

What is a Circle of Support?

Circle of Support focuses on the youth's culture and searches for long-term solutions within the circle of support that will nurture and encourage a healthy plan for their future. This is a great opportunity for them to connect with supportive and caring adults who can help them after they leave the system. Circles of Support participants can be a youth's siblings, birth family members, foster or kinship care providers, teachers or coaches, relatives, church members, friends, mentors, medical providers and so on. The circle of support can help identify the teen's strengths, hopes and dreams, goals and needs in the areas of education, employment, health/mental health, housing, and all life skills training components. Often time's, teens use prior foster care family placements and professionals as a support later in their lives. It's important to think how you as a member of the teens circle, can help support the youth's transition plan and attaining their short- and long-term goals toward self-sufficiency.

The Circle of Intimacy are the people who are closest to the teen, those they rely on every day and those who know them best. They are people the teen can hardly imagine living without. Examples include parents, grandparents or other family, housemates, caregivers.

The Circle of Participation are friends and family members who know the teen well, who they can call on when needed and who can call on the teen. Examples are friends at school or work, team mates or coaches, neighbors, people where you work with, teachers.

The Circle of Exchange includes people who are in the teen's life because they are providing a service that is being paid for: We all have people who fit into this category: doctors, therapists, trainers, support providers, hair dressers, and attorneys.



Different life topics:

Family/Supportive Adult Relationship: Understanding their permanency plan – reunification, adoption, relative care, aging out. Reconnect with bio family members? Identify the most supportive people in their life.

Community/cultural/social life: Cultural groups, mentors, clubs, camps or summer programs, school related activities.

Education: Education and Training voucher (ETV), SAT/ACT scores, FAFSA – PELL grants and student loans, Scholarships, Military recruitment, Vocational/Technical Schools.

Required Documents: Driver's license or State Picture Identification card, birth certificate, Social security card, Immunization records, voter's registration card, Life book, Education portfolio (Who's going to keep these documents for the teen? Or a copy?)

Housing: Who and where the teen will live: Family member, friend, foster parent, college housing or dormitory, shelters, supervised independent living. Reviewing rental applications. If the teen had to provide a reference or cosigner for a housing application, who would the teen choose?

Job and Career: Resumes. Daycare needed? Local Workforce office and local or private employment agency, Job Corps.

Financial management: Bank accounts and income. Credit card management, taxes, credit score reports.

Transportation: Own vehicle, borrow, public transportation, bicycle, walk, motor bike? Driver's education course complete? /driver's license? Auto insurance?

Life Skills: Laundry, personal hygiene, grocery/personal shopping, cooking nutrition, cleaning, insurance, medical appointments, medication.

Self-Care and Health: informed medical consent (you have the right to be your own medical consentor.) Current medications and administration. Health education on coping with stress, nutrition, smoking cessation, healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention, sexual health, fitness, first aid, vision, dental, mental health.