

International Center for Trauma Education and Care

**Spring 2025
Newsletter**

Edited by:
Kiersten Lechleitner



**Milestones since
October 2019**



**Total People Trained
21305**



**Total Educators Trained
3271**



**Total Pastors Trained
1776**



**Total Countries Reached
20**

From Our Executive Director

Even before the Center was formally established, we were deeply committed to reaching beyond our campus—to our local community, to other states, and even internationally. This outreach, even within a single academic quarter, has always been a meaningful and valuable part of our mission.

At the heart of this commitment is our focus on students. We believe that by investing in them, the impact we create will extend far beyond the walls of our institution.

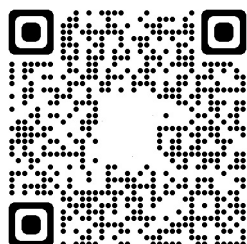
In this edition of the newsletter, we'd like to highlight one such student. She chose to spend spring break providing trauma awareness trainings and working to support positive growth in children.

Here is her story, in her own words...

-Ingrid



Learn More



Bolivia Trip



International Center for Trauma Education and Care

**Spring 2025
Bolivia Tour**

Contributor -
Lisiane Umuhire



Bolivia Trip

From March 12–21, 2025, I had the privilege of returning to Familia Feliz, a children's home in Rurrenabaque, Bolivia, as part of a mission trip with a team of 17. The group included 15 students from Andrews University and two representatives from the Center for Faith Engagement (CFE). It was especially meaningful for me to return—this place shaped so much of my journey into social work, as I previously served there as a student missionary. I co-led the team alongside Guillermo Dominguez, another former missionary to Familia Feliz.

This time, my focus was on the trauma work. As a first-year Master of Social Work student, I had the opportunity and privilege to put into practice all I had been learning and contribute to the emotional and psychological healing that's just as vital as physical support. In addition to hands-on projects like repainting the girls' home, building benches, planting flower beds, and repairing the water line, I led trauma-awareness trainings for the staff and volunteers who care for the children every day.

We offered two sessions—one in English for student missionaries from Southern Adventist University, and one in Spanish for local Bolivian staff that work with the children. These trainings introduced foundational concepts about how trauma impacts child development and behavior, and we discussed practical, everyday strategies for implementing trauma-aware care in their context. It wasn't just about theory—it was about giving them tools they could use immediately, in moments of stress, conflict, or emotional shutdown.

I also helped shape and implement a trauma-aware Vacation Bible School (VBS) experience for the kids, centered around Psalm 139:14—"I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." The VBS curriculum incorporated social emotional learning to help the children recognize their emotions, build trust, and develop coping skills. Watching the kids respond to the activities—sometimes cautiously, sometimes with laughter—was a reminder that healing doesn't happen all at once, but it begins in safe, intentional spaces.

-Lisiane Umuhire

Bolivia Trip



"When we play together, we feel physically attuned and experience a sense of connection and joy... they moment you see a group of grim-faced people break out in a giggle, you know that the spell of misery has broken"

— Bessel A. Van der Kolk MD; Trauma Specialist



Bolivia Trip

In the Classroom

Contributer -
Charity Garcia



Milestones Since October 2024



Total Educators Trained

9



Total Education Specific Trainings

1

The pandemic impacts to our school communities in the areas of teacher wellness, student mental health, and lagging academic achievement have become more acute than ever before. The 2024 RAND State of the American Teacher survey reported that amongst the highest sources of stress for most teachers in both 2023 and 2024 was student behavior, low salaries, and administrative work outside of teaching. Teachers' reported well-being has been consistently worse than similar working adults since 2021. Teachers and administrators also need trauma-informed support in order to sustainably provide trauma-informed pedagogy to their students.

In response, ICTEC has developed customizable trainings in four main areas: Trauma & the Classroom, Trauma's Impact on Academics, Trauma-informed Responses to Aggressive and Defiant Behaviors, Trauma-informed Responses to Shut-down Behaviors. These trainings are available via Zoom or in-person. Dr. Garcia is often joined by trauma center education interns and alumni of trainings to add additional depth and current real life application examples. Additional trainings that are tailored to specific educator or school settings are also available. For example, next month Dr. Garcia will be training TriCounty HeadStart specifically in helping educators and school support staff to actionize their knowledge about trauma and it's impacts into tangible practice with children and families.

Last month, Professor Ingrid Slikkers and Dr. Charity Garcia offer a 24-hour Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Caregiver Training, with breakout groups tailored to educators and whole group sessions that helped to build connections across disciplines.

(https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRAT100/RRAT108-12/RAND_RRAT108-12.pdf)

"I was glad to be able to be in the TBRI training because it will be very helpful in the future as I plan to work within schools. The information was practical and I was able to put it to use right away as I currently work at a day care program."

Erin Staples,
Master of Science in Speech-Language
Pathology

April 13, 2025



In the Community and Beyond

Contributors -
Dustin Young
Serika Charles
Delfish



Fall 2024 - April 2025 Statistics



Total People Trained
2301



Total Trainings
40

I stood in the back of the room at a recent weekend event, preparing to share our team's "Trauma 101" presentation. I often prep and try to handle my nerves prior to the first workshop yet I could not do much more than simply listen as the worship team sang the words

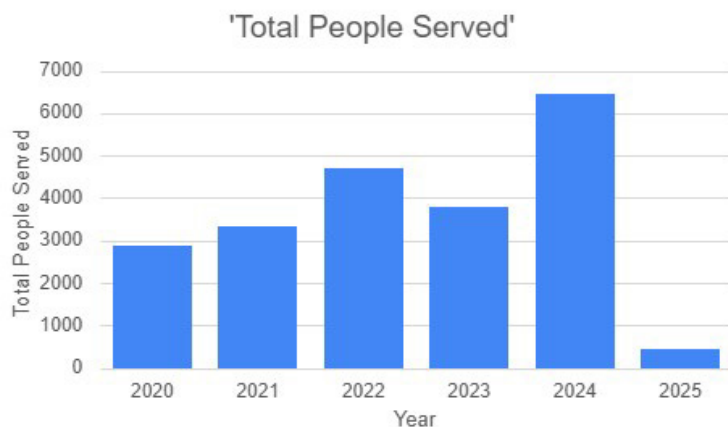
"It was lonely in the dark, but You were working. It was painful, it was hard...When I look back over my life, and I think how good You have been. My soul sings, "Great is Your faithfulness." You'll turn it around, don't know when, don't know how but You always do it somehow." (Great Is by Elevation Worship)

This event was designed to bring faith leadership teams together and examine how to navigate the struggles, wounds, dynamics, and blessings happening within their lives and communities. Why did this simple (and powerful) worship song catch my heart so strongly? They were singing about one of my favorite topics, Post-Traumatic GROWTH! The leadership team had intentionally chosen the theme song to focus on the topic of pain/trauma and also on the power of healing. This is how a simple song, when intentionally shared, can become part of a coping technique (singing helps with distress & emotional regulation), community connections, praise, and you bet it became part of our team's message throughout the training. It is our team's goal to not only share current practice, insights, stories, and skills that can be implemented; it is our goal to remind participants that they are not alone in the dark moments as well as the hope that the dark moments will become part of their healing story. Leadership teams and communities that begin the discussion and practice of building trauma awareness not only think of the painful wounds of trauma, but they also think of the skills to cultivate healing.

The effects of childhood trauma on our health "cost an estimated...\$748 billion annually in Bermuda, Canada, and the United States."

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

June 29, 2023



In the Community and Beyond

Contributors -
Dustin Young
Serika Charles Delfish



2024-2025

**Diverse
Audiences**

Berrien County Juvenile
Court

Berrien County RESA
Suicide Prevention Training

Bolivian Children's Home

Cass County Drug
Endangered Child Summit

Egypt

MENA Missionary Families

Corewell Medical Staff

Upper Hill Church, Kenya

Women's Ministry Leaders
in Nigeria

I continue to be humbled at how our team has been able to support so many different communities, professions and individuals. Good really is happening, and much of that is due to those supporting our team with prayers, financial donations, and presentation requests. Thank you for your continued support for our team as we continue to grow, serve, and collaborate, knowing that amazing things are happening.

-Dr. Dustin Young

International:

In the Kijauri district of Kenya, 402 people—pastors, elders, ministry leaders, and congregation members, all belonging to Upper Hill SDA and Kijauri SDA—gathered for Trauma Awareness Training that was developed and presented by our Social Work intern, Serika Charles-Delfish. What unfolded was more than the sharing of information; it was a sacred reminder of what it means to bear one another's burdens. From the beginning, the leaders spoke with tenderness about the weight they carried for their community. Domestic violence had left deep wounds. Many people with disabilities were longing to be seen and supported. And the leaders themselves, though steadfast in their service, were navigating their unspoken pain. They didn't come seeking quick solutions; they came seeking understanding. The questions that emerged were thoughtful and courageous. Leaders wanted to know how to create safe spaces where people could begin to heal. They wanted to understand how to care for others without neglecting their well-being. Evidently, their desire to serve was not born from obligation but from love—a love that mirrors Christ's own. By the end of our time together, many reflected on how the training had opened their eyes. They spoke about the changes they hoped to make within their church walls and throughout their community. It was a reminder that the church is not simply a place of worship but a refuge—a sanctuary for the brokenhearted and the weary.

-Serika Charles Delfish
Intern, MSW Candidate

"Preventing ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) could potentially reduce many health conditions. Estimates show up to 1.9 million heart disease cases and 21 million depression cases potentially could have been avoided by preventing ACEs."

<https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.htm>

October 8, 2024



Pastoral Initiatives

Contributer-
David Sedlacek
Co- Presentor
Beverly Sedlacek



Milestones Since October 2024



Total Trainings

8



New Countries Reached

2

Our pastors are not immune from trauma "the experience of physical abuse was consistently higher than the national average. "

Trauma and its Impact on Pastoral Leadership
David Sedlacek, PhD, LMSW, CFLE

2023

The past three months have been filled with training events on trauma and its healing for several local churches, groups of pastors, seminary faculty, and Women's Ministry leaders from Africa.

The presentation to seminary faculty and discussion afterward revealed a great deal of brokenness in the seminary students. This resulted in a call for equipping the faculty to become better equipped to respond to the brokenness.


A Journey to Wholeness training has been scheduled for August 24th, 2025.

In February our team was invited by the General Conference Women's Ministry Department to train 30 women's ministry leaders at Babcock University in Nigeria to minister as lay counselors to other women.

A very exciting and rewarding development is that the women's ministry leaders of Western Africa that were trained have already begun to train other women to be lay counselors to other women. Additional training sessions in local areas have been scheduled for each of the 30 women that were trained. There is a high incidence of trauma, especially sexual trauma in this part of the world, making the need for this lay counselor trauma training especially important.

At this training a manual on trauma was developed that is being upgraded and prepared to be used in any Division of the world church.






**ADVENTIST
WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**
Presents

**THE TRAUMA
INFORMED CHURCH**

**A BIBLICAL
APPROACH
TO THE HEALING
OF TRAUMA**

22nd-23rd Mar. 2025 8:30am- 4:30pm

 **Mid Ghana Union Conference (MGUC)
Conference Hall, Abrepo, Kumasi.**

" Heal me O Lord and I shall be healed, save me and
I shall be saved, for you are my praise. Jeremiah 17:14

Training that is now being offered by the women we
trained in February

Leaders in Training

Contributors:

Sofia Bailey (Education),
Serika Charles Delfish
(Social Work), Tricia Handy
(Education)

Intern Developed, Led, or Supported Presentations:

- Trauma Aware Training for Upper Hill Church, Kenya
- Trauma Aware -a 3-Week Short Course
- TBRI - Trust Based Relational Interventions Caregiver Training is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children, in various settings.

"64% people in the US will experience at least one adverse childhood experience before the age of 18. 1 in 6 report 4 or more."

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

June 29, 2023



Sofia Bailey - TBRI training has significantly impacted my approach to supporting students. I have implemented strategies such as a calming corner, zone check-ins, and fidget tools to help students regulate their emotions. This training has made me more sensitive to students' feelings, equipping me with the knowledge and skills to guide them through self-regulation. By addressing students' emotional and social needs, I am contributing to their holistic development, ensuring they are not only academically successful but also emotionally resilient. Additionally, I can now support my colleagues in helping their students manage emotions effectively, creating a more nurturing and responsive classroom environment.



Serika Charles Delfish - Facilitating the Kenya training was an opportunity to serve and a profound experience of growth for me as an intern. It deepened my understanding of what it means to lead with humility and presence. I learned to hold space for difficult conversations, even when the answers weren't simple. Witnessing the vulnerability of the leaders in Kijauri taught me the importance of listening—not just to respond, but to understand truly. This experience also sharpened my ability to adapt. Working across time zones and navigating unexpected challenges during the virtual training reminded me that meaningful impact isn't about flawless execution; it's about showing up with dedication and care. I left with a renewed appreciation for the resilience of communities that face hardship and choose healing. Above all, I was reminded that trauma-informed care is not just a concept to teach—it's a way of being. It's recognizing the inherent dignity in every person and believing in the possibility of restoration. The people of Kijauri exemplified that belief. And because of them, I carry it into every space I serve.



Tricia Handy - The TBRI training has had a powerful and immediate impact on the interactions with my students in the classroom. I find myself being more intentional about listening to my students, not just the words they say, but their body language, behaviors, and all the non-verbal cues that I previously chose to ignore or had just altogether missed. Being more intune with the needs of students has not only helped to strengthen our relationships and build up our class community, it has empowered my students to be comfortable with sharing their feelings more openly, knowing that we are all here to support one another. It has been humbling to watch my students demonstrate the love and care that Jesus calls us to show others. Each day they teach me how to be more sensitive, more helpful, more loving. As our class learns to trust one another more, we develop more meaningful relationships within our classroom - a practical example of the beautiful friendship God desires to have with each of His children.

International Center for Trauma Education and Care



Trainings Offered:

Introduction to
Trauma Awareness

Trauma Responsive

Trauma Trainings for
Educators

Suicide Prevention
Training

Trust Based Relational
Intervention
(TBRI)

And more....

Our Mission:

Trauma occurs when a person experiences something that is perceived as physically or emotionally threatening. These experiences produce feelings of exceeding stress, terror, or helplessness, and can produce lasting effects upon the individual's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Such trauma is prevalent, without regard for socio-economic, race, gender, or religion around the world.

The Center's main goal is to provide trauma-informed education and care to people and places around the globe. We model the compassion of Jesus by helping to prevent traumatization or re-traumatization while promoting long-term healing from trauma.

We offer trauma-informed awareness, education, and tools to support prevention and healing in organizations, schools, churches, and communities across the world acknowledging that the work of becoming trauma-informed is a continual journey.

Request Training

