

History of Abuse at Kurn Hattin

Kim Dougherty, J.D.,
M.S.W., on behalf of
over 30 survivors

March 17, 2021



Justice Law Collaborative
The experience, compassion, and dedication you deserve

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 1950 to 1979



1950-59

Type of Abuse: Physical & sexual abuse perpetrated by staff.

Examples:

- Child was sexually abused by the then-Exec. Director of KH.
- Child was neglected medical treatment for broken bones and ear infections which have had lifelong incurable impacts

Reporting: No known reports to authorities.

1970-79

Type of Abuse: Severe Sexual and Physical abuse

Examples:

- House Parent sexually molested and raped dozens of boys on KH property.
- Houseparent fed children sugar water with poison sumac

Reporting: Gym teacher confronted the child abuser who fled campus, no police or DCF report ever filed

- Survivor contacted KH in 1980s and was contacted by their insurance adjuster; no report or investigation

1960-69

Type of Abuse: Severe Physical and Sexual Abuse perpetrated by staff.

Examples:

- KH House Parents and staff sexually molested multiple boys
- House Parent forced child to stand outside overnight in the winter without a coat until she fell unconscious
- House Parent forced routine torturous exercise routines while physically beating them while the children were pants down

Reporting: Some staff members were let go but never reported to police or DCF

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 1980 to 1989



Decade Snapshot

- One 12-year-old was repeatedly raped by KH staff member. Both the Executive Director and House Parent were aware of the molestation. They responded by fitting for a diaphragm and provided her birth control pills at graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by older peers with barbie doll legs and other objects.
- Mark Davis molested numerous boys between the ages 7-12 on campus. The survivors reported to multiple KH staff and nothing was done. A few tried to run away but were always caught by the same Vermont State Trooper, took no action after hearing about the abuse and returned them to the cottage. At least one of Mark Davis' victims committed suicide.

1983

DCF expressed concern for KH's non-compliance around firearms and spanking policies.

1985

DCF renews the provisional license despite continuing concerns.

1989

DCF finds KH noncompliant for routinely isolating students in their rooms for indefinite periods of time.

VSP first document Mark Davis' molestations. 17 boys accused Davis.

1984

DCF notes instances of child abuse and inadequate staff training. Still grants KH a provisional license.

1988

DCF notes staff troubles regarding Mark Davis during a site visit. Takes no further action.

Decade Snapshot

- One 12-year-old was repeatedly raped by KH staff member. Both the Executive Director and House Parent were aware of the molestation. They responded by fitting for a diaphragm and provided her birth control pills at graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by older peers with barbie doll legs and other objects.
- Mark Davis molested numerous boys between the ages 7-12 on campus. The survivors reported to multiple KH staff and nothing was done. A few tried to run away but were always caught by the same Vermont State Trooper, took no action after hearing about the abuse and returned them to the cottage. At least one of Mark Davis' victims committed suicide.

The following areas of concern were identified in the letter:

1. "Staff actions which constitute child abuse as defined by statute and failure to report such abuse to S.R.S."

At the request of Mr. Maysilles, the Licensing Unit provided technical assistance to Kurn Hattin in formulating policies and practices for the identification and reporting of child abuse. Mr. Maysilles assured me that every effort will be made to identify child abuse, and that all suspected incidents will be reported in accordance with state law and licensing regulations.

2. "Staff use of inappropriate physical intervention to control children's behavior."

The list of prohibited forms of discipline from the licensing regulations has been incorporated into Kurn Hattin's staff manual. A series of memos from Mr. Maysilles to staff make it clear that the use of spanking and all other forms of proscribed physical intervention are prohibited, and that the administration will not be tolerant of lapses. The memos also indicate the administration's awareness that staff need training in learning more effective means of discipline, and promise that such training will be forthcoming.

3. "The use in a child care capacity of adults who are not subject to Kurn Hattin's other policies and controls governing staff."

Kurn Hattin is taking a two-pronged approach to this matter. In the first place, the facility's legal advisor indicated that actions of spouses and dependent children of housemothers may be used as grounds for asking the entire family to leave, whether or not they are employed by Kurn Hattin. The administration is also considering ways in which husbands of housemothers can be better integrated into life at Kurn Hattin, and perhaps also be subject to training requirements.

4. "Continuation of staff whose previous actions suggest an inability to adequately perform direct child care services."

There are no staff currently employed by Kurn Hattin who fit in this category. Mr. Maysilles has stated in writing, "In the future we shall be more forthright in terminating or reassigning those staff members who are not suited to direct child care services."



1989

DCF finds KH noncompliant for routinely isolating students in their rooms for indefinite periods of time.

VSP first document Mark Davis' molestations. 17 boys accused Davis.

es regarding
e visit. Takes

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 1980 to 1989



Decade Snapshot

- One 12-year-old was repeatedly raped by KH staff member. Both the Executive Director and House Parent were aware of the molestation. They responded by fitting for a diaphragm and provided her birth control pills at graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by older peers with barbie doll legs and other objects.
- Mark Davis molested numerous boys between the ages 7-12 on campus. The survivors reported to multiple KH staff and nothing was done. A few tried to run away but were always caught by the same Vermont State Trooper, took no action after hearing about the abuse and returned them to the cottage. At least one of Mark Davis' victims committed suicide.

1983

DCF expressed concern for KH's non-compliance around firearms and spanking policies.

1985

DCF renews the provisional license despite continuing concerns.

1989

DCF finds KH noncompliant for routinely isolating students in their rooms for indefinite periods of time.

VSP first document Mark Davis' molestations. 17 boys accused Davis.

1984

DCF notes instances of child abuse and inadequate staff training.
Still grants KH a provisional license.

1988

DCF notes staff troubles regarding Mark Davis during a site visit. Takes no further action.

New England Kurn Hattin Homes Licensing Update
Page 3

Decade Snap

- One 12-year-old was re by KH staff member. B Executive Director and were aware of the mole responded by fitting for and provided her birth graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was re sexually assaulted by ol barbie doll legs and oth
- Mark Davis molested n between the ages 7-12 c The survivors reported KH staff and nothing w tried to run away but w caught by the same Ver Trooper, took no action about the abuse and rel the cottage. At least one Davis' victims committe

hours per week, who helps with office work. Both campuses have a "senior houseparent" now. The concern noted in the previous licensing report, regarding the loss of the assistants, has diminished considerably. However, some reduction in program and/or the campus director's time with residents can be seen.

Kurn Hattin has had some difficulty with staff this past year. The boys' campus has had to let three staff go since June for various reasons. One houseparent was accused and recently convicted of sexual involvement with a minor who was a student at the school. The incidents did not take place at Kurn Hattin. A review of personnel policies and performance reviews of this individual indicated Kurn Hattin was not remiss in the hiring or supervision of this individual.

III. NONCOMPLIANCES

The previous licensing report noted four areas of noncompliance. Kurn Hattin has developed an acceptable policy for the use of volunteers and interns. The current use of an initial placement plan is acceptable.

I noncompliant for
ting students in their
efinite periods of time.

ment Mark Davis'
17 boys accused Davis.

review of accused

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 1980 to 1989



Decade Snapshot

- One 12-year-old was repeatedly raped by KH staff member. Both the Executive Director and House Parent were aware of the molestation. They responded by fitting for a diaphragm and provided her birth control pills at graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by older peers with barbie doll legs and other objects.
- Mark Davis molested numerous boys between the ages 7-12 on campus. The survivors reported to multiple KH staff and nothing was done. A few tried to run away but were always caught by the same Vermont State Trooper, took no action after hearing about the abuse and returned them to the cottage. At least one of Mark Davis' victims committed suicide.

1983

DCF expressed concern for KH's non-compliance around firearms and spanking policies.

1985

DCF renews the provisional license despite continuing concerns.

1989

DCF finds KH noncompliant for routinely isolating students in their rooms for indefinite periods of time.

VSP first document Mark Davis' molestations. 17 boys accused Davis.

1984

DCF notes instances of child abuse and inadequate staff training.
Still grants KH a provisional license.

1988

DCF notes staff troubles regarding Mark Davis during a site visit. Takes no further action.

Kurn Hattin

Decade Snapshot

- One 12-year-old was repeatedly raped by KH staff member. Both the Executive Director and House Parent were aware of the molestation. They responded by fitting for a diaphragm and provided her birth control pills at graduation.
- A 6-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by older peers with barbie doll legs and other objects.
- Mark Davis molested numerous boys between the ages 7-12 on campus. The survivors reported to multiple KH staff and nothing was done. A few tried to run away but were always caught by the same Vermont State Trooper, took no action after hearing about the abuse and returned them to the cottage. At least one of Mark Davis' victims committed suicide.

INVESTIGATION REPORT		VERMONT STATE POLICE		Incident No. 2010-89-10612	
2. Incident: Lewd or Lascivious Conduct with a Child		3. Statute Violated: T13-52602		4. Officer: Det. Sgt. Myles Heffernan	
5. Date Recd: 7/88-12/15/89		6. Date Recd: 12/18/89-0836			
7. CODES: VICT (V) COMP (C) ACCUSED (A) PROPERTY STLN (PS) PROPERTY REC (PR) PROPERTY DAMAGED (PD) ENTERED NOIC (NC)		8. Code: Y		9. Multiple, see attached page	
10. Address: Street City/Town State Zip		11. Address: Street City/Town State Zip		12. Address: Street City/Town State Zip	
13. Location of Incident (To Include Town):		14. Comp. If Other Than Victim:		15. Name of Victim:	
Morrison Cottage at the Kurn Hattin Boys School, Westminster, Vermont.		Morse, Robert K. (School Director) Kurn Hattin Boys School, Westminster VT		Davis, Mark Wadsworth	
16. Race: W		17. Sex: M		18. Age: 10	
19. DOB: 10/20/88		20. POB: S. Weymouth MA		21. POB: S. Weymouth MA	
22. Accused touched and fondled the genital areas of several juvenile males		23. Code: NA		24. Description: Serial And/Or Mod. No.	
25. Value: NA		26. Value: NA		27. Value: NA	
28. Value: NA		29. Value: NA		30. Value: NA	
31. Code: NA		32. Male: NA		33. Mod: NA	
34. Year: NA		35. State: NA		36. Color: NA	
37. Reg. No: NA		38. VIN: NA		39. VIN: NA	
40. Name of Receiver: NA		41. Reason: NA		42. Name of Maker: NA	
43. Doc. No: NA		44. Bank Drawn On: NA		45. Bank Photo: NA	
46. Doc. Amt: NA		47. Doc. Date: NA		48. Money, Property or Services Obtained: NA	
49. Photo Taken: NA		50. By Whom: NA		51. Duct for Prints: NA	
52. By Whom: NA		53. Evid. Taken: NA		54. Desc: NA	
55. T.O.T: NA		56. Other Agency Notified: NA		57. OA Response: NA	
58. Officer Responding: NA		59. Officer Responding: NA		60. Officer Responding: NA	
<p>This case is a Lewd or Lascivious Conduct investigation involving numerous juvenile male students who are residing at the Kurn Hattin Boys School in Westminster, Vermont. As of yet, seven of the victims have been interviewed and verified that the accused did in fact touch and fondle their genital area. There are allegedly at least ten other juvenile male victims who have either been at the school in the past or are currently at the school. Attempts are being made to interview these victims also. The accused was interviewed, and confessed to the above mentioned offenses. He was processed and released on a citation with conditions and is scheduled to appear at the District Court in Brattleboro, Vermont on January 8, 1989.</p>					



1989

DCF finds KH noncompliant for routinely isolating students in their rooms for indefinite periods of time.

VSP first document Mark Davis' molestations. 17 boys accused Davis.

staff troubles regarding is during a site visit. Takes action.

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 1990 to 2009



1990-1999

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse perpetrated by staff and sexual abuse perpetrated by staff and peers.

Example:

- Children forcibly put into "solitary confinement" for hours with no food or natural light.
- Houseparent sexually molested a child and forced them to perform oral sex acts.
- Inappropriate age grouping and lack of supervision allowed peers to sexually abuse younger children.

Reporting: DCF noted isolation techniques and peer sexual relations; no further action was taken.

2000-2009

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse perpetrated by staff and sexual abuse perpetrated by staff and peers.

Example:

- Staff regularly beat children and choked them against the wall.
- Children were sexually molested and anally raped by peers.

Reporting:

- Child reported peer sexual abuse to houseparent who ignored him and made him return to bed with his perpetrator.
- Child reported house parent physical abuse to then principal/director and was ignored.
- DCF reported that KH needed to better document physical abuse; never was enforced.

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2010 to 2015



2010-2011

Type of Abuse: Sexual Abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples: 9-year-old in cottage with 13-year-olds was anally raped and forced to perform oral sex repeatedly

Reporting:

- Student ran away from KH multiple times and was disciplined instead of investigating the cause of his distraught.
- Police report launched in 2018 who said since both parties were minors, there was nothing to do.

2015

VSP received notice from DCF that a KH student was forced to perform oral sex and engage in anal sex by a peer.

2012-2014

Type of Abuse: Sexual Abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples: Older girl in cottage repeatedly forced herself onto a younger child, forcibly touching private parts and rubbing genitals

Reporting:

- Kurn Hattin house parent walked in on the abuse once and did not report the incidence.
- House parent told guardian that no action needed to be taken as they were both minors.
- House parent blamed the abused child instead

Date/Time of Crime:

March 4, 2015

Victim Information:

Juvenile [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]
(See Juvenile Identification Sheet)

Complainant:

Source of Information

[REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]

Westminster, Vermont 05158

Description of Scene:

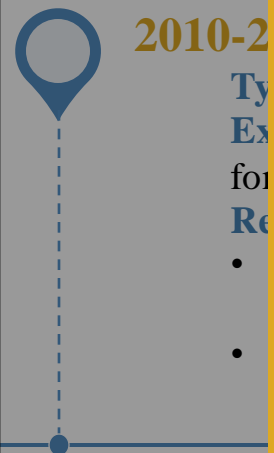
Incident occurred inside Juvenile [REDACTED] bedroom at Kurn Hatten School,
Westminster, Vermont.

Accused Information:

Juvenile [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]
(See Juvenile Identification Sheet)

Modus Operandi:

Accused had oral and anal sexual intercourse with victim.



Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2016 to 2018



Period Snapshot

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse by staff; sexual abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples:

- Houseparent would grab, shake, and scare child often.
- Student was routinely raped, molested, and forced to perform oral sex and swallow a peer's ejaculate.
- Female peer assaulted child by routinely vaginally penetrated another with a toothbrush and threatened to kill her with a knife in her sleep if she ever told.

2016

DCF learned that the Exec. Director's 15-year-old son solicited nudes from a 12-year-old student and a 13-year-old student. Son continued to have access to at least 1 student.

9-year-old student was assaulted for the next 2 years by a peer, including being penetrated with a toothbrush. KH aware.

13-year-old student was molested by 15-year-old peer for months. KH aware peer "gamed" the discipline system to gain access to peer.

2017

2018

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Thank you for your cooperation with the Regulatory Investigation that Department for Children and Families, Residential Licensing & Special Investigations Unit conducted in August 2016, regarding an allegation that your 15-year-old foster child (██████) solicited inappropriate digital photographs of a 12-year-old female former resident of Kurn Hattin Homes (██████). It was also alleged that ██████ attempted to solicit inappropriate photos of a 13-year-old Kurn Hattin resident ██████, who reportedly refused to provide the photographs. Finally, it was noted that ██████, who is no longer a student at Kurn Hattin, was working in the Kurn Hattin student cafeteria and, in this capacity, has had ongoing contact with ██████, which she stated was upsetting to her. This letter serves as a follow-up to the Regulatory Investigation.

Possible Licensing Violations:

Residential Treatment Program Licensing Regulation 401, "A Residential Treatment Program shall not hire, or continue to employ, any person whose health, behavior, actions or judgment might endanger the physical or emotional well-being of the children/youth served."

2018

er,

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2016 to 2018



Period Snapshot

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse by staff; sexual abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples:

- Houseparent would grab, shake, and scare child often.
- Student was routinely raped, molested, and forced to perform oral sex and swallow a peer's ejaculate.
- Female peer assaulted child by routinely vaginally penetrated another with a toothbrush and threatened to kill her with a knife in her sleep if she ever told.

2016

DCF learned that the Exec. Director's 15-year-old son solicited nudes from a 12-year-old student and a 13-year-old student. Son continued to have access to at least 1 student.

9-year-old student was assaulted for the next 2 years by a peer, including being penetrated with a toothbrush. KH aware.

13-year-old student was molested by 15-year-old peer for months. KH aware peer "gamed" the discipline system to gain access to peer.

2017

2018

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2016 to 2018

Period

Type of Abuse
staff; sexual A
peers

Examples:

- Housepare
and scare c
- Student wa
molested,
oral sex an
ejaculate.
- Female pe
by routine
another wi
threatened to kill her with a knife in
her sleep if she ever told.

Allegation

On 4/02/2019, CIES received [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Kurn Hattin [REDACTED], alleging that [REDACTED] had tried to kiss and touch alleged child victim, [REDACTED]. Appended information was added on 4/11/2019 when [REDACTED] further disclosed that [REDACTED] had touched her vagina with her fingers and asked [REDACTED] to masturbate with a toothbrush while she was naked. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were roommates during the incident back in February 2020 and [REDACTED] didn't feel safe to disclose what happened until [REDACTED] was discharged from Kurn Hattin.

On 4/09/2019, CIES received [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Kurn Hattin [REDACTED], alleging that [REDACTED] had tried to kiss and touch alleged child victim, [REDACTED]. Appended information was added on 4/12/2019 when [REDACTED] mother, [REDACTED], called CIES with additional information that [REDACTED] had "stuck a toothbrush in [REDACTED] and that meant "in her vagina." Ms. [REDACTED] also reported that [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] had touched her numerous times while she was in the shower. [REDACTED] said it was "gross and perverted."

On 4/9/2019, CIES received [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Kurn Hattin [REDACTED], alleging that [REDACTED] tried to kiss and touch the alleged child victim, [REDACTED]. When speaking with the reporter, the other students shared that they didn't disclose the incidents sooner because they were scared to get in trouble and [REDACTED] said she would kill them in her sleep with a knife.

2018

2017

HH was asked to talk about the things she had seen OS do. HH advised that she saw OS masturbate with a toothbrush. OS asked her to do it and she ignored her. This happened more than one time. OS would do this standing up with no clothes on and HH could see her privates. OS did this in front of SC and HR as well. HH advised that OS did this when she was roommates with SC and HR. OS asked HH to try it but OS never put anything into HH.

HH advised that she did tell [REDACTED] about OS and the toothbrush incidents.

HH advised that there are camera's in the hallway and common area of the cottage, none in the private areas, bathrooms and bedrooms.

HH was asked to talk about the house parents and advised the following.

[REDACTED] sometimes brings [REDACTED] to the cottage. They rarely come. They are an [REDACTED], a [REDACTED], and an [REDACTED]. They sometimes come to the cottage when she isn't working ([REDACTED]).

molested, and forced to perform

oral sex and swallow
ejaculate.

- Female peer assaulted
by routinely vaginally
another with a toothbrush
threatened to kill her with
her sleep if she ever told.

9-year-old student was routinely

2018

2/12/2019 – This is the date when information was learned by Nancy Richardson of the threatening/forced masturbation with a toothbrush of three residents by one residents. This was not reported to licensing until April 2019 and resulted in three [REDACTED] assessments. Keri confronted Nancy Richardson about the lack of follow through and reporting and she responded that “I just figured that’s what girls do.”

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2016 to 2018



Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that there was one occasion on the stairwell when Juvenile [REDACTED] made him put his hand down his pants and touch his private parts. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that Juvenile [REDACTED] would threaten him that if he told he would tell everyone that he was gay or bisexual. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that the incidents would always happen in the stairwell or bathroom because there were no cameras but there were cameras in the other rooms. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that he tried to avoid being in those areas with Juvenile [REDACTED]

Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that one time this school year he was in the bathroom brushing his teeth after getting out of the shower and Juvenile [REDACTED] came into the bathroom and pulled down his underwear. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that Juvenile [REDACTED] put his penis in his butt. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that it hurt and he yelled and jumped away. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that Juvenile [REDACTED] asked him several times after to put his penis in his butt but he never did.

Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that one time when they were in the bathroom Juvenile [REDACTED] was masturbating and some fluid came out of his penis and into his mouth. Juvenile [REDACTED] advised that it tasted warm, salty, and gross, causing him to gag. Juvenile [REDACTED] was unable to provide a timeline for each of the sexual encounters he had with Juvenile [REDACTED]

2017

2018

threatened to kill her with a knife in her sleep if she ever told.

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020

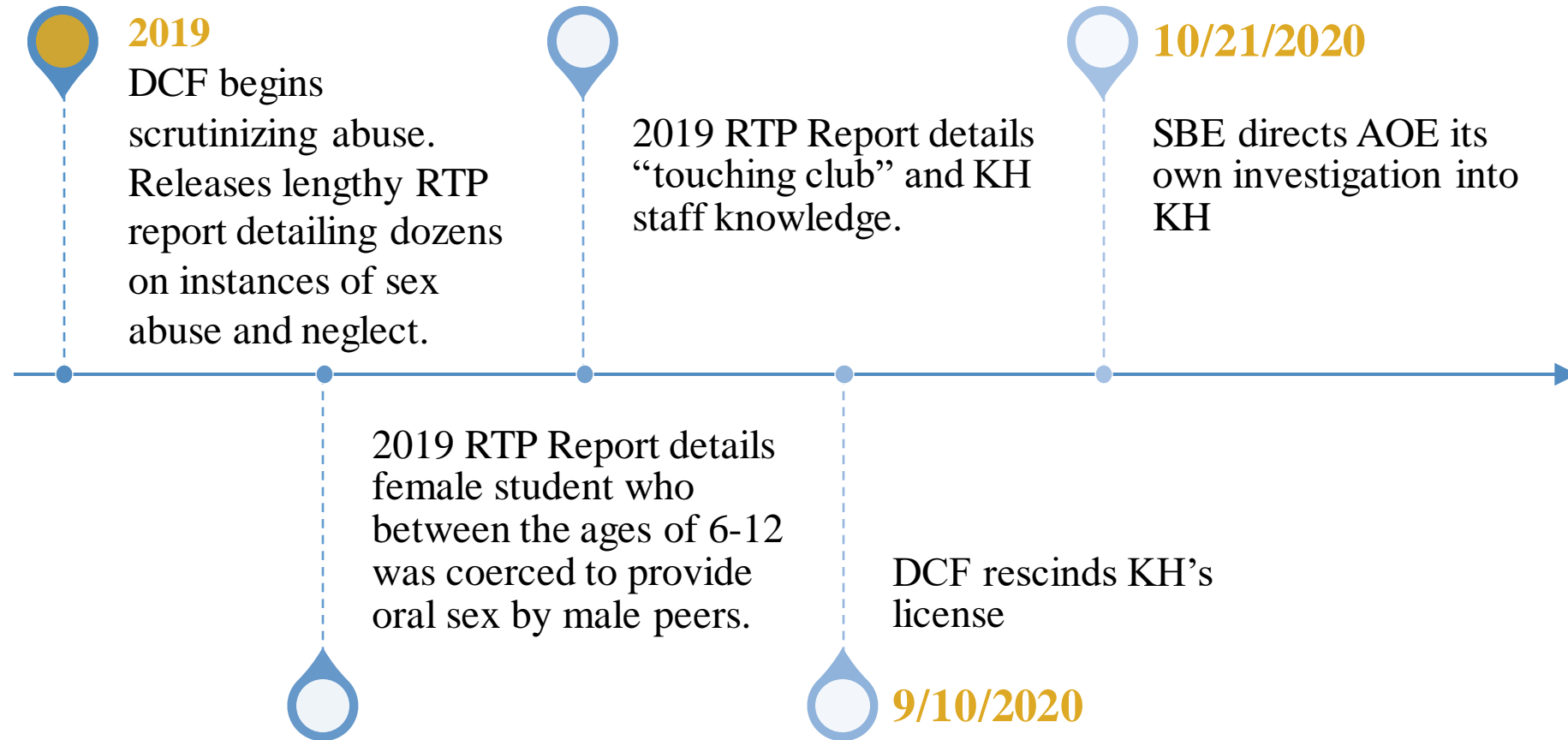


Period Snapshot

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse by staff; sexual abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples:

- House parent told student that her parents didn't want her anymore and gave the child 6 pills that caused her to pass out.
- Students forcibly molested. KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the "Touching Club".



Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020



Period Snapshot

2019

DCF begins

10/21/2020

RTP Regulations 118, 120, and 122 are all rated in noncompliance. Of the 17 child abuse and regulatory investigations during this licensing period, at least three were not reported within the required timeframe. For example, three incidents occurring in February 2019 and were not reported to licensing or Centralized Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) until April 2019. Staff interviews illuminated an instance in October 2019 where information was intentionally withheld from licensing regarding the division of Parent Cottage students into other cottages due to the inadequate staffing coverage. Multiple staff interviews have alleged that significant incidents within residential programming and timing had not been documented. At least two separate scenarios were noted. School-wide Information System (SWIS) began to hold all the Kurn Hattin School's incident reports as of 2015. There are multiple incidents reviewed within 10 student files on SWIS that should have been reported to RLSI but were not. These include incidents of sexual touching between students and other incidents that directly impact the health and safety of the students.

- Students forcibly molested. KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the "Touching Club".

was coerced to provide oral sex by male peers.

DCF rescinds KH's license

9/10/2020

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020

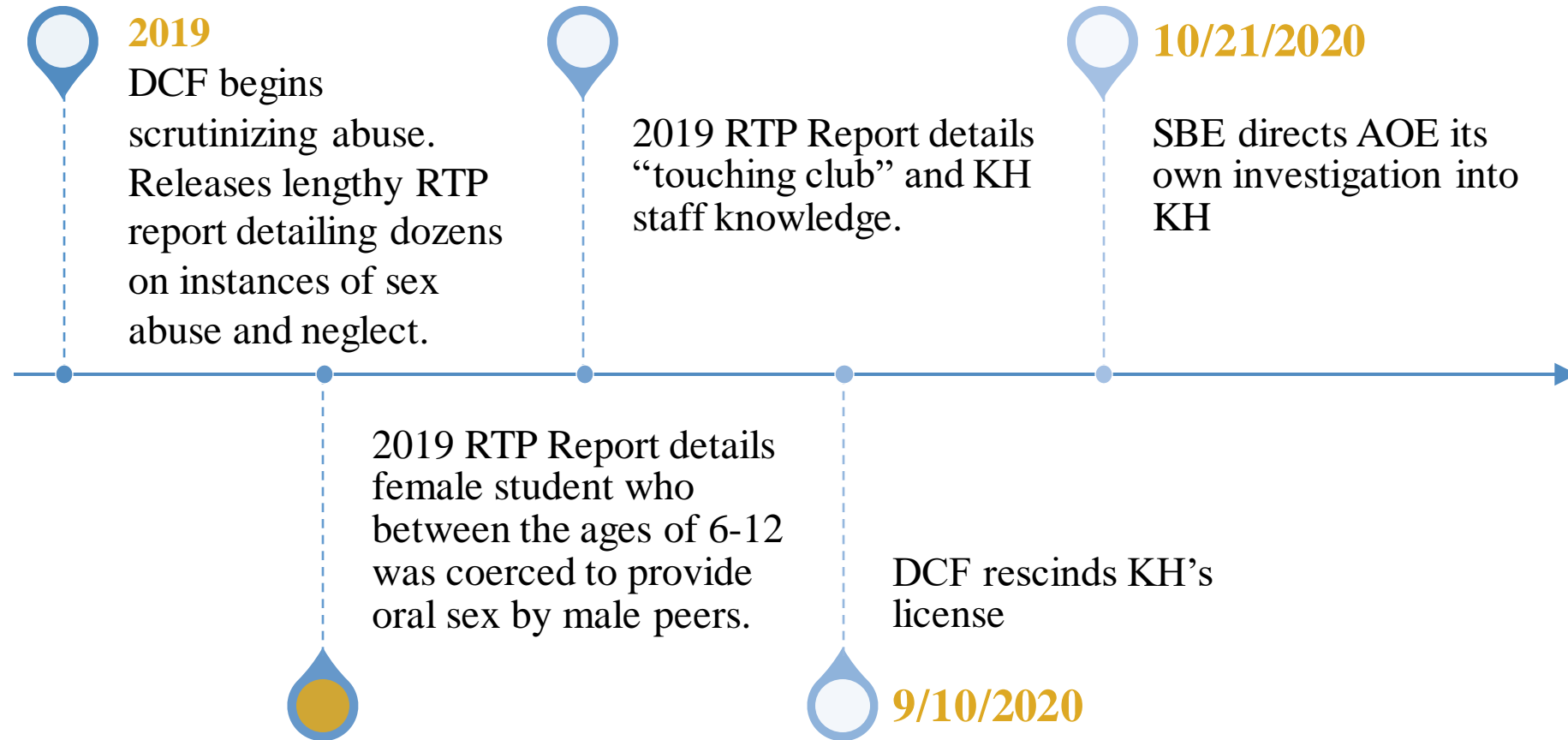


Period Snapshot

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse by staff; sexual abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples:

- House parent told student that her parents didn't want her anymore and gave the child 6 pills that caused her to pass out.
- Students forcibly molested. KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the "Touching Club".



Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020



Perpetrator
Type of
abuse
perpetrated
Example

On 3/21/19, Family Services Division Central Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) received [REDACTED] alleging possible sexual abuse of [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) by another youth, [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) while they were both placed at Kurn Hattin Homes. The reporting source said [REDACTED] reported that she performed sexual acts (orally and insertion with fingers) on peers. [REDACTED] shared that she felt pressured and threatened to perform these acts and described that there was no supervision at Kurn Hattin. [REDACTED] described that this occurred from the ages of 6 – 12 years old, through her entire time at Kurn Hattin and began as “hazing.” Additionally, on 4/25/2019, CIES received [REDACTED] alleging possible sexual abuse of [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) by another Kurn Hattin resident, [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]). [REDACTED] disclosed that [REDACTED] had forced her to have sex with him and this occurred behind the stairwell in the auditorium. [REDACTED] said that she felt uncomfortable and unsafe some of the times they would have sex because [REDACTED] said he wouldn’t be her boyfriend anymore if she didn’t do it. These [REDACTED] were combined into one subsequent regulatory intervention.

- How
tha
her
chi
to p
• Stu

KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the “Touching Club”.

oral sex by male peers.

license

9/10/2020

its
into

not want to talk about that. She did provide the name of [REDACTED] as being someone involved. She again said she did not want to talk about the details, saying she was "like 6" and does not remember half the stuff that happened. She said that she has no concerns about what happened because her [REDACTED] told her that it was just experimenting. She told her [REDACTED] what happened because she thought it was disgusting. She identified [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] her mom's adopted mother, last name [REDACTED] and she talked to her about it years ago. [REDACTED] said all the girls in the school would experiment with each other, it happened from when she got there until when she left. [REDACTED] said that experimenting makes her want to throw up and is disgusting and described it as touching and physical contact. [REDACTED] said the problem was there was no staff in the hallways, they would be sleeping. She talked about friends stealing money and taking snacks.

10/21/2020

Type of Abuse: Physical

scrutinizing abuse

2019 RTP Report details

SRE directs AOE its
investigation into

abuse by

perpetrator

Example

- House

that he

her and

child

to pass

- Students forcibly molested.

KH staff were aware

referred to the group

perpetrator students

"Touching Club".

[REDACTED] said she bullied her [REDACTED] a lot, and before the bullying, things happened because of what happened to her in the past. She went on to recall being touched when she was growing up. [REDACTED] recalled sitting on [REDACTED] lap in the car which made her feel weird because of her hormones or something. [REDACTED] then discussed being touched as a child, it was a blur, and she knows it happened but does not know who. She specified that this was before Kurn Hattin.

[REDACTED] remembered her and [REDACTED] having "2", and that she was pressured, then referring to this girl raping her. She said this happened when she was 10-11, and the girl was [REDACTED]. She said that she understood why she did it because she was raped a lot, and because of her abuse she does not know what was wrong or right.

[REDACTED] wrote 1 Humping 2 Mouth + Vagina. She specified that humping happened in [REDACTED] room, in Hubbard and clothing was on. [REDACTED] said it stopped when she was tired, or uncomfortable, but can't remember and it was a long time ago. Ronan then asked about the #2, which was mouth and vagina. She said this happened at a different cottage, it was in the morning a couple weeks after the first time. She said they were roommates at the time. She described her as having clothes on, [REDACTED] with clothes off. She said it only lasted a second,

Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020

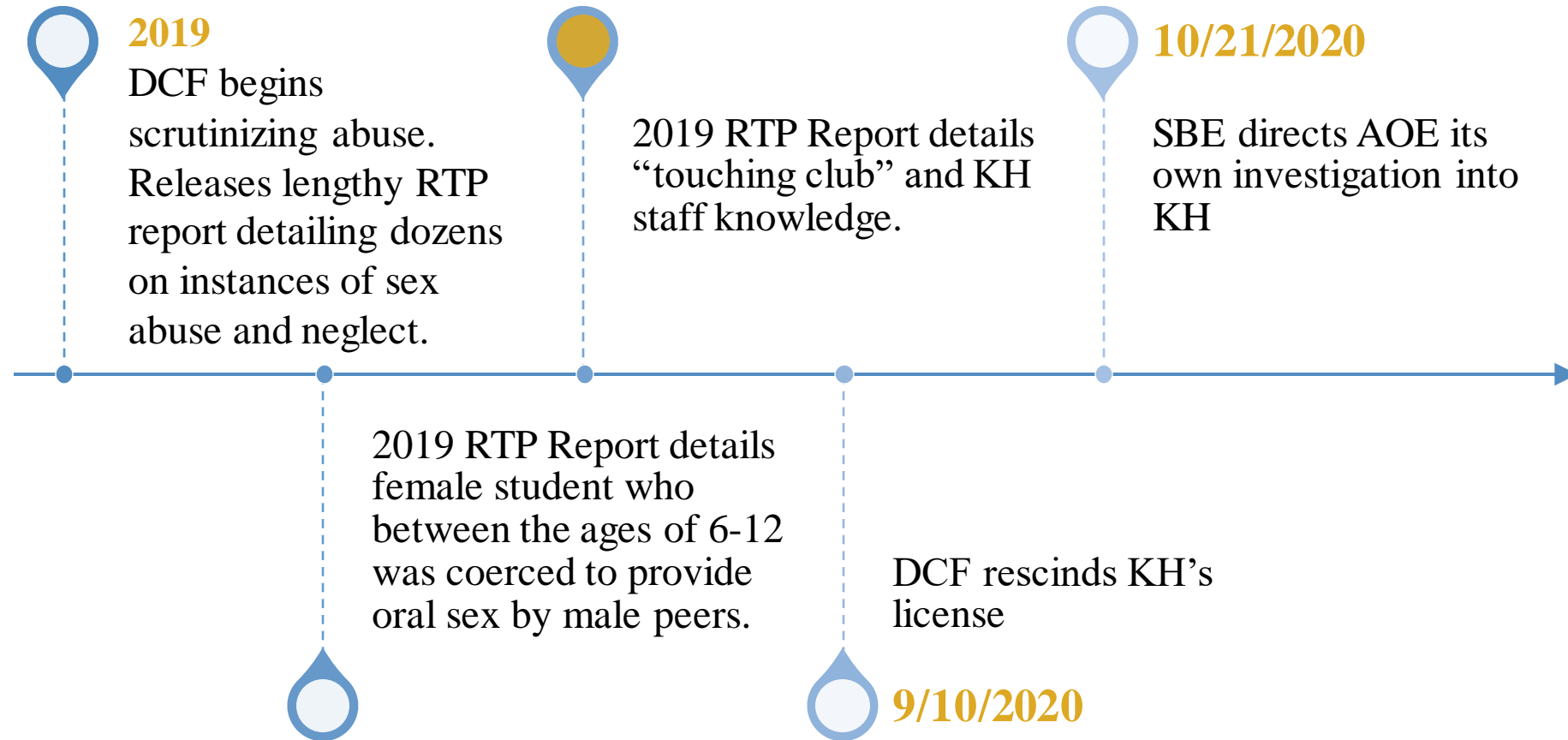


Period Snapshot

Type of Abuse: Physical abuse by staff; sexual abuse perpetrated by peers

Examples:

- House parent told student that her parents didn't want her anymore and gave the child 6 pills that caused her to pass out.
- Students forcibly molested. KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the "Touching Club".



Kurn Hattin Abuse: 2019 to 2020



In general, she shared the concern that events that were once “isolated are becoming systemic” which she attributed to the lack of follow through and bad judgement calls of administration, but mostly named Nancy Richardson, Director of Residential. Carol Bazin and Clint LaPlante are Assistant Residential Directors. She was adamant that Steve Harrison and Sue Kessler know of these incidents/concerns.

Examples.

- House parent told student that her parents did not want her anymore and gave her child 6 pills that caused her to pass out.
- Students forcibly raped. KH staff were aware and referred to the group of perpetrator students as the “Touching Club”.

on instances of sex abuse and neglect

4/6/2019 – Keri Newton shared an email from Christine Reid, Director of Counseling at Kurn Hattin (with her permission) explaining her concerns about the inaccurate information in incident reports concerning the touch club. The incident reports or documentation did not fully explain the sexualized behavior between students. This was assigned to Chris Ward as a [REDACTED] assessment. Keri shared that one student remained on campus for 4 extra days, while others were sent home, because Nancy Richardson “forgot.”

9/21/2020

AOE directs AOE its own investigation into H

9/10/2020

Years of Kurn Hattin's Non-Compliance & Violations of Regulations, yet no action



1983: absence of a policy prohibiting maintenance of firearms and of a policy prohibiting spanking/corporal punishment.

1984: failure to report such inappropriate use of physical intervention handling children's behaviors; inadequate staff performing childcare services; lack of behavior management training; lack of staff evaluation procedures.

1984: failing to provide training to husbands of housemothers that "was much needed after several incidents of aggressive behaviors towards children by husbands of house mothers."

1985: lack of adequate and consistent training for house parents and their spouses; noncompliance with creating Service Plans for children that require more help regulating emotions and behavior.

1988: 3 staff were terminated this year, one was found to be sexually abusing a KH child. Staff member molested 14 students, pled guilty.

1989: non-compliance for isolating children in their bedroom for extensive periods of time.

1992: one staff per cottage is inadequate and should have two for supervision purposes.

1995-96: grouping children with different ages in cottages resulted in the higher potential ability for younger children to be sexually or physically harmed; also noted an unlocked medication cabinet; multiple missing person and runaway reports by VSP.

1997: excessive isolation and solitary confinement.

1998: repeated issue with medication administration; staff responsible for administering medication should be aware of the policies and procedures.

1999: issues with medication administration continued where staff forgot to administer medication or failed to do so in a timely manner.

Justice Law Collaborative, LLC | Kim Dougherty, Esq. | 19 Belmont Street, Easton, MA 02375 | (508)230-2700 | kim@justicelc.com | www.justicelawcollaborative.com

NON-COMPLIANCE



Years of Kurn Hattin's Non-Compliance & Violations of Regulations, yet no action



2015: forced older peer on younger peer oral and anal penetration; not fully compliant with a DCF regulations regarding the seclusion of children, including providing constant, uninterrupted supervision by qualified staff, employed by the program and familiar to the child/youth.

2016: Executive Director Harrison's 15-year-old son solicited nude photos from a 13-year-old and a 12-year-old KH female resident and was allowed to continue to work in KH's cafeteria with ongoing access and contact to one of the female students.

2017: allegations of physical abuse at KH, including grabbing/pushing/shoving students, withholding a student's breakfast for being late, and also being verbally abusive; a 9 year old female disclosed she was being continuously vaginally penetrated with a toothbrush by another girl. She stated she feared to disclose sooner as the girl threatened, she would "kill [her] with a knife". Director of Residential Services was aware and failed to report because she thought that was "what children do;" failure to timely report an allegation that one student, on different occasions, offered to pay money to see two other residents' private parts.



2017-2019: at least four VSP reports of peer on peer sexual assault, on multiple occasions, involving multiple individuals, including the "touching club."

2018: DCF's "Mr. Harrison writes it occurred "...in a cottage supervised by two of our most experienced and able house parents attests to the difficulty of dealing with very cunning and able children in a residential setting..." "This not just an issue of cunning children but a supervision issue. The abuse occurred for over a year in that same cottage with the most experienced house parents and cameras."

2019: "large number of KH residents engaging in sexualized contact with each other. At least nine separate youth from two different cottages...age range of youth involved was between 7-11 y.o... Mrs. Richardson [...] stated that the sexual activity has been described by the boys as showing each other their genitals, some boys stated that they engaged in hand to genital contact, and one of the older boys (10) disclosed oral-genital contact with another of the older boys (11)...Mr. Plante [...] added that the youth report that 'the club' has been going on for at least a full year, perhaps longer... Ms. [x] said that a youth said the club 'has been going on since 2016.'"

2019: report found: 3 of 17 child abuse and neglect investigations, were not reported in a timely manner. They also found that there were a large number of children who were engaging in sexual activity and KH did not intervene or report.



June, 2020: DCF offered to assist Kurn Hattin in meeting regulatory requirements to remain licensed as an RTP if it so desired. Kurn Hattin declined the offer."

September, 2020: under mounting pressure, Kurn Hattin finally relinquished its RTP license to DCF.

Affects of Kurn Hattin Abuse



- *"I went there a troubled kid and came out broken."*
- *"I could hardly breathe," "I was in a panic."*
- *"There was no safe place. There was no place where I could be OK. Nobody ever protected me...They all got away with it for so many years. They all knew...There isn't a piece of me that doesn't believe that."*
- *"My friend committed suicide as a result of the abuse at Kurn Hattin. I'm his voice now and that of all the others who can't speak for themselves."*
- *"We can't prevent what happened to the rest of us, but we can make sure going forward nothing happens to them."*
- *"The cycle of abuse must be broken, but before that can happen Kurn Hattin needs to acknowledge its role in it and stop denying it."*

Affects of Childhood Abuse & Trauma



Jenny Coleman, Executive Director of Stop It Now! advises:

Childhood trauma can have a profound impact on educational success, professional success and the ability to support yourself, she said. Survivors are at high risk for physiological problems, including obesity, stress, anxiety, changes in brain development, and cardiopulmonary and gynecological diseases. They are also more likely to be revictimized and become addicted to drugs and alcohol.

Victims of sexual assault are 10 times more likely to take their own lives than people who have not been victims of sexual assault, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

Affects of Abuse on the Brain

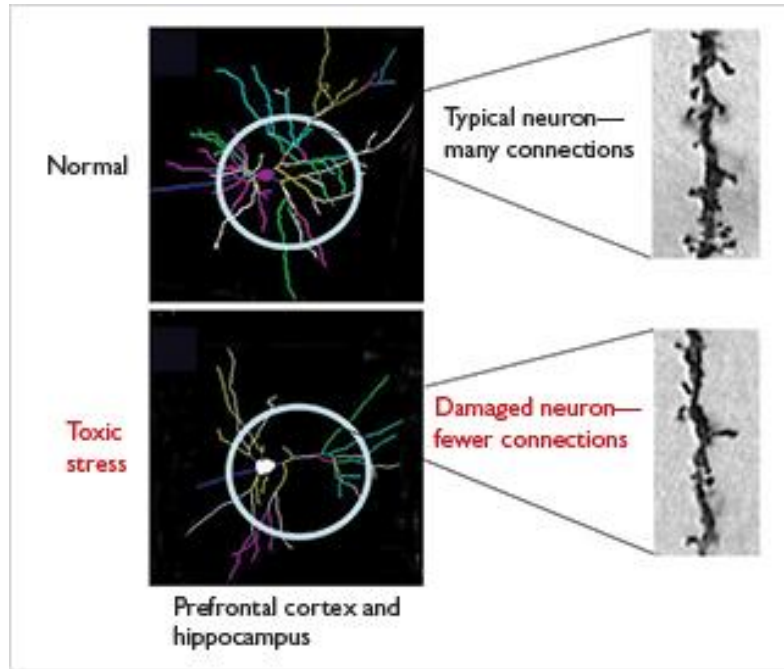
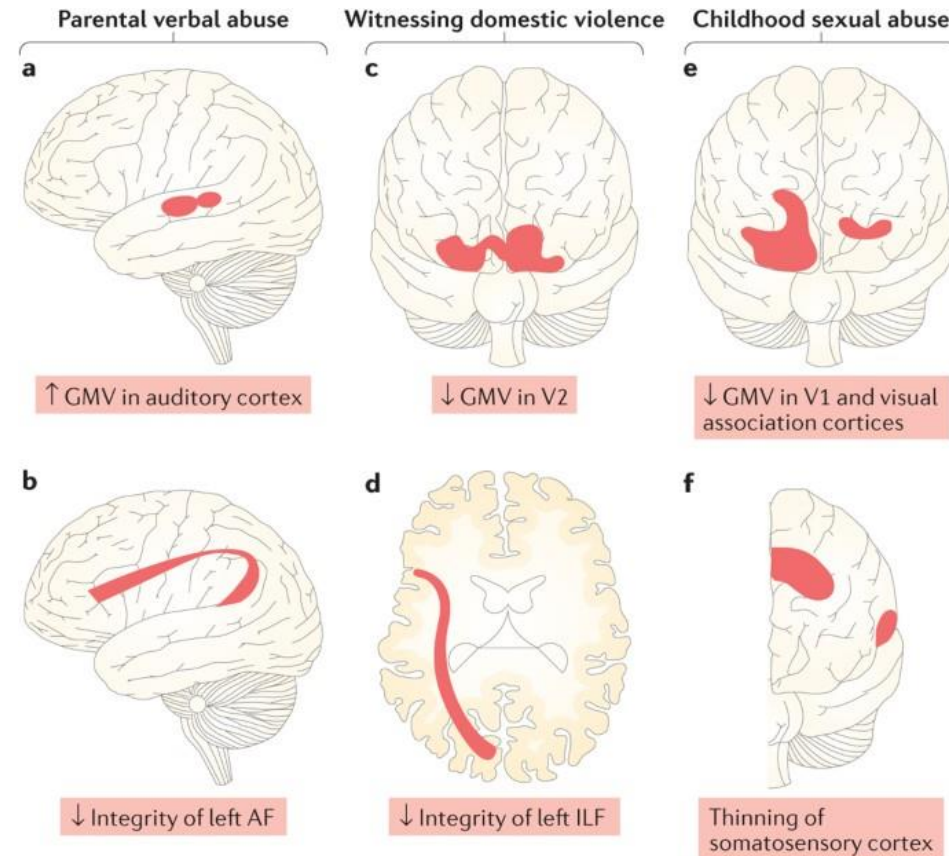
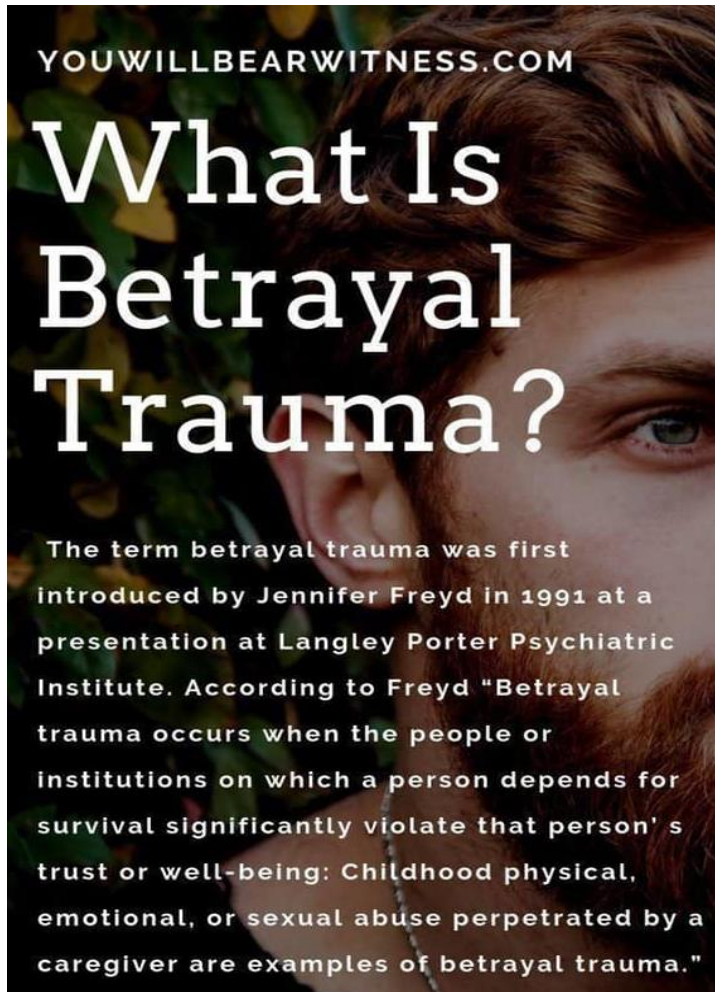


FIGURE 1. Brains subjected to toxic stress have underdeveloped or fewer neural connections in areas of the brain most important for successful learning and behavior in school and the workplace.¹²



Nature Reviews | Neuroscience

Affects of Abuse by Caregivers: Betrayal Trauma



Jenny Coleman, Executive Director of Stop It Now! advises:

“It’s not just abuse itself, but a lack of response to the abuse,” that can damage a child’s belief in self, she said. “It’s just such a shame. Healing can happen immediately when we respond with belief and safety.”

The culture of intense silence at Kurn Hattin likely further damaged the children psychologically, she said, because they grew up “without anyone believing them.” The children were already vulnerable and had special needs. The layer upon layer of trauma in this situation is “really profound,” she said.

Help Break the Cycle of Generational Trauma



Never underestimate

a cycle breaker. Not only did they
experience years of generational trauma,
but they stood in the face of the trauma
and fought to say, "This ends with me."

This is brave. This is powerful.

This comes at a significant cost.

Never underestimate
a cycle breaker.

NATE POSTLETHWAIT

tinybuddha.com