

Small Church Initiative



WEEKEND CONSULTATION MANUAL

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Overview of Process*

Phase One

Before the Weekend Consultation

- The weekend consultation process begins with a vote from the church's Ad Board/Council to enter into the Healthy Church Initiative process.
 - The church pastor informs the Annual conference's Congregational Excellence office and is enrolled into the next Peer Mentoring group.
 - Pre-consultation workshop is held; MissionInsite demographics are obtained; Mystery worshiper program begins; self-study is completed; teams are created; etc...
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Phase Two

During the Consultation

- Day One – Consulting team interviews the pastor, staff, and key lay leaders; pot luck; congregational learning time
 - Day Two – Write report; deliver report to pastor and laity leaders
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Phase Three

After the Weekend Consultation

- Town hall meetings for church to discuss report and prescriptions
 - Congregational vote held by DS at Church Conference on total prescriptions
 - If approved:
 - Church is assigned a coach to work with them with two on-site sessions and four telephone sessions
 - Church staff, leaders, and congregation focus on implementing each prescription and growing a healthy church
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** This is a typical consultation schedule, some changes may be made. More detailed information available in the "Church Prep Checklist" section **

Healthy Church Initiative Process

Overview

The Healthy Church Initiative was formed to help revitalize churches and aid them in fulfilling The Great Commission.

(see Matthew 28:19-20)

The process started in Missouri with a group of six churches several years ago and has grown and spread throughout many UMC conferences nationwide. Bob Farr collaborated with other key individuals like Paul Borden, Doug Anderson, and David Hyatt to continuously refine the process.

In 2009, the Small Church Initiative was designed to meet the needs of churches with less than 80 in worship attendance.

There are many components to this process.

SCI Components

1. HCI Team Meeting – oversight of process, assign consultants, coaches, etc. and the prep for this meeting.
2. Consultation dates set up with churches, consultants, coaches (coaches need to be recruited and plans made for training)
3. Peer Mentoring Group(s) Orientation
4. SCI Workshops (Pastor & Laity together)

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Healthy Church Initiative Process, Continued

SCI Components continued

5. Pre-consultation Steps
 - Self-study, two teams active at each church
 - Prep in the local church: Teams, self-study, communication, clear the calendar
 - Contacts with each church, Peer Mentoring groups meeting
 - Each church has a Consultation Team – Lead Consultant and one lay person
 - Receipt of Self-studies, review, copy and send to Team for each consultation

6. Consultation

7. Following Consultation, Town Hall Meetings, Church Conference to Vote on Prescriptions.

8. Follow up Coaching begins, process for coaches to send in reports, receive payments, etc. – coaches accountability handled by Coach Coordinator.

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Healthy Church Initiative Process, Continued

Suggested Annual Timeline for SCI

July – SCI recruitment begins for next round of workshops

September– Receive notification of those churches in workshops wanting to take next step of consultation.

October-Line up consultations with churches/coaches/consultants for dates (Jan-May of the next year). Finalize as soon as possible. See Master HCI Schedule sample for tracking.

November-

- Finalize list for Peer Mentoring Orientation and plan weekend
- All churches receive self-study and direction needed to prepare for the consultations.
- Prep for Consultations underway in each church.

November-December – Continue prep for consultations, PM groups/orientation

January

- Hold Peer Mentoring Orientation
- First Consultations

February – Consultations

March – Consultations – some coaching might begin for earliest consultations churches if approval is made

April – Consultations follow up coaching begins in churches after approval of prescriptions.

May – Wrap-up Consultations – most churches into coaching by now

June – Coaching continues, begin planning for next SCI season

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Healthy Church Initiative Process, Continued

Robert Schnase,
Bishop
Missouri
Annual
Conference
United
Methodist
Church

"The Healthy Church Initiative (HCI) has become our process to transform existing congregations thru continuous learning communities.

The centerpiece of the Healthy Church Initiative is the Pastoral Leadership Development Group (PLD), a voluntary, nine-month, small-group, peer learning experience for pastors that involves professional coaching, in-depth reading, and mutual support that gives pastors tools for training laity and helps pastors develop strategies and skills for congregational transformation.

Some congregations step beyond PLD to the next level of HCI which involves a weekend congregational Consultation. A team of trained consultants meet with staff and laity for in-depth analysis, discussion, and teaching to arrive at key congregational prescriptions for change that leads to growth.

Churches who accept the recommendations receive on-going congregational coaching. Recently we've added a lay teaching component to the HCI called Lay Leadership Development (LLD) to train using readings and peer group discussions to support and complement the PLD groups.

During fall 2009, more than 250 pastors voluntarily participated in PLD groups, nearly 200 laity attended LLD, and more than 20 churches have invited in-depth Consultations.

The HCI provides a process that strengthens pastoral effectiveness, improves clergy moral, deepens our connection, and enhances skills for ministry.

This process bears fruit in the five core practices of fruitful congregations. The HCI is key to growing fruitful congregations."

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Healthy Church Initiative Process, Continued

STRATEGIES	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Peer Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy churches grow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is everything
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires outside help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates urgency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laity involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No quick fix

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

1. Radical Hospitality
 2. Passionate Worship
 3. Intentional Faith Development
 4. Risk-Taking Mission & Service
 5. Extravagant Generosity
-

Five Expectations

We have of each other

1. Christ-centered
 2. Fruitfulness
 3. Excellence
 4. Accountability
 5. Collaboration
-

Mission

Leading congregations to lead people to actively follow Jesus Christ.

Continuous Learning Communities

Overview

There are various continuous learning communities which are key to the overall Small Church Initiative process. Each of these programs are designed with two main purposes:

1. Develop core competencies of pastors and laity leaders.
 2. Prepare pastors and laity leaders along with their churches for the consultation which is the centerpiece of the SCI process.
-

Continuous Learning Communities

examples, not all inclusive

- Small Church Initiative Workshops for both pastors and laity together
 - Peer Mentoring
-

Costs

In most cases, the participating church will be responsible for paying for their participation fee and their own books. Current cost is \$300 per church for the six workshops and participant workbooks.

The districts and conference will be responsible for paying the teachers / facilitators of the classes.

Focus

We know from past experiences that the issues/opportunities that are identified most during consultations are: passionate worship, focusing outward, vision, evangelism, connecting, mission, and structure.

Each program was designed to help address these areas.

Materials

Each participant in these programs receives a complete workbook which contains key information on each topic along with plenty of room for notes.

The facilitators for each program will use a guide which contains all the information they need to lead each session in addition to a participant workbook and a CD of all the PowerPoint® presentations.

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Small Church Initiative

Overview

This process is designed for church leaders (pastors and laity) in churches with an average attendance of 80 or less. These sessions will have pastors and lay leaders together.

The **Small Church Initiative** includes two main components:

1. The SCI group training sessions for pastors and lay leaders. These six sessions are held every other month over the course of one year.
2. Full-day church consultation on-site with a trained consultant provided by the conference.

Not all pastors/churches who take the group training will continue on to have a consultation experience. However, that is an underlying focus for these sessions.

Topic / Books

Session	Topic	Book
1	Orientation / Building the Case for Hope	<u>The Healthy Small Church</u> by Dennis Bickers
2	Getting Beyond Our Church Walls	no book
3	Leadership Development: The Foundation for Growth	<u>Ultimately Responsible</u> by Sue Nilson Kibbey
4	Empowering Laity Beyond Committees	<u>Evangelism in the Small Church</u> by Royal Speidel
5	Casting Vision for Missional Clarity	no book
6	Developing Vision Statements & Goal Setting	no book

Mini Consultation

There is also the option for churches in the SCI process to have an onsite consultation. While the overall process is similar to what is covered in this manual for larger HCI churches, it has been adapted for smaller churches.

More details are available from the SCI coordinator.

Role of District Superintendent

Overview

The District Superintendents have a key role to play in the whole Healthy Church Initiative of the Missouri Annual Conference. The key words are “informed and involved.”

The DS should be very informed as to what is happening in regard to SCI Workshops and Consultations. Each district will work and develop these processes to be most helpful with their churches. It would be great to have a District Strategy of the SCI, and have steps and a timetable that you are working in your district.

Key Points for the DS to be “Informed”

1. The DS needs to know about and understand the SCI process, and manuals. It is important to have a district strategy as to what are our next steps of consultations.
2. The DS needs to ensure they are being kept informed before the following stages in the process:
 - Conversations with the church about being in the process
 - The yes/no decision – to enter into the process
 - The start of the SCI consultation material gathering
 - The date of the consultation
 - Option to attend the congregational training session
 - The times and dates for the town hall meetings
 - The time and date for the charge conference
3. Get information from Bob Farr if you are not now well informed. He can inform you or refer you to the best resource person for each step of the process. Ask questions and be proactive.

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Role of District Superintendent, Continued

**Key Points
for the DS
to be
to be
“Informed”**

1. The DS can work with Bob and these lay leaders to set up classes. The DS can attend workshops at least for the “learning component” of each session.
2. The DS can work with individual churches/pastors to get into the Peer Mentoring/Consultation process. Board/Council approval is required to make this step. Peer Mentors are trained and under Bob Farr’s office in terms of accountability and responsibility.
3. Involvement in the Consultation process for the DS can be any number of things:
 - Get trained and be a coach in another district.
 - Be trained to lead consultations.
 - Attend consultations in your district, but not the interviews. The congregational learning time is a good place for the DS to attend.
 - Work with the pastor on dates for information meetings to study the prescriptions and the Church Conference date/time.
 - Conduct the Church Conference to vote on the prescriptions.

Overall, the DS is a key player in the Small Church Initiative and we hope this is not just one more program to be promoted but a “process” to grow healthy congregations and to “make disciples.” The DS can be helpful at many steps along the way and supportive of those in the process.