

TEAMWORK:

ISSUE 8 / WINTER 2021

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



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SEASONS GREETINGS!

The eighth 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.](#)

Read on for a message from our Director, some cool coping skills, and some ways that you can support Cutchins and the Clinic this holiday season.

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 and we will remove you from the mailing list.

Happy Holidays Clinic and Flex Families!

I won't sugar coat it, THIS IS HARD. This time of year, when many expect everything to be jolly and bright, can feel like anything but joyful to some of us. The pressure to feel happy, to spend money, to feel "okay" can be a heavy burden to carry, especially if you are already holding tough emotions, situations or memories. I'd like to take a moment to just recognize how challenging things are for so many right now. To validate that if you are not fully in the holiday spirit, that's okay! It doesn't make you Ebenezer Scrooge, or the Grinch. And maybe things will shift for you as the season goes on, and the load will feel lighter (it did for Scrooge and the Grinch!). And maybe things won't shift very much, and the feelings will get heavier and you will need to ask for help carrying the load. And that's okay too! There are people out here to help each other, our friends, family, and of course your people at the Clinic; we are what will help us through this tricky time.

None of us can predict what the winter will bring in terms of COVID, though it appears we are in for a long few months with close contacts, testing and the virus as a part of our lives. To that end, let's all err on the side of caution and keep each other healthy by staying home if we have symptoms or have been in contact with anyone sick. I feel fortunate that we are all so adept at telehealth now, and can shift to meeting virtually when it's in our best interest. Though we have no plans in this moment to transition fully virtual for therapy, that remains a possibility should it become necessary to keep everyone safe. We will communicate as openly as possible around this possibility. Please keep in regular communication with your providers to help us keep everyone safe and healthy.

I hope you enjoy this copy of our newsletter. We've added a "Coping Skills Corner" which will be a regular feature where we share a helpful coping skill with you each issue. This issue we're giving you two to try! Because we could all use more tools in our tool belt, especially now.

With kindness and gratitude,
Amanda Jenkins Harrison, LMHC
Director, The Children's Clinic



5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise

This skill will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. It can help to alleviate anxiety or stress to get your body regulated so your brain can settle. This calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep belly breath to begin.

5 - LOOK: Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.

3 - LISTEN: Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

2 - SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favorite smells.

1 - TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste.

Take another deep belly breath to end.

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Regulate with Peripheral Vision

MRI and EEG scans show that peripheral vision stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system leading to good feelings, mindfulness, and calm awareness.

Want to give it a try? [Here is a short video](#) if you want to do a science experiment with your family or friends. See if you can notice the difference in how you feel once your eyes are relaxed and you are using your peripheral vision.

If you want to try something simpler, try this:

1. Sit and have your eyes facing forward.
2. Use your index finger, pointing to the sky placed in front of your nose. Try to make sure it is close enough or far enough away so you can focus on it clearly.
3. Keep your eyes facing forward and move your finger (or you can use a small object) in a half circle around your face going all the way back behind your ear. Try going both directions to your left and right ear. You can also try this with a friend or family member to take turns moving an object or their index finger. Remember not to follow it by moving your eyes!
4. How far to the side can you see?
5. Notice how you feel by relaxing your eyes and taking in a whole range of vision. It's easy to do anywhere and anytime you need to!



Coming Soon: The School of Hard Talks

The Clinic and Flex teams will be offering a parenting group in early 2022 called "The School of Hard Talks," a training to teach parents of teens and young adults how to use Motivational Interviewing skills in their conversations.

This will be a 4 week, online group, provided free of charge through funding from the Department of Mental Health.

[Here is a link](#) to an online training if anyone would like a sneak peek!



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.

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- 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

STAFF PICKS

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



Podcast on Childhood Trauma – Amanda's Pick

In a refreshingly approachable conversation about a tricky subject, Gwendyth Paltrow (Actress and Goop founder) and Dr. Nadine Burke Harris (Physician, researcher, advocate and California Surgeon General) discuss the impacts that ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) can have on people throughout their lifetime. They also discuss protective factors and offer hope for healing for future generations. This podcast may be better listened to without little ears around as there are hard subjects and the occasional swear word.

Can we communicate with animals? – Kris's Pick

Check out this video with your kiddo and have an interesting, meaningful, and fun conversation:

1. Do you think it's possible to communicate with animals?
2. How do you and your pet communicate with one another?
3. What changed for Spirit after his story was told? How did the people who cared for Spirit change?
4. Do you think it's important for people to understand why an animal (or human) is feeling or behaving in a certain way?