

TEAMWORK:

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Director

Coping Corner

Symposium Reflections

Pronouns Resource

Pet Project Spotlight

Parent Support

We want YOU!

Staff Picks

LEAP INTO SUMMER!

The tenth 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, and for information about the goings on at Cutchins and in our local community! This issue is jam-packed!

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.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hello Clinic and Flex Families,

Summer officially starts 5 days from the time I am writing this, chances are by the time you are reading this, it will have begun! Happy Summer!

We know many families go on vacations and trips over the summer and we value that connective and (hopefully!) relaxing time. We also want to make sure there is continuity of services and continued connection between clients and your providers, so when possible we encourage keeping up with regular appointments. Zoom has opened up new possibilities for maintaining connection, a benefit of the pandemic. Talk to your providers about your summer plans, and see what can happen. Sessions over state lines can be a bit tricky with licensing and insurance, so better to plan in advance.

This Summer newsletter holds so many great things:

- A piece on pronouns and how to handle when you make a mistake (Happy Pride Month!)
- We also have our first Pet Project spotlight, thanks to all who have participated, what cuties!
- A synopsis of our Annual Cutchins Trauma and Attachment Symposium
- A reminder of our drop in parent support group with our Flex Parent Partner Connie
- An opportunity to participate in a study at Smith College shared by our intern Tianmei
- And of course, the coping corner and staff picks!

As we transition from the school year to Summer, some bumps in the road can be anticipated. Schedules will shift, caregivers will need to accommodate camps and other new routines and many kiddos will need to flex as well. It's not the easiest transition, but we seem to do it every year!

Summer is a lovely time in so many ways (fire flies, beach trips, and ice cream trucks to name a few of my favorites) and I hope amongst all the change and transition your families are able to find your very own lovely parts of summer.

With Kindness,
Amanda Jenkins Harrison, LMHC
Senior Director of Community Programming
Cutchins Programs for Children and Families



POSITIVE SELF-TALK & COPING THOUGHTS

Positive statements encourage us and help us cope through distressing times. We can say these encouraging words to ourselves and be our own personal coach. We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties. Find some examples of coping thoughts on the next page!

Try writing down a coping thought or positive statement for a difficult or distressing situation—something you can tell yourself that will help you get through. Write it down on a piece of paper or an index card and carry it in your pocket or handbag to help remind you.

1. STOP AND BREATHE; I CAN DO THIS.
2. THIS, TOO, WILL PASS.
3. I CAN BE ANXIOUS/ANGRY/SAD AND STILL DEAL WITH THIS.
4. I HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE, AND I CAN DO IT AGAIN.
5. THIS FEELS BAD; HOWEVER, IT'S A NORMAL BODY REACTION. IT WILL PASS.
6. THESE ARE JUST FEELINGS; THEY WILL GO AWAY.
7. THIS WON'T LAST FOREVER.
8. I CAN FEEL BAD AND STILL CHOOSE TO TAKE A NEW AND HEALTHY DIRECTION.
9. I DON'T NEED TO RUSH; I CAN TAKE THINGS SLOWLY.
10. I HAVE SURVIVED BEFORE, SO I WILL SURVIVE NOW.
11. I FEEL THIS WAY BECAUSE OF MY PAST EXPERIENCES, BUT I AM SAFE RIGHT NOW.
12. IT'S OKAY TO FEEL THIS WAY; IT'S A NORMAL REACTION.
13. RIGHT NOW, I AM NOT IN DANGER. RIGHT NOW, I'M SAFE.
14. THOUGHTS ARE JUST THOUGHTS—THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY TRUE OR FACTUAL.
15. THIS IS DIFFICULT AND UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY.
16. I CAN USE MY COPING SKILLS AND GET THROUGH THIS.
17. I CAN LEARN FROM THIS AND IT WILL BE EASIER NEXT TIME.

*Adapted from Baldwin County Public
Schools Coping Skills Toolkit*

Reflections on the Cutchins 4th Annual Trauma and Attachment Symposium

Ashley Boudle, COTA/L

On May 20th Cutchins held its 4th Annual Trauma and Attachment Symposium virtually. The topic this year was sensory integration, processing, praxis, developmental trauma, and its impact on attachment and participation in meaningful activities of daily living. Cutchins was proud to host our presenter and expert on this topic, Teresa May-Benson Sc.D, OTR/L, FAOTA. Teresa is the founder and CEO of TMB Education LLC as well as president and practicing occupational therapist at OTR Inc. in Pennsylvania. She is active in conducting research and mentoring clinicians related to sensory integration, praxis, and social competency. Some important educational takeaways from this presentation included:

- Trauma and attachment concerns are intertwined and related to sensory integration, sensory processing, and praxis challenges.
 - Sensory integration and processing challenges simply put can be difficult with the intake, organization, modulation and perceiving of sensory information from the body or the environment which could include sound, smells, touch, light just to name a few.
 - Praxis challenges can include difficulty with planning, organizing and carrying out bodily movement.
 - Many of these challenges are often mistaken as a behavioral problem when really they are a neurological response to stimulation – and some individuals have difficulty with too much, or too little stimulation. Trauma and attachment concerns can disrupt how the brain develops and this can affect parts of the brain that manage sensory integration, processing and praxis. The more we know about these difficulties the more we can facilitate development or at the very least make accommodations for these individuals to increase their ability to function and participate in daily activities.
- There are key intervention considerations and strategies that can be utilized when working with individuals with trauma, sensory integration, processing, and praxis challenges.
 - Just a few examples from the presentation: Just right challenge, mother space, kid power, brain power, safe place method, incorporating appropriate sensory, gravitational, and proprioceptive experiences based on OT evaluation and other mental health provider assessments, and using rhythmic activities like rocking on a swing, or drumming for example.

Teresa informed participants of various strategies and treatment interventions to better serve our unique clients that might be experiencing sensory integration, processing, praxis, developmental trauma and attachment challenges and how to spot and assess these challenges with several assessments listed in her presentation based on provider background. She provided evidence on how occupational therapy practitioners can benefit these individuals and that a collaborative model of care between OT, other mental health providers, family, parental, and peer supports can be most beneficial for most individuals. For more information about Teresa and her research on this topic, assessments and interventions please visit [this link](#).

WHAT TO DO **WHEN** YOU GET SOMEONE'S PRONOUNS WRONG

Correct yourself briefly and move on

"Did Lily tell you what time she, I mean, they would have that report done?"

Say "thank you" when someone corrects you

"Yeah, he really-"

"they"

"Thank you, they really..."

Interrupt people with quick corrections (yes, every time)

"Him."

"Can I help her with-"

"Thank you."

Try practicing new pronouns with a friend!

"I really want to get Syd's new pronouns right."

"Totally! I want her, I mean them to feel welcome."

Don't complain about how hard it is!

"Thank you for correcting me. I'm still learning and I appreciate it."

"She."

Last: don't apologize profusely It's not their job to make you feel better about misgendering them

Pet Project Spotlight: Jack

By: D.P.



I was 5 years old when I met my dog, Jack. He is black and white and looks like a cow. He likes to tackle me sometimes. During story time, Jack likes to lay down and listen. Jack is happy when we ask him if he wants to go for a walk and then he comes running! We can also tell that he is happy because his ears crink forward. When Jack is mad, Jack barks. If Jack's barks were words, they would say, "knock it off!" When there is a thunderstorm, Jack feels afraid and comes close to us or hides under the table. I come near him to help him feel safe. His favorite treat is cheese and his favorite vegetables are carrots and green beans. He loves them! He carries his carrots or his green beans to another room to hide them so no one can steal them. Sometimes I feel sad when I leave Jack. It helps knowing that someone is taking good care of him.

parent support group

I would be honored if you would join me in a snack and chat lunch by Zoom, the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 12:00. Come when you can!

This will consist of me, you and other parents having lunch, chit chatting and laughing. It will be a very relaxed atmosphere and a great way to forget about the stressors of work and life for a moment.

So, fix your favorite lunch, or snack and let's chat 😊

Hosted By Connie Evans,
Parent Partner with the Flex teams.
Email Cevans@cutchins.org for more info!

WE WANT YOU!

Do you SHARE PARENTING with another adult for a child under 18?



QUESTIONS

Contact
mpruett@smith.edu



WON'T TAKE LONG

The survey should
take about 20
minutes to complete.



\$100 AMAZON GIFT CARD

Enter to win at the
end of the survey!



RESEARCH

This study has been
approved by the
Smith College IRB.

OUR RESEARCH AIMS TO
IMPROVE **FAMILY COURT
SERVICES AND PARENTING
INTERVENTIONS.**

***Thank you for helping us understand what
makes co-parenting more successful!***

No matter how it looks in your life, we want to hear from YOU to better understand shared parenting across diverse relationship types (married, unmarried, divorced, etc.), economic status, sociocultural backgrounds, gender identities, and sexual orientations.



SMITH COLLEGE
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COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS SURVEY:
<https://bit.ly/copafs27>





STAFF PICKS

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

Multigenerational Trauma Article - Clover's Pick

Neuroscience is beginning to understand how trauma is inherited in subsequent generations. A fascinating look at how and why some children will present with increased signs of stress and fear without any known traumas to themselves.

Ungame - Leslie's Pick

Trying to find ways to get your kids to open up more over dinner or to engage in conversation during long car rides? This card "game" offers a multitude of open-ended questions that can serve as conversation starters and give both caregivers and children a chance to know each other better. Great for all kids, but could be especially helpful for people with some social anxiety or who need to strengthen social skills. My experience is that this game promotes connection and has led to enjoyable conversations.