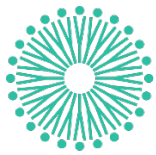


The Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU) launched VT Helplink in March 2020 as Vermont's statewide, single point of contact for Vermonters needing treatment, recovery and other resources related to substance use.



VT Helplink
Alcohol & drug support center

VT Helplink in Action

During 2024, VT Helplink received 1,000 calls and online chats, and over 21,000 website visits. Marketing activities continued to increase awareness of VT Helplink as a resource for people and loved ones of Vermonters struggling with substance use. Over half of interactions to VT Helplink (51%) were related to alcohol use. Opioid use (heroin, fentanyl, medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)), made up nearly one quarter (20%) of reported use and stimulants (methamphetamine, cocaine, crack,) accounted for an additional 16%. Most referrals were to substance use disorder treatment (outpatient & residential), recovery supports, harm reduction resources and MOUD.

Call Center

VT Helplink's call center is staffed by certified Screening & Information Specialists (SIS), under supervision of Master's-level clinicians. Vermonters can call 802-565-LINK (5465), or toll free 833-565-5465, and speak confidentially to a SIS with knowledge about Vermont's system of care, resources and treatment options that meet their needs. The call center is open 8am-10pm on weekdays, and 8am-6pm on weekends and holidays. VT Helplink collaborates with Vermont 2-1-1.

VT Helplink's text messaging component was launched in September 2024. Vermonters are now able to text the word "LINK" to 802-565-5465 to initiate a conversation with a SIS.

Website

At VTHelplink.org, Vermonters can access information, resources, and educational materials. Through the website, Vermonters can utilize the brief online self-screening tool to learn about treatment options and supportive services for themselves, or for a loved one or client. Website visitors can also securely chat online with SIS through the website.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **VT Helplink received 1,000 calls and online chats, and over 21,000 website visits**
- **Over half of interactions (51%) were related to alcohol use**
- **In 2023, marketing measured 8,986,593 impressions**
- **The website is now accessible to Spanish speakers**
- **Text messaging was launched September 2024**
- **New clearinghouse launched in December 2024**
- **Website and call center operations will be 24/7 starting January 2025**

The VT Helplink website is now accessible to Spanish speakers with a translation button available on the home page, along with translated marketing materials available for ordering.

Marketing & Communications

VT Helplink is promoted via television, radio, print, and digital/social media advertising, including using refreshed marketing assets featuring Harm Reduction & Overdose Prevention Service Providers, one of the best performing VT Helplink marketing campaigns to-date. In 2023, VT Helplink marketing campaigns measured 8,986,593 impressions (how many times the content was seen by the intended audience).

Clearinghouse

DSU transitioned the Vermont Alcohol & Drug Information Clearinghouse under the VT Helplink program. As part of the Clearinghouse work, new materials (VT Helplink and other Vermont alcohol/drug education & information materials) will also be created.

For more information, contact AHS.VDHDSU@vermont.gov.