

Bishop's Response Team of the Alabama-West Florida Conference

- What is the purpose of the Bishop's Response Team?

The Bishop's Response Team of the Alabama-West Florida Conference responds and assists a congregation experiencing a crisis or trauma so that healing can begin. The team is trained to care for and provide support to those who are hurting. The trained team members are both laity and clergy.

- What situations might call for the Bishop's Response Team?

The Bishop may send the team after any kind of crisis, traumatic event, or unexpected change that may occur in a congregation. Some examples include sudden death of a pastor, embezzlement or misuse of funds by pastor or layperson, clergy sexual misconduct, laity sexual misconduct directly involving the congregation, sudden sabbatical by a pastor, church closures, sexual abuse of a church member at a church camp or other church event, and any other instance as requested by the Bishop.

- Why is it important to have a Bishop's Response Team?

The AWF Conference is committed to helping all churches be vital congregations. Churches, like families, can benefit from attentive listening to help guide them through the pain and grief associated with crisis, trauma, and unexpected changes so that they may be vital and healthy congregations.

- What is the procedure for asking for a team?

The Bishop's Response Team is sent at the discretion of the resident Bishop. If your church has experienced a crisis or traumatic event, contact your District Superintendent to inquire about receiving assistance from the Bishop's Response Team.

- What can we expect to happen when this team is assigned to our church?

The response team comes to you. When a team is assigned to your church, you can expect a loving and helpful response to the congregation, the staff, the pastor(s), and all others affected by the crisis, traumatic event, or unexpected change. Listening to everyone's story will help move individuals, congregations, and staff members through a healthy grief and healing process. The team will encourage people to speak openly about the emotions they may feel, learn about power, vulnerability and grief work, reflect on the spiritual aspect of healing and grieving, and provide the assistance necessary in determining what each congregation needs in order to heal.

- What is the cost to receive this assistance?

There is no cost. The team is composed of volunteers. Training was provided by our giving of apportionments.

- Who is the Bishop's Response Team Coordinator in the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference?

Rev. June Jernigan, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Ministerial Services.

8/2017

Questions for Clarification of BRT

- How regularly will the BRT meet together for continuing ed, updates, etc.?
- How will you know when you have been deployed to serve?
- Who will lead the team?
- Do BRT members need Safe Sanctuary training? Sorry. That's my question for every volunteer situation in the local church. It a habit.
- Do we have procedure for updates on cases to keep congregation, clergy, complainant, and BRT informed?

Ideas for Clarifying BRT process:

- Process flowchart for BRT members, DSs, and churches who receive BRT
- Draft a generic first congregation meeting agenda from Becky's slides.

Steps to take when BRT is deployed:

Questions to ask of team members:

-Now that you have been trained and have reviewed this document, are you still willing to serve in this capacity?

-Do you feel called to serve with a particular group or involved party (i.e. pastor, pastor family, staff, complainant)?

-Is there specific training that we can provide that would be helpful? Maybe this is broken down into a multiple choice. Which of these trainings would be most helpful?

Objectives:

- Listen well to help facilitate healing and grief processing
- Provide a ministry of presence to reinforce that the church cares
- Assist in telling the truth regarding the precipitating event
- Educate on grief work
- Educate on sexual conduct and inherent power of clergy, when applicable
- Encourage theological reflection
- Assist in naming feelings and emotions related to the event

Typical Bishop's Response Team Tasks

- Coordinate with District Superintendent
- Coordinate with other BRT members
- Meet with Staff Parish Relations Committee
- Meet with congregation
- Debrief following meetings
- Decide next steps

Bishop's Response Team Dos

- DO ask questions
- DO reflect back what you have heard
- DO validate feelings
- DO plainly state the situation without flowery language
- DO focus on the story of the people you are serving

Team Member Task Responsibilities

- Team Leader (see Appendix 1)
 - Coordinate the responsibilities of BRT among team members
 - Work with District Superintendent
 - Plan SPRC Meeting
 - Plan Staff Meeting (if necessary)
 - Plan Congregational Meeting
 - Devotional Component (See Appendix 4)
 - Educational Component (sexual misconduct and grief work)
 - Small group leaders
 - Facilitator for large group conversation after small group discussion
- Assistant Team Leader
 - Manage logistical details (See Appendix 2)
- Possible Support Person Assignments (See Appendix 3)
 - Support Person to the Accused
 - Support Person to the Victim
 - Support Person to Congregation
 - Support Person to the family members for all parties
 - Support Person to the interim pastor

List of Appendixes

- Appendix 1 - Team Leader Guidelines - june
- Appendix 2 - Logistics meghan
- Appendix 3 - Support Person Guidelines - brian
 - List of questions to ask
 - Listening skills
 - Ministry of Presence
 - Follow up for support persons to individuals, staff, SPRC
- Appendix 4 - Devotional Helps meghan
- Appendix 5 - Staff-Parish Relations Meeting -brian
 - Statement/Script to announce meeting -meghan
- Appendix 6 - Staff Meeting - brian

- Statement/Script to announce meeting
- Appendix 7 - Congregational Meeting - brian
 - Statement/Script to announce meeting

*Create survey monkey for BRT after they have been deployed.

-What was helpful?

-What worked?

-What might you try in the future?

-What further resources/training did you need?

-etc.