

How Healthy Start began...

Rev. Dale Sollom-Brotherton, founder of New Beginnings Consulting, has spent over 10 years helping congregations in conflict. He has identified patterns which, if addressed early, not only prevent destructive conflict, but actually re-direct the energy in these tensions towards positive results.

Dale has found that one of the most frequent causes of destructive tension in congregations is unclear mutual expectations between pastor and lay leadership and, consequently, the absence of an effective way to monitor and enhance the quality of this partnership. Research has discovered that the seeds of destructive conflict are usually sown in the first years of a pastorate, the same time when expectations are high and feelings are positive.

The best thing to do, Dale has realized, is to clarify these mutual expectations — as early as possible — and take advantage of the excitement and energy that comes with a new chapter in a congregation's life. This early involvement not only clears up any potential misunderstandings and mistaken assumptions; it also provides a way to build on this natural excitement to identify and achieve goals that are mutually established.

Dale has personally trained and directly supervises a group of highly effective facilitators for Healthy Start. He is always available if there are questions or concerns throughout the Healthy Start process.

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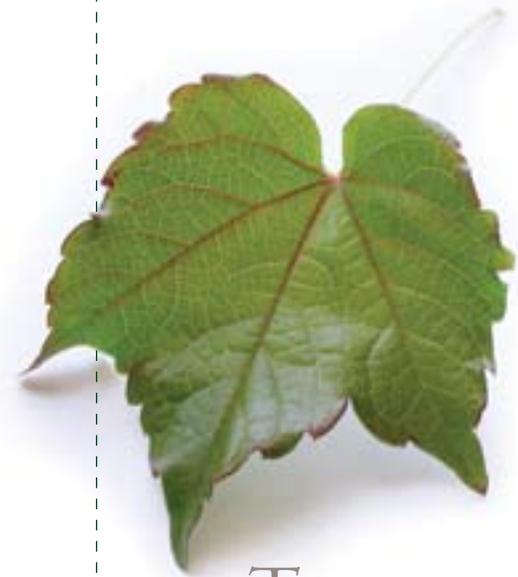


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Healthy Start

for Congregations

Enhancing the Partnership of
Pastor *and* **People**



The congregation and search committee have worked long and hard to prepare for the arrival of a new pastor . . .

The pastor has prayerfully concluded that he or she is called by God to serve this congregation . . .

How will pastor and people build on this new beginning? How will they make sure they are able to give their very best to one another so that God's mission and ministry move ahead as well as possible?

The answer: Healthy Start!

The Process

Within the first two to four weeks of a new pastorate there is a facilitated one-day retreat with pastor and lay leaders to:

- Build and develop a spiritual partnership.
- Get better acquainted.
- Clarify explicit and implicit mutual expectations.
- Set initial goals for leaders.
- Establish quarterly check-in dates for monitoring these expectations and goals, and for making the necessary "course corrections."
- Plan for communication with a denominational representative.
- Congregations with multiple staff teams will engage in a similar parallel process for the staff team itself.

At the end of the first year plans are made to continue the routine of mutual check-ins, with or without the assistance of a Healthy Start facilitator.

The Benefits

- Congregational leadership is rooted and grounded in prayer and faith.
- The important work in the search committee's self-study is forwarded to congregational leadership for **action**.
- Healthy patterns and practices are nurtured in communication, collaboration, partnership, and consensus-building.
- Misunderstandings resulting from unclear expectations are prevented.
- Goals are established and measured periodically.
- Possible conflicts are precluded and re-directed by an "early warning system."
- Congregational leadership is intentionally united in its ministry and mission.
- Solid connections with the larger church are established.

The Results

- Prayer and faith are at the center of congregational leadership.
- A positive, energetic leadership partnership is developed.
- Goals are identified and achieved.
- The tone is set for vital ministry and mission far into the future.
- Any tensions are identified early; necessary "course corrections" are made together.
- A culture of mutual evaluation is developed, leading to revitalized congregational life.
- The staff (for larger congregations) becomes an authentic team in leading and serving the congregation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should we participate in Healthy Start?
Think of it as a kind of "insurance policy" after all the time and energy spent in the call process. Good partnerships and goal achievement don't just happen by themselves.

We have never had any severe conflict. How would Healthy Start help us?
Wonderful! Healthy Start will save so much time and energy for you as you clarify your goals and expectations, and it will help you to build quickly on all the important work of the Search Committee.

Can't we do this for ourselves?
An expert facilitator has a unique perspective on the congregation and its leaders, and can raise any difficult issues in a positive way.

Is there a cost involved?
Yes—there is an investment for

Healthy Start which depends on the size and circumstances of the congregation. Congregations are often able to set aside funds during the time between permanent pastors. Denominational assistance is sometimes available.

How will we find time for Healthy Start?
The important task of getting acquainted and setting goals should always happen in any congregation, and it always takes time!

What if we have a staff team?
Healthy Start offers a separate and parallel process for the staff team itself.

What should we do next?
Contact New Beginnings Consulting for further information about process, cost and scheduling at 866-248-3256 (toll free).