



Meeting Title: Kankakee County ROSC Council Meeting

Date: May 26, 2026

Location: Virtual

Facilitator: Magdalena Campos

Attendees: Ben Rudolph (ROSC Region 2 technical assist.); Rev. Eugene Edwards (Duane Dean Behavioral Health); Liz Gibson (Birth to Five Illinois); Troy Luie (City of Kankakee); Paula Ekstrom (Wilmington Coalition); Morgan Roberts (UI Ext.); Anthony Begesha (Kankakee HD); Josec Galindo (Kankakee State Attorney); Johanna Gonzalez (IDHS-DBHR); Dr. Ruby E. Powell; Paula Stampley (Kankakee County State Attorney’s Satellite Office); Barry Lee (Iroquois Mental Health Center); Nichelle Alexander (HLM); Dr. Maria Crawford (HLM); LeAnn Nanos (Kankakee Community College); Amari Parham (Iroquois Mental Health Center); Kate Drayton (CDC Foundation Overdose Response Strategy); Kim Cunningham (Kankakee Forgives); Latricia Alexander; Kirsten Anhtony (HLM); Cristyna Ramirez (ECS); Neesha Stringfellow (HLM); Tarcia Leak (HLM); Magdalena Campos (HLM); Celeste Fonseca (HLM)

Status Report on items pending from last meeting:

Who	Task	Status
HLM Recovery 180 Will County ROSC	Email April Meeting Minutes	Emailed

2:00pm - 3:00pm Welcome & Presentation by
 Kirsten Anthony & Nichelle Alexander
 Project L.I.G.H.T. (Living In Grace, Hope & Transformation)

Overview/Notes

- **Overview:** The HLM Recovery Kankakee County Council Meeting introduced new members, including Barry Lee from Iroquois Mental Health Center and Josec Galindo from the State Attorneys Community Division Office. The meeting highlighted the retirement of Jan Dombrowski, the Executive Director of the

Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization, and her significant contributions to the community. The presentation "Project L.I.G.H.T." focused on mental health, substance use, and vaping among youth, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues through education, prevention, destigmatization, connection, and transformation. The session also included a discussion on the risks of vaping and the impact of social media on mental health.

- **Introductions and Initial Collaborations:** Neesha Stringfellow asks for first-time attendees to introduce themselves. Barry Lee introduces himself as the Director of Substance Use Recovery Services with Iroquois Mental Health Center. Josec Galindo introduces himself as part of the State Attorneys Community Division Office. Kim Cunningham introduces herself as the administrative assistant at Kankakee Forgives. Neesha discusses collaboration with Hero, the Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization. She announces the retirement of Jan Dombrowski, the Executive Director of Hero and shares the impact Jan Dombrowski has had on the community and her personal life.
- **Introduction of Project L.I.G.H.T. Presentation:** Neesha introduces Kristen Anthony and Nichelle Alexander to present Project L.I.G.H.T. The presentation aims to educate on vaping, substance use, and mental illness among younger audiences. Neesha highlights the importance of the messages "It's okay not to be okay" and "Who is your trusted adult?"
- **Project L.I.G.H.T. Presentation Overview:** Nichelle begins the presentation by leading positive affirmations with the audience. The presentation's title, Project Light, stands for Living in Grace, Hope, and Transformation. The five main points of the presentation are: educate, prevent, destigmatize, connect, and inspire transformation. Nichelle leads the audience in deep breathing exercises to help them feel more calm and aware of their emotions. Nichelle and Neesha discuss the importance of acknowledging and accepting all emotions. They emphasize that it is okay to feel different emotions and that seeking help is a sign of strength. Nichelle shares a national suicide prevention video to highlight the importance of reaching out for help. The video features personal stories of individuals who have struggled with mental health issues and the importance of the 988 hotline. Kirsten discusses various factors that can negatively affect youth mental health. These factors include bullying, academic pressures, family conflict, parental separation, abuse, grief, social media pressures, low self-esteem, financial instability, and health challenges. Neesha adds that social media and eating disorders are significant issues that need more discussion. They stress that all problems, no matter how small, are important and should be addressed. Kirsten explains how mental health issues can lead to substance use, including vaping, alcohol, and other drugs. She discusses the myths and facts about vaping and its harmful effects on the brain and overall health. A video is shown to illustrate the dangers of e-cigarettes and the manipulative marketing tactics used by tobacco companies. The video highlights the addictive nature of nicotine and the long-term health risks associated with e-cigarettes. Neesha and Kirsten conduct a pop quiz with the audience to test their knowledge on

substance use and mental health. Questions cover the impact of substance use on school, sports, mood, relationships, and the vulnerability of teen brains to substance use. The audience provides answers such as motivation loss, unstable relationships, and the risk of overdose. The quiz aims to educate the audience on the risks and consequences of substance use.

- **Community Feedback:** Josec states it was such a great presentation! Johanna provides feedback and says to talk about emotions and to give more specifics on what substances are.
- **Conclusion:** Neesha and Kirsten summarize the key points of the presentation and the importance of addressing mental health and substance use issues. They emphasize the need for open conversations and support systems to help young people cope with their struggles. The presentation concludes with a reminder of the resources available, such as the 988 hotline, for those in need of help. The audience is encouraged to continue the conversation and support each other in their mental health journeys. If you would like Project L.I.G.H.T. to come to your organization please reach out to HLM Recovery 180 ROSC at hlmrecovery@gmail.com .