

Circles Initiative

Information Guide

Creating Circles of Friends for
people who have disability



Meaningful & Supportive Relationships....
things that make all our lives worth living

Circles Initiative aims to:

- Build and strengthen the personal networks of a person who has disability
- Helping friends and family include the person who has disability
- Assist the person to identify their hopes and dreams for their future & share their interests, gifts and talents
- Ensure each person has a plan to achieve their lifestyle, hopes & dreams
- Facilitate personal networks to come together and form a Circle of Support

What is a ‘Circle of Support’?

A group of people who are intentionally invited to come together in friendship and support of a person who has a disability, for the purposes of protecting their interests into the future. Not with the expectation that this group might necessarily have a responsibility of “caring for” the person BUT with the expectation that if asked people might be pleased to make time and agree to join the Circle to “look out” for the person.



Reasons why:

- Most people who are vulnerable because of disability will always need someone to “look out” for them
- They are often less able to represent themselves, to make wise decisions without good advice, to protect their interests or to speak up for themselves
- Parents are often the only major source of guidance, support and protection. They worry about asking others to take on these roles as they feel it will burden them
- When parents are no longer able to fill these roles there will be members of the circle who will retain knowledge of the person, their history and ambitions for their lifestyle
- Some people may have no one except paid service workers in their lives
- Paid services will often require that somebody holds them accountable for their support to the person. A circle would have this role
- An effective circle can have a strong voice



How it works

A Circle facilitator is appointed. They will get to know the person and help identify who may be in the person's network. They will approach those identified and invite them to be involved. The facilitator will then be involved in helping people connect with one another individually as well as help organise a get together of everyone involved every few months. This get together will be fun and include food, often happening in someone's home or a café, in the evenings or on the weekend. While being enjoyable it will be a time to share important things happening in the person's life and how everyone might contribute to make the person's hopes and dreams for their future come true.

Who is involved in a person's Circle of Support?

People who care about the person in question and are prepared to commit to their friendship and involvement in the Circle for the long-term;

- Close and extended family members, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins etc.
- People who step forward might be friends of family, friends of the person, people who support the person,
- Outsiders who have been identified as interested in being involved in the person's life for the long term, advocates etc.
- *No one is paid to have ongoing involvement in a Circle of Support.*



Individual Social Commitment

Everyone in the persons Circle commits to spending individual & regular time with the person, learning about their hopes in life as well as their daily, changing and evolving needs and opinions, their vulnerabilities, strengths and gifts. Dinner invites, a cuppa together, sporting matches, movies, picnics, walks, whatever would be fun and fit with shared interests & personal time available.

About the Circles Initiative

The Circles Initiative is involved with building and strengthening the networks of friends and families of people who have disability and who live in South Australia. Most people served currently live in the Adelaide suburban and surrounding areas. Some people currently reside in institutions, community group homes, while others live in their own homes in the community or at home with family. Particularly people who aspire to living a lifestyle included in community are those who would benefit most from involvement with the Circles Initiative.

The Circles Initiative is deeply committed to helping people build an inclusive lifestyle in a home and community of the person's choice.



Personal Hopes and Dreams

The Circles Initiative helps people identify and share their future hopes and dreams, some big some seemingly small – all out of reach without effort and friends to help make it happen. Just a few of the hopes and dreams we are involved with:

- To move from the institution and share home with my sister
- Travel to Memphis Tennessee to the Grand Ole Opre
- Go to the movies
- Live back in my home community
- Go for a swim in the sea
- Get a job
- Meet someone and fall in love
- Become a DJ
- Find someone to share my home with
- Go fishing regularly with mates
- See my parents more often
- Go on holiday and visit places I haven't been to



How to financially support this important work

We are seeking people who would be interested in making a financial investment in the personal future of a person/s Circle. For example, a donation of \$3,000 per year would enable us to facilitate a circle for an individual.

We invite personal, business & corporate sponsorship.
All donations made to CLP's Circles Initiative are tax deductible.

The Circles Initiative is deeply committed to helping people build an inclusive lifestyle in a home and community of the person's choice.



Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Fund supports this project.



Contact:

Jayne Barrett

Manager, Circles Initiative
Community Living Project Inc.,

111 Beach Road, Christies Beach SA 5165

Tel: (08) 8384 7866

Mob: 0408 550 123

Email: jayne.barrett@clp-sa.org.au

www.clp-sa.org.au

Community Living Project Inc.