Competencies for Person-Centred Thinking Tools
The Learning Community for Person-Centred Practices
Core Person-Centred Thinking Tools to be included in all training

Relationship circle

Competency: Relationship circle

What is it? (Skill)

This person-centred thinking tool identifies who is important in a person's life. It can be used to create actions to increase the number and depth of relationships that the person has; and to inform how to support the person (how can we support the person in their relationships).

What do I need to know? (Knowledge)

- The importance of a range relationships in peoples lives.
- Being clear about the role of paid support in a person's life and how friendships and inclusion can be achieved.
- Ways in which relationships and social networks can be explored and represented - e.g. relationship circles, maps, photos.
- What the different circles in this tool represent and different terms that can be used, for example circle of intimacy, friendship, participation, exchange – or people I love, like, do things with and people who are paid.
- How to sort the difference between the information gathered into important to a person with that information that is important for (how best to support or what other people need to now or do).
- How to use this information to help the person themselves identify new opportunities or for others to do this on the person's behalf. This needs to take into account the balance between paid support, family and community.
- Understanding the options that can be available through assistive technology and how this can be implemented and enhanced when linked to information discovered through relationship circles and approaches such as Just Enough Support.
- The importance of identifying relationships in order to develop strong ongoing Circles of Support and using these relationships in a formal way to strengthen Supported Decision-Making.

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What do I need to do to gather information and use it? (Behaviour/Attitude)

With an individual

- Decide which type of relationship circle would best capture a person's current understanding of their life in terms of relationships.
- Establish and use appropriate communication methods e.g. pictures, objects of reference, words to develop the relationship circle.
- Use existing materials that the person has about their life to explore their relationships e.g. photos albums, Facebook timeline and pictures, School Year books, C.V.s, Granny's boasting book, who is on speed-dial on their phone.
- Establish 'ground rules' or agreements about who will be asked to contribute further information to any planning effort based on the relationship circle.
- Identify how the person wants to be involved and informed about what people are saying.
- Think and identify with a person about their lives in the past and now, and who was important to them and how they wish these important relationships to be respected and supported now. A person may also start to think about those people they have lost contact with and would like to contact again.
- Categorise people in someone's life under the main headings in a relationship circle in order to sort the importance and strength of the relationships.
- Explore important issues around individual relationships and what this says about what is important to the person and how best to support them. Add relevant information to the person's one-page profile or person-centred plan.
- Ask the question with or on behalf of the person - what do my relationships bring in terms of helping me to manage my health, provide my treatment care and support, and to help make things happen in a way that makes sense to me?
- Ensure different professionals are included who might be involved in helping someone with their health.
- Use the circle to identify all the people that may need to know about certain aspects of your health or be offered support to learn how best to support the person.
- Explore how the themes and patterns emerging from the relationship circle could help build on the existing networks of relationships.
- Think with the person and their Circle/ Team to have more relationships in their life and action plan for this.

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Within a team

- Use team meetings to gather and share each person's relationship circle in a way that feels comfortable for the team.
- Help staff reflect on what they are learning about themselves and how this relates to what they are discovering about the people they support.
- Use one-to-one/person-centred supervision to share what you are learning about the team member from their relationship circle and what that says about healthy work-life balance and how this can be reflected in their one page profile.
- What is recorded in a team member's relationship circle can be extended and explored by having a conversation about those people that they have identified in the circle, asking: what do they know, do and are interested in; where do they live; what skills do they have e.g. book keeping, teaching swimming, and resources e.g. a car, a holiday home. Then ask the question, what do we know about the people that we support and how could we use the knowledge from the team's relationship circle to help connections for and with people? This would be used as the foundation for bridge building and community connecting.
- Use this tool to develop each team members One Page Profile.
- Use a relationship circle with the team to think about the important relationships that they have. For example, people in the individual's circle of support and their families; inspectors; local community leaders; 'suppliers'; professionals/ community team; Human Resources team; Assistive Technology representative.
- Use this map to then think about the relationships that you have with them now, and how you would like the relationship to be in the future – what could be strengthened or enhanced?
- Use the results of this to agree and achieve actions to move closer to what has been described as a desirable future; for example, do they need more information from the team?

What does 'good' look like (Standards)

- Clarity of information about who the person is that is included in the relationship circle, their name and the relationship to the person.
- Date of when the relationship circle has been completed.
- If people are included that have not been in a person's life for a while, it will be noted in brackets how long they have not been around.
- Photos may be included or links made to video clips of the person included in the relationship circle so people who are using this can get a better understanding of the nature and quality of the relationship.

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- Clarity about what role the people identified in their circle could have in supporting them and what support they may need in order to do this.
- There are actions that relate to increasing the depth and range of relationships that the person wants to have in the future.
- Patterns or themes are explored – for example, are there characteristics in common for the people that the person gets on best with? This is used to inform 'matching support'.
- There is a date to review how it is being implemented and someone is responsible for making sure this happens.

How can I demonstrate that I understand and practically apply the tools correctly? (How can this be assessed?)

The person can describe, by giving specific examples:
- How the person was involved in deciding how to represent the relationships in their life (e.g. photos, video, words, images, using technology).
- How the information has led to an action plan or added to a one page profile in terms of who is important to the person and 'how best to support' section.
- How, through using the relationship circle, decisions have been made about who else needs to be involved for any resulting actions to be successfully implemented.

You can see from the relationship circle and actions:
- Clear information about the people in the persons life and how close the person feels to them.
- How, as a result of using the relationship circle, the person wants to keep or enhance the existing relationships in their life, and the action plan to start to achieve that (SMART actions).

What connects to this?

One-page profiles, person-centred plans and support plans, other tools – Perfect Week, Matching Support, Decision Making Profiles and Agreements, Social Inclusion – The Inclusion Web, Just Enough Support.

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Advanced – further information and enhanced skills

- How the tool help people to think about their networks and people in their life that may be able to offer ideas, knowledge, resources, and support as part of solutions to problems they may be encountering.

- A Practical Guide to Delivering Personalisation - Person-Centred Practice in Health and Social Care.

- Planning in Health: tools to develop your support plan for your Personal Health Budget.

- Use examples and formats found on www.thinkandplan.com and www.thinkaboutyourlife.org.

- How this information can be used to start Life Story books and can be developed out of using the History Tool.

- Links with Inclusion Web - The Inclusion Web forms part of the Inclusion Web Resource Pack, published by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). Further information available at www.ndti.org.uk <http://www.ndti.org.uk>.

- Essential lifestyle Planning for Everyone (2005) Michael Smull and Helen Sanderson.

- Using the information developed in the relationship circle to help with approaches like Support Decision Making - see Paradigm (2008) – A Guide to Supported Decision Making: A Guide for Supporter. It can help people to think about who can support a person with decisions and this can be recorded. It can be developed in the decision making profile and agreement.

- Supporting and complementing use of the Recovery model in mental health.

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