

Circles Network

So, what's different?

Our experience, and evidence from published research projects, indicates that a flexible approach makes a positive difference to the lives of families where one or both of the parents are disabled.

Working from a respectful basis within the social model of disability, helps open up wider opportunities for parents to enhance the quality of parenting and the well-being of their children.

The needs of the children are always paramount. The Crowley House Project ensures that they are met, through effective support for the parents.

How do you purchase our services?

Contacts are made directly by individuals and their families or through social workers and other professionals. In order to access financial assistance, it is usual to work closely with a person's care manager or social worker.

Following initial telephone or written enquiries, we arrange to meet and listen to what it is that the person requires. If we are considered to be the relevant and appropriate organisation to provide support, people may enter into a contractual arrangement prepared on an individual basis.

What does the service cost?

Once we have established the support arrangements required we draw up a costing. Our charges are competitive, in line with other locally based organisations. Fees are required for assessment, direct support, consultancy, production of reports and court attendance. In line with current thinking we offer the best value possible. Our quality standards are high and our facilitators are well supported and trained.

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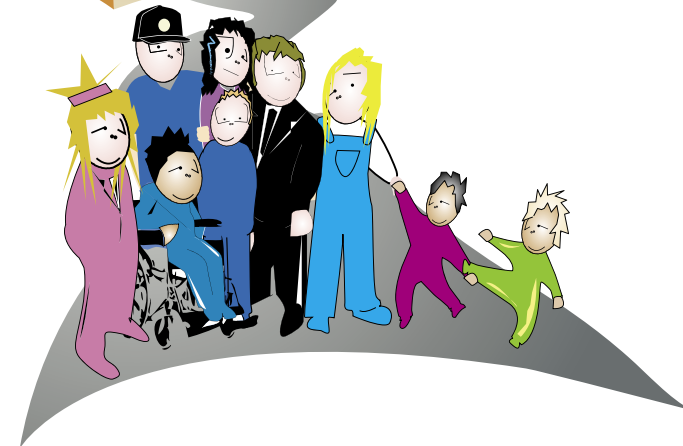
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Circles Network
building inclusive communities

The Family Empowerment Project



**Supporting
disabled parents**

Introduction

The Crowley House Project, supporting disabled parents, is designed by Circles Network to provide help to disabled parents, including parents with learning difficulties and mental health differences. The project offers all kinds of help - from a listening ear to practical assistance with the tasks of everyday living.

Many families face stresses and tensions on a daily basis. These are often made worse, and can threaten to become overwhelming, because of the isolation and exclusion fostered by our social systems and attitudes towards difference and disability.

Each family involved with the project is encouraged to dream, and plan ways to move forward. Working together, we plan how to fulfill dreams, offering support at every stage of the process.

Circles Network is a national voluntary organisation formed in 1993 with educational aims to build inclusive communities. The aims are to support people who are experiencing social exclusion or at risk of being isolated, through disability or long term illness, to become and remain included in community life.

The primary function of Circles Network is to assist people to develop circles of support, networks of friends who agree to support a person in a non-patronising, non-judgmental way to achieve the dreams and ambitions they may hold. We work to build inclusive communities where everyone belongs, and to show through a wide range of schemes how people can be supported to live fulfilling and self-determined lives regardless of their abilities.

What we do...

Within a flexible programme of support to meet each individual's needs, our activities cover a whole range of family issues. The aims of the project include:

- ★ working to fulfill the family's hopes and dreams through person centred planning and sensitive support;
- ★ assessment in the form of person centred planning, where the parents are at the heart of the process;
- ★ assisting families to contribute actively in service, statutory and legal processes;
- ★ encouraging the development of positive, informal networks of support to enable people to overcome social isolation;
- ★ enabling parents to develop effective parenting skills and working towards maintaining the well-being of the family as a unit;
- ★ supporting friends and professionals in the lives of each family member to develop effective support and communication;
- ★ offering learning support in a style which is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of each person.

...and how we do it:

- ★ spending time getting to know the family well, establishing a trusting relationship on which to build.
- ★ seeking and promoting opportunities for disabled parents to gain control over their lives.
- ★ assisting parents to understand their current needs and possible future outcomes.
- ★ giving opportunities for parents to be involved in positive parenting.
- ★ listening to parents' concerns about their children.
- ★ helping parents to solve problems and agree aims for the future.
- ★ celebrating successes and valuing the gifts each parent possesses.
- ★ seeking to raise the confidence and self-esteem of disabled parents. Using alternative learning methods and approaches giving parents chances to practice new skills without being judged.
- ★ using the community to enable families to develop informal, local networks of support.
- ★ providing practical support where it makes sense for the family.
- ★ working with hope and without prejudice.