Circles of Support

Martina Rynne
Brothers of Charity
Services Clare
What is a Circle of Support?

- Involves a small number of people coming together regularly to provide support to a person with a disability, who they care about.
- Circles are made up of ordinary people.
- Facilitate ordinary people to play a role.
- Invite people in to have a relationship with the person.
- It is intentional and has to be.
What is a Circle? Contd.

- Circle can provide things that money can never buy
- People working together towards a common dream or Vision
- Add celebration to achievements
- Provides some relief for families, in terms of safeguarding the life of the person into the future
- Provide practical support, shopping, socialising, etc
Every circle is different—because of the uniqueness of the dreams of the individual at the centre of the circle—and the uniqueness of the contribution of each circle member.
Who are the People On the Circle?

- *Immediate Family*: Mom, Dad, siblings

- *Extended family*: grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins

- *Community*: neighbours, friends of family, friends of person
Who are the People On the Circle?

- No paid people on the Circle
- People of similar age to the person
- Three generational Circles
What seems to work with Circles?

- The Vision for the person being very clear
- What is the purpose of the Circle? Short term/long term
- Finding like minded people-who understand the Vision and are committed to making it happen
- Giving people an amount of responsibility they are comfortable with-no pressure
- Having regular Circle meetings
- Commitment over a long time
- Creative brainstorming and honesty
- Having a facilitator initially
- Meeting over food
Examples

- Paul
- Helen
What have we learned?

- Commitment and conviction that the person with disability is entitled to a good and ordinary life
- Sibling involvement is really important
- Grow the Circle slowly—No rush to have 10 people
- Help the Circle members to get to know the person with a disability
- Have Patience
- Be Positive
- Two heads are better than one!
- Circles can be for the person, or for the person and the family
Thank You

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