

A Guide To Circles of Support

Deb Rouget and Teresa Micallef



“

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

”

(Margaret Read)

About the Authors

Deb Rouget is the CEO of Belonging Matters and **Teresa Micallef** manages Building Community Networks (BCN), a service provided by Belonging Matters. BCN assists people with intellectual disability to create and maintain Circles of Support – fostering an important safeguard for the future and a full, meaningful and inclusive life.

Both Deb and Teresa facilitate Circles of Support, are voluntary members of a Circle of Support and provide training and mentoring to those interested in Circles of Support.



Acknowledgements

The information in this guide comes from a range of sources and from our direct experience of working alongside people with intellectual disability and their families to set up, maintain, facilitate and develop their Circle of Support.

Belonging Matters would like to acknowledge the following people who have provided guidance and advice about Circles of Support over many years: Jayne Barrett and Katrina Fredberg (Community Living Project), Margaret Rodgers (Community Resource Unit), Pam Rallings, Libby Ellis (InCharge), Ric Thompson, The National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) and the many individuals and families who have pushed the boundaries!

Citation

Rouget, D and Micallef, T. (2021).
A Guide to Circles of Support.
Belonging Matters: Melbourne ©

Index



Part 1	About Circles of Support	Page 5
Part 2	Limitations and Cautions	Page 11
Part 3	Identity and Vision	Page 12
Part 4	Tips for Starting a Circle of Support	Page 15
Part 5	Tips for Meetings	Page 26
Part 6	Facilitation	Page 29
Part 7	Training and Further Information for Circle Members	Page 31
Part 8	Acknowledgements and Resources	Page 32



Making the Most of this Guide

We suggest you read a section at a time and give yourself time to go through the exercises in each section using the workbook. You may like to keep a journal/book to write down all your thoughts and ideas in one place. That way, when you are ready to create a Circle of Support, you will have all your ideas, dreams, visions and thoughts in one place. Also, asking a partner, friend or ally to work through the guide with you is one good step towards creating a Circle of your own.

You will find it useful to watch the videos about Circles of Support and the other resources available in Parts 7 and 8 of this guide.



 **DOWNLOAD**

Complete Exercises in Workbook

To download the Circle of Support Workbook visit <https://www.belongingmatters.org/articlesanddocuments> or click the download button (if viewing this guide as a PDF).

Part 1: About Circles of Support

What is a Circle of Support?

One of the first examples of a Circle of Support was developed in Canada in the 1980s. Judith Snow was a woman with disabilities wanting to move out of a nursing home and live in her own apartment (Forest & Snow 1983). Since then, Circles of Support have been used extensively in many countries as an idea and practice to intentionally invite people to come together in friendship and support of a person with a disability. Circles of Support harness the goodwill, knowledge and connections of community members rather than viewing the person as a service recipient and can assist to move a person with a disability from the passive role of client to valued friend, contributor, citizen and creator of their own solutions (Barrett, 2008).

Circles of Support are not a service, professional team meeting, program, social gathering or once off meeting but rather a voluntary group of people who are committed to assisting a person with disability to achieve their goals and safeguard their interests into the future.

Circles of Support are unique. The purpose, membership, whether it is facilitated, where, when and how often meetings occur are all matters that are unique to the person for whom the Circle is being created.

"Circles of Support harness the goodwill, knowledge and connections of community members rather than viewing the person as a service recipient." (Jayne Barrett, 2008)

An Example of a Circle of Support

Dee's first Circle of Support began in 2007. It was a large group and many members were friends of her mum and dad's. Dee enjoyed the social nature of her Circle but little progress was made in regard to her vision to find work and move out of home. In 2016, after some thoughtful planning, it was decided to redesign and re-form a Circle of Support with the clear purpose of assisting Dee to establish a small business and pursue other valued roles in the community. Younger members, closer to Dee's age, were also invited based on this purpose.

All members know and care about Dee and provide their time voluntarily. Circle members consist of an Uncle who Dee adores, a long-term advocate, 2 past support workers of a similar age to Dee who have remained in her life, and her mum and dad. Two additional people who have knowledge about running or supporting small business were also specifically invited to match the purpose. Dee's key support worker, who also has small business experience, assists Dee to participate in meetings and helps her and her support team to follow up on some of the goals and actions.

Dee's meetings are facilitated by a Belonging Matters' facilitator. The Circle meets at Dee's apartment 6 times a year, for 2 hours in the evening. Dee orders pizza for her guests and they enjoy socialising together before the meeting begins.



Over the years, Dee's Circle has assisted her to connect with her neighbours and local community by trying a choir, getting more involved with the Hawthorn Football Club, becoming a student in cake decorating and art/craft classes, and entering her work into competitions. The Circle members have also given their time voluntarily by travelling with Dee to visit the Sydney Opera House (a long-held dream). Some members also enjoy sharing a meal with Dee at her apartment or at a local restaurant. The biggest achievement has been assisting Dee to establish her card making business called 'DeeZines By Dearne'. Dee says "I like the flexibility of hours and making money from selling my cards".



Circle members have come to know Dee and have built a relationship with each other, providing an important safeguard for the future. This has been strengthened by end of year social celebrations and attending a large community fun run together. As the circle developed, Dee gained more confidence in expressing herself and identifying the things she would like to discuss with the circle. Dee knows her Circle is there to support her voice and assist her to make decisions and meet her goals.

"The Circle Meeting has taught me that the focus person is surrounded by people - family and unpaid people that genuinely want the focus person to have a better life and to reach all her goals" (Circle member, Building Community Networks Survey, 2018/18)



What Guides the Efforts of Circles of Support?

Circles of Support are grounded in the values of belonging, community, contribution and relationship. Key to having a good life, is having meaning and purpose—the opportunity to make a valued contribution to society and give to others.

"Most significantly, Circles are powerful because they exist to honour, support and make available a person's capacities and interests, not his or her deficits. Support Circles are formed to be vehicles for people to discover and to talk about ways in which a person could be contributing to the wider community through, often overlooked, interests and talents" (Snow, 1991, p78).

"Most significantly, circles are powerful because they exist to honour, support and make available a person's capacities and interests, not his or her deficits". (Snow 1991, p78)

Why are Circles of Support Important?

Most of us rely on our friends and family for enjoyment, advice about our future, support in times of crisis, practical assistance and to celebrate successes. Often people with an intellectual disability have few unpaid connections other than family or paid people. They have been denied the typical opportunities and pathways in life that most people take for granted. This can leave people particularly vulnerable, lonely, isolated and dependent on welfare, paid services and funding. For many people with disability, these typical connections may not exist automatically and need facilitation (Community Living Project, 2019).

Together with sharing ideas, networks and practical assistance, Circles of Support assist with the preservation of knowledge and information, particularly for a person with complex needs, intellectual or dual disability, and those with communication difficulties. For parents or carers who are ageing, Circles of Support can provide an important safeguard and succession plan for the future.

Benefits of a Circles of Support

Circles of Support have many benefits. They assist people to reconnect and form deeper relationships. Just by inviting a few people, it is possible to expand one's contacts and associations as each person will have hundreds of connections. Circles of Support offer the space to share ideas and learn from others and provide practical assistance. They can increase social or work opportunities and introduce people to new roles that they might like to explore.

They can also provide an immediate support structure e.g. to solve problems, make decisions, discuss fears, provide support in times of crisis, provide a safe place for feedback and an important advocacy safeguard for the future. An important focus of the Circle is to assist people to reach their potential and develop skills, without always relying on funding.



"Bringing ideas together from all walks of life".
"The circle provided planning and a clear sense of direction".
"Catching up with friends, seeing the focus person thriving, being part of something great". (Building Community Network Survey, 2017/18)

What are Some of the Possible Outcomes?

An evaluation of Belonging Matters' Building Community Networks found that "... existing networks (Circles of Support) indicate that most individuals are achieving significant outcomes across a range of domains. There are demonstrable positive changes in areas like employment, living arrangements, study and lifelong learning, volunteering, contributing to and leading their communities, life skills and health and fitness." (Jay, 2018, p20)

With the encouragement and assistance from their Circle of Support:

Emily has moved into her own place and shares with a housemate, "I got my goal of moving out".



Lauren found work and moved into her own home with housemates.



Brodie pursued his interest in music and completed a Certificate III in Music.



Dee started her own card making business called DeeZines and took more responsibility for banking and bills.



Sarah pursued her passion for music and was mentored by a new friend in making music.



Matt got a job in a restaurant.



Part 2: Limitations and Cautions

Circles of Support are the voluntary gathering of ordinary citizens. We need to be cautious not to replace the heart felt connection of a Circle, with a professional mechanism such as a staff meeting or team of therapists, or to replace genuine natural supports with paid supports as they can have a conflict of interest. Members of Circles of Support gather because they have a genuine connection with the person and are not paid to be there. If inviting a support worker or professionals, then we recommend careful consideration. For example, what happens if there is a problem with the support worker that the Circle of Support would like to address? If support workers leave will that create a big gap? Will the flavour of conversations change? Will the support worker consider themselves a friend and therefore not assist me to make friends? Will goals be dictated by what the professional offers? Would it be better to ask the support workers to offer their time as an unpaid commitment or be a visitor or guest?

Circles of Support should not be seen as an answer or solution to everything. They have a unique role to play and can have many weaknesses, especially if there is not adequate membership and a shared understanding of vision, values and purpose. Some of the other difficulties can include:

- Losing sight of the person, their age or holding low expectations.
- Inviting members because of obligation.
- Boring and uninteresting meetings.
- A single member or professionals dominating the process or discussions.
- Members not having a role to play.
- A lack of asking or willingness of circle members to take on tasks and challenges.
- A lack of investment in member knowledge and understanding.
- Leaving the organising to one person.
- Not having the energy at a particular time.
- A lack of intentional succession planning (as members will come and go).
- A lack of renewal or giving up instead of redesigning or considering what went wrong.

Part 3: Identity and Vision

Before you begin or start a Circle of Support, it is important to think about your interests, vision and what you would like to achieve.

Identity

A full, meaningful and inclusive life is often anchored in our identity – who we are and our passions and interests. This is a good starting point to creating an inclusive life in the community. Of course, over time our interests and passions change so this exercise should be reviewed. However, it can be a good starting point to joining the community, finding a job, etc.



Exercise 1: A Bit About Me

Complete the exercise below or in the workbook.

About Me

- → My Passions, interests, hobbies...
- → I enjoy...
- → My abilities, skills and strengths...
- → I'd like to learn...
- → My particular flair or gift...
- → I like to spend time with people who are...
- → These people interest me because...
- → I feel motivated, satisfied or content when...
- → I value...
- → My purpose in life is to...
- → I avoid or dislike...
- → These are the gaps or things that are missing from my life...
- → I need support to...



Vision

Thriving in life will depend on having big vision and planning intentionally to bring it to life!

Before you begin to plan a Circle of Support, it is important to think about your vision and what you would like to achieve. A good place to start is to think about what makes a full, meaningful and inclusive life for you?

Do not think in terms of disability but what brings the good things of life for any person. What brings you meaning and purpose? What are your priorities or what are the gaps in your life at the moment? By spending time doing the exercises below, it will give you and your Circle of Support direction. It will also provide clues as to whom you might invite to join your Circle of Support. You can also do these exercises with your Circle of Support.



Exercise 2: My Vision for a Full, Meaningful, Inclusive Life

What is your vision for a full, meaningful and inclusive life? What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Create a big picture and make it positive and focus on success! Infuse with passion and creativity.

Think about 10 years from now. Draw it or write it down! You could collect images that capture your vision. Don't limit your possibilities. Dream big and embed that dream in your interests and within your community. Think about employment and career, study, recreation and leisure, relationships, home, spirituality and meaning, civic contribution, volunteering, health and wellbeing and safeguards. Use present tense, be concise and jargon free.

My Vision for a Full, Meaningful and Inclusive Life

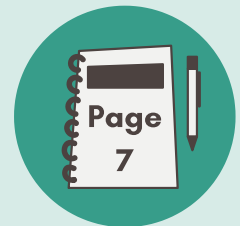




Exercise 3: My Priorities for the Next 1 or 2 Years

Now think about the priorities. From your vision where do you want to start? What would you like to achieve in the next one or two years? For example, I would like to find a paid job, join a choir, get to know more people in the community, or move into my own home. Think about what experiences might be typical for someone your age.

My Priorities for the Next 1 or 2 Years



"Thriving after school will depend on having big vision and planning intentionally to bring it to life!" (Belonging Matters)



Part 4: Tips for Starting a Circle of Support

Is a Circle of Support the Right Idea for Me?

Circles of Support have many benefits but they are far from perfect. They are not a magical solution, fad or quick-fix (Rodgers and Rallings, 2016). They are organic in nature, based on relationships and need tender loving care! The first place to start is to consider if a Circle of Support is suitable.

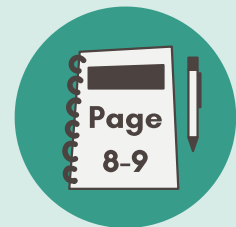


Exercise 1:

Is a Circle of Support a Good Idea for Me?

Think through some of the following questions to consider if a Circle of Support is the right idea for you.

Is a Circle of Support a Good Idea for Me?



- → If I have a Circle of Support the benefits might include...
- → A Circle of Support might meet my needs in the following ways...
- → Some of the key challenges might include...
- → Some of my fears and resistances include... / How could I overcome these?
- → I could contribute to my Circle of Support in the following ways...
- → What do I need to have in place to have a Circle of Support?
eg. somewhere to hold the meeting, someone to help me facilitate the meetings...
- → Do I have the time and energy to give my Circle of Support, over time? Is there anyone who could assist me?...

My Ideal Circle of Support



Exercise 2: My Ideal Circle of Support

Before you start, take some time to imagine your Circle of Support working really well. Go beyond what you think is possible.

My Circle of Support

- → My ideal Circle of Support will look like this, eg. young and vibrant...
- → My Circle of Support will feel, eg. relaxed, welcoming, confident, enthusiastic...
- → What are the qualities and attributes of the Circle, eg. stretching/pushing the limits, holding a vision for inclusion...
- → When we meet together we will be, eg. respectful, listen to each other...



The Purpose of My Circle of Support

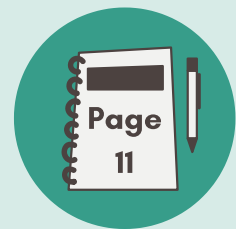


Exercise 3: **The Purpose of My Circle of Support**

Think about the purpose of having a Circle of Support. What would you like your Circle of Support to assist you with or help you achieve? Some people have specifically set up a Circle of Support to help them at school, explore employment options, create a business, move into their own home or increase their opportunities and connection in their community.

The Purpose of My Circle

- → The purpose of my Circle of Support is to...
- → The focus and priorities for my Circle of Support now are...
- → In the future my Circle of Support might assist me to...



Circle of Support Membership

It is not really about the size of your Circle of Support but about the match of members. It is important to invite people who are unpaid and match your vision, purpose and values and extend beyond your immediate family. Even one or two members beyond your family is a good place to start. You can then build your membership as your Circle develops or you investigate new things.

For example, consider extended family, friends and neighbours. Also consider people you know or do not know yet in your community or from places of shared interest. For example, if you are interested in computers, you could invite an Information Technology (IT) expert. It is always good to have a few people your own age because they tend to know what others are doing who are a similar age.

Avoiding inviting paid workers or professionals, remember it is a Circle of Support not a team or staff meeting.

Try to brainstorm all the possible people who could be involved, without making decisions for them e.g. they are too busy! Not all members need to have every attribute that you desire, but it is important that they at least match your values!

Avoid saying you do not have anyone to invite, even if you think this is true. Challenge yourself to go beyond this belief or boundary to allow yourself space to think of people that may not be likely candidates, but who may be interested if they were asked.

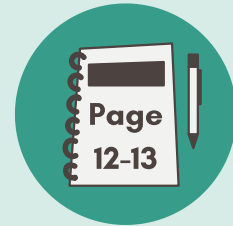
Avoid asking people out of obligation. Think about how each person can and will support your vision and purpose. Inviting the wrong people can be frustrating and time consuming. If the invite is out of obligation, think about how the person might support you in other ways, eg. going to the movies. Inviting the right members is very important to the success of a Circle of Support.



Exercise 4: The People I will Invite to be Members of My Circle of Support

Record the following information about the qualities that you would like Circle of Support members to have.

Qualities of Members



- → My Circle of Support members will have the following qualities and values...
- → My Circle of Support members will include people who have the following skills, assets and knowledge...
- → My Circle of Support members will have the following connections and associations...
- → I get on well with the following people who are a similar age...
- → These are people I don't know well yet, who might make an ideal match...

List the People who Match the Above!

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| • → | • → |
| • → | • → |
| • → | • → |
| • → | • → |

Commitments Circle Members Will Need to Make

It is important to be clear about what is expected from potential Circle of Support members before you invite them. Think about the commitment you would like members to make.

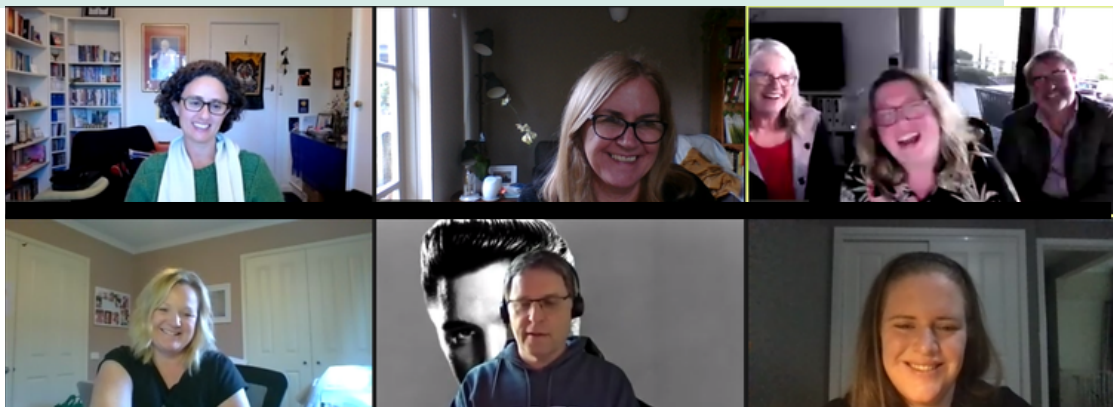
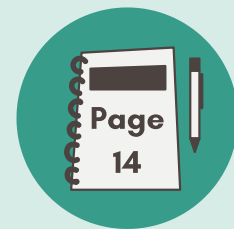


Exercise 5: Members of My Circle of Support will Need to Make the Following Commitments

Record some of the practical things members will need to consider and what is expected of them.

My Circle of Support Meetings

- → Will be held on (day and time)...
- → Will go for (duration)...
- → Will be held at (venue)...
- → Circle member who doesn't live close can attend via Zoom...
- → Will be held every (how often)...
- → Will start or finish with (eg. dinner)...
- → Outside of meetings, Circle members will need to...
- → Circle members will need to commit for (term eg. 1 year)...



Asking and Inviting People

Often asking and inviting people seems like a challenge. Getting the vision, qualities and commitment clear will help you decide who to invite. It can also clarify what you are asking from people when you invite them.

There are a number of ways you can invite people e.g. in person, on the phone or by sending an invitation, for example an email or letter. No matter how you ask people, we recommend writing down how you will ask potential Circle members and practicing it!

There are some important things to consider when asking. For example, be clear about your purpose and what you are asking for, make the request simple rather than complex, consider if it is the right time and place to ask and who might be the most appropriate person to do the asking (Thompson, 2005).

Your attitude can have an impact, so it is important to make it positive. For example, is your attitude and thinking something like, "no one will come or have time" or more like, "people love getting together and are keen to assist." The more positive you are about involving people in a Circle, the more likely the people you ask will pick up on that and be inspired to get involved.

Try not to be too dissuaded if someone says they can not come. Perhaps they are busy, are not sure how they could help or are not clear about what you are asking. They may think they need to make a lifetime commitment. Most people feel honoured to be part of a Circle of Support.



"I feel privileged that I am in a small way, a part of this process". (Circle Member, Building Community Networks Survey, 2018/18)



Exercise 6: Asking and Inviting People

Identify the best way to ask people about becoming a member of your Circle of Support e.g. in person, a phone call, written invitation. It may be different for each potential member.

How to Invite People



- → The best time to ask is...
- → I will ask people to be a member of my Circle of Support by...
- → When I ask people to be a member of my Circle of Support, I will say...

Example

Hi Jo, I am wanting to find a job. I know you have lots of connections and ideas. I am gathering a small group of people to help me think this through and share ideas and connections. We are meeting on Thursday the 7th of May at 7pm at my place for 2 hours. I was wondering if you might like to come? I am hoping people might like to continue to meet every 6 weeks to help me make progress. A delicious supper will be served!

Strengthening My Circle of Support

Circles of Support work well when members feel connected, have relationship with each other and when members feel they have a role to play. Think carefully about ways you can connect people so they can get to know each other. This might mean creating a time in the meeting for members to share how their week has been or something they have enjoyed doing since the last meeting. Group connection games or activities work well and create fun. Some Circles of Support set a challenge e.g. bring a recipe to share, something you have made, bringing a picture of your best holiday, etc. Others may hold a social occasion e.g. Dee and her Circle of Support did a community walk together.



Exercise 7: Strengthening My Circle of Support

Ways to Strengthen My Circle of Support

- ➔ At the meeting we can get to know each other by...
- ➔ Some creative connection activities include...
- ➔ Outside of the Circle of Support meetings we could...
- ➔ Other ways we can get to know each other...



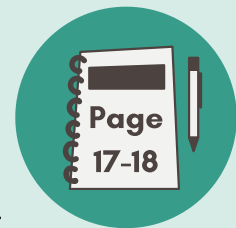
Creating Renewal and Succession Planning

Sometimes a Circle of Support might need to renew or refresh. You could ask your Circle of Support to do the exercise below after each meeting and include an annual review.



Exercise 8: Creating Renewal and Succession Planning

Circle Meeting Review



What did I like most about the meeting?...

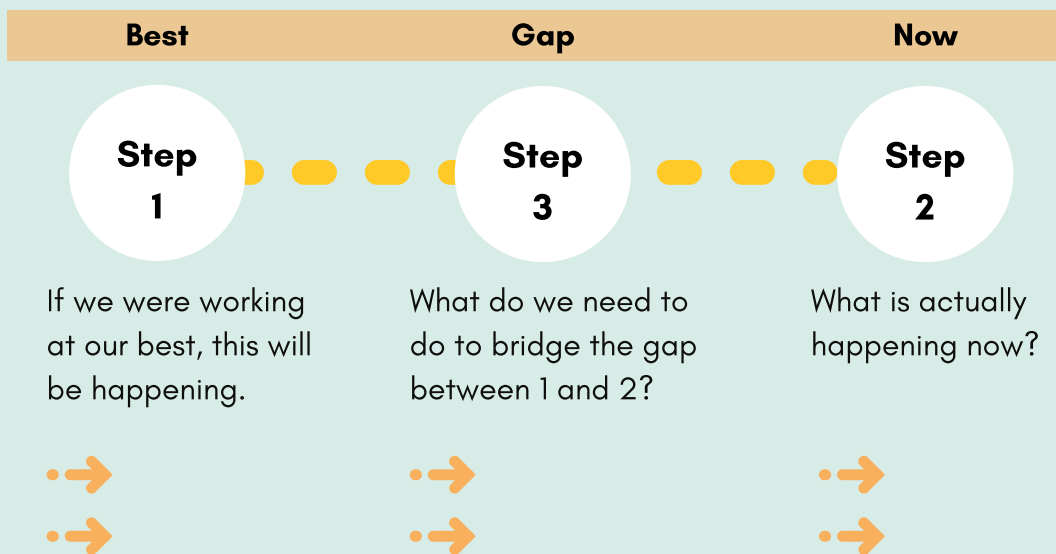


What could be improved?...



What didn't work?...

Annual Reviewing of my Circle: Bridge the Gap



As much as we would like Circle members to stay forever, this is not reality. The Circle of Support may like to spend time thinking about how to replace members when they leave, so that it remains strong and vibrant.

Replacing Members



- → When a Circle of Support member is thinking of leaving, they need to...
- → They should give this much notice...
- → We will replace the member by...
- → To bring new members up to speed, we will...



Part 5: Tips for Meetings

- ✔ Choose the right venue. You want people to feel relaxed and the space to be welcoming and free from distractions. Restaurants can be good for celebrations but they are often noisy, have multiple distractions and are not private.
- ✔ Meetings are best held at a convenient time for those who work e.g. evenings and weekends. Start and finish on time and keep the focus. We recommend meetings go for no longer than 2 hours in person, and less if via online.
- ✔ Define your vision, purpose and values with the Circle in the first meeting. It will act as an anchor for future meetings and you will be able to refer back to your vision if people get off track. You can review this every year or when needed.
- ✔ Make it fun and a good experience for everyone. It can be fun to start the meeting with an introductory game. This can help members relax and get to know each other. Use creative ways to run meetings, eg. at the end of the year you might ask all members to write their favourite Circle experience for the year on a sticky note.



- ✔ Set the scene for each meeting by setting the purpose at the commencement of each meeting.
- ✔ Make sure all members are included and feel they have a role to play, especially you as the focus person. This might mean thinking about augmentative communication or using photos.
- ✔ Make sure conversations are respectful and do not happen around you. People generally dislike being grilled with hundreds of questions or having their private life or shortcomings shared in public.
- ✔ Members can come up with lots of ideas. Time, space and support might be needed to consider ideas in an informed and non-pressured way. This might occur after the meeting.
- ✔ If members get off track you might 'park' the discussion for another time.
- ✔ Feel the energy of the network, are members engaged? Do they need a break? Is it time to finish?
- ✔ Build relationships. Food is always a good way to share and for members to get to know each other but it should not be the focus of a meeting. Often a planned yearly celebration is a great way for members to get together outside of a meeting and build relationships, e.g. doing a 'fun run' together.
- ✔ Always find ways for Circle members to get involved and for their voices to be heard e.g. let the Circle determine the time, venue, ground rules, actions etc. Make the most of people in the room who have particular skills or knowledge. Ask them if they can follow up on their idea. Do not dismiss an offer! Learn to accept, rather than trying to dissuade a member e.g. you are too busy.
- ✔ Be role, goal and action focused. The whole idea of the Circle is to assist you to make progress towards and enjoy a full and meaningful life in the community.





- ✓ Remember to ask the Circle to hold your interests, passions and abilities at the heart of conversations or as a method to explore possible roles in the community.
- ✓ Circles are often made up of community members who have been infiltrated with all sorts of assumptions about people with a disability. It is okay to challenge bad ideas with understanding, explanation and kindness.
- ✓ Ensure all ideas, points and actions are noted and assigned to a member, preferably not all to you or your parents! You do not need to have a traditional agenda or take copious minutes. Keep a list of actions to share after the meeting that can be reviewed at the next meeting. This will keep people focused and accountable.
- ✓ The Circle should think about how they create a "Culture of support, challenge, growth and friendship". This might mean discussing how difference of opinion might be managed or how challenge is welcomed.

"create a 'Culture of Support', challenge, growth and friendship". (Building Community Networks Survey, 2017/18)

"They [the Circle] have built a strong sense of friendship and love". (Building Community Networks Survey, 2017/18)

Part 6: Facilitation

Although an independent facilitator is not vital, they can assist with:

- Drawing out and harnessing knowledge, connections and voluntary offerings of members.
- Asking and inviting members to take up certain roles or tasks.
- Keeping the Circle on track and accountable for their actions.
- Maintaining the Circle and offering advice, challenge and reflection.

Circle members assisted by Building Community Networks (BCN) suggested that a facilitator can be useful for the following reasons:

- "Helps draw out those who are quieter and keeps [the focus person] at the centre, making sure his voice is heard."
- "I wouldn't have a clue where to start without a facilitator."
- "Helps keep us on track and focused."
- "Helps us think through goals, expand thinking and writes up minutes."
- "Makes us think of other possibilities."
- "It meant it wasn't all left up to me [Mum]."
- "Allowed me as a parent to take more of a back seat."
- "A wealth of knowledge and experience that is genuine."
- "Having a facilitator that is experienced in the benefits of an inclusive lifestyle was useful as without this, there can be a risk of some members wanting to push segregated settings." (Belonging Matters, Survey 2017/2018)



Facilitator Qualities

- → You may have a friend who can facilitate your Circle of Support or you can hire one.
- → The facilitator should have excellent facilitation skills, be independent from service provision, hold positive regard for people with disability and value social inclusion and belonging.
- → It is important to ensure the facilitator understands your vision and values and can challenge ideas that stereotype or exclude people with a disability.

Circles of Support and the NDIS

In Australia, people with a disability have been able to obtain funding for a facilitator through their National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding support package. Although Circles of Support are a well-established technique, the concept might be misunderstood. This is because Circles of Support are largely situated in the people, neighbourhood and the community domain, rather than the professional and service domain. This means that providing clarity and justifying your request for Circle of Support Facilitation is vital. For example, "My informal Circle of Support is vital to help me achieve my goals, reduce my isolation, build relationships and make decisions, connect me to my community and protect my interests when my family are no longer able".



Part 7

Training and Further Information for Circle Members

Once you have established your Circle, it may be helpful to invest in the thinking of your Circle members. Think about opportunities specifically related to your Circle and its purpose. Consider sharing articles, videos, books and periodicals from the resource list which you can find in Part 8 of this guide.

To find out more information about Circles of Support or facilitation, please contact Belonging Matters.



info@belongingmatters.org



03 9739 8333

**BELONGING
MATTERS** INC

Part 8

Acknowledgements and Resources



Organisations and Websites



Building Community Networks, Belonging Matters, VIC

<http://belongingmatters.org/building-community-networks>



Imagine More, ACT

<http://imaginemore.org.au/resources/circles-of-support>



Community Resource Unit, QLD

<http://cru.org.au>



Community Living Project, SA

<http://communitylivingproject.org.au>



Resourcing Inclusive Communities, NSW

<http://ric.org.au>

Microboards Australia

<http://microboard.org.au>

Circles of Support and Microboards, VIC

<http://cosam.org.au>

In Charge, New South Wales

<http://incharge.net.au>

Issacs Band of Brothers and Sisters, ACT

<http://www.theband.org.au>



Videos

Starting a Circle of Support with Justine Hall Belonging Matters (September 2020)

<http://talksthatmatter.net>

Circles of Support - Introducing Brodie's Circle Circle of Support and Microboards (COSAM, July 2018)

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=gPfHheOrl18>

Lauren's Circle of Support Circle of Support and Microboards (COSAM, February 2020)

<http://cosam.org.au/infotype/video-resources>



Articles and Periodicals

Circles Initiative Information Guide (Community Living Project)

http://12fa360f-fae0-657a-c249-b252f0f4108a.filesusr.com/ugd/c77aca_2ae04360ee97443c8ee3f641b4521d22.pdf

A Guide to Circles of Support, D Rouget and T Micallef, Voice Issue April 2019

http://downsyndrome.org.au/voice/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/03/Circles_of_support_Voice_April_2019.pdf

Thinking About Circles of Support (Belonging Matters Inc)

(Periodical Issue 26 - 2016)

<https://www.belongingmatters.org/product-page/periodical-26-circles-of-support>

Thinking About The Art of Asking.....R Thompson (Belonging Matters Inc)

(Periodical Issue 21 - 2009, pp 18-20)

<https://www.belongingmatters.org/product-page/periodical-21-the-art-of-asking>



Books

What's Really Worth Doing and How To Do It

A book for people who love someone labelled disabled (possibly yourself)

(J A Snow, 1998 - Inclusion Press, Ontario, Canada)

Building Circles of Support and Friendship

A Guidebook for Parents

(J Burke-Gaffney, 2017 - Hamilton Family Network, Canada)

<http://dsohnr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/52.-Building-Circles-Guidebook.pdf>

Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future, Pave the Way

(J Ward, 2010 - Mamre Association Inc, Mt Gravatt, QLD)

The Shouted Goodbye

(J Ward, 2015 - Boolarong Press, Salisbury, QLD)

<https://www.belongingmatters.org/product-page/the-shouted-goodbye>



Tip Sheets

Circles of Support (Belonging Matters Inc, 2019)

http://12fa360f-fae0-657a-c249-b252f0f4108a.filesusr.com/ugd/c77aca_8a3ac00e13ed4fecb50b34f1777d1416.pdf

Planning Your Circle of Support Meeting (Belonging Matters Inc, 2019)

http://12fa360f-fae0-657a-c249-b252f0f4108a.filesusr.com/ugd/c77aca_2c396d685e6b4da08565959277daa0af.pdf



References

Circle Initiative: Information Guide (Community Living Project, SA)

(J Barrett, 2008)

Building Community Networks Survey

(Belonging Matters, 2017 and 2018)

The Joshua Committee: An Advocacy Model

(M Forest and J Snow: Journal of Leisureability 10 (1), pp 20-23)

Circles of Support and Microboards Review

Building Community Networks, Belonging Matters Inc, VIC

(Jay Leighton, 2018)

Roles Based Planning 2nd Edition: Anti Marginalisation Task Force

(S Ramsey, 2007)

Who will stand with you? Harnessing the support of family and friends through Circles of Support

(M Rodgers and P Rallings, 2016 in Thinking About Circles of Support - Issue 26)

Belonging Matters Inc, VIC

Great Questions: Writing of Judith Snow

(J Ward, 1991 - Inclusion Press, Canada)

Belonging Matters Inc



3/178 Boronia Road, Boronia Vic 3155



(03) 9739 8333



info@belongingmatters.org



belongingmatters.org

**BELONGING
MATTERS INC**