

How is



Trauma-Sensitive?

A trauma-sensitive or trauma-informed faith environment is one in which knowledge about the impact of trauma and the journey of trauma recovery is recognized and utilized to help foster faith development. A primary goal of trauma-sensitive faith environments is to help heal the wounds resulting from exploitative relationships and help individuals experience the kind of loving relationships that God intended for them.

Research identifies five key elements of trauma-sensitive environments:

Safety, Empowerment, Collaboration, Choice, and Trust.

Safety The retreat team that will serve you is comprised of Victim Assistance Coordinators, mental health providers, and clergy who have completed a thorough *screening and vetting* process and who have completed additional *training* in the prevention of abuse and formation of right relationships. The rural retreat setting provides a serene and *secure space* to meet as a group and offers *private sleeping quarters* for each individual participant.

Empowerment A key aspect of The Way Healing Retreat is the empowerment of participants to *reclaim their identity as a beloved child of God* and to be *strengthened in their journey* with the knowledge that they are not journeying alone.

Collaboration Registration for The Way Retreat begins with a *collaborative discernment process*, first encouraging individuals to discuss their participation in the retreat with the trauma recovery providers they have entrusted to help them on their journey. Then together with a retreat team member they discern whether this retreat is the right experience at the right time in their healing journey. During the retreat, participants have the *opportunity to meet with a retreat team member* to discuss what they are experiencing and what their next steps might be following the retreat. If there is any need for *crisis intervention* during the retreat weekend it is provided through collaboration with the participant's ongoing provider.

Choice Participants are *invited* to journey with Christ through His passion. Participants are offered a vast array of opportunities to encounter Christ and process their thoughts, feelings, and experiences throughout the retreat. Participants are *free to choose the activities that are the best fit for them* and have the choice to participate, observe, or excuse themselves as needed.

Trust One of the most devastating effects of trauma comes through the great violation of trust that is at the core of abuse and exploitation. The Way Retreat strives to help participants build trust by offering an *opportunity to experience safe, stable and nurturing relationships* with team members and participants. Most importantly, however, The Way reminds us that we are called to *love* others and to put our Trust in the Lord.