

OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM



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In addition to our on-staff spiritual life team, pastors and vicars from Zion Lutheran Church, Bismarck, and Grace Lutheran Church, Fargo, assist in ministering to our kids.

TRAUMA- INFORMED MINISTRY

Trauma-informed care through
the lens of God's mercy



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When Chaplain Rick Jones joined Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in 2012, the ministry was embedding the principles of trauma-informed care into its treatment and education programs for at-risk children and their families. After reviewing studies showing the pervasive, long-lasting negative effects of childhood trauma on physical and emotional well-being, Ranch leaders and staff had developed trauma-sensitive approaches to treatment and education.

As Chaplain Jones studied these approaches and learned ways to incorporate them into his ministry, he realized trauma-informed care mirrors the Biblical model of God's mercy. Just as God is present in the midst of our pain and provides for our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, we are present for the children in our care, providing for their needs.

WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED MINISTRY?

Whether we know it or not, we all serve people in our ministries or congregations who have been impacted by trauma. Trauma-informed ministry is a way to respond to people's needs in a way that acknowledges their experiences and helps them feel safe.

To put this philosophy into practice, Chaplain Jones added another "R" to the 4 R's of trauma-informed care to create a model of trauma-informed ministry.

- **Realizes** the effects of trauma.
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma.
- Creates a system that **Responds** to events that may trigger a trauma reaction.
- **Resists** re-traumatization.
- **Reserves** judgement.

Deaconesses Kelly Bristow and Stephanie Wilde have since joined Chaplain Jones in ministering to the needs of the children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Together, they are seeing the impact of trauma-informed principles on their mission to help children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.



WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is a normal response to an abnormal event. It can happen to anyone at any time and can have lasting effects on the body, mind, and spirit. In addition to headaches, dizziness, panic attacks, and feeling disconnected from God, someone who has experienced trauma may struggle with trust issues and feel unsafe in relationships.

THE POWER OF "WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?"

At the Ranch, we minister to children who have experienced many adverse childhood experiences and trauma. A simple shift in mindset from "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?" can make a huge impact on how we minister to trauma survivors.

As a ministry leader, you can create a trauma-informed environment that acknowledges people's experiences and helps them feel safe. If you would like to create a healing and healthy place for families using the principles of trauma-informed care, contact Chaplain Rick Jones at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (see back).