

Relationship circle



What is important to you, will almost always include who is important to you. We can learn about and record the important people in someone's life by having conversations and using the relationship circle. In our lives, our family & friends are the single most important factor. Sometimes people need support to make, develop & maintain relationships. There are different styles of relationship circles & maps, but they all represent the people in the person's life & indicate how close they are.

What it does

It captures who a person knows, how they know them, who else in their circle knows them and how these networks and relationships can help a person to live the life they choose.

How it helps?

It is a way of identifying who is important to a person and to explore any important issues around those relationships. It feeds into support planning because it highlights those people who should be involved in planning and helps to discover which relationships can be strengthened or supported.

You can use Relationship Circles tool to:

- Identify all the important people in a person's life & how close each relationship is
- Show the balance between family, friends & paid workers in someone's life
- Actively seek to increase the number & depth of relationships that a person has, if that's what they want
- Identify who could contribute in supporting a person to achieve their goals & aspirations
- Look for themes. Are there any common characteristics amongst those a person gets on with that could help with support?

How to Develop a Relationship Circle:

- Include the date of when the relationship circle was created
- Be clear about who each person is, give their name & state the relationship to the person
- Think about the role each person on this relationship circle could have in supporting the person to achieve the lifestyle they want to lead
- If the person has very few people in their life, think together about what it would take to make connections and friendships, or deepen existing relationships. Set specific goals to move towards this if this is what the person wants
- To develop a relationship circle, start by writing the name of the person in the center of the diagram. Then write the names of the people that they know around them, placing the most important people closest to the center. You can place people in one of 4 categories;
 - Family
 - School, work or day time activities
 - Friends & unpaid people, including neighbors
 - Paid supporters

When you are supporting someone to complete their relationship circle, you may find it useful to use prompts to help them explore their relationships, such as:

- Photo albums
- Social networking sites eg facebook, Instagram etc
- School yearbooks
- Address books
- Phone speed dial lists
- Cell phone texting contacts

If you are supporting someone who does not use words to speak, use the most appropriate communication methods for them eg pictures, objects, words etc.

Family

- Can include any relatives who are a part of someone's life. Eg this could range from uncle Joe who they only see once or twice a year to family members they see every day or week. We must also recognize the fact that not all families are close. Each person's perspective & situation is unique.

School, work or daytime activities;

- Many of us get to know people through our place of education or work. Think about where the person spends their day. Who are these people and how well does someone know them? Are there any people that the person would like to get to know better?

Friends & unpaid support:

- This category covers anyone that the person knows and has a relationship with. This could include people that they don't know well but who they see or chat with regularly, like the woman who works at the post office, bank or grocery store in their neighborhood. It might include people they knew in the past, but with whom they have lost contact.

Paid Supporters:

- Paid supporters include anyone who is paid to be in someone's life such as a support worker, doctor or hairdresser. For some of the people we support, these paid supporters make up the majority of the people that they know.