

PROJECT SUN

Helping children flourish

Anxiety: Symptoms and Treatment Options for Early Childhood Through Adolescence

Guest Speaker:

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Term of the Month:

Anxiety

Anxiety is the fearful anticipation of further danger or problems accompanied by an intense unpleasant feeling or physical symptoms, such as frequent stomachaches or persistent trouble sleeping. Anxiety in children may present as: Generalized Anxiety Disorders, Separation Anxiety Disorders, Panic Disorders, or Phobias.

Source: aacap.org

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common psychiatric issues for children and adolescents, **affecting over 25% of children between the ages of 13 and 18 years old** (adaa.org). Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the number of patients presenting to the ER and psychiatric departments with anxiety disorders. There has also been a significant increase in the number of stressors that a child may experience every day. These can include the daily pressures of school, social media, peer groups, expectations from parents, and career goals. Early identification and intervention for anxiety disorders has proven to help limit the impact on social and academic functioning.

The focus of October's Parent Café is to help parents and caregivers...

- Identify early signs and symptoms at various ages
- Understand genetic and environmental factors
- Support a child with anxiety
- Select treatment options, including alternatives to medication therapy

October's Parent Café, "**Anxiety: Symptoms and Treatment Options for Early Childhood Through Adolescence**," will be held via webinar on October 15, 5:30-7:00 PM. For registration information, visit the Project SUN Facebook page or [CLICK HERE](#).

Resources for Parents of an Anxious Child:

- [Anxiety in Teens is Rising: What's Going On?](#) - Nearly 1 in 3 adolescents ages 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder and those numbers have been rising steadily. Explore the factors that may be contributing to this issue.
- [When to Worry About an Anxious Child](#) - Distinguish a child's everyday stresses from a potential anxiety disorder.
- [The Anxious Child](#) - This booklet was designed for parents and caregivers, and explores anxiety throughout a child's developmental stages, reasons why anxiety may take root, and what to do when searching for next steps.

October: Slavery & The Making of America

Project SUN and the YWCA Kankakee continue to host screenings and discussions of the PBS series, "Slavery and The Making of America."

[Click a date/time to register on Eventbrite.](#)

- **Episode 3 - Online, Oct 19 (5:30-7:00) | In-Person, Oct 22 (5:00-6:30)**
 - *As western expansion rises, the abolitionist movement takes root in the North, sowing seeds for the nation's growing divide.*
- **Episode 4 - Online, Oct 26 (5:30-7:00) | In-Person, Oct 28 (5:00-6:30)**
 - *The Civil War, Reconstruction, and 13th amendment make historic strides, though slavery's eradication does not end black oppression.*

November: I Am Not Your Negro

"I Am Not Your Negro" explores racism in America, sharing the stories of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr, and other civil rights leaders. Stay tuned to the Project SUN Facebook page for registration information.

Racial Justice Film Screenings & Discussions

For the next year, Project SUN will be hosting monthly screenings and discussions of race-themed films to address systemic racism. The objective of these screenings is to create educational opportunities and encourage productive conversations about personal and societal changes that can be made. By confronting these injustices we can better understand their toll on the mental health and well-being of children of color.

If you would like to help plan the year-long series or offer a film suggestion, please contact projectsun@cfkrv.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

- [Three Ways to Change Your Parenting in the Teenage Years](#) - As neuroscience shows, the part of teenagers' brains that helps them make wise decisions won't reach maturity until their mid-20s. So what can you do until then?
- [Helping Children to Identify and Express Their Feelings](#) - Learning to identify and express feelings in a positive way helps kids develop the skills they need to manage them effectively.

REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes

- [Managing Social Media Stress With Mindfulness](#) - It can be difficult, particularly for teens, to maintain connections with friends online while preserving healthy self-esteem and self-awareness.

ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes

- [Trends in Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) in the US](#) - Review trend data on ACEs from the 20th century onward, which shows an unsettling growth of parental alcohol and drug abuse rates in recent years.
- [The Role of Sleep in Childhood Psychiatric Disorders](#) - The relationships between sleep, emotions, and behaviors during early development are striking, but their complexity leaves much to still be explored.

Key Takeaways From "Having Tough Conversations with Your Child About Relationships"

September's Parent Café presentation by Morgan DePatis, Harbor House, and Susa Soda, KC-CASA, was followed by a lively Q&A discussion. Here are answers to two key questions that were raised. Additionally, KC-CASA made available a [book recommendation list](#) and [parent guide](#) for talking to children about sexual abuse. Harbor House also shared their [parent guide](#) that offers tips when approaching the difficult topic of teen dating violence. If you, your child, or someone you know wishes to seek help, contact Harbor House's 24-Hour Hotline at [815-932-5800](tel:815-932-5800) or KC-CASA's 24-Hour Hotline at [815-932-3322](tel:815-932-3322).

How do I have conversations about consent with my child?

When we hear the word consent, many of us automatically think of sex, but we consent to things every day and probably do not even think about it. Introduce this word early on with simple examples, such as, "Can I pet your dog?" Children need to learn to respect answers without pushing others to change their mind.

Sadly, you can find many examples of characters who do not seek consent in movies and television. Statements like, "She doesn't want to go out with me, but I'm going to keep trying until she does!" show a clear disrespect for consent. Use those moments to point out what characters should have done. You may also hear bad examples in stories your child shares from their friends. Use these times as teaching moments. Sit down and have conversations about consent as often as possible.

How do I know if my child is in a bad relationship?

Perhaps you and your child had a great relationship before. Now they are withdrawn, wearing baggy clothes, and showing signs of depression, such as wanting to stay in bed all day, or not showing interest in the things they used to enjoy. Are they saying "sorry" a lot more than normal? All of these things can be indicators that they may be in an abusive relationship.

For many young adolescents, this may be their first relationship, so be sure to talk early on about what a healthy relationship versus an unhealthy relationship looks like. Emphasize that abuse is not normal and that they deserve to be treated with respect.

Your child needs to know that abuse is NOT their fault. While it may be hard, try not to overwhelm them with things they "should" do. First and foremost, they need to know that you love them.

November's Parent Café

"Supporting Our LGBTQIA+ Children"



Project SUN's November Parent Café will take place online via GoToWebinar, **Thursday, November 19, from 5:30 - 7:00 PM**, as we explore how to talk about gender and sexual identity with children, as well as how to support a child who identifies as being LGBTQIA+. Our presenters will be:

- Matthew Hedding-Hess, KC-CASA Counselor and Outside The Lines LGBTQ Youth Group facilitator
- Rev. Barbara Lohrbach, pastor at St. John United Church of Christ and Kankakee PFLAG chapter facilitator
- Jennifer Corke-Kafer, Parent & Advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth

[CLICK HERE](#) to register by November 18.

Let's Talk: Breaking the Silence on Challenges Faced by LGBTQIA+ Youth

Project SUN is continuing our "Let's Talk: Breaking the Silence" series for [young adults ages 16-21](#) on **Thursday, October 29, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM**. This event will center around the challenges LGBTQIA+ youth experience and how this impacts their mental health. LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies are invited to join us via Zoom for this discussion.

[CLICK HERE](#) to share the registration link.