

PROJECTSUN

Helping children flourish



Grief & Loss During the Holidays

The holidays engender strong feelings. The stress of preparation for the holidays themselves, and seeing, or not seeing, loved ones can stir up - often complicated - feelings around various types of loss. This can leave a joyous time of year feeling laden with conflicted emotions. Honoring these feelings and giving yourself time to process them is essential to navigating the holiday season.



Guest Speakers:

Anne King

Field Advocate, American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention

Donna Balazs, MA, LCPC

Bereavement Coordinator,
Uplifted Care

Moshe Brownstein, LCSW

Counselor, Collective Balance
Counseling LLC

December's Parent Cafe will provide participants with...

- A personal testimonial from a parent's experiences in dealing with loss.
- An introduction to the five stages of grief and some of the thoughts and emotions people may experience at each of the stages.
- Grief education utilizing Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's Stages of Grief model.
- Coping strategies that may be useful at the various stages of an individual's grief journey.
- Strategies for coping with loss during holidays and other special occasions will be discussed, as will some simple ways to honor the memory of a lost loved one during the holiday season.

December's Parent Café, "Managing Grief and Loss During the Holiday Season" will be held via webinar on Thursday, December 17, from 5:30 - 7:00 PM. This presentation will address grief following the death of a loved one as well as other forms of loss such as divorce, relationship breakups, and separation or isolation. To register, visit the Project SUN Facebook page or [CLICK HERE](#).

Young adults ages 16-21 are encouraged to join us for an interactive online event - **"Let's Talk: Breaking the Silence on Managing Grief and Loss During the Holidays"** - Thursday, December 10, from 6:30 - 8:00 PM. Participants who meet participation requirements will earn a \$25 gift certificate. [CLICK HERE](#) to share the registration link.

Grief & Loss Resources For...

- **Everyone:**
 - [5 Ways to Plan for the Holidays After a Loss](#)
 - [Coping With Grief & Loss During the Holidays](#)
- **Children:** [A Sesame Street Guide to Helping Kids Grieve](#) - Find books, activities, and videos to help your young child talk about their grief.
- **Youth & Young Adults:** [Coping With the Loss of a Loved One](#)
- **Parents & Caregivers:**
 - [After a Loved One Dies](#) - Explore how to talk with your child after a loss.
 - [A Children's Guide to Grief, Loss & Healing](#) - Read a breakdown of how to address grief for each developmental stage of your child's life.

Thank you!

As the new year approaches, we wanted to thank you for your support during Project SUN's first implementation year. This year has not been what any of us could have expected, but we still accomplished a whole lot. We are busy preparing our first Annual Report, which will bring highlights your way in early January. Our work in making a System of Care in Kankakee County a reality will continue to require many hands to make light the work.

In addition to reading our newsletters, we encourage you to volunteer to help with our activities in 2021 and to make your voice heard. You can always call or email us with any ideas, questions, or concerns - we love hearing from you!

Term of the Month:

Grief

Anguish experienced after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person. Grief can include:

- physiological distress,
- separation anxiety
- confusion
- yearning
- obsessive dwelling on the past, and
- apprehension about the future.

Grief may also take the form of regret for something lost or remorse for something done.

Source: [dictionary.apa.org](https://www.dictionary.apa.org)



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

- [Keep the Holidays Happy During COVID-19](#) - How to approach the new stress that COVID-19 brings to the holidays.

REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes

- [Stress, Depression, and the Holidays: Tips For Coping](#) - Stress and depression can dampen your holidays and hurt your overall health, but being realistic, planning ahead, and seeking support can help you cope.

ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes

- [Structural Racism is Taking a Toll on Children's Mental Health](#) - Racism and social inequality don't just affect adults. This article explores racism's profound impact on the mental health of children of color.

Key Takeaways From "Supporting Our LGBTQIA+ Children"

November's Parent Café presenters, Jennifer Corke-Kafer, Arwa Sons, and Rev. Barbara Lohrbach provided much helpful information, including responses to these two participant questions, and these handouts: [Local & National LGBTQIA+ Resources](#), important [Mental Health Facts](#), [LGBTQIA+ Definitions](#), and [book recommendations](#) and religious resources provided by Rev. Lohrbach.

As a parent, should I consider finding a counselor for my child who identifies as being LGBTQIA+?

Therapy is very important for youth and children who have identified as being LGBTQIA+, as well as for you as a parent. Being LGBTQIA+ can come with many social pressures, such as stigma, social isolation, peer rejection, harassment, verbal abuse, and more. Additionally, going to counseling as a parent can help you better support your child in their journey.

It's important to have steady LGBTQIA+ affirming mental health supports. Try to find a counselor who has experience working with LGBTQIA+ youth. If you visit a counselor who does not feel like a good fit, feel free to try others until you find one who works well with you and your child. (Find a list of local counseling options starting on page 3 of the [LGBTQIA+ Resources](#) handout.)

As a teacher, what can I do to better support my LGBTQIA+ students?

To start, identifying yourself along with your pronouns is one way to signal to students that you would be open to talking with them about their questions. This shows that you are a supportive or safe person to talk to. Put up a "safe place" sign or a pride flag in your classroom, or Google Classroom, and in your email signature.

Educate yourself so that you have resources on-hand to connect your students with if they do have questions. If the student you are working with approves, connect with their parents so that they also can access these resources.

Finally, you must be willing to speak up when needed. If you hear derogatory language in your classroom do not let it slide.

New Parent Cafe Topics in 2021

Our team is currently planning Project SUN's 2021 Parent Cafés. Help us determine topics and presenters for future Cafés!

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit your ideas or email projectsun@cfkrv.org.

Workforce Development Workshops

Project SUN is seeking to develop supports for the local mental health workforce starting in 2021. Additional team members for our Workforce Development workgroup are needed to help us identify potential training opportunities. To join the team, contact us at projectsun@cfkrv.org.

Racial Justice Film Screening Series Schedule for 2021 Coming Soon

Your help is needed! Throughout 2021, Project SUN will be hosting screenings and discussions of race-themed films to address systemic racism. To assist Project SUN in planning this year-long series or offer a film suggestion, please contact projectsun@cfkrv.org.

Help us build a Strong & Unified Network in Kankakee County!

2021 SYSTEM OF CARE COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR TRAININGS DATES

Attendees will learn to use the online Kan-I Help database, and scenarios when they might choose to make a referral to Project SUN. Open to all who are interested, this training is a tool designed to benefit your work, or simply enhance your personal knowledge. ([Click a date to register](#))

[January 23](#)
[February 24](#)
[March 26](#)
[April 24](#)
[May 12](#)
[June 25](#)
[July 31](#)
[August 25](#)
[September 24](#)
[October 20](#)
[November 19](#)

Saturday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Wednesday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Friday - 1:30 - 4:00 PM
 Saturday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Wednesday - 1:30 - 4:00 PM
 Friday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Saturday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Wednesday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Friday - 1:30 - 4:00 PM
 Wednesday - 1:30 - 4:00 PM
 Friday - 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Any questions? Contact projectsun@cfkrv.org

