

## ***IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON FAITH\****

After the experience of a traumatic event, persons may be impacted emotionally, intellectually, physically and ***spiritually***. There are three possible outcomes as a result of this spiritual challenge:

- Faith is reaffirmed
- Faith is rejected
- Faith is transformed

**Spiritual tools** are an essential part of the Pastoral Response to trauma or extreme stress:

- Meaning and purpose are critical to stress resistance
- Faith and religion are a source of emotional support
- Faith and religion can be a starting point to regaining purpose and to begin problem solving
- Measures of participation in a faith based community are strong predictors of and positively relate to the quality of life

### **The Power of Prayer in Crisis:**

- A source of safety and security, ventilation and validation, prediction and preparation
- A source of comfort and stress moderation
- A source of connection to a broader community of faith
- Reaffirms a belief in order, meaning in the world
- A source of communication
- A source of spiritual processing

\*Adapted from National Organization of Victim Assistance Training Manual

## **The Power of Ritual in Crisis:**

- A source of social integration and support
- Helps to retain communication with loved ones
- May integrate tragedy into belief systems
- May become traditions for later generations
- Reminds people of their faith and belief systems

## **Ethical Guidelines in Addressing Spiritual Issues**

- Beware of the vulnerability of survivors
- Understand and respect the trust placed in you
- Be respectful of rituals or spiritual practices
- You have an affirmative ethical responsibility to meet the spiritual needs of survivors by finding appropriate spiritual support for them

## **Styles of Spiritual Coping**

- Blaming God
- Viewing the event as a punishment from God
- Blaming Satan or evil forces for the event
- Pleas for direct intercession
- Conversion
- Helping Others
- Problem Solving

## **Spiritual Issues that May Arise**

- Why me?
- Is this an act of God's will?
- Why does God hurt little children, or allow them to be hurt?
- Why doesn't God answer my prayers?
- Why is there evil in the world?
- How can I forgive? or Will God forgive me for what I feel?
- What did I do to deserve this?

## **Guidelines for Pastoral Assistance to Victims of Trauma or Crisis:**

(Taken from "Out of the Depths: Help for clergy in Ministering to Crime Victims" by Dr. Richard Lord)

- Don't explain
- Don't take away my reality
- Stay close
- Remember me...for a long time
- Don't be frightened by my anger
- Listen to my doubt
- Be patient

## **PROTOCOL: UTILIZING THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM**

(District Protocol)

### **Role of the Archdiocesan Catholic Charities Crisis Response Team:**

The role of the Catholic Charities Crisis Response team is to assist Catholic schools that have experienced a crisis/trauma situation, particularly a situation that impacts a significant portion of the school community. The Crisis Response Team assists the school by:

- Consulting with administrators/staff/parents
- Conducting crisis debriefing sessions with staff, classrooms, small groups, individual students and parents as needed
- Providing information about common stress reactions and developmentally based responses
- Assisting with the identification of and intervention with individuals at high risk as a result of the crisis
- Assisting with development of a follow-up/referral plan as needed

The School Crisis Response Team of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is coordinated by the Program Director of School Social Work Services. The team is made up of the coordinator and school social work staff. All team members are:

- Masters level Social Workers or Counselors licensed by the State of Indiana
- Trained in crisis intervention, crisis debriefing, and grief and loss issues

*Including Pastors + Youth Ministers?*

### **Accessing the Archdiocesan Catholic Charities Crisis Response Team:**

It is important to contact the crisis response team coordinator as soon as possible after the school becomes aware of a crisis incident. Time is needed to assess possible impact of the crisis, the level of crisis response needed, and to gather the team to respond as indicated. To contact the Crisis Team Coordinator:

During regular Catholic Center business hours, Monday through Thursday:

- Contact Tish Pyritz at her office phone number, 317-236-1523. If she is not immediately available, leave a message, then call her cell phone number, 317-509-2889.

After hours and on Fridays and weekends:

- Contact Tish Pyritz at 317-509-2889.
- Contact \_\_\_\_\_, OCE, at \_\_\_\_\_