



# TEAMWORK:

## A QUARTERLY CHILDREN'S CLINIC AND FLEX NEWSLETTER FROM OUR TEAM TO YOURS

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### COZY SEASON

The twelfth issue of our Children's Clinic and Flex Team Newsletter is here!

You can find all our newsletters printed in the waiting room at the Clinic, and archived [here](#) on our website.

This newsletter has been made possible through our agency partnership with the United Way of Hampshire County.

United Way of the  
Franklin & Hampshire Region



Cutchins Programs  
for Children & Families

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E-mail [habair@cutchins.org](mailto:habair@cutchins.org) and we will remove you from the mailing list.

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hello Clinic and Flex Families!

Preparation for the Winter and holidays is upon us. I feel like everywhere I look I see some sort of prep: holiday shopping, home oil tanks being filled and snow tires being put on cars. There's an energy to this preparation that always feels cozy and nostalgic to me, that those of us who live in the Northeast know instinctually how to prepare to fare as best we can when the coldest temperatures hit. This time is also a reminder that the winter months provide an opportunity to slow down. This slowing down can be needed, but can also feel disorienting if your system is used to functioning at a higher speed for whatever reason. I hope you and your families have time to listen to your bodies over the winter, and adjust to what they need. That may be snuggling up with a book by the fire, but it may also be finding a local pool to swim at to get excess energy out, or racing down a mountain to gather up some Vitamin D. Our bodies will tell us what we need, and if we listen closely we can meet those needs.

In this Winter 2022 newsletter you will find so many helpful and fun items:

- Our **Featured Pet** from our Clinic Pet Project (hard copy in the Clinic waiting room, soon to be added to our new and improved Website!)
- Info on our **Amazon Wishlist** with desired items for our programs as well as how to donate to Cutchins (free to you!) through **Amazon Smile**. Please think of us as you holiday shop. As a small nonprofit, we work on a tight budget and so appreciate donations big and small!
- A very exciting **Transracial Adoption training opportunity** with Angela Tucker, please see email from Holly as well as the flyer in this newsletter for more info. We really hope to see as many Cutchins families as possible take part in this free, highly valuable event!
- The **Coping Corner** written by Leslie from the Clinic: helpful for the holidays and school vacation
- And as always, we close out the newsletter with our **Staff Picks**

I hope this newsletter brings you some tidbits to make the Winter flow a bit smoother. Before we know it, it will be spring and we will be putting away our snow boots and trading them in for our rainboots. Until then, I'll be making dozens of paper snowflakes, coming soon to a waiting room near you!

With kindness,  
Amanda Jenkins Harrison, LMHC  
Senior Director of Community Services



## Coping Skills for the Holidays (and School Vacation)

By Leslie S. Leff, LICSW, SAC

Holidays are always emphasized as festive and fun, but we know that in fact, they can also bring a lot of stress to families. Here are some tips to help you and your kids manage when things feel less than joyous:

1. Keep things as SIMPLE as possible. While it is tempting to do so much, make sure that you don't end up making things actually harder on yourself. Maybe you can delegate some tasks. Also, remember that sometimes to keep things sustainable, less can be more.
2. Similarly, be REALISTIC ABOUT your and your children's EXPECTATIONS. What can you and they reasonably manage without getting overstressed? Think about what your kids can handle and what their needs are. How are they with meeting new people? How do they do staying up late? At what point do your kids get overstimulated?
3. As much as possible, KEEP ROUTINES THE SAME. It has been shown that kids, particularly those with neural atypicality, do better when things are predictable. Keeping sleep times the same can really make a difference as can making sure kids get three healthy meals a day. And yet...
4. PREPARE children for the changes in routine. Traveling and/or spending time with other people's schedules can disrupt what was familiar. That can be particularly hard for some kids. So, make sure to include some familiar objects – like books and toys. As much as possible, maintain some familiar routine.
5. KEEP KIDS ACTIVE. Sitting around all day can only make things harder. For kids as well as adults, exercise can minimize stress. Get kids outside...

6. SPEND TIME IN NATURE. Both alone and with your family. Studies have shown that spending time in nature is better for your physical health. It can also increase the brain's cognitive functioning. Also, being in nature has been shown to both reduce stress and boost happiness. This can help lower depression and anxiety. And one study showed that kids who get to spend time in nature have lower risk of developing a psychiatric disorder.

7. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. It is important that you don't forget your own needs so you can manage your own stress. Take a break when needed or get some physical exercise. Find alone time. Spend time in nature. Do deep breathing. Be sure to laugh. Don't overdo substances. And get enough sleep. Remember that despite greeting card depictions, we are not all happy at this time of year. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is that you are feeling without judgment.

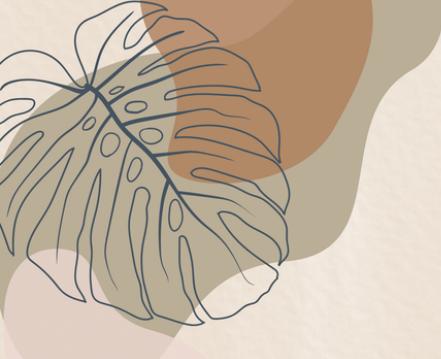
8. LIMIT ACCESS TO NEGATIVE PEOPLE. As much as possible, spend time with people who encourage you. If you do need to spend time with someone who is negative, this could be a good time to practice forgiveness – at least in your head. But, if you are not celebrating with someone who helps you feel good about yourself, make sure to reach out to a positive person at some point during the holidays.

9. SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE YOU ENJOY. This, hopefully, includes your children. Create new rituals. Have fun. Play games. Laugh. Decompress together.

10. PAY IT FORWARD. Choose something to do as a family that helps others. It can be simple. Bake cookies for another family. Shovel an elderly neighbor's driveway. Choose toys for a toy drive, etc. This not only teaches kindness, but helps build perspective of what other people are experiencing at this time. It could also help you connect with what the deep meaning of whatever holiday you celebrate means to you and provide an opportunity to convey that to your children.



COMING SOON



# TRANSRACIAL Adoption Panel Discussion with Angela Tucker

<https://www.angelatucker.com/>

Please join us for an evening event:

Thursday December 15 6-7:30PM

ON Zoom (link below)

TRANSRACIAL Adoptee Panel

facilitated and moderated by Angela.

Question and ANSWER from attendees.

Open and free of charge to Cutchins staff, Clients and caregivers/families of Cutchins Programs Services (ideal ages 12 and up).

We hope you will join us for this valuable and meaningful conversation!

"Angela Tucker is a transracial adoptee. Her forthcoming debut book: YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL: Stories of Race Identity, and Transracial Adoption, will be published in April 2023 by Beacon Press (pre-order now). Angela hosts The Adoptee Next Door podcast, has produced five short films and is the founder of the Adoptee Mentoring Society. She has consulted with NBC's This Is Us, supported the lead actor of Broadway musical Jagged Little Pill, has over 15 years of experience working within adoption and foster care agencies and has mentored over 200 adoptees. Angela is married to Bryan Tucker, an Emmy-award winning filmmaker.

They live in Seattle, Washington."

Zoom Link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89346517559>

Meeting ID: 893 4651 7559

Questions? Reach out to Amanda HARRISON aharrison@cutchins.org

## SUPPORT CUTCHINS

If you are finding yourself wanting to make a donation this holiday season, please consider checking out [our Amazon wish list](#).

Being a small nonprofit, we are always happy when we receive donations to help us serve families.

You can drop off items at our front desk.  
Thank you!



Cutchins participates in the AmazonSmile Program-- a philanthropic offshoot of Amazon that donates 0.5% of eligible purchases on Amazon to charities chosen by Amazon customers.

There is no extra cost to you, and items on AmazonSmile are the same products on the regular Amazon site.

### How to Participate

- Visit [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)
- On the horizontal menu bar at the top of the website, you will select "AmazonSmile" and you will then be directed to choose the charitable organization of your choice
- Search for "Cutchins Programs for Children and Families" and then hit "select" to set Cutchins as your charitable organization of choice.
- Products that are eligible for a donation are listed with the AmazonSmile logo

To set up AmazonSmile on your Amazon shopping app on Android or IOS:

- Go to settings and select "activate AmazonSmile"
- Select "Turn on AmazonSmile"
- You will be prompted through a couple of overview images which you will select through and then it will be activated

## Pet Project Spotlight: Marigold

By: RW



Marigold is our cat, she is a Torbey. We aren't sure how old she is but we guess she is somewhere around 13. Marigold likes to wake us up at 4:00 in the morning. She is very much a people cat, she loves to be around people. Marigold loves to sit on people, she likes to show off for the camera on Zoom. Cats are my favorite thing on Earth. If you are upset, Marigold can calm you down by coming over to you and helping you feel better.

# STAFF PICKS

**A round-up of resources and links that we've found helpful lately**



## The Family Tree – Leslie's pick

The Family Tree, written by Sean Dixon and Illustrated by Lily Snowden-Fine. This visually beautiful children's book creatively addresses the conundrum that children who have been adopted or live in untraditional families face when given the school assignment to create a family tree. The story's clever solution is expansive, inclusive, and inspired by a loving community. This book should be on the shelves of all adopted and untraditional families and everyone who loves them, as well as on the shelves of traditional families who want to develop a broader understanding of what being a family can mean. In fact, this book should be a must read for all people who work with children and in all school libraries.

## ADHD in Girls and Women – Laura's pick

I found this TEDx video on "ADHD in Girls and Women" to be heart-felt and eye-opening. It's worth watching with anyone in your family living with ADHD.

## Girls Home Spa Lab – Jen's pick

"Girls Home Spa Lab" is a book of all natural recipes for healthy habits and "feel good" activities. It is a creative, sensory based, and mindful approach to working "tweens" on healthy sleep and wake routines/self care. It has DIY recipes and activities to correspond with each piece!

## Free Printable Behavior Charts – Amanda's pick

Here is a website with varied FREE printable behavior charts. They are arranged by age/grade and include behavior charts, chore charts, potty charts, hygiene charts. All the charts! They are also customizable.