

RESPONDING TO TRAUMA IN YOUR PRESBYTERY OR PASTORAL CHARGE

Pastoral Charges, presbyteries and other groups within the church can experience trauma in a variety of forms. The following are all incidents that have happened somewhere in the United Church:

- A minister has a massive heart attack and dies at the Sunday School picnic
- A UCW presbyterial chair is killed in a car accident.
- A church caretaker commits suicide.
- A church burns to the ground. Arson is suspected.
- A congregational treasurer is arrested on charges of having defrauded her secular employer
- A congregation becomes aware that one of its lay volunteers has been sexually abusing children in a mid-week program he was leading
- A minister suffers a disabling stroke

Such incidents can be physically, emotionally and spiritually devastating to individuals and groups within the church. When the body of Christ suffers such a wound, the wider church is called upon to respond in whatever ways the situation requires, to bring comfort and healing to those affected. In Saskatchewan Conference, our Executive has determined that such response can best and most quickly be provided by individuals or teams of people provided by Shepell-fgi, our Employee Assistance provider, on a fee-for service basis.

PROCESS FOR ACCESSING TRAUMA RESPONSE

- When an incident occurs, contact the Conference Personnel Minister or any one of the Conference Program Staff at **(306) 721-3311**. That person will need some information from you:
 - Details of the incident
 - Number of people impacted by the trauma
 - Background information about any other recent events that might have impact on this situation

and will help you determine what sort of assistance is needed. That person will then make the arrangements with Shepell-fgi.

- The usual cost for such response is \$750 for a four hour time block. The costs of this will be negotiated by the conference with the body in crisis, and will take into account that body's ability to contribute to the costs. In some cases, Shepell-fgi may be able to provide a response under the United Church's Employee Assistance Plan provisions.. **Please remember that it is critical to get help to those who need it as quickly as possible. The financial implications can be sorted out at a later time.**

WHAT SORT OF RESPONSE CAN WE EXPECT?

The response your pastoral charge or presbytery will receive will vary with the kind of incident you have experienced.

- The trauma response may be in the form of an individual, or of a team.
- You can expect the trauma response provider/team to be present within 24 to 72 hours of learning of the incident.
- Response will take the form of both group and individual conversations and debriefing.
- Follow-up may come from either the trauma response provider or from other individuals and/or groups in the conference.