

Meet Dr. Laura Felsted

Laura Felsted, DO, has joined Stowe Family Practice as a specialist in internal medicine. She sees primarily adults ages 50 to 100, who have complicated chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and dementia.

“It’s a patient population that I’m interested in. I call them ‘established adults,’” Felsted says. “Not everyone I see is sick or has a chronic disease. I also enjoy women’s health and seeing healthy people of all ages.” She works with her healthy patients to stay on top of yearly exams and important tests, such as colonoscopy and blood pressure, in order to avoid future complications.

Felsted attended Michigan State University, where she studied medicine and received a degree in osteopathy. “These days there really isn’t much difference between the MDs and DOs,” she explains. “Osteopaths may do more hands-on body manipulation, but basically there

is very little difference. I am very open to conversations about alternative approaches.”

A big part of Felsted’s care is prevention. “I help my patients focus on being well every day by moving their bodies, making good food choices, getting plenty of rest, and not being overextended. Over the course of a lifetime, paying attention to these four things every day will pay off,” she says.

If a chronic diagnosis is made, Felsted helps her patient find ways of managing it. “It’s about lifestyle, and finding the delicate balance between diagnoses and being the healthiest we can be, despite the diagnosis.”

Felsted lives in Stowe with her husband and daughter. Prior to



joining Stowe Family Practice, Felsted practiced adult medicine at Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin. “Coming to Stowe Family Practice was about finding a balance of work and family,” she says. “I want to take care of people and better manage my family’s needs. I hope to make an impact on helping keep people well and to be proactive about their own health.”

Addressing the many challenges of youth



Photo courtesy Bess O'Brien

Youth In Transition



Behavioral Health & Wellness Center is dedicated to the mental health and wellness of Lamoille Valley's youth and young adults. The Youth in Transition (YIT) program helps young people be successful in school, the work place, and their community. It is offered in individual, group, and family sessions that meet in a school environment or, if necessary, at BHWC.

BHWC has been involved with YIT for nearly seven years. The program is funded by a grant from Vermont Federation of Families. Its mission is to teach life skills and connect young adults, ages 16 to 24, to the things they want and need to live successfully and independently, such as resources for housing, substance abuse and mental health counseling, medical care, employment, and education.

"YIT is an opportunity for kids who are struggling in school, or are experiencing truancy, mental health issues, a chaotic family structure, or homelessness, to get help," says Clinical Director Hayley Hamilton, MSW, LICSW, LADC. Hamilton heads up BHWC's YIT team of five case managers and counselors—Luke

Smith, MSW, LICSW, AAP; Kathy Mai, MSW; Jennifer Pimentel, MSW; Matt Bouchard, BS, AAP; and intern Darrin Greene.

Case managers and counselors work in schools with guidance counselors and teachers to identify YIT candidates and get them into groups or individual sessions, which meet weekly at Lamoille High School and People's Academy High and Middle Level. During the summer they continue with group activities to help keep the kids connected to each other and their counselors.

"We work to empower youth to finish high school and move on to secondary

school, and help them find housing, a job, healthcare, and other social services," Hamilton says. "We go to them in their school environment and try to keep barriers low. Some may receive extra therapy at BHWC."

YIT has four components: peer outreach; peer leadership; case management; and case review. BHWC collaborates with other agencies in the community—Lamoille Family Center, Lamoille County Mental Health, The Restorative Center and others, such as Crossfit, a local gym—to provide services, a healthy lifestyle, and life skills. This system of care builds upon the strengths of young adults and creates a variety of mental health and related services to meet their unique needs. The system also fosters young adult leadership.

BHWC case managers continue to work with the young adults after community connections are made, to coach them through the changes they are making to improve their lives. Many young adults feel that having such a case manager is vital to their making key decisions and changes.

Darrin Greene,
intern

Clinical Director
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Matt Bouchard,
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