



Windsor-Essex Family Network October 12, 2021 Newsletter



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Adult Sibling Support Group Meetings begin soon!

Group to meet on Zoom Thursday, October 14, 2021, from 7 - 8 pm

To register and get the zoom link for the meeting email: sibgroup@windsoressexfamnet.ca

By Heather Kerr, Kyla Dumlao & Catherine MacQuarrie

Who we are:

We are a group of adult siblings planning who typically meet monthly from September to June. We host a casual get-together to chat about all things related to being an adult sister or brother of someone with a disability. As siblings and volunteers, we want to create a space where people can come together to talk, share, learn, laugh and help each other find resources. We look at things from a sibling perspective, differently than our parents might at times. We support each other by sharing our stories and experiences.

We welcome adult siblings, sib-in-laws and sibling figures in various stages of life. We are working through what it means to support our siblings, who live with disabilities, in different ways.

We are launching our first gathering for Fall 2021 this year in October. Just for this month it will be held on the second Thursday of the month - October 14, 2021 from 7 - 8 pm. Following this first Fall virtual gathering our other Sibling Group meetings will be held the first Thursday of the month.

We are currently meeting virtually. Here are the dates for upcoming meetings in 2021 and 2022.

- October 14, 2021
- November 4, 2021
- December 2, 2021
- January 6, 2022
- February 3, 2022
- Mar 3, 2022
- April 7, 2022
- May 5, 2022
- June 2, 2022
- BREAK FOR SUMMER

To attend our next meeting, please email us and we will send you a Zoom link OR feel free to email us with any questions, and to get connected! One of us will return your email.

E-mail us at: sibgroup@windsoressexfamnet.ca to get connected!

To check things out on our webpage go to:

<https://windsoressexfamnet.ca/sibling-resources/>

We would like to thank Windsor-Essex Family Network for their support for our own webpage and private email, and the purchasing of new resources for the WEFN Lending library.

HIGHLIGHTS

Inside this Newsletter

Exploring the Power of Support Circles, Session One
Wed., Oct. 20, 2021
Register for 1 session or all 4, Your choice! See inside!

An Evening of Inspiration, High School and Beyond
Wed, Nov. 17, 2021

IEPs and More Follow-up including links to excellent resources about IEPs and other related info.

Exploring the Power of Support Circles

A dynamic virtual learning series launching October 20th

Choose to register for any of the sessions, or just one! To learn more about the entire series and all four sessions, see page 3.



There is still time to register for Session One!

Discovering the Power of Support Circles

Wed, October 20, 2021, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Presenter Judith McGill, LifePath Training and Facilitation

Why form a Support Circle? What are the benefits? What are the challenges?

So much to discover! Join us to explore:

- Expanding our imagination and thinking differently
- The significance of relationships as a safeguard
- The purpose and intentions of Support Circles
- Benefits of a Support Circle

Invite others to join you, those who are important in your lives. This could be friends, extended family, siblings, an independent facilitator, family coordinator, and/or other supportive professionals.

Register by noon on Tuesday, October 19, 2021

On-line at: <https://windsorsexfamnet.ca/upcoming-events/>

Or by email: info@windsorsexfamnet.ca

A link to the virtual event will be provided the day of the event.

About the presenter, Judith McGill

Judith has worked as the Executive Director of Families for a Secure Future, an independent facilitation organization, for over 20 years.

As an Independent Facilitator she spends time with individuals and their families supporting them to take up their adult roles and actively “re-imagine” their futures, one step at a time. For some this entails supporting them over time to build and maintain a Support Circle so that they may deepen their sense of community and be supported to make decisions alongside others.

As a sibling of a brother with cerebral palsy she is deeply committed to bringing about a transformative change in how people come to see themselves.

Judith is an adult educator with LifePath Training and has been writing and speaking about leisure, relationships, independent facilitation and community building in the field of disability for almost four decades. Her provocative style and inspirational ideas have helped to transform the lives of many of the people she has come into contact with. She has a marvelous capacity for helping people discover what really matters in their life and muster the courage to go after it.

She is author of *Developing Leisure Identities: A Pilot Project*, co-author of *Leisure, Integration and Community* with Peggy Hutchison and co-editor of *The Pursuit of Leisure: Enriching the Lives of People who Have a Disability*. She is currently writing several books entitled: *Riding the Tiger: Taking Charge of Hiring and Keeping Outstanding People*; *The Power of Support Circles*; *Conscious Listening and Speaking*; *Meditations on Everyday Mercies*.



Exploring the Power of Support Circles

“A Support Circle is a group of dedicated people who gather intentionally for the purpose of finding ways to support a person who has a disability to make decisions and move their life forward so that they are able to live a rich and meaningful life.”

About this four-part series, presented by Judith McGill

For people with disabilities, making the decision to form a Support Circle can be the most important decision of their life. For families, supporting their loved one to invite others to form a Support Circle can be one of the most courageous and remarkable steps they will ever take. Although, inviting others to enter into a deeper relationship in this way makes people and their families feel particularly vulnerable, it also opens up so many new possibilities for taking-action and coming to know the true meaning of community.

This unique series invites people with disabilities, their family and/or loved ones as well as independent facilitators/supporters to learn together. One of the highlights of the learning: What it means to intentionally build relationships, that can become safeguards in the lives of people with disabilities.

The four sessions are designed to be inspirational, and at the same time provide clarification and what to keep in mind going forward.

Families who take the series together will greatly benefit from learning among others. They will gain a deeper appreciation for how their family can work with others to begin investing in the future.

Support Circles are a place where the person is held by the members in such a way that they experience their own humanity and possibility. Where people are supported to have a real say in their lives. It is a place where they come to know community and belonging, a place where they come to have an authentic experience of mutual giving and receiving.

Judith McGill

Four sessions, four valuable themes!

Session One

Discovering the Power of Support Circles

Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

- *Expanding your imagination and thinking differently*
- *The significance of relationships as a safeguard*
- *The purpose and intentions of Support Circles*
- *Benefits of a Support Circle*

Session Two

Creating a Sense of Belonging to a Community

Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

- *Support Circles telling their stories*
- *The meaning of Support Circle membership*
- *Deepening relationships and a sense of belonging*
- *Nature of power in relationships*
- *Working through uncertainty and fears*

Session Three

Building a Support Circle

Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

- *Strengthening everyone's voice*
- *Crafting the initial invitations*
- *Formal planning as a starting place*
- *Rites of passage: teenage hood & adulthood*

Session Four

Keeping a Support Circle Alive Over Time

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

- *Intentional planning for sustainability*
- *Role of the independent facilitator/supporter*
- *Rhythm of a Support Circle*
- *Supporting planning and decision-making*
- *Potential challenges and safeguards*

Each session can be taken on its own, and will have its own flyer and registration prior to the date. If you want to register for all four sessions in advance, email: info@windsorsexfamnet.ca

This series is being hosted by: Windsor-Essex Family Network and the Windsor-Essex Relationships/Circles Group. To learn more about the upcoming session in this series, go to: <https://windsorsexfamnet.ca/upcoming-events/>

Save the Date:

Wed. November 17, 2021 - 7:00 – 8:30 pm

A Night of Inspiration for Families Navigating High School and Beyond

- Flyer and Registration Link coming soon
- Back by popular demand, Rose and Monica, local parents, will be sharing their family's experiences at this stage of life.



Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and More - Follow-up Information

Close to 100 participants attended the IEPs & More event held virtually on October 4, 2021. For a number of households, there were 2 – 3 people participating. Many thanks to our partners with the Enhancing Family Support for Education Group, and the presenters with the Greater Essex County District School Board and Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board for their support with the event. It was our first time holding this event virtually and we learned a great deal.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION: For resources about IEPs and much more Windsor-Essex Family Network has created a resource page on our website called *Individual Education Plan information and Much More*. The link to this resource page is: <https://windsorsexfamnet.ca/ieps-and-more/>

Below is the table of contents for what is contained on the resource page:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) Resources
- Communication with School
- Inclusive Education
- Special Education Overview
- Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)
- Transition Planning
- Resources to Strengthen You and Your Family

Additional information on appropriate accommodations is available on the website of the **Ontario Human Rights Commission** at the following link:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/guidelines-accessible-education/appropriate-accommodation>

More about IEPs and Families - Recommended Reading from “The Mighty”

Families who are involved with their student's IEP, will find the following article interesting, even affirming. For those you who have been called “that mom”, we hope you enjoy the article entitled, *When I Became 'That Mom' I Once Dreaded as a Special Education Teacher*, by Trish Jacobi. A colleague and friend has said, “It's time to bring some pride into being ‘that mom’.” Read the full article at this link:

https://themighty.com/2021/01/becoming-that-mom-special-education-teacher-prnt/?fbclid=IwAR1vjSr2pZf2VPQN4FaMq9CK4Nm8kZWX_X8mRYpQQAJBNV5q8rKgRJ3XqL0%C2%A0

Windsor-Essex Family Network

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