

Referral Process for Becoming a Circle Leader

Circles of Hope

A main component of Circles® is a “Matched Circle,” a supportive, befriending relationship made up of one **Circle Leader** who has low resources and two to four **Circle Allies**, usually from middle income. Circle Allies join the Circle Leader in moving towards having adequate resources, reasons and relationships. Everyone in the Circle benefits from the friendships that are formed.

Who is a potential Circle Leader? Harvey County residents who:

- are frustrated about just “getting by” and want to learn about ways to “get ahead”
- are at least 18 years old and currently are ready, willing and able to make changes
- have low resources, including financial (living at or below 200% of poverty)
- are able and willing to work or can benefit from job training
- are willing to build new relationships which will provide support and connections
- can commit to attending regular meetings and keeping appointments



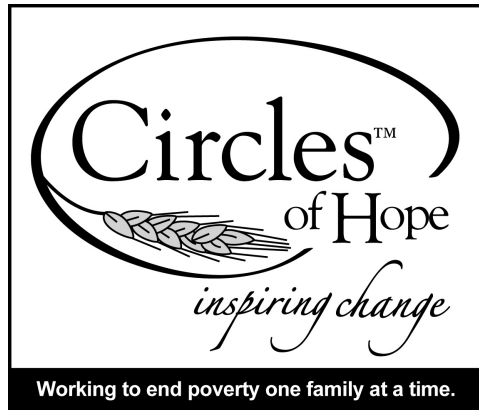
The referral process includes 3 steps:

1. Candidates complete an intake application that is available from Circles of Hope by calling 284-0000, emailing info@peaceconnections.org or stopping by Peace Connections, 612 N. Main in Newton (also available at www.peaceconnections.org/Circle_Leader_application.pdf)
2. Applying candidates are interviewed by Circles staff and Circle Leaders.
3. The coordinating team assesses for whom Circles is a good match.

Steps to Becoming a Circle Leader:

1. Attend, participate and graduate from a **Circle Leader** co-investigation class.
 - The Circle Leader training class meets every Tuesday night for 12 weeks, for 2½ hours.
 - Each Circle Leader training class includes a meal and free childcare.
 - Circle Leader training class members learn the “hidden rules” of class, assess their own resources (not just money), and develop their own plan to change their situation.
2. Circle Leader training grads decide to become a **Circle Leader** and make an 18-month commitment to give and receive support through Circles of Hope.
3. Be matched with 2-4 **Circle Allies** from the community.
4. Attend weekly participant meetings on Tuesday nights.
 - The first meeting each month is focused on an educational topic. The second is “Matched Circles” with the Circle Leader’s Allies, to work on the Circle Leader’s plan. The third is a meeting of the Guiding Coalition teams, the governing body of Circles, including Circle Leaders. The fourth looks at the “Big View”—what is happening in Harvey County that keeps people in poverty or helps them get out.
 - Weekly meetings include a meal and childcare.
5. Share their strengths and give back to the community.

The Circle Leader training class and Circles® of Hope empower people to make their own plans and reach their own goals.



Circles is not for someone if any of these describe their life:

- **Being in crisis** (e.g., homeless, being evicted). Circles is not a crisis program and can't help with immediate, emergency needs. Circles is a process people commit to in order to improve their lives over time through friendship and support, to help them move to the next level.
- **Being on disability without** any prospect of getting off or earning some extra money under the disability program.
- **Living in a domestic violence situation.** Circles doesn't work well for people who are experiencing a lot of chaos and turmoil in their lives.
- **Addictions.** Circles participants must have at least 6 months of being clean/sober. People struggling with untreated alcohol, drug and other addictions usually are not available to work on "getting ahead."
- **Mental health issues** that are untreated or where the person is struggling to function on a day-to-day basis.
- **One partner wants to join Circles but the other doesn't.** Circles does not work well when one spouse or significant other is not engaged. Allies work with the whole family.

**Being "ready, willing and able"
to make plans for the future is really important!**

Circles of Hope wants to partner with persons to explore the causes of poverty and support them in developing a personal plan to increase their resources and have a more stable, secure future!

For more information, call 284-0000 or stop by the Circles office at Peace Connections at 612 N. Main