A COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAM INITIATIVE
A Plan for Developing Support Teams
In Partnership with the Support Team Network

The Need

People need care everywhere. They need care because they are living longer with various illnesses but not always with the quality of life desired. People need care because families are more geographically dispersed in another city, town, or state, and thus are not available as caregivers.

People need care because they are being discharged from hospitals quicker and sicker than ever before. At the same time, fewer caregivers are available due to two-income families and other reasons. When people have health concerns or special needs, the practical, emotional, and spiritual needs often fall through the cracks.

Who wants to care?

Congregations and organizations have been caring for people with special needs for centuries. How this care is coordinated and organized is the challenge. People want to make a difference in someone’s life, but how can they in this busy and hectic day?

The needs are too great to meet all the needs of one’s neighbor by oneself. The needs are too great if we keep trying to recruit people to do what we want them to do rather than helping each person to discover what they love to do and offer it in a manageable, time flexible way. The needs are too great if every congregation or organization works independently and reinvents the wheel in each situation.

However, we can meet the needs in a community if we do some things together. We can share training, learn from each other’s experience, and encourage one another in the process as a more effective way of becoming caring communities.

The Team Approach is a practical way to involve volunteers in supporting and caring for persons with health concerns and other special needs.

The Team Approach is a proven model

The Team Approach allows volunteers to do what they can, when they can, in a coordinated way, with a built-in support system. It is a practical way for persons to create community for persons when they need it most.

The Support Team Network staff has trained thousands of persons to be on Support Teams, as well as thousands more to start, train, and sustain Teams since 1994. Teamwork has taught us important basic principles that make caring for people in this day and time practical and possible.
What is a Support Team Initiative?

A Support Team Initiative is a partnership with congregations, organizations, and The Support Team Network to develop Support Teams to care for persons who have health concerns or other special needs. Teams offer practical, emotional, and spiritual support when people need it most.

An Initiative takes place within a community that usually involves 5-10 (or more) congregations and/or organizations. Congregations and organizations share the training of trainers called a Support Team Development Training, as well as share a process that gets the right people to the training and then supports the participants once the training is complete. The Support Team Initiative’s goal is sustain Support Teams in a community for many years to come.

A single congregation can also have a Support Team Initiative to care for its own members as well as anyone else it desires. The principles are the same but the process is tailored to each congregation.

The Team Approach is also an easier way for persons to get the assistance they need by having one point of contact that has access to many persons. It is like having an extra set of helping hands available when it is needed and wanted without having to coordinate people’s schedules and takes the guesswork out of what people want to offer.

What is a Support Team?

A Support Team is a group of volunteers organized and prepared to offer practical, emotional, and spiritual support to persons with health concerns or other special needs. A Support Team cannot do everything for a person, family, place, or need, but it can do a lot to improve the quality of life for persons going through difficult times. There are many ways to organize a Team.

Basic Model. A Support Team may focus on one person or family, meeting a variety of needs along the way.

Mission Model. The Team can also focus on a number of persons who share a common need (examples – transportation, meals, and house or yard maintenance).

Facility Model. A Team’s focus may be on a few needs of several persons living in one place, like a nursing home, clinic, or even a hospital unit.

Prevention/Educational Model. Finally, a Team can focus on preventive education or other educational issues (like support for diabetics, cancer awareness, HIV prevention, and more).

How is a Community Defined?

A community may be defined as 2-10 congregations and organizations who want to work together to share the preparation, training, and support in a Support Team Initiative.

While the description that follows refers to a Community Support Team Initiative, an Initiative can also be conducted within a Single Congregation or a locally-focused organization for the members and ministries of a congregation or programs of that organization.
The Support Team Initiative Process – A One-Year Plan

An Initiative is a partnership with a community and the Support Team Network to teach persons how to develop Support Teams. The one-year partnership includes materials, brochures, workshops, training, and coaching that adapts our experience to a specific community.

A Support Team Initiative shares a common community Training (train-the trainer training) that teaches persons how to start, train, and sustain Support Teams for whatever need they want to address. But it’s not enough to do a single, isolated training in the community and just hope that the right people show up (those who want to start teams), and that Teams will magically develop as a result of the training.

Helping the community build ownership in the process and getting the right people (Team Developers) to the Training results in healthier Teams that are able to help more people effectively. The Team Developers need support in the weeks and months after the Team Developer Training as they put what they learned into action.

A Support Team Initiative involves a five step process: Exploring, Preparing, Training, Developing, and Supporting.

The Support Team Network coaches a community through Exploring and Preparing, then travels to the community to lead the Training (a train-the-team-developer training), and then continues coaching through the Developing and Supporting phases. All of this is done through monthly conference calls, email, website support, and materials (i.e. brochures, fliers, manuals, invitational letters).

The Support Team Network’s role in the partnership is to provide the guidance, training, resources, and support that maximize the success of all phases of the process.

The Support Team Initiative Process is summarized in five phases in below.

1. **Exploring** brings together representatives of congregations and/or organizations who want to learn more about The Team Approach and Support Teams through “An Introduction to Support Teams: Working Together to Share the Care” workshop. The workshop can be led by a STN National Trainer, or by local facilitators who have been through a Support Team Development Training, and its purpose is to:

   a. Provide an opportunity to sample Support Team training;
   b. Learn how a Support Team Initiative works; and
   c. How you can bring a Support Team Initiative to your community.

An Initiative Team (a Support Team for Support Teams) is formed at the end of the workshop with representatives from congregations and organizations who want to work together in a Community Support Team Initiative.

The Initiative Team assumes the responsibility for local guidance of the Initiative, decides on the method of funding for the Initiative, and invites the Support Team Network (STN) into partnership. Information about cost of the Initiative is at the end of this document.

The Support Team Network coaches The Initiative Team through conference calls, e-mails, and other materials, and provides a professionally produced introductory video, *An Introduction to Support Teams: Working Together to Share the Care*, that can be copied and distributed in the community to introduce persons to Support Teams.
When the Initiative Team is ready, everyone's role is clarified once more, and a partnership is made with The Support Team Network. A Support Team Development Training date is set and the preparation begins.

2. **Preparing** involves efforts to invite even more congregations and organizations to participate in the Support Team Development Training and how Teams can be used effectively in a congregation or organization. Guidance is provided to help groups determine if they want to be part of the Initiative and who the best persons are to send to Support Team Development Training.

One of the methods used in Preparing is to host a brief 1-2 hour Preparation Workshop(s) to accomplish the above goals. Sometimes, multiple Preparation Workshops are held in a community at different times and settings.

The Support Team Network coaches the Initiative Team to tailor the preparation to a specific community, and also provides resource materials and templates (i.e. brochures, fliers, PowerPoint slides).

Finally, two or three local persons will be identified from the Initiative Team and prepared to facilitate with a STN National Trainer in the Support Team Development Training to lay the groundwork for helping a community eventually be able to do an Initiative on its own.

3. **Training** is accomplished in a two-day event that equips persons to start, train, and sustain Teams in their congregation or organization. This is a train-the-trainer training, or commonly referred to as a train-the-team-developer training. Normally, the training is on successive weekdays from 9-4 each day, but can be flexible for each community.

Training participants gain the confidence and competence to develop teams to address almost any health concern or other special needs. They learn the proven steps of team development, practice each step, and teach it to others during the two days.

A Support Team Network National Trainer comes to the community to lead the two-day training. He or she also invites 2-3 persons from the community ahead of time to help facilitate the training to learn how to lead future Support Team Development Trainings. A detailed teaching plan is provided one month ahead of time.

The Support Team Network coaches the Initiative Team prior to the Training as well as provides brochures and a Guidebook (approximately 75-100 pages) that can be duplicated and distributed to each Training participant. The STN Staff recommends providing a three-ring binder notebook to make it easy for participants to copy various pages when they return home after the training.

If an Initiative Team prefers, the contents of the Guidebook can be purchased at cost, $10 per person (including shipping). Then the Initiative Team can insert the three-holed punched sets into locally purchased notebooks. Each community can decide what's best.

4. **Developing** involves the actual work of starting Support Teams within the participating congregations and congregations of the Initiative. Persons needing care and persons wanting to care are brought together as Support Teams are built and caring begins.

“A Congregational Initiative Team” can be formed in each local congregation (or an “Organizational Initiative Team” if in an organization) to give support to Team development.
The Congregational Initiative Team also has a representative on the Community Initiative Team that meets to share experiences and valuable lessons with one another in the community.

5. **Supporting** is an essential part of the process, where the Community Initiative Team is guided by the Support Team Network to give attention to sustaining the Initiative throughout the first year and beyond.

Supporting normally involves a community Support workshop that is led by local facilitators and celebrates the work being done, offers support to all participating congregations, and projects plans to invite additional congregations to join the Initiative.

Detailed plans are made to help participants continue to learn from one another’s experience, network with each other, and plan for a new Initiative in the coming year. The Initiative Team works with The Support Team Network to determine what role, if any, it would like STN to have in the coming year.

**Materials**

The Support Team Network provides printed materials (Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, and PDF files) throughout the Initiative including flier templates, brochures, slide presentations, and video resources to train persons to give leadership in the phases mentioned above.

The congregations and organizations that are in partnership with The Support Team Network for the Initiative may duplicate materials for use within those specific congregations and organizations throughout the year process. If the community prefers The Support Team Network to provide printed paper copies of the brochures, fliers, and PowerPoint presentations, they can be purchased at The Support Team Network’s cost (see budget preparation at the end of this document).

A ten-minute introductory video, “An Introduction to Support Teams: Working Together to Share the Care” is available in VHS and DVD format. A copy of each format is supplied to a Community Support Team Initiative and anyone may copy it to distribute in the community (or more can be purchased at our cost).

In addition, the Network staff is available for coaching through telephone conferencing, e-mail support, and resource sharing throughout the one year as needed at no additional cost.
Option 1.

**The cost for a one-year Community Support Team Initiative is $5,000.**

The Support Team Network provides the coaching, resources, and support for all phases of the “The Support Team Initiative” described above.

In addition, the travel (auto mileage or airfare) lodging, and meals for the STN National Trainer who leads the two-day Support Team Development Training is expected. The Community Support Team Initiative is limited to the members of the partnering congregations and organizations.

Some communities prefer The Support Team Network National Trainer to lead one or more of the workshops (Exploring, Preparing, or Supporting) during the first year of an Initiative (in addition to the two-day Team Development Training). If so, we will provide a Trainer at a cost of $500 per event plus travel expenses.

Option 2.

A second option is for a congregation who wants to do an Initiative only for its members and ministries.

**The cost for a single Congregational Support Team Initiative is $2,500.**

The Support Team Network provides the coaching, resources, and support for all phases of the “The Support Team Initiative” for a single congregation that is described above.

There is also an additional cost of travel (auto mileage or airfare), lodging, and meals for the STN Staff Member to lead the Support Team Development Training. The Congregational Support Team Initiative is limited to the members of the partnering congregation.

**Food Costs.**

Light refreshments (coffee, soft drinks) may be provided but are not required during the Exploring, Preparing and or for the Preparation workshop.

An additional cost for an Initiative involves the food for the two-day Support Team Development Training (two continental breakfasts, two lunches, and four refreshment breaks).

**Payment for an Initiative** may be made in one or two payments.

**Funding Alternatives**

The Support Team Network assists communities in exploring funding for a Community Support Team Initiative.

*The most important principle to remember is to share the cost among many groups and individuals, just as the community shares the care and training.*

Some communities have done one of the following to fund an Initiative. These suggestions may be combined or altered.
1. **Several groups underwrite the Initiative** (i.e. congregations, organizations, health care providers, corporate groups, or any combination), participants pay for food and materials.

   - *Winston Salem, NC* – The Hospice and Palliative Care Center led the way and invited 20 other organizations and congregations to work together to share in the Community Initiative. Twenty groups committed time, energy, and money to underwrite all of the costs except for food and Guidebooks. The participants were charged $35 for the two-day training to cover the cost of food and Guidebooks.
   - *West Hartford, CT* – A dozen congregations from different denominations underwrote the cost of the Initiative, participants paid for food and Guidebooks.

2. **The two-day Support Team Development Training participants pay a training fee to cover the cost of the Initiative** (or congregations or organizations can pay for their representatives).

   - *Greenville and Shelby, NC* – The Mid-East Commission on Aging and the Isothermal Planning and Development Commission charged $200 per person for the Team Development Training and made a commitment to provide partial and full scholarships to congregations who could not afford the full cost to send two or more representatives. The Commission paid for the food and materials.

3. **Key individuals or organizations in the community who believe in the mission of Support Teams can underwrite or contribute** to the cost of the Initiative, or may provide scholarships for participants who are unable to pay.

   - Bloomington, IN – Bloomington Hospital hosted and paid for the Support Team Development Training for the community. Congregations covered the cost of the food and materials.

4. **Apply for a grant from local Community Foundations, city, state, regional, or national grants to underwrite the cost.**

   - Missoula, MT and Kalispell, MT, Rocky Hill, CT – Wrote a Rallying Points grant and a Faith in Action Grant to underwrite most of the costs for the Training.
   - The Alabama Department of Senior Services – Wrote Support Team Training into a federal grant and received funding to do training in every region of Alabama at no cost to participants over a three year period. Covered training, materials, and food.

5. **A community-wide fund raiser can underwrite or supplement the cost of the Initiative.**

   The Support Team Network will be ready to offer possible approaches to funding based on our experience in other communities. Also, the Support Team Network will inform the community of any matching funds available from state, regional, and national organizations that may help with the cost of an Initiative.

**So Where Do We Start?**

The first step is to contact the Director of The Support Network, Malcolm Marler, and talk with him about what your hopes for Support Team development in your community.
Your first step may be to plan, invite, and host the Exploring workshop, “An Introduction to Support Teams: Working Together to Share the Care.” An Initiative Team will be formed at the end of the workshop to explore the steps of a Support Team Initiative.

Malcolm is also available to answer questions that you may have, and connect you with a Support Team Network Initiative Coach to guide you through the process.

The Support Team Network’s long-term goal is to empower the community to do an Initiative on its own so that it won’t be dependent on The Network. In the meantime, The Support Team Network is available to work with communities on a year-to-year basis and tailor how much support is needed for each unique setting.

One step at a time, the Team Approach works!

We look forward to working together to share the care!

Contact Information

Malcolm Lewis Marler, D.Min,
Director, Head Coach, The Support Team Network
Toll-free: 866-435-1391
mmarler@SupportTeam.org

Copyright Policy: Congregations and Organizations who are partners in the Support Team Initiative have permission to copy and distribute all STN materials among its members or volunteers. Distribution of materials is prohibited to other groups except for the video.
## Support Team Initiative Budget Planning

### A Support Team Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Support Team Initiative</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or Single Congregation Support Team Initiative</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Optional Workshops led by The Support Team Network

- Exploring, Preparing, Supporting Workshops ($500 each plus expenses) $___________________

### Travel expenses for one STN National Trainer

- Airfare or auto mileage, hotel (3 or 4 nights), meals, lodging, airport parking (if needed) for Training $___________________

### Food for Support Team Development Training

- Includes 2 Continental Breakfasts, 2 lunches, and four refreshment breaks $___________________

### Support Team Initiative Guidebooks

- Electronic Copy is free in Microsoft Word format (approximately 100 pages) $___________________
- Or The Support Team Network can provide printed paper copies ($10 each, three-holed punched, the community provides notebooks) $___________________
- Plus Shipping Costs $___________________

### Brochures

- An Introduction To Support Teams $___________________
  - Electronic Copy is free in MS Publisher and PDF format
  - Or STN provides printed, folded color copies for $20 per 100

- An Introduction to a Support Team Initiative $___________________
  - Electronic Copy is free in MS Publisher and PDF format
  - Or STN provides printed, folded color copies for $20 per 100

### Fliers

- An Invitational Letter and Flier for a Preparation Workshop $___________________
  - Electronic Copy is free in MS Word format

### Video

- An Introduction To Support Teams: Working Together to Share the Care!
  - DVD and VHS provided (10 minute video), free to copy and distribute
  - Or, STN can provide multiple copies for $14.95 including shipping. Total cost is less when ordered in bulk.

* Optional costs.