

Planning Circle Exercise: Identifying Your Personal Supporters

Identifying your personal supporters is one of the first steps in personal planning. This planning circle exercise is designed to help you with this step.

Personal Planning involves making a legal document to authorize your personal supporters (e.g. family, friends) to help you now or in the future if you need assistance with one or more areas of your life, such as health care, personal care, financial affairs and legal affairs. Representation Agreements and Enduring Powers of Attorney are the legal documents available to adults in British Columbia for personal planning.

We suggest you use this planning circle exercise as a discussion tool to help identify your personal supporters and ways they may assist you in areas of your life. Complete it with your personal supporters. They might like to do it too.

Remember, there is no 'right' way to complete this exercise; these steps are a guide.

- 1.** Print a copy of the planning circle. Place yourself in the centre circle. You can use a photo, print your name, draw, paint, or use any other way to identify yourself.
- 2.** Next, think of the people you trust and who know you best. Place their photo, name or symbol in the circles surrounding you. You may want to put the people you the strongest relationships with, closer to you.

Questions to ask yourself.

Who do you like to spend time with? Who listens to you and respects you? Who do you want to talk to when you need help making decisions?

Please note that there is no required number of people to have in your planning circles. This exercise may help you decide to expand your network. Developing personal relationships takes time and effort and is key to protecting your wishes if you need help speaking up for yourself.

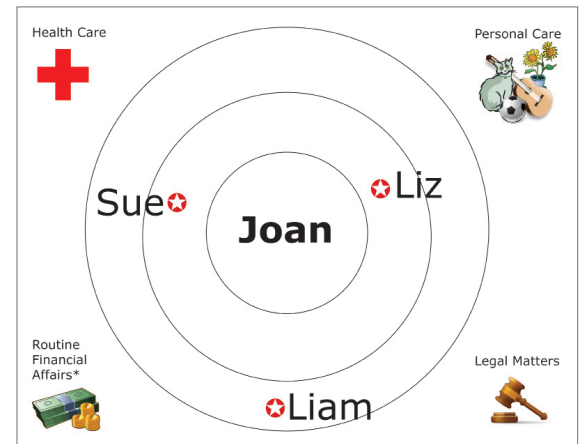


Please note that filling in the planning circles is not the same as making a legal document. This is one of the steps in the personal planning process. For help with personal planning please visit www.nidus.ca

Below are some examples of how others have used this tool.

Example 1:

Joan is a senior who has had two strokes. The last one affected her speech and mobility. Joan's daughter Liz wanted to know her mother's wishes so she could help advocate for her if she has another stroke. But Joan seemed reluctant to discuss personal planning. Liz talked with Nidus staff who suggested that Joan's reaction is likely a response to how the exercise is being presented. Joan's perception may be that Liz is only thinking of her as the disease and what has to be done to manage her. Nidus staff pointed out that personal planning is for everyone and that Liz consider engaging all family members in the exercise. Liz reported back that at a recent family gathering, everyone did the planning circle exercise, including Joan. They learned a lot about themselves and each other and are now anxious to get on to the next steps of completing their legal documents.



Example 2:

Leander is a 24 year old man with an acquired brain injury as a result of a skateboarding accident. He is in the hospital and is not able to communicate verbally. In order to help Leander identify who might be part of his Representation Agreement, Leander completes the planning circle exercise. His sister and his friends work with Leander on his communication and, after trying various methods, determine that Leander can communicate by squeezing their hands. They lay out photos of everyone who is a part of Leander's life on a table and point to each one separately. Leander squeezes his sister's hand at each picture. Leander squeezed his sister's hand once if he didn't want that person placed in the circle, and twice if he wanted that person placed in the circle.

Example 3:

Gloria, a brain injury survivor, was recently diagnosed with recurrent breast cancer. She already knows who her personal supporters are: her sister Amanda, son Josh and ex-husband Richard. Gloria has decided to assign different authorities to different supporters. She uses the planning circle exercise to discuss with her supporters what areas of her life she wants them to help with. She places Amanda close to health care and personal care and her son and ex-husband next to the financial and legal areas.

Health Care



Personal Care



Routine
Financial
Affairs*



Legal Matters

