



PROJECTSUN

Helping children flourish

Recognizing the Needs of **Siblings** Living With a Child Who Has Behavioral Health Concerns



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Home is a place to feel safe and loved. A place where we can let our hair down and be ourselves. At least that is the goal. When a member of the family has a mental health diagnosis that causes them to display acting out behaviors, family life presents challenges to its members.

Having a brother or sister with a mental health diagnosis that includes behavioral acting out components, affects siblings in many ways. This may include difficulties in...

- navigating their relationship with the affected sibling, their parents, and other siblings,
- knowing how to navigate the sibling's behaviors,
- missing the attention of parents, and
- finding ways to explain the sibling's behaviors to friends.

All of this can be overwhelming for children living with a sibling with behavioral health concerns.

Parents want to provide a safe and loving environment for their children. They spend their days and nights making sure that their children have what they need. When one or more children within a family present with behavioral challenges, it requires more energy and resources to provide for their needs. This can leave less time and energy for their other children. Thankfully, there are ways to provide the support needed for these children also.

During the July Parent Café presentation, "Recognizing the Needs of Siblings Living With a Child Who Has Behavioral Health Concerns," we will explore the emotional needs of the siblings of a child with behavioral challenges and how to support them. This event will be held via webinar on **July 16 from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**. This timeframe departs from the timeframe for previous Parent Cafés. For registration information, visit the Project SUN Facebook page or [CLICK HERE](#).

Addressing Systemic Racism – Pursuing Racial Justice

The impact of racism on the mental health of children and adolescents of color has been well documented. For example, according to The Lancet Child Adolescent Health Journal (07.03.2020), the attempted suicide rate among Black high school students is 9.8% versus 6.1% for White students, making it nearly 40% higher.

However, addressing disparities like this are difficult because they force us to examine why these differences exist and the role systemic racism plays. Project SUN will be initiating conversations to dismantle systemic racism by providing the space for White people and people of color to come together to discuss and see what has been invisible to some of us.

We will be hosting two virtual gatherings: **one for the community at large on July 28** ([CLICK HERE to register](#)) and **one for young adults (ages 16-21) on August 5** (More details coming soon - see the Project SUN Facebook page). Both sessions will take place from 5:30-7:30 PM. We will examine the origins of systemic racism, reflect on how each of us learned about our race, what are some of the benefits and barriers we have experienced based on our race, and how to get involved in making changes to help our country to heal.

Word of the Month

Racial Justice

The **systematic fair treatment of people of all races**, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

raceforward.org, 2015 - "Race Reporting Guide"



Helpful Resources

We challenge you to read at least one of these resources!

Visit projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com/ to comment and share your thoughts or questions. Pass along what you find helpful to a friend or family member!

FRIENDLY READ - Less Than 5 Minutes

- [Getting Children and Teens Outside While Social Distancing](#) - Free, fun outdoor activities for parents and children.
- [How racism in the US health system hinders care and costs lives of African Americans](#) - Three recommendations to reduce racial disparities in health care services.
- [Five Ways to Encourage and Celebrate Diversity with Early Learners](#) - Helping young children to embrace different perspectives and diverse cultures, reducing bias, and fostering empathy.

REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes

- [Siblings Under Stress](#) - Supporting the siblings of a child whose emotional or behavioral issues can be consuming.
- [Implications for Telehealth in a Postpandemic Future: Regulatory and Privacy Issues](#) - Opportunities and challenges that health care systems can now explore due to the expanded role of telehealth during COVID-19.

ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes

- [Effects of Social Deprivation on Adolescent Development and Mental Health](#) - How physical distancing might have a disproportionate effect on an age group for whom peer interaction is a vital aspect of development.
- [The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health](#) - Acknowledging the role of racism in child and adolescent health can help optimize clinical care, workforce development, research, and more.

Following Up With "Exploring the Autism Spectrum"

Dr. Raunak Khisty, Pediatric Psychiatrist at Riverside Medical Center, was the guest speaker at June's Parent Café and answered the following questions during his presentation on, "Exploring The Autism Spectrum."

How is autism typically diagnosed?

Autism tests are typically completed during a child's routine pediatric checkups when they are between 16-30 months. During this checkup, the provider will typically use the **M-CHAT** (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers) screening tool. If this test comes back showing a high risk for autism, consult with your pediatrician to see if you can get your child **ADOS** (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) tested as well. ADOS testing can be done on children all the way to adults and is the gold standard when it comes to autism testing options.

Riverside's Outpatient Behavioral Health services include **GARS** (Gilliam Autism Rating) testing for autism, but it is only available for older adolescents at this time.

Want to know the level of risk your toddler between 16 and 30 months of age may be at? Try this [free online M-CHAT](#) screening tool, provided by Autism Speaks.

What is the role of gluten in autism? Can dietary changes enable a non-verbal child with autism to speak?

Dietary changes alone will not make your child start talking. However, gastrointestinal symptoms are huge for children with autism. If your child has food sensitivities consider seeking out a gastroenterological consultation. Removing gluten from their diet may be helpful for some things, but won't initiate speech.

Is there a cure for autism?

Currently, there is no cure for autism. However, a few interventions have been developed to help patients who have autism. One of the main treatment options used is Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA).

While no medication treats the core symptoms of autism, the FDA has approved the use of medications like Risperidone and Aripiprazole to target certain behaviors of autism, such as severe aggression and mood instability.

How can I motivate my child with autism to adopt healthy life skills? (Examples range from potty training to showering.)

All children have their own currency. Screen time is a good example of this, whether it be television time for young children or phone time for teenagers. Identify what they value!

Be very specific about identifying your expectations. Children on the autism spectrum are very concrete in their thinking, so you need to spell out clearly what you would like for them to do. If you don't do this you are setting your child, and yourself, up for failure.

Looking for Autism Resources?

[CLICK HERE](#) for a list of local autism services including screening and diagnostic options, counselors, and other specialized services and activities.

August Parent Café

Project SUN's next Parent Café will be held **Thursday, August 20, from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**. This timeframe departs from the timeframe for past Parent Cafés. Presenter Dr. Mark Jordan, Senior Psychologist at Indian Oaks Academy, will lead participants in, "**Self Care Tips for Parents and Caregivers.**"

[CLICK HERE](#) to register by August 19.