

RELATIONSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

We all have people we prefer to be with and group activities that we like. There are also those that we want to avoid! The same is true for people with disabilities. If you were to think back over the life of the person with a disability you can recall relationships that enhanced his or her life, group activities that brought out enthusiasm and excitement and supports that made life go smoothly. What was it that made these relationships and affiliations tick?

Kathy looked forward to her monthly self-determination group. She was always excited about attending and talked about it for days afterwards. At one point, her case manager thought it might be best if Kathy no longer attended the group. It wasn't clear how much Kathy was learning about self-determination. Kathy was asked if she wanted to continue going. Her response was an emphatic "yes". The case manager was told that attending the group was very important to Kathy. Did it really matter whether or not she was learning all she could about self-determination? Wasn't the benefit to Kathy that she had made friends and enjoyed attending the group? After much cajoling, her case manager reluctantly agreed to allow her to continue. As Kathy said, "I like it and want to go." Isn't that an example of exercising self-determination?

Each of us has a variety of relationships: family, friends, co-workers, community members, and professionals. These relationships are unique and touch us in a certain ways. Consider your own personal network. Are parts of that network also part of the person's network? Who else is part of his or her inner circle? What group activities does the person like to be a part of? Why do these relationships work? Which ones have not worked? Why?

By understanding who positively touches the life of the person and recording these findings you will help assure that those relationships are maintained in the future. You might also provide insight as to who else could potentially support the person in the future.

The following tools may help you plan. Select those that work best for your situation or create your own. Provide as much detail as you can. Add extra pages if you need to.



Tools

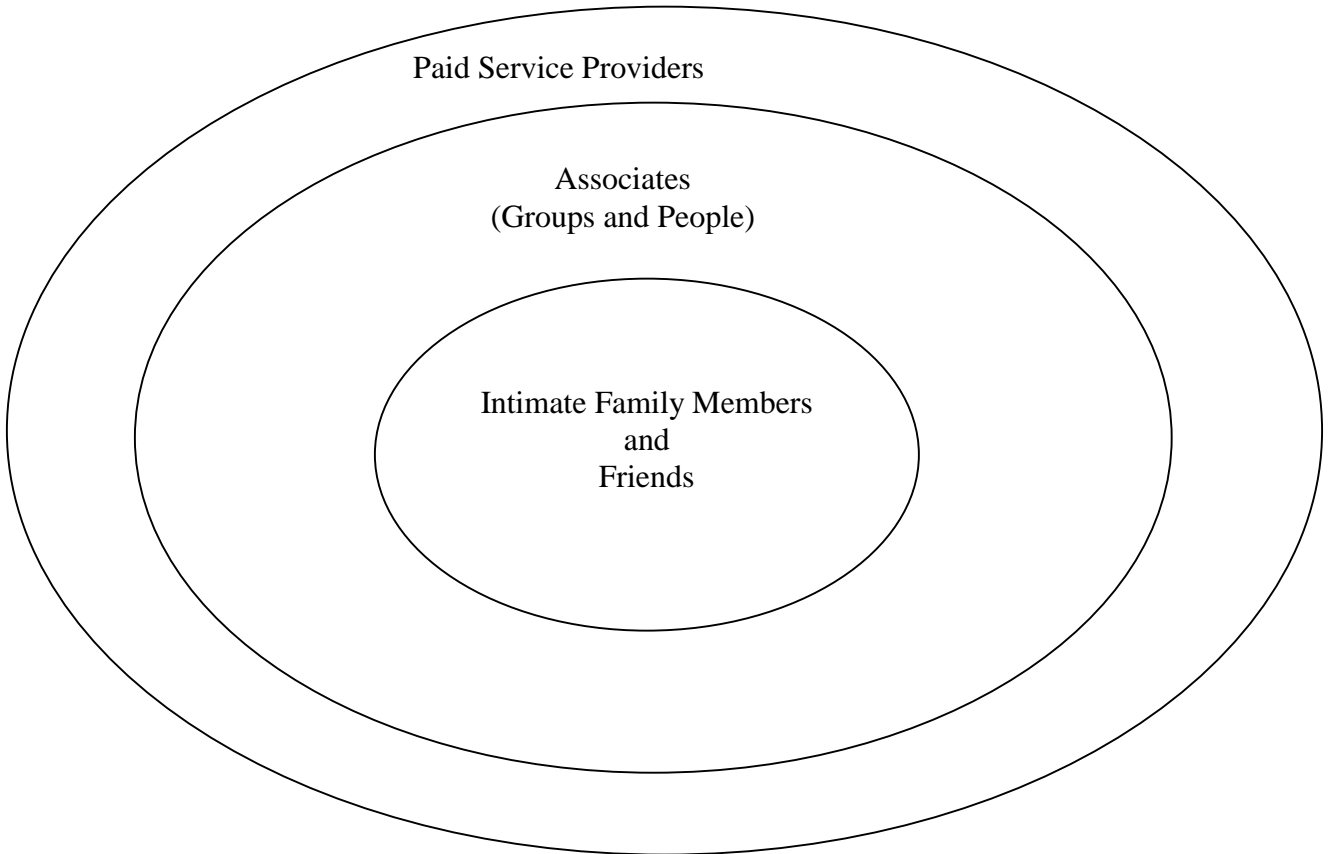
Relationship Circle

Relationships Chart

Things to Consider About Relationships & Affiliations

Relationships & Affiliations Questions

Important People in Life



PREFERRED RELATIONSHIPS

Who does the person like to be with and what do they enjoy doing together?

Who?	Routines	Suggestions

List the qualities in others that are most liked and disliked

“Likeable”	“Unlikeable”

Things to Consider About Relationships & Affiliations

Significant Relationships

- Family members
- Extended family members
- Friends
- Mentors

Associates

- Coworkers and bosses
- People at places he/she frequents
- Spiritual leaders
- Allies
- Community groups and networks
- People who have had an important influence

Paid Service Providers

- Human service agencies
- Funding agencies and contact persons
- Medical and therapeutic professionals
- Educators

General Qualities & Characteristics

- Personal preferences
- People with needed expertise and skills
- Philosophical beliefs
- People and groups with shared interests

6. *What suggestions do you have about dealing effectively with people who provide supports to the person?*

7. *In your opinion, what are the ideal qualities that people who provide support possess?*

8. *What community groups and associations does the person belong to now and wish to belong to in the future?*

9. *What characteristics in people cause you concern for the person?*

10. *What personal and group characteristics are important for a relationship to work?*

11. *How would the person, relatives, close friends and significant people in the person's life answer these questions?*