



PROJECT SUN

Helping children flourish

Having Tough Conversations with Your Child About Relationships

Susan Soda, KC-CASA & Morgan DePatis, Harbor House

Engaging in conversations with your children about relationships may not come naturally. However, conversations about relationships with your children should start early and change as they get older in order to build self-esteem, decrease the likelihood of entering into unhealthy relationships, and empower them to make healthy relationship decisions. Children go through many changes during adolescence, so helping them figure out relationships as they grow is important. You can help your children by engaging in those tough conversations. If you feel unsure about how to have these discussions, don't worry, Harbor House and Kankakee County Center Against Sexual Assault (KC-CASA) are here to help!

Together, KC-CASA and Harbor House have developed some helpful discussion points that you can use when having a conversation with your children about relationships.

- Learn to talk to your children and teens about body safety- including public and private parts and secrets.
- Learn how to help your children and teens identify healthy, unhealthy, and abusive behavior in relationships.

But tough conversations go beyond this too. There may come a time when your children may be sexually assaulted or may experience or witness domestic violence. This presentation will address how you can support them by responding well. Resources will also be provided to help maintain ongoing conversations as your children get older.

September's Parent Café presentation, "**Having Tough Conversations with Your Child About Relationships**," will be held via webinar on **September 17 from 5:30 AM - 7:00 PM**. For registration information, visit the Project SUN Facebook page or [CLICK HERE](#).

Resources for Tough Conversations:

- [A Parent's Handbook: How to Talk to Youth about Healthy Relationships](#) - Learn how to empower your child to make informed decisions about their relationships and create an ongoing process of trust-filled communication.
- [Consent at Every Age](#) - In today's world, even small children receive a slew of messages about relationships and sex through media and their peers. Learn how to address this appropriately from preschool through high school.

Guest Speakers:



Morgan DePatis
*Prevention Specialist,
Harbor House*



Susan Soda
*Community
Engagement Specialist,
KC-CASA*

Addressing Systemic Racism – Next Steps

Based on the feedback received from our two community events, Project SUN and the YWCA Kankakee will continue to address systemic racism through ongoing opportunities to bring people together to learn about the history of how we got to where we are today and to develop avenues for pursuing racial justice. Watch for details to participate in the four-part viewing and discussion of "Slavery and the Making of America."

Participants will learn from Morgan Freeman as he narrates a chronicle of slavery from 1619 to passage of the 13th Amendment in this award-winning Public Broadcasting Service production. Also planned are monthly screenings and discussions of race themed films to help increase the understanding of racial injustice in modern American society and the toll it takes on the mental health and well-being of children of color. If you would like to suggest a film, please send the title to projectsun@cfkrv.org.

Term of the Month:

Relationship Spectrum

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy somewhere in the middle. Key elements of healthy relationships include:

- Communication;
- Respect;
- Trust;
- Enjoying personal time; and
- Making mutual sexual choices.

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, contact Harbor House at 815-932-5800 for free, confidential assistance.

thehotline.org. "Relationship Spectrum"



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

- [The Physical Effects of Stress](#) - Stress has massive impacts on the body, so it's vital to cope with it properly.

REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes

- [When Siblings Won't Stop Fighting](#) - Playing referee for your children's conflicts can be exhausting. Find helpful tips, along with specific advice for children who have a sibling with emotional or developmental challenges.
- [5 Key Elements to Trauma-Informed Care](#) - Implementing a trauma-informed framework in your organization involves a massive organizational cultural shift, requiring ongoing focus, training, and leadership commitment.

ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes

- [Considerations for Building Post-COVID Early Care and Education Systems that Serve Children with Disabilities](#) - Review the interrelationship between disabilities, race, and ethnicity, and how these impact us amid COVID-19.

Proudly Wearing Purple for Overdose Awareness



On Monday, September 1, the Project SUN team wore purple in honor of International Overdose Awareness Day. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (2006) lists both stress and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) as influences associated with heightened use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, making self-medication a profound mental health issue.

Kankakee County has been deeply impacted by the effects of substance abuse and misuse. The Kankakee County Coroner's Office stated that in 2020 there have already been 36 overdose deaths in our community. To find local substance abuse information and resources, [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the Kankakee County Opioid Task Force website.

Key Takeaway From "Self-Care Tips for Parents and Caregivers"

August's Parent Café presenter, Dr. Mark Jordan, is a Senior Psychologist at Indian Oaks Academy. Dr. Jordan provided this helpful response to a participant's self-care question.

How often do I need to set aside time for self-care? Just when big things are going on in my life? Or every day?

Self-care needs to happen daily and as often as possible. It's key to remember that self-care doesn't always have to be a big thing, such as going on a beach vacation. Picture self-care being to mental health what insulin is to a diabetic; you have to take time out of your day to do it, but it keeps you well in the long run.

Stress takes a toll on us whether we see it or not, including some dangerous health impacts. (See "[The Physical Effects of Stress.](#)") If you aren't filling up your self-care reserves in advance, you risk being bankrupted later on when an unexpected stressor comes along.

October's Parent Café

Project SUN's October Parent Café will return to its previous evening timeframe on **Thursday, October 15, from 5:30 - 7:00 PM.** Dr. Khalid Arshad, a Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Specialist for Riverside Medical Center, will present,

"Anxiety: Symptoms and Treatment Options for Early Childhood Through Adolescence."

[CLICK HERE](#) to register by October 14.



Become a Community Navigator!

Will you help us build a Strong and Unified Network in Kankakee County? Project SUN's System of Care Community Navigator training program is now open to all who are interested in this training; a tool designed to benefit your work, or simply enhance your personal understanding.

This training is designed to equip you with:

- An overview of Project SUN and how to assist families in identifying community resources/options to meet their needs.
- Tips on how to most effectively use the online Kan-I Help resource database, particularly with regard to children's behavioral health services.
- Scenarios when organizations might choose to make a referral to Project SUN and when Project SUN might contact them on behalf of a family.

The System of Care Community Navigator training is a significant piece of Project SUN's work to facilitate multiple points of access to the system of care in our community. By becoming a certified Community Navigator, you will play an essential role in building a Strong and Unified Network of support for local children and families.

[CLICK HERE to register for Saturday](#) September 19, 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM.

[CLICK HERE to register for Friday](#) September 25, 1:30 - 4:00 PM.

