

# Circle of Support

# CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

## Connecticut Community Care, Inc. Self-Directed Support Services

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### Getting Started

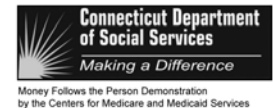
Having relationships and support from others in making decisions or guiding our lives is important to everyone's life.

Sometimes these supports come naturally, and other times there is a need to build a network of people who can play a part in different ways in your life. When we think of networking, we may see this as a tool to getting a job. But networking with others is a way to learn about your goals in life in order to accomplish them. For example, network with someone who has accomplished a similar goal or knows a lot about the area you want to learn more about. This could include talking to someone who hires their own personal care assistants or lives in the community.

This tip sheet will focus on another way to build upon the relationships around you to accomplish goals in your life. This is known as a Circle of Support. This tip sheet will give you information about what is a Circle, as well as the steps used to form and maintain a Circle of Support.



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### What Is a Circle of Support?

A Circle of Support is a group of people who you invite to come together to give you guidance and support and to help you plan for your future. This group should include people you feel comfortable with, and who you see as an important part of your life in helping you to reach your goals. They may also be willing to take action with you in fulfilling the goals you set in your life. Some members of your Circle of Support may include:

- Close or extended family
- Friends you have known for a long time or might have just met
- Outsiders who were identified by other Circle members who can help you accomplish your goals.

All members are not paid, and are there because they want to help you in accomplishing your goals.



## Steps to Creating a Circle

So now that you know you want to create a Circle of Support, there are different steps you should take in order to form your initial Circle and have your first meeting. These steps include:

- ☑ **Decide who to invite.** Invite people who are willing to participate voluntarily in your life to help you reach your goals. They must be open to working with you on change. Members may include: family, friends, neighbors, members of a club you belong to or other community members.
- ☑ **Obtain Facilitators.** It is helpful to have two facilitators – one to lead the discussion and one to take notes of what occurs.
- ☑ **Schedule meeting time and location.** Your Circle should be held in a location you are comfortable in. This can be your home or someone else's home, or somewhere in your community. It is a good idea to have refreshments, and make it comfortable and fun for everyone.
- ☑ **Send out invitations.** Include the purpose of the meeting, and have an RSVP date.

- ☑ **Develop an agenda for the Circle meeting with one of the facilitators.** The agenda for the first Circle meeting should discuss what a Circle is, and a general discussion of why you chose to have a Circle. Other agenda items to consider include:

- **Introductions of Circle members.** How do they know you, and for how long.
- **Review of your current life as it is today.** This is helpful for everyone to know the same thing.
- **Clarify goals for the future.** Include obstacles and opportunities.
- **Set priorities, and develop new goals as needed.** Your goals will change over time.
- **Record discussion, including obstacles and opportunities.** Always keep a record for Circle members to see and refer to.
- **Develop an action plan.** This should include who will do what prior to the next meeting in helping to achieve goals.
- **Set the next meeting date and time.** Usually Circle meetings occur on a regular basis, like monthly meetings.

A Circle of Support is a great way to build relationships, and further opportunities in your life. You may make a new friend, or accomplish a dream you have.