

## FAMILY CIRCLES ASSESSMENT

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### Guidelines

This is a flexible tool that families can adapt. Use your creativity. If you want, you can draw the circles on a larger piece of paper. You can use pictures, drawings, or other symbols, as well as words. The idea is for you, as a family, to create a picture or map of the people and influences that are a part of your world. Some are sources of support; others are sources of stress, or both support and stress. Following are some ideas of what might go inside the circles:

1. **Self** – At the center of a family member’s world is your relationship with yourself (and your inner belief system). Note your strengths and your challenges. Note any conditions or qualities that deeply influence your life (athletic ability, hearing impairment, sense of humor).
2. **Partner/children** – List your partner’s name (if you have one) and your child(ren), or whomever you live with and consider your family. Note their strengths and their challenges. If you want, ex-partners can be listed here or extended family, informal network, or formal network.
3. **Extended family** – List other family members including parents, siblings, or grown children. Note the ways they help you and your family do well, and ways they hold you back. These influences can continue for a long time, even after the family member has died.
4. **Friends, neighbors, and culture** – List friends, neighbors, informal care providers, other members of a club, team, or religious group, or others you have a relationship with by choice. These are the people outside your family who make a real difference (stressful or supportive). Note the ways they influence your family life. How does your informal network contribute to your family’s well-being, or hold it back? Note cultural groups you are part of.
5. **Agencies, schools, and institutions** – List people who are in your life because it is their job—school teachers, agency workers, job supervisor, and co-workers. Note what you get (a paycheck, health insurance, self-worth). Note what you give (eight hours a day, keeping a car on the road to get to work, time away from your children). How do these contribute to your family’s well-being, or hold it back?
6. **Economics and community** – Note economic influences in your family’s life (welfare reform means having to get off welfare within two years; you just got laid off from plant closing). Describe your community and how it affects your family’s well-being (friendly neighborhood). Note local, state, national, and global trends that affect you family (video game violence, cuts in GED programs, good childcare hard to find).
7. **Natural environment** – Note how the natural environment and its condition affect your family (child has asthma caused by air pollution; family relaxes in a park).

Next, you may find it useful to circle areas of support, and make a box around areas of stress, or use different colors. Some people or influences may be both!



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# ***Family Circles Assessment***

7. Nature

6. Economics and Community

5. Agencies, Schools, Institutions

4. Friends, Neighbors, Culture

3. Extended Family

2. Partner/Children

1. Self



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