



BlueCross BlueShield
of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.



True North Wilderness Program, in Waitsfield, Vermont, is pleased to partner with Blue Cross Vermont in an innovative pilot program to assess the cost effectiveness of wilderness therapy as a covered mental health treatment option. **During this pilot program, Blue Cross members are eligible for full in-network coverage of the daily rate at True North.**

This partnership is an exciting step toward better, more comprehensive mental health treatment for young people and True North is proud to be on the cutting edge of making this treatment more accessible to all.

What is True North?

Intensive, therapeutic intervention that takes place in the beautiful outdoor settings in Central Vermont. True North works with adolescents (ages 14-17) and young adults (ages 18-25) and their families to help with mental health, emotional, and behavioral challenges that have made it impossible for them to function in a more traditional environment.



The Therapeutic Model

Two therapists are assigned to each family, one for the student and one for the parents. Students meet twice a week with their therapist in the field, and parents meet with the student therapist once a week and with the parent therapist once a week, usually by phone or Zoom. Students are supported 24/7 by guides, who support the students' specific therapeutic goals under the supervision of the therapists.

Who can benefit from True North?

Students come from all over the country, and even the world. Most are enrolled and funded by their parents.

They are seeking help with a wide range of issues, and have often exhausted local and traditional options with limited success. Some of the common concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Mood disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Difficulty functioning at school/home
- Relationship problems (social/family)
- Substance abuse
- School refusal
- Oppositional behavior with parents
- Self-harm/suicidal ideation
- Overuse of technology



Program Information

The program features vary by season and include:



SUMMER:

- Small groups, living outdoors
- Learning skills including some academic skills
- Hiking, backpacking, camping
- Adventure activities like canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding, disc golf, yoga, cooking



WINTER:

- Small groups, sleeping in heated spaces, still outside as much as possible
- Learning skills including some academic skills
- Adventure activities like hiking, skiing, snowboarding, x-country skiing, snowshoeing, disc golf, yoga, cooking
- Field house activities and games like pickleball, soccer, basketball, corn hole, etc.

How it works

- If an adolescent or young adult client may benefit from enrollment at True North and the family is enrolled with Blue Cross, the professional may contact True North directly to speak with Kelly or Courtney about the potential fit of the student, including:
 - Student profile
 - Parent involvement and support
 - Assessment of risk of running from the program due to proximity
 - Current availability and group dynamics
- If appropriate, the professional can inform the family about True North and encourage the family to contact a care manager at Blue Cross and to contact True North directly.
- The length of stay for the student is generally between 10-12 weeks and is determined by the treatment team with support from Blue Cross for completion of the whole program. True North will work with the local professionals, including therapeutic or educational consultants, and the Blue Cross Care team to help the family plan aftercare support.

For more information, contact:



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