

# PROJECT SUN

Helping children flourish



## February Marks Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARTNERS AT HARBOR HOUSE

Teen dating violence (TDV) is when one teen in a dating relationship attempts to gain all power and control over the other teen. The abuse can include the following forms: **physical, verbal, social, digital, sexual, and stalking.**

TDV affects millions of U.S. teens each year. One in three teens is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, which far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence. Sadly, only one-third of abused teens will tell their story to someone who can help.

**Digital abuse** is a form of dating violence that has grown in prevalence. This abuse might manifest as a teen's partner forcing them to share passwords, controlling their online presence, constant communication, or having inappropriate pictures forced or shared without permission.

Unhealthy relationships can have long-term negative effects such as antisocial behaviors, use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol, depression and anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. Teens who experience dating violence may also experience problems in adult relationships such as lack of trust and being revictimized in college or later.

**Early education about safe dating practices is key to helping eradicate TDV.** Prevention practices also focus on healthy relationships, empowerment to make healthy decisions, and learning how to communicate fairly.

To learn more about TDV & how to help a teen, call Harbor House's 24-hour hotline at 815-932-5800 or visit [harborhousedv.org](http://harborhousedv.org).

*2018 Illinois Youth Survey Data collected through Kankakee County schools showed...*

**Dating violence is a serious mental health concern in Kankakee County.**

Verbal violence is experienced by local 10th and 12th graders at rates nearly **2 to 3 times** that of physical violence.

In 2018, **15%** of 10th graders and **16%** of 12th graders experienced verbal violence, which includes being put down or controlled by the person you are dating.

**10%** of 12th graders indicated that they experienced physical violence as well as **7%** of 8th and 10th graders.

### Word of the Month

**ACEs** - *Adverse Childhood Experiences*

ACEs are traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect. Aspects of the child's environment can also undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding. ACEs can have lasting, negative effects on health, well-being, and opportunity. However, these effects can be reduced when addressed early.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), 2019 - Find the "ACEs Resource Packet" under the Helpful Resources section.

## "Does My Child Need an IEP? Or a 504 Plan?"

Project SUN's Parent Café, set for February 20, will give you the chance to learn from local school and special education professionals about Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Section 504 (Disability Act) Plans. This will also be a space for you to talk with others who may have walked through your present experiences. February's guest speakers will be:

**Dr. Geneva A. Walters**  
Kankakee School District #111,  
Superintendent

**Kathleen Fuhrmann**  
Attorney at Law





# Helpful Resources

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

Visit [projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com/](http://projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com/) to comment and share your thoughts or questions. Also, pass along what you find helpful to a friend or family member!

## FRIENDLY READ - Less Than 5 Minutes

- "[Mental Health Myths and Facts](#)" - "Can you tell the difference between a mental health myth and fact?"
- "[What is Teen Dating Violence?](#)" - "Understanding what teen dating violence is, why it happens, and what it means for those involved is an important first step in prevention."

## REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes

- "[CDC's Child Developmental Milestones \(Birth- Age 5\)](#)" - "Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development." Check the milestones for your child's age range. Delays may signal a potential problem.

## ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes

- "[ACEs Resource Packet: Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) Basics](#)" - Learn the basics of ACEs, gain an introduction to the neurobiology of trauma and stress, and steps that can be taken to further trauma-informed care.

# January's Parent Café Sparks Important Questions

In response to a number of the questions asked at the January Parent Café, we wanted to share some of the wisdom discussed that evening. Due to the number of questions asked regarding ADHD and Autism, we have chosen to dedicate future Parent Cafés solely to those discussion topics.

**How long is the wait for children's mental health services?**

*Dr. Khisty* - A wait-list for child psychiatry services can be 3-4 months long. One recommended "cheat code" was to look into local PHP (Partial Hospitalization Programs) and IOP (Intensive Outpatient Programs) programs.

Project SUN seeks to assist parents and children in accessing a broad range of mental health services. If you are stuck and can not find local options, please call Project SUN at [815-304-5933](tel:815-304-5933).

**How can child development milestones be tracked, especially for those enrolled in WIC?**

*Kankakee County Health Dpt.* - All infants enrolled in WIC are assigned a Case Manager who tracks development/milestones with the family, administers ASQ (Ages & Stages) developmental screenings, and additional screenings as needed.

To learn more about developmental milestones: See the CDC resource under "Reflective Reads" (*above*) or contact Project SUN and request an age-specific (birth-high school) "*Snapshot of Your Child's Social & Emotional Well-Being*" brochure.

**Where can I find a local parent support group?**

*Theresa Mitchell* - A Parent and Family Support Group is hosted every Thursday from 5 - 6:00 PM at The Helen Wheeler Center for Community Mental Health. These meetings allow parents and their children to come together for group discussion.

To learn more, contact Helen Wheeler Center at: [815-939-3543](tel:815-939-3543).

## Meet us in the community!

### Project SUN Parent Café

**February 20 | 5 - 6:30 PM**

Choosing Between an IEP or 504 Plan With Your Child's School

Kankakee Public Library, 4th Floor Auditorium  
201 E Merchant St, Kankakee, IL 60901

Open to parents with children of all ages. Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP by February 19 at:  
**815-304-5933** OR [augustina@cfkvr.org](mailto:augustina@cfkvr.org)

### March's Café Topic

**More Than Sad - March 19 | 5 - 6:30 PM**

*Presentation by Anne King, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention* - The More Than Sad program helps educate individuals on how to recognize signs of mental illness and when to seek treatment.



### Parent Input Needed!

**CLICK HERE** to take a brief, 3 minute survey. Your results will help us select the best times, topics, and locations for future Parent Cafés.

