



Supporting People to do what really matters to them



A Community Circle brings people together to help someone to live a more connected life, Community Circles support people to do what matters to them. They are about finding out what is important to the person, and thinking together about how to turn that purpose into meaningful action. It is also a way to help people self direct their lives through supporting their decision making, ensuring choice and control. The person and their circle get to know what makes the person happy, what's getting in the way of living well, explore their current connections in their communities and help create new ones.

People often offer to help out others in need but don't know where to start. A Community Circle provides the opportunity to find out how they can assist. These people could be friends, family, neighbours, professionals or other people they know. The Community Circle then helps to support the person, share tasks, and keeps everyone in the loop about what's working and what's not. Members meet every few weeks with the person being supported by a Circle facilitator.

On offer is also a Community Circles App, which is an easy way to help support the collaboration. The App helps keep everyone focused on the person, reminding people what's important to them and how to best support them. It also keeps tasks and activities on track, with an easy view calendar, for everyone helping out: paid and unpaid support. The reminders helps people remain accountable for turning up, for doing what they agreed to do and provides peace of mind with an easy daily "I'm OK" check-in function.

If it sounds simple, that's because it is. Circles are completely flexible, they are co-produced with the person, so they decide who's in the circle and its purpose. People can explore all sorts of things together; from spending more time with friends, family and neighbours, exploring their interests, reconnecting with the community, or even seeking ideas for getting a job or volunteering to start contributing back to their community.

Community Circles can increase a sense of belonging and inclusion and fill in some of the gaps in that important space between paid service delivery if people are receiving government funding. They help use all the resources available to a person to improve their quality of life. Circle facilitators are trained to work with people to discover what really matters to them, and to understand and focus on the purpose of the Circle. Circles are for anyone who has a need- providing more connection and a sense of belonging to their community to help improve their safety and wellbeing - Older people, people with disability, mental health challenges or carers to provide more support in their critical function. Facilitators may be paid or unpaid, depending on the community and role. People who'd like the opportunity to have a circle, be part of a circle or learn to facilitate a circle through a '2 hour club' -contributing their assets and people skills to assist someone for 2 hours a month are welcome, and they and receive training and become part of the Community Circles movement.

We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing things that matter to us" #socialcarefuture

Community Circles help people to be happier, healthier, and more connected with the support of those around them.

What can people achieve through a Community Circle?

People have used Circles for lots of different reasons, in lots of different settings. Here are just a few examples of how Community Circles has helped people:

Mario's Circle supports him to stay well and connected to his community. He is caring for his wife Amelia who has dementia. Mario needs more help between paid services to stay well himself and his daughter Bella also needs support to help her parents remain living together at home. The Community Circle means Mario gets a break, he can still go bushwalking, bowling and do the bookkeeping at the club whilst Amelia has companionship at home, goes for a walk, visits with a neighbour for a knit and natter or cooks with a friend. It also means that Bella isn't as worried about her parents as she knows they have neighbours and friends around them supporting them intentionally to thrive at home.

Leila's circle and her NDIS package help her to live alone for the first time. The Circle's purpose is to support her to improve her mental health by feeling more connected and less lonely. She wants to meet other young people, join a "Glee" choir, get some help with her TAFE course and learn to cook Greek food. She also wants to have more people in her life who are not with her just because they are paid to be there. Leila is now cooking for volunteer groups through the local council with a neighbour, she is picked up by a new friend to go to a fun choir. Leila has a social life now, is accessing support at TAFE and is helping to organise a street party for Christmas with a neighbourhood committee.

Community Circles work in lots of different ways, with a range of purposeful partners. The whole community is welcome to join us.

If you would like to join us:

- hear more about Circles: we can come and speak to your team or a community group
- become a Circle Member so we can match your interests to someone needing a circle
- find out how to start a circle we can assist you and share our resources

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The image of Olivia's hands and the butterfly wings are our symbol of spreading the mission of Touched by Olivia to bring inclusion to communities around Australia. The success of the Community Circles and TBO partnership will be to ensure the uniqueness and preferences of individuals are at the centre of all connections and that communities work together in true collaboration. The whole ecosystem needs to join together: the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, hand in hand with Government and Providers.

Whether we are introducing ourselves to individuals who have an interest in how circles could impact their lives, approaching new potential circle members, or encouraging a circle to look outside of itself to make new connections - our aim is to spread a sense of community for everyone. **#Who do you Know?**

