

Questions to Assist in Finding Networks

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Child protection professionals often struggle to find support people and build naturally connected networks around parents, young people and children in child protection cases. It is completely natural that people involved with child protection authorities resist involving extended family people they know. This worksheet is designed to assist professionals to persist in continuing the discussion and to do everything possible to find people that can support the parents and children.

The worksheet questions are listed under the categories past, present and future. This list of questions is not exhaustive but designed to stimulate the professional's imagination about ways to explore finding and enlisting people who have natural connections to the children and parents.

In exploring the possibility of who is available to support parents and children the professional needs to completely let go of the idea that they have failed if it is not possible to find people who will get involved. The professional succeeds in this work when they have done everything they can to explore the issue from every angle possible with the parents. Whether people are found or not the professional will have much greater insight into the parent and how they see and experience their world and much greater clarity about whether it is possible to build and sustain a safety network around the family.

Past

- Who are the people that have stuck with you at your best and worst moments in life?
- Can you tell me about someone in your life that really got you and who you really felt understood you? Who was that? What did they do they you knew they really understood you?
- What has been the best thing(s) for you from having people support and help you?
- What has been the worst thing(s) that have happened to you when you have had other people help or support you in the past?
- What has been the most important day in your life and who was there to share it with you?
- Who has been the person that surprised you the most and helped you out in your life?
- Who has been the person that surprised you the most when you needed help caring for your child?
- Who have you relied on when things got crazy in life? What were the most important things they did for you?
- When you think about your past, who has been most supportive of you in the choices you have made regarding your children?
- When you were younger, who was your favourite person? What made them your favourite person?
- Tell me a story about a happy time in your life. Who was there with you?
- Who was there when your child was born?
- Think about a time in your past where you were in a crisis of some kind (financial, medical, etc.). Who did you confide in?

- Who have you called to care for your kids in the past?
- Who went with you to buy your first car/picked out your wedding dress/ make a major purchase/etc.?
- Who was the person that helped you in a really tough time that surprised you they were helpful to you in that time?
- Who knows about what happened about this/that situation?
- Who have you told your secrets to? What made them somebody you trusted?
- Who have you trusted the most?
- Have there been people you have trusted that have let you down?
- What would you say are your best skills and talents? Who did you learn those things from?
- What are your most important beliefs about how to live your life? Who did you learn those things from?
- Where in the world does your family come from – who holds those stories?
- Who has been there for you when you had troubles in the past?
- When you think of all the people you have been close to in your whole life, whether family or friends, who has taught you the most about yourself as a person or parent? Tell me about a time that sticks out when that person showed or told you something about being a parent that you've never thought of before?
- Who did you consider to be the most significant people in your life growing up?
- Tell me about a moment in your life that you are proud of. Who did you share this with? Who would you share this with if they weren't there?
- What was the most fun thing you have done in the last 6 months? Who was there with you? Who did you tell about that?
- When you think of your most favourite holiday celebrated with your family or loved ones, who was there and what made it so special?
- Who has meant the most to you in your life?

Present

- Who knows the most about who's in your family on your mother's side?
- Who knows the most about who's in your family on your father's side?
- Who is someone in your life that you can call on or depend on in a time of need (crisis)?
- Who is someone in your life that you would tell exciting/good news to?
- Tell me about the people who are unconditionally committed to you?
- Who would you call to come to your children's birthday party?
- Who would you call first today if you had wonderful news? News that you were the most excited you have ever been.
- Who do you call on a bad day? Who do you call on a good day? Who would call you on a good/bad day?
- If I gave you 1 million dollars right now and I said you can have the 1 million free and clear, but you have to give the million dollars to 5 people in order to receive 10 million more. Who would those 5 people be?
- Who is the person you trust the most to take care of your kids, no matter what?
- This is a difficult discussion. Who in your life, if they were here right now, would help you feel like it is a little more manageable? Can we call them to come here?
- What most worries you about inviting people to help you with this?

- How many contacts do you have on your phone? Who could we call right now to come over?
- Who are you going to call about this when you get off the phone with me? Who do you want that person to call?
- Who in your life do you wish had been here to help when I knocked on your door? Who might be the first person you tell about CFS meeting with you today?
- Who is the most important person in your life today?
- Who would you call to care for your child if you went to the hospital today?
- Who would you call in the middle of the night when you need help? What is it about that (those) person (people) that makes you sure you can count on them?
- Who do you call when you are stuck and unable to pick up your kids at school?
- If you won a big award who are 5 people you would want to be there?
- Who did you send a text message (phone call) to first today?
- Who is the one person you wish were with you to support you right now?
- In case of an emergency (or if you were in an accident), who do you feel are the two most important people to contact?
- Who do you go to in life when you are making important decisions (like moving to a new town)?
- Who is your go to person when life gets tough?
- Tell me about the people who have been unconditionally committed to you?

Future

- Can we get hold of the person who knows the most about who's in your family on your mother's (father's) side to come and help us (come to the next meeting)?
- Who knows the most about who's in your family on your father's side?
- If you could have just the people you want around you in your life who would they be? What would they do? What would you be doing with them? How would they help you? How would you help them? If you had these people in your life how would that change things for your kids?
- When you think about everything it takes to look after your kids okay if you could have as many people as you want how many people do you think would be ideal to help you with the kids?
- Tomorrow you end up in a serious accident and you are in the hospital in a coma. Who would you want the doctor to call to take care of your kids until you get out?
- If you could fast forward 5 years from now, who would be your support network and who would rely on you?
- Who would be the people that you see in your life sharing your birthday 5 years from now?
- Who would you hope to have at your side for comfort in your older years of life?
- Tell me about your wildest dreams for the future? What does it look like and who's there with you?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Who is there with you? What do your relationships look like?
- If next year you found yourself homeless who would you call?
- If you were to die in a car accident tomorrow, who are the people you would want to raise your children?

- You wake up tomorrow and its two years from now. Who are the people you would hope would be in your life?
- If you were getting married, who is the one person (or people) you would want to be there to celebrate with you?
- Who will you call to invite to our next birthday celebration?
- If your child was getting married tomorrow, who in your world would you dream would be there?
- For all of us there's someone who will come into our lives in the future that will help us be a better person would you agree? OK so what do you imagine they will do/be to help you be a better person? How will you be a better person when that person comes into your life? How will your children see you be better person?

Ideas and Questions for people who say they don't have anyone?

- Okay so you don't have anyone to talk to help you with your life and raising the kids does it make any sense to you that we would want people alongside you and the kids?
- If you did have people to support you with your kids what would you want them to do? What would be most helpful for you?
- What would be most helpful for your kids about having some people to support you?
- Who (or what sort of person) would your kids say they would want you to get to help you raise them?
- Have you heard that expression 'it takes a village to raise a child'? On a scale of 0 to 10 where ten is I completely agree that that is right and 0 is that's just bullshit where would you rate that saying?
- What do you think would impress the judge about you having support people helping you raise your kids?
- Does it make any sense to you that the judge/my boss would want you to do this? What might it mean to the judge if you found some people to support you?

Family Safety Circles® created by Susie Essex

