

HISTORY

Circles were originally developed in Canada in 1994 to help high-risk sex offenders on their release to re-integrate back into society. So successful are Circles at reducing sex crimes that Circles now exist throughout the country.

The United Kingdom has been running these circles successfully since 2002, with very low re-offending rates.

Circles are now operating in several US states.

THE ORGANIZATION

North Carolina Circles of Safety and Accountability (NCCOSA) is a project of Durham Congregations in Action. Circles is a community based organization. The steering group includes representatives from North Carolina Department of Public Safety and Durham Criminal Justice Resource Center, as well as individuals with experience in corrections, community support for ex-offenders, child protection work, restorative justice and criminal courts.

WHY CIRCLES WORK

The positive impact of Circles comes from the recognition by the offenders that the volunteers care about them. They know this because the volunteers are giving up their free time. At the same time the volunteers protect the community by checking the behavior of the offenders to see that they are keeping to their parole conditions.

For more information and volunteer application forms, contact:

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Please call between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm. You may send a fax or email at any time.

Published February 2012

Circles of safety and accountability in Durham, North Carolina



NO MORE VICTIMS

How to help released sex offenders stop committing more crimes and making more victims? Use volunteers from the local community to form circles of safety and accountability around them.

That is why these circles are being introduced to North Carolina.



WHAT CIRCLES OFFER

Circles of safety and accountability provide a healing approach to justice by building and maintaining healthy patterns of living for offenders as they learn to cope with life outside prison.

Circles work to:

walk with the offender through the often difficult transition back into the community.

encourage offenders to live normal lives by providing the network and support needed for them to succeed.

celebrate milestones in their journey to healthy integration.

collaborate with various systems.

Circles work in cooperation with police, supervision agents, treatment professionals, social service workers and local organizations.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

Circles of Support and Accountability consist of small groups of volunteers (four to seven in each group) who provide intensive support and accountability to sex offenders following their release from prison. The offender is called a Core Member in a circle of safety and accountability

Each circle lasts approximately one year with weekly 1-2 hour meetings attended by all circle members, including the Core Member. A volunteer can expect to meet no more than 4 hours per week.

Volunteer involvement in the Circle is most intense during the first 60-90 days following an offender's release from prison. Involvement gradually diminishes over time as the offender successfully re-settles back into the community and becomes less dependent on the circle

CIRCLE PROCESSES

Group mentoring in a circle setting provides the opportunity to share wisdom and build on the life experiences of others. Diversity of

thinking adds opportunities for problem-solving within the group and provides new ways to relate to the community at large.

The circle represents a bond of mutual respect, understanding and ownership in the process.

TRAINING

Volunteers receive approximately 25 hours of free training with continuous follow-up support. Training is based on a restorative justice model.

Topics include:

circle processes and guidelines;
criminal justice system overview;
human sexuality and sexual deviance;
effects of long-term imprisonment;
community concerns; setting personal boundaries and self-care; re-offending prevention; creating a covenant with the core member.

Volunteer today!

