

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 26, 2015**

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

Agency offers specialized treatment for traumatized children

BISMARCK, N.D. – Children and teens who have been abused, neglected, or exposed to domestic violence, a serious accident, or other traumatic events are at risk of developing traumatic stress. Without behavioral health treatment, this can affect how they view themselves, others, and the world, and may have long-term negative effects.

To help traumatized children and teens heal and cope in healthy ways, behavioral health professionals at the North Dakota Department of Human Services' eight regional human service centers have been trained to offer specialized care and treatment.

Department experts estimate that the majority of the children receiving services through foster care, child protection services, or public behavioral health treatment services have a history of trauma.

“Every child is different. The training our staff have received as a partner in the Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth enables us to offer trauma-informed care for those children whose traumatic experiences are negatively affecting them at school, at home, and with their peers,” said Sara Quam, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist at Southeast Human Service Center in Fargo.

Common reactions following a traumatic event may include anxiety, constant worry or fear, problems concentrating, learning, or taking in new information. Some children may become more impulsive, have difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep, or may experience nightmares. Emotional changes may include being moody, sad, angry and aggressive, or being withdrawn, depressed, or unusually quiet.

When these reactions become significant, long-term, and adversely affect children's lives, help is available.

Quam said providing trauma-informed care includes not only using proven therapy approaches, but ensuring that the environment children and teens encounter when they receive services in the human service center does not re-traumatize them.

“At Southeast Human Service Center, we have made a commitment to educate all of our staff about trauma and infuse this information into our policies and practices. We feel this level of investment is necessary to effectively serve the population we work with and promote recovery,” she said.

- MORE -

Human Service Centers offer specialize care for traumatized children – page 2

Quam said she hopes awareness about the specialized training regional human service center staff members have received grows so that more children benefit.

Southeast Human Service Center currently has six treatment professionals who have completed training and are available to provide therapy to children, teens, and families affected by trauma. For more information or to make a treatment referral, parents, guardians and professionals can contact Southeast Human Service Center's central intake team at 701-298-4500.

Contact information for other regional human service centers is online at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/>.

The department is part of a statewide network of behavioral health clinicians whose mission is to implement, evaluate, and sustain evidence-based mental health treatments for children who have experienced traumatic life events. Information about the Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth based in Fargo, N.D., is online at <https://www.tcty-nd.org>.

#