

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250

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For more information, contact: Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933 or LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892

Human Services launches trauma awareness project ***“Trauma Happens. Recognize it. Talk about it” targets broad audience***

BISMARCK, N.D. – A new project from the North Dakota Department of Human Services’ Behavioral Health Division is aimed at increasing the understanding of trauma. The project — “Trauma Happens. Recognize it. Talk about it.” — is intended to raise awareness and help people recognize trauma while also encouraging those affected by trauma to seek help to address it.

“Trauma happens, and it has a thousand faces,” says Mark Doerner, Ph.D., a psychologist and Behavioral Health Division program administrator. “Some signs that trauma has happened include flashbacks or nightmares about the traumatic event, avoidance of people, places, and things that are reminders of the event, and being unable to relax. It’s also true that people may be affected very differently by the same traumatic event.”

The division encourages people to go to www.nd.gov/dhs and click on the “Trauma Happens” button to view a video and to learn more by reviewing frequently asked questions and data about the impact of trauma.

Doerner said the awareness campaign is also intended to promote recovery.

“It’s very important that healthcare providers, therapists, clergy, and others recognize and understand trauma,” says Doerner. “That’s often critical to helping a person talk about their traumatic experiences and recover from them.”

The trauma awareness campaign is part of a federal System of Care Expansion Grant awarded to the Behavioral Health Division in 2013. The goal of the grant is to ensure that evidence-based trauma care is included in the existing system of care for children and youth with serious emotional disorders, and their families.

The department is part of a statewide network of behavioral health clinicians known as the Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth. Through division efforts, behavioral health professionals in the private sector and in the department’s eight regional human service centers have had access to trauma-specific training to better serve children, youth, and families affected by trauma.

The department’s Behavioral Health Division provides leadership for the planning, development, and oversight of a system of care for children, adults, and families with severe emotional disorders, mental illness, or substance abuse issues. Information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/mentalhealth/.

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