

# TEAMWORK:

ISSUE 9 / SPRING 2022

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



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## C'MON SPRING!

The ninth 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, resources for supporting kids when the news is scary, information about upcoming groups, and a cool community project!

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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Hello Clinic and Flex Families!

It's hard to get our bearings these days, isn't it?

The world seems to be opening up, slowly, in some places. Masks are coming off, groups are starting to gather, and there is the beginning glimmer of hope in knowing spring is juuuuust around the corner.

And then in other ways much stays the same... Masks are still on in some places, social interaction is new and a bit guarded, and every cold brings anxiety and dread (and tests!).

It's hard to know what to expect when traversing from town to town, from group to group, as the rules seem to be ever shifting. Flexibility remains the name of the game.

For now things are fairly similar here at the Clinic. Masks are on, temperature and symptom checks happening on site and on Flex visits, and we err on the side of caution where people seem ill. The Clinic is licensed by DPH as a healthcare facility, and so we continue to follow their protocols until they shift to looser requirements. We will let you know when our protocols will change. As we eventually change and adjust, the changes may not align with your family's comfort level. If that is the case, please talk with your Clinician to come up with a plan that feels safe to you and your family.

We have a few opportunities in this newsletter I hope you do not miss, both meeting on Zoom:

- a new Dungeons and Dragons peer group for 12-17 year olds, facilitated by our Intern Sarah and an experienced D&D player
- "The School of Hard Talks" group I will be facilitating teaching Motivational Interviewing skills to parents of teens and young adults.

We are excited to be introducing a collaborative art project for Clinic families, organized by our Senior Clinician and Art Therapist Laura Seftel and our intern, Tianmei Zhu. "The Pet Project" will be a way to share how the love of our pets is an important part of our lives, and how our relationships with our animals are sustaining and nourishing. Bringing each individual's submission together in a collaborative project will hopefully feel connective and remind us of the importance of community and relationship. Please see your clinician with any questions or interest in "The Pet Project", we hope you will take part and can't wait to see the final project!

My thoughts are also on the larger world, and in that vein we are sharing three resources on how to talk to children about what is happening in Ukraine. Major events like this tend to be challenging to discuss with children, especially those who have had hard events in their own lives. I hope the articles, podcast, and read aloud video offer some gems of wisdom and some grounding for the tough conversations.

However your family is handling the shifts and the competing needs the world seems to offer right now, I hope that you are all able to make choices that are mindful and in line with your family's values. As things swirl around, I hope you have moments of feeling settled and balanced. For me that will be tasting delicious local maple syrup, and a pile of shoes muddy from a spring hike. What's more grounding than mud and syrup?

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





# Talking with kids when the news is scary

Leslie S. Leff, LICSW, SAC Kris Johansson, M.Ed

Even as we have begun to see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, Russia recently invaded Ukraine, compounding other challenging issues. That is a lot for us to digest as adults and it can be even harder to know what to tell our kids. As of this writing, developments are ever changing and there is so much uncertainty. Given this, we wanted to share with you these helpful resources about how to talk with children in light of the events in Europe.

Click the links to check out the resources:

- ["How to Support the Kids We Love When the News Gets Really Scary"](#)
- ["War, Crisis, Tragedy: How to talk with kids when the news is scary"](#)
- ["How to Talk to Kids About the Ukraine Invasion"](#)
- ["The Breaking News Storytime Read Aloud"](#)





## Coming Soon: The Pet Project



Over the past few years we have gotten to meet many of your pets on Zoom.

Be on the lookout for our clinic-wide "Pet Project" inviting families to share how you and your animal companions take care of each other.

Over the next few weeks your therapist will offer you and your child a chance to add your own drawings, photos, and stories!





# NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GROUP

Join us for a new recreational group this spring! Our peer-led and clinician-supported D&D group will provide a weekly space for socializing and fun. Open to ages 12-17. No supplies are needed, and beginners are welcome!

**6:00-7:00 pm via Zoom each Wednesday**  
**Beginning March 16, 2022**

**To join, contact Sarah Mikesell:**  
**(413) 587- 3265 ext. 414**  
**[smikesell@cutchins.org](mailto:smikesell@cutchins.org)**



## THE SCHOOL OF HARD TALKS

Drawn from principles and practices of Motivational Interviewing, this four-week psycho-educational group for parents of teens and young adults, teaches basic communication skills such as reflective listening, asking open-ended questions and resisting the impulse to “fix-it.” By entering conversations with a mindset of curiosity and empathy, parents may be better equipped to avoid power struggles by helping their teen feel more understood, confident, and in-control.

Group will meet 4 Tuesdays on Zoom:  
5:00-7:00

March 22, 29. April 5, 12

All sessions should be attended

Email [Aharrison@cutchins.org](mailto:Aharrison@cutchins.org) with interest





# SENSORY-FRIENDLY GAME

## SPRINGFIELD THUNDERBIRDS

**Sunday,  
April 3rd  
2:05pm**

**VS.**



*Exclusive \$14  
defense zone  
ticket for all  
students, family,  
friends, and the  
community!*



*Place order by 4/2 to  
receive discounted  
ticket rate.*

*Optional \$3 Food  
Voucher includes  
Hotdog, soda,  
popcorn!*

This offer is NOT available at the MassMutual Center Box office

To order your special group rate ticket, scan the QR Code or visit the link below:

<https://springfieldthunderbirds.formstack.com/forms/sensoryfriendly0403>

**T-birds Rep Lauren Blanchard  
(413) 417-2289**

[lblanchard@springfieldthunderbirds.com](mailto:lblanchard@springfieldthunderbirds.com)

Come out for a fun day at the Springfield Thunderbirds for our Sensory Friendly Game!

Sensory Friendly Night includes decreased microphone/music volume, no strobing lights, consistent lighting throughout game, cool-down stations and no goal horn/noise meters.

Optional \$3 food voucher includes hotdog, soda, and popcorn!





## STAFF PICKS

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

### Big Bright Feelings Books - Leslie's Pick

I strongly recommend the picture book series, "Big Bright Feelings," by Tom Percival. These books which are appropriate for children from preschool through middle elementary school, help kids with a wide range of emotions and experiences. They contain colorful, whimsical illustrations and are written in language and images that are accessible and fun for kids. I am particularly fond of *Ruby Finds a Worry* in which the main character learns that "worries" can get bigger if you keep them to yourself, but get smaller and even go away when you share them with someone who understand. The series also includes, *Ravi's Roar* (about managing expression of angry feelings); *Perfectly Norman* ("an empowering picture book about embracing and celebrating what makes you unique"); *Tilda Tries Again* (about persevering when things are hard); and *Meesha Makes Friends* (about learning how to make friends).

### Ordinary Terrible Things Books - Binda's Pick

Anastasia Higginbotham has a way of addressing real life issues that children sometimes have to navigate that are both frank and respectful of kid's natural curiosity. The collage and drawing combination adds an interesting and at times humorous tone to topics that while ordinary, can also be terrible. Check out [this animated read-aloud](#) of one of the books in the series, *Not My Idea*.

### Easy Spring Crafts for Kids - Holly's Pick

Check out these fun and interactive activities to do with your kids!