

TEAMWORK:

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



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HELLO SUMMER!

The sixth issue of our **Children's Clinic and Flex Team Newsletter** is here just in time for summer! Read on for updates about in-person services at the Clinic, insights from the recent Cutchins Trauma and Attachment Symposium, and plenty of local resources for you and your young ones.

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



United Way
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 Cutchins Programs
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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hello Families!

After a long time of waiting quietly, our lovely Clinic is ready to welcome us all back in person, on site, as of July 1, 2021. Your Clinician will talk with you about your family's comfort with meeting in person, outdoors or inside the Clinic, or whether you would like to remain meeting by telehealth for the time being. At this time, insurance companies are continuing to reimburse for telehealth. If this should change, we will revisit options for treatment.

Important updates:

- Everyone being seen in person, whether outdoors or in the Clinic will need to fill out the "Consent to Meet in Person" document, giving us legal consent to meet in person. You will be given a copy by either your Clinician or our front office staff.
- Please talk to your clinician about what outdoor session options may look like moving forward (for example, a walk near the Clinic on a bike path vs. locations further from the Clinic).
- We are not using the waiting room at this time due to space limitations. When you get to the building you will call/text an identified phone and clinicians will be called by our front office to meet you at the Clinic door.
- Everyone in the building must be masked at this time. We understand this is not the case in all environments, however due to our license with the Department of Public Health, masks are required at this time.
- When you enter the Clinic, you will take your temperature on a standing, touchless thermometer and fill out a brief health survey.
- There are hand sanitizer stations located throughout the building for your use, as well as bottles in each clinical office.
- We will try to space out appointments as we are able to have less people in the building at one time.
- We have high quality air filters running throughout the building to keep our air healthy and fresh.
- The building is being regularly cleaned and sanitized.
- Snacks will not be provided during sessions at this time. We hope to be able to provide snacks and eat within the Clinic space once mask rules shift.

As a Clinic we are so very excited to be on the path to providing mental health services to our clients in person, in the way we have at the Children's Clinic for over 30 years. And as we have over the past 16 months, we will continue to work together and do the best we can to support each and every Clinic family. I know I, for one, am so looking forward to hearing the sounds of laughter and movement and healing and play fill our sweet building very soon.

With kind and hopeful thoughts,
Amanda Jenkins Harrison, LMHC
Director, The Children's Clinic



REGULATE, RELATE, REASON:

Sharing Bruce Perry's Wisdom on Nurturing our Children's Development

By Leslie S. Leff, M.Ed., MSS, LICSW

On May 13, 2021, I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Bruce Perry speak at our agency's Trauma and Attachment Symposium on his Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics. Dr. Perry has done pioneering work in the field of childhood trauma – in fact, I am proud to say that my initial training in this field was through his work. I wanted to share some of the most salient ideas for our families.

Dr. Perry emphasized the power of relationships in the development of children. He stressed how every baby and child needs to be seen, known, and appreciated for who they are by at least one adult in their lives – ideally their primary caregiver. In fact, as much as we value our work here in the clinic, we agree with Dr. Perry that the brain doesn't change solely as a result of once-a-week hour-long interventions. It is what happens between sessions that really matters. So, it is the love, joy, and connections that children get from their families that has the most impact. A big part of our goal at the clinic is to support and enhance that relationship between children and caregivers.

We all have both adverse and positive experiences in our lives. People who have experienced trauma often have had more and extreme adversity than the average person. Yet, even those who have experienced trauma can develop resiliency through nurturing and caring relationships. In fact, Dr. Perry shared that “connectedness and relational health is more important than adversity.” For it is through the connectedness and relational health that one’s brain can actually heal from trauma. So, it is not only important to understand what negative things happened to a child, but what helps them through it – what strengths they have and how they can be nurtured.

Another important point Dr. Perry emphasized is that our brains develop from the bottom up which means that the most primitive parts of our brains – ones related to bodily sensations and emotions – developed before language development and the “thinking” and reasoning part of our higher brain. When a person is upset, they do not operate from that higher part of the brain. All too often, we try to talk and reason with children when they are upset. Dr. Perry reminds us that **regulation must come before talking**. That means that we, as adults, must be sure that we are regulated before we try to approach an upset child – and that we help them regulate their own emotions before we attempt to reason with them. Regulation can happen through breathing, hugging, rocking, etc. – whatever works best for your child and whatever is needed in that moment. A good way to remember the best order for interacting with a child, indeed, any person who is upset is: REGULATE, RELATE, REASON.

So, the greatest gift you can give your child as we are all coming out of this pandemic is to love and enjoy them. In his recent book (*What Happened to You*), Dr. Perry wrote, “Love, given and felt, is dependent on the ability to be present, attentive, attuned, and responsive to another human being.” I know many caregivers are concerned about interrupted and inconsistent schooling over the last year. Rather than focusing on making up for lost time academic, it is more important to help your child recover from a challenging year. As Dr. Perry stated at a recent education conference, “Play with them and let them play, and let them play with each other. Let them sort of reconnect with their friends, you know, do things that are fun. What that means is, if your kids over the summer have a regulating and rewarding set of experiences, they’re going to come to school ready to go to work.”

And don’t forget to care for the caregiver while you are at it. This year has been hard on all of us and we adults – especially caregivers – need to replenish ourselves through experiencing joy as well.

If you would like to learn more, here are some of Dr. Perry’s books that you might find helpful:

- *What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* by Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey
- *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist’s Notebook—What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love and Healing* by Maia Szalavitz and Bruce D. Perry

Books by other authors that specifically address raising children and that include many of the themes mentioned above:

- *Attachment Parenting: Developing Connections and Healing Children* edited by Arthur Becker-Weidman and Deborah Shell
- *Creating Loving Attachments: Parenting with PACE to Nurture Confidence and Security in the Troubled Child* by Kim S. Golding and Daniel A. Hughes
- *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive* by Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell
- *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind* by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson



Thank you to our friends at Ten Thousand Villages in Northampton for their April fundraiser! Community members purchased very sweet finger puppets to donate to our Clinic. We would love to share these with our friends, and think we could have a lot of fun playing with them with you, whether we will be in person or on Zoom! Thanks again to Karen and the wonderful staff at Ten Thousand Villages!

www.tenthousandvillages.com/northampton



Local Vocational Resources for Youth

By Nancy Pierce

MassHire Springfield & Holyoke

Job postings, job search engines, webinars and specialized certification classes/programs. Also offers virtual job coaching, virtual tours of local colleges, workshops on interviews and resume writing and so much more valuable vocational opportunities and resources:

masshirespringfield.org

masshireholyoke.org

Jobs in the Valley

Search engine for finding employment in the Pioneer Valley. Organized based on part time or full time work. Many of the jobs are mental health, social work, or child care focused job opportunities but also have other postings as well!

jobsinthevalley.com

Community Action

Youth programs include Youth Works vocational training and job coaching as well as LGBTQIA support groups offered virtually.

www.communityaction.us/youth-programs

Grounding Exercise

BY ASHLEY BOUDLE

This grounding activity will help you and your children practice mindfulness, self-regulate, ease anxiety and stress, and get outside to connect with nature.

How to practice grounding:

- Find a safe, peaceful outdoor space.
- Take your shoes and socks off.
- Sit down on the ground.
- Place your hands palm-down onto the ground, and your feet flat onto the ground in front of you.
- Close your eyes, take a few minutes to breathe, just focus on your breath and the feeling of the earth on your hands and feet.
- Try to let this process continue for 1 minute, 5 minutes, or more!

Research shows that doing this on a regular basis can decrease inflammation in the body, improve any sensory disorganization, increase bodily awareness, accelerate wound healing, decrease stress, and improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.



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1. Visit www.smile.amazon.com
2. 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
3. Search for "Cutchins Programs for Children and Families" and then hit "select" to set Cutchins as your charitable organization of choice.
4. 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:

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



STAFF PICKS

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

Online Jigsaw Puzzles – Amanda's Pick

How many of us enjoyed a good, old fashioned jigsaw puzzle over the pandemic? A young person I met with introduced me to Jigsaw Explorer, a website where you can complete puzzles online, and add friends and families remotely to complete puzzles with you. Like a challenge? Try to "beat the clock" and complete each puzzle faster than the last one.

Park Hill Orchard – Ashley's Pick

Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton, MA has delicious pick-your-own fruit, from berries, to peaches, to apples! There is a fun art trail on site that you can follow through the orchard. And also a little shop where you can buy baked goods—they accept SNAP benefits!

Celebrate summer with local ice cream! – Allie's pick

I just learned that June is "Dairy Month," and that six local dairy farms are celebrating with a Dairy Passport challenge! Fellow ice cream lovers: will you get a cone at all six farms before the month is out?