

BUILDING A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

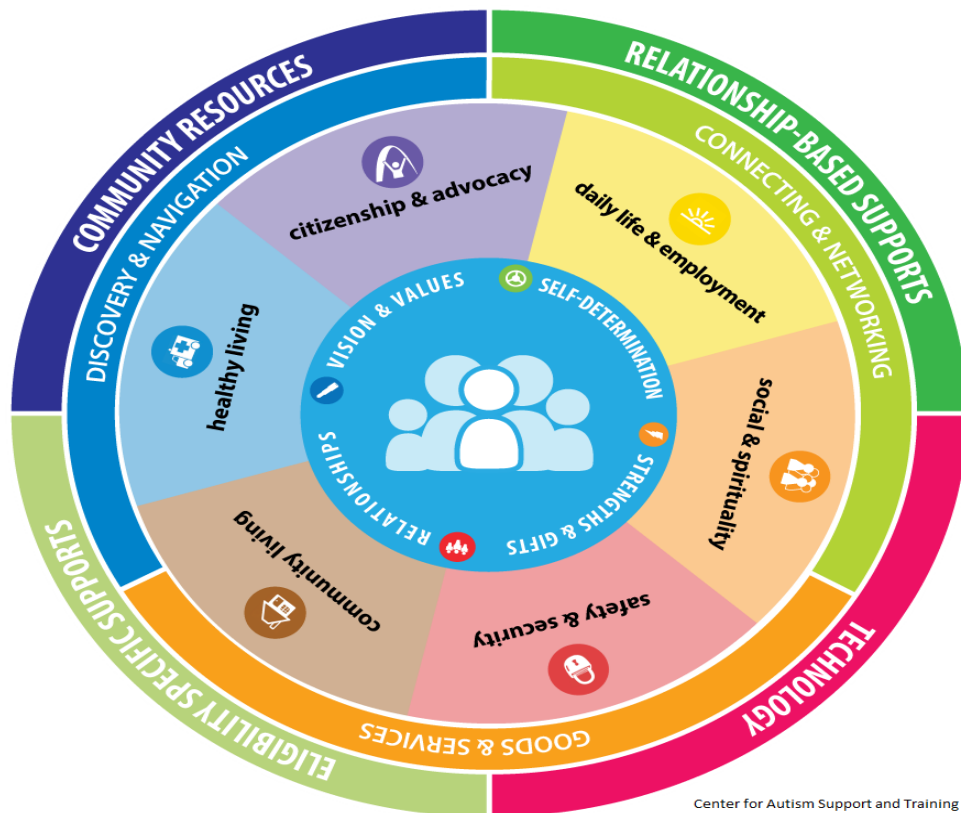
What is a Circle of Support (COS)? Everyone in an individual's life that supports them in one way or another. Some participants have more impact and frequency than others. A COS can change over time and should be reviewed regularly to determine if the impact is beneficial.

Who can be in a Circle of Support? It changes over time and based on need; however, COS typically include: family members, teachers, employers, friends, religious officials or members of the religious organization, medical professionals, therapists, support services providers.

Why are Circles of Support beneficial? It takes a village! Being everything to your child can be overwhelming for you and can potentially limit their progress towards independence. Besides, we all have our areas of expertise and ability to support in certain areas.

For example, it makes my son uncomfortable to discuss certain issues with me; however, he is fine discussing them with Dad, another male family member, or a friend. It's just important to make sure everyone is on the same page!

And, it kills us to think about it; but, if you are their "everything", what happens to them if something happens to you? Can they navigate life independently? Do they know who they can ask for help if they need it?



Center for Autism Support and Training