

TEAMWORK:

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

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AUTUMN HAS ARRIVED

The third edition of our **Children's Clinic and Flex Team** newsletter is here along with a chill in the air and beautiful red, orange, and yellow leaves all around us.

We've got lots of great content here to help you through this season of transition.

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

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UPDATES

Hello Clinic and Flex Families,

Welcome to fall! This has always been my favorite season, and when considering why, I think it's the idea of transition that has always appealed to me. Fall is about accepting that the warm days of summer have passed us by, and we enjoy the days getting cooler in preparing for the colder days of winter.

During this time of transition, we in New England have so many traditions that we can enjoy; apple picking, hiking, pumpkin carving, corn mazes... Sam has some fun ideas for Halloween if your family will be celebrating this year! I am thankful that so many of these activities are still possible during the pandemic and hope that your families have been able to enjoy some of your treasured fall traditions.

Here are some updates on our programs:

- **Flex Teams:** The Flex teams (DMH services for Youth and Transitional Aged Youth) continue to meet using telehealth, though will be working with individuals to determine if face to face sessions would be helpful, especially while we are still able to meet outside. If you have not returned your telehealth consents to the team, please reach out to Merideth ASAP. We've also included some suggestions for time management and mindful eating for mental health in this newsletter.
- **Back to school shifts:** We have been working as a team to support families in the transition "back to school" whether your students are learning in person, in a hybrid model or fully remote. We recognize that this has been a big challenge for so many families, and hope you continue to reach out for supports and ideas to help ease this transition. Please see some ideas for organizing a home work space later in this newsletter.
- **The Children's Clinic Sessions:** We continue to meet almost fully remotely with clients, though have seen a few individuals outdoors with masks and distanced. The process toward opening up for in person sessions at the Clinic has begun, (cleaning protocols, consents, PPE acquired etc.) though we are moving very slowly and carefully so that we can ensure safety of staff and clients. Please reach out to your clinician with questions about this process.

(Continued)

UPDATES

- Staff changes: We are sad to say goodbye to two members of our clinical team at the Clinic: Kris Johansson and Anna Morrell will be moving on to new exciting professional opportunities. Though we will miss both of them as such important parts of our team, we are glad for the time we had working together and wish them both the best of luck in their next steps on their journey.

In this time of transition, for many of us it can be hard to feel grounded and steady. May we all give ourselves the space to feel each emotion in the moment, and then find the ground steady and gently beneath us. I hope you enjoy, find comfort and learn from this Fall edition of our newsletter.

My best to all your families.

Be safe and be well.

~Amanda Harrison, LMHC
Children's Clinic Director



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



HALLOWEEN AT HOME

MAKE THIS YEAR MEMORABLE AND SAFE WITH FUN NEW TRADITIONS

BY SAM CHAPLIN LICSW

1. EPIC CANDY HUNT



Instead of trick or treating door-to-door, set up an epic Halloween candy hunt in your backyard or an appropriate outdoor space.

Hide candy, tiny pumpkins, or other spooky treats around the yard for the kids to find... a Halloween version of the classic Easter egg hunt!

2. COSTUME PHOTO SHOOT

Create lasting memories with a Halloween costume photo shoot.

Use decorations to create a spooky backdrop, or a themed backdrop that fits with your child's costume... then paint or decorate picture frames to hold the prints.



3. SPOOKY (OR SILLY) MOVIE NIGHT

Grab some snacks, get cozy, and have a spooky movie night with a classic family friendly movie that's perfect for spooky season. Here's a list of the ["40 Best Kids' Halloween Movies That Won't Keep Them Up All Night"](#).

(Good Housekeeping, 2020)



Visit a farmstand or pumpkin patch (or your local grocery store) as a family to pick out the perfect array of pumpkins to carve or decorate together.

After your creations are complete you can simply admire each other's work, or have a contest where each pumpkin receives a special award. Spookiest, cutest, most original... are a few ideas.

4. PUMPKIN PAGEANT



CHECKLIST FOR CREATING A VIRTUAL LEARNING WORKSPACE

BY SAM CHAPLIN LICSW

Here are a few helpful things to consider when creating a workspace for your child or teen that supports their virtual learning experience.

COMFORT

- Furniture is the right size for your child
- Computer or tablet is at eye-level
- Feet are able to be flat on the floor, or a stool
- There are a few different options for sitting (firm chair, a more cushion-y spot, and standing room) to change position when needed

ORGANIZATION

- Folders color-coded by subject and labeled
- Supplies are grouped together
- Digital spaces (computer desktop, google drive, e-mail inbox, etc.) are organized
- There is a plan to re-organize or tidy up the space as more supplies and papers accumulate

SENSORY FUNCTIONING

- Noise cancelling headphones or ear protectors are available to block out extra noise
- Appropriate fidgets or break time sensory toys are accessible in a basket or designated location
- Healthy crunchy snacks, mints or gum, and/or warm drinks such as herbal tea are available

- The space includes sensory tools for movement breaks such as : hanging swing, mini trampoline, wobble board, jump rope, resistance bands for stretching, portable foot pedal bike

- Consider the visual stimuli in the room. Simple art in a relaxing color may be helpful, while clutter may be overstimulating and distracting

JOY

- The space includes your child's favorite colors, characters, or items that make them smile

- Photographs of friends and family are nearby for a dose of motivation and happiness
- Your child or teen has gotten a chance to make the space their own in some way with your permission and support

- There are tools for creative expression such as art supplies, scrap paper, coloring pages, or musical instruments
- There is something from the natural world nearby whether it's a window to the outside, or a small plant

MORE IDEAS

[THE SENSORY CHILD GETS ORGANIZED BY CAROLYN DALGLIESH](#)

[HOW TO SET UP A VIRTUAL OR HOMESCHOOL LEARNING SPACE FOR KIDS
BY MICHELLE CROUCH, PARENTS MAGAZINE JULY 2020](#)

[THE BEST DESK CHAIRS FOR KIDS, ACCORDING TO EXPERTS
BY KORIN MILLER, FORBES AUGUST 2020](#)

[21 AT-HOME CLASSROOMS THAT WILL INSPIRE YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE THIS YEAR
BY MURPHY MORONEY FOR POPSUGAR FAMILY](#)

TRANSITIONAL AGED YOUTH

TIPS FOR T.A.Y.

The following section is intended for transitional aged youth (ages 16 to 24) but may be helpful for other folks as well.

Included are helpful links for staying calm and connected during the pandemic, some examples of healthy foods that are both good for the body and mind, and an example of a daily schedule one can follow if they're struggling with structuring their days.



STAYING CALM & STAYING CONNECTED

BY CONNIE PONDER

Staying connected with others during the pandemic can be really difficult, especially for those who are naturally introverted. Maintaining connections with friends, family, and others, however, is important to our mental health. It reminds us of the supports we have in our lives and gives us the chance to socialize.

Here's a link to a video to help you stay connected as a remote learning student

Here are five tips on how to stay connected if you are introverted

In addition to staying connected with others, being connected with ourselves is just as important. A good way to center yourself is through practicing a variety of breathing and mediation exercises. These can be completed in the morning to get your day going, throughout the day when you need a reset, and at night before bed to get your mind and body ready for rest.

Here's a deep breathing exercise to try

HEALTHY FOODS

BY NANCY PIERCE

Incorporating healthy foods into your diet is essential for both your physical and mental health. Eating healthy foods each day will give you the energy you need and keep you full and focused.

It is sometimes easier and faster to choose unhealthy foods, but these foods won't support your brain function and physical health the same way healthier options will. For example, foods with iron in them help bring oxygen to the bloodstream, which not only helps support red blood cell health, but boosts energy and increases mood.



Listed below are some healthy foods to try to support both your body and mind!

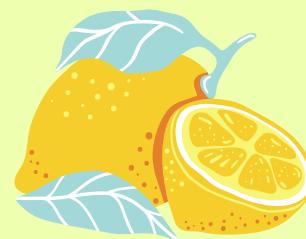


Foods with Vitamin C - Immune System Health

Citrus: Oranges, Grapefruits, Lemons

Greens: Spinach, Kale, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts

Fruits: Cherries, Strawberries, Papaya,



Foods with Iron – Oxygen to blood, red blood cell health, energy & mood

Greens: Spinach, Broccoli

Seafood: Shell fish, Tuna, Salmon

Vegetarian: Beans, Lentils, Sunflower seeds, Quinoa, Tofu, Dark Chocolate

Meat: Red meat, Turkey

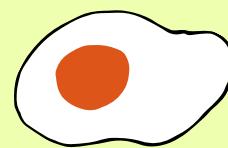
Foods with B Vitamins – Ease Anxiety, nervous system health, energy & mood

Seafood: Salmon, Shellfish

Greens: Spinach, Collard Greens, Romaine Lettuce

Meat/Protein: Eggs, Beef

Vegetarian: Beans, Chickpeas, Kidney Beans,



Foods with Probiotics – Gut & Digestive Health, Helps the body absorb nutrients

Vegetarian: Miso Soup, Yogurt, Sauerkraut, Kimchi



Creating a daily schedule

BY
MEGAN
SHINNICK

Below is an example of a daily schedule you can follow from home. Making a schedule like this can keep you busy throughout the day, and incorporates the healthy things our minds and bodies need. Creating and sticking to a routine is important for both our mental and physical health, especially during these times!

Be sure to include self-care activities, a healthy bedtime routine, and mindfulness or time for quiet throughout the day. These schedules can be easily changed to fit your interests and priorities, and you can even make a weekly version changing up the individual days. There are some free outlines available on Microsoft Word that can be used to create a schedule, as well as a bunch of online PDFs to give you some ideas. [Here's an awesome blog post to help you get started, from The Spruce.](#)

| Time | Activity | Details |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 9:00 AM | Morning Routine | Breakfast, make your bed, shower or wash up |
| 9:30 AM | Morning Walk | Walk around your neighborhood or a nearby trail. If weather is bad, try indoor exercise like yoga or dance. |
| 10:00 AM | Creative Time | Coloring, word puzzles, creative writing, reading |
| 12:00 PM | Lunch | Prepare and eat lunch. Meal prep for tomorrow. |
| 12:30 PM | Chores | Tidy up bedroom, wash or fold laundry, take out trash |
| 1:00 PM | Quiet Time | Watch a show, play a game on your phone, read, or take a short nap |
| 2:00 PM | Self-Care Time | Breathing or meditation exercise, coloring, journaling, calling a support person to chat |
| 3:00 PM | Afternoon Walk | Walk around your neighborhood or a nearby trail. If weather is bad, try indoor exercise like yoga or dance. |
| 4:00 PM | Project Time | Work on your project / goals. Write yourself a letter a day, journal, create a scrapbook, or work on a new art piece |
| 5:00 PM | Evening Prep + Dinner | Cook dinner, set the table, and enjoy eating. Take a few minutes to yourself before cleaning up. |
| 7:00 PM | Free Time | Engage in activities that make you feel soothed and happy. Watch a good movie, bake, call a support, or read. |
| 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM | Nightly routine and Sleep | Put on pajamas, make a cup of decaf tea, engage in a breathing or relaxation activity, and put away electronics so you are ready for sleep. |

STAFF PICKS

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



The Mightier: Biofeedback - Anna's Pick

"The Mightier offers kids and families the opportunity to practice different calming and focus strategies through biofeedback and by simply playing games. The learning happens naturally and is reinforced in both the game and in daily life. Kids love collecting Lavalings, earning Acorns and new games, all for practicing regulation skills! While there is a monthly cost, there is a generous 30-day free trial to see if the Mightier is a good fit."

Death is Stupid by Anastasia Higginbotham - Binda's Pick

"This picture book takes the perspective of a little boy whose grandma has died. He clarifies what he (and all kids) need to hear when someone they love dies, and how to support him. [Here is a link to the book being read on YouTube.](#)"

Will the Pandemic Socially Stunt My Kid? - Clover's Pick

"NY Times article addressing parent concerns about socialization delays that may be occurring in children due to the pandemic. Mental health workers use a developmental lens to share how children's socialization needs can be met during this challenging time as well as offering a reminder of children's innate resilience."

Learn the Brain Dance - Katelyn's Pick

"The Brain Dance was developed by Anne Green Gilbert and is a fun way to provide our brains and bodies a with a break and a reboot! This link is an easy to follow along video that takes participants through the different movements."