

Circles of Hope

Circle Leader Job Description

The Circle Leader has four primary goals:

1. Create life changes that lead to your permanent self-sufficiency and a different future story.
2. Develop your unique gifts and leadership skills to lead your matched circle and contribute to the Circles community (reciprocity).
3. Use your experience of low resources and leading your family to self-sufficiency to advocate within the community for changes to the systems that keep people in poverty or make it hard to get out of poverty.
4. Help Allies understand what it's like to live in low resources, so they become more compassionate and more willing to help change things in our community.

The Circle Leader commitment:

1. Complete the Circle Leader training course focused on relationships, self-sufficiency and becoming a Circle Leader.
2. Complete Circle Leader orientation.
3. Commit to be part of Circles of Hope for 18 months.
4. Attend weekly dinner meetings with other Circle Leaders and Allies.
5. Meet monthly with your Allies to keep working on your own goals and help them work on theirs.
6. Make progress on your goals.
7. Identify ways you can contribute to Circles of Hope and keep it going and growing, in reciprocity for the support you receive.
8. Keep sharing your expertise on what it's like to live in low resources in Newton and Harvey County.

Support the Circle Leader receives:

1. Orientation and Circle Leader training class
2. Two to four caring Allies to join you on your journey to self-sufficiency.
3. Weekly meetings in which meals and childcare are provided.
4. Program features such as educational topic meetings that help you keep developing your 11 resources, and Individual Development Account (IDAs).
5. Staff available to answer questions, provide encouragement, and assist with conflict resolution.
6. Getting to know lots of other people in Circles of Hope, who help you with your “bridging capital” for both networking and resources.

How to be sensitive of differences across class lines:

1. Remember that Allies may not have an experience with poverty and may make mistakes. Part of your job as a Circle Leader is to help them keep learning. That happens as you become friends and share your story with them.
2. Remember that the Allies in your matched Circle are friends, not social workers or case managers, and they aren't there to “fix” your situation.
3. When there are strong feelings about Circles of Hope or Allies, be willing to look at how your personal fears are being triggered or your hidden rules are being stepped on, and talk to someone about it. Using the “ouch—oops” guideline is helpful here.