



Circle of Security

Information for Referring Agencies

Circle of Security is a relationship based early intervention program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children. Decades of university-based research have confirmed that secure children exhibit increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enhanced school readiness, and an increased capacity to handle emotions more effectively when compared with children who are not secure. Circle of Security (COS) is an internationally recognised evidence based program which draws from 50 years of research into attachment. It is run as a seven week parent group for parents with babies and toddlers. The group is designed to enhance the bond and sense of security for both parent and infant in their relationship by:

- Giving parents a roadmap as a way to better understand their children's needs
- Inviting parents to reflect on their own experiences of being parented and how it impacts on their parenting
- Providing an environment where parents can focus on their strengths and struggles and benefit from the experience of sharing with other parents

The PSFaNS COS Program particularly focuses on families raising children suffering from attachment difficulties due to developmental issues, reactive attachment disorder, maltreatment, disrupted relationships and complex trauma.

The COS intervention is designed to transfer research knowledge to parents in a user-friendly way. The DVD-based design helps parents learn to observe and interpret children's behaviour using the Circle of Security.

The Circle map draws a very clear link between child development, attachment research, emotional co-regulation and learning. Whilst in PSFaNS we generally recommend this group for families with 0-3 year olds, Circle of Security is equally relevant to families raising children of all ages. With the help of a Circle of Security Network therapist, parents will discover new ways to help their children connect, restore, and grow.

Developmental Trauma & Circle of Security

Many children with maltreatment histories have suffered a variety of traumatic events. These experiences have devastating effects on a child's physiology, emotions, impulse

control, self-image, ability to think, learn, and concentrate. Their relationships with others and attachment with parents and caregivers are often very strained.

Children with these histories often have behaviour problems, trouble using their caregivers for help, difficulty learning from their mistakes, and problems in regulating their own emotions and behaviour. Across the life span, these conditions are linked to a wide range of problems, including addiction, chronic physical conditions, depression and anxiety, self-harming behaviours, and other psychiatric disorders.

The Circle of Security program is designed to offer parents/caregivers direction and clarity in understanding trauma and healing. Parents/caregivers are the most essential part of helping children overcome trauma and develop alternative pathways to healing.

As with all PSFaNS programs any developmental or other concerns are followed up and addressed.

For more information phone Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services 49874674