

CIRCLE OF COURAGE



The Circle of Courage starts with the idea that there are no special needs - just ordinary needs that we all share. It is a way of looking at how we can better include a person in our lives, or the activities or organisation we are part of. We use just four questions to help think about who a person really is:

GENEROSITY - Where in their life is the person able to contribute?

BELONGING - With whom / where does the person belong?

INDEPENDENCE - How is the person trusted to make their own decision?

MASTERY - At what is the person so very talented at?

The Circle of Courage suggests that all human beings have four basic needs - belonging, generosity, mastery, independence - which must be kept in balance in order for a person to be strong, healthy, pro-social and successful. Whenever any of the four are missing, less than desirable behaviours emerge (*Hard to believe? Have you ever eaten a tub of Ben and Jerry's ice cream when you were felling heart-broken?*). So while a circles goal to support a person managing their life or challenging behaviours may be worthy, the plan must be to figure out how to make their life better - to balance the circle - and then watch what happens.

When we ask these questions about a person we are considering how friendships and a sense of belonging impact on their lives and behaviour. The Circle of Courage teaches, that belonging is not simple a desire, but a basic human need we all share, and friendship is not just a disability issue.

Seeing the Charade: What we need to do and undo to make friendships happen (2006) Tashie, Shapiro Bernard, Rosetti

Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our hope for the Future (1990) - Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Brockern