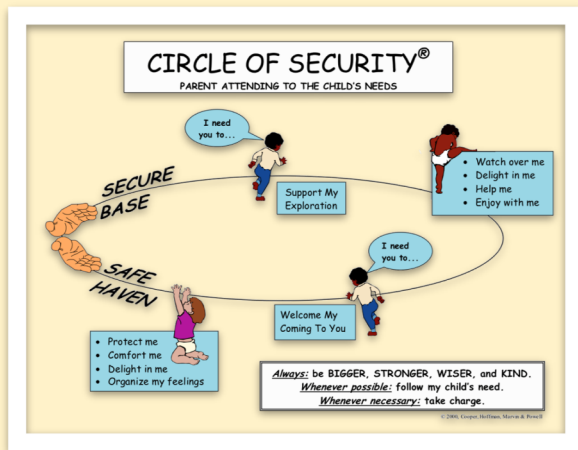




The **Circle of Security** is a way of thinking about emotion and behaviour that enables early childhood professionals to look beyond a child's immediate behaviour and think about how to meet their genuine relationship needs.



thrivecommunitysupportcircle.com



Thrive Child Care (TCC) is the licensed early childhood program of Thrive Community Support Circle. We believe that early learning experiences create a foundation that fosters children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our inclusive environment welcomes all children and families while embracing their uniqueness and individuality.



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*My
Circle of Security
Journey*





Hi everyone, I wanted to share my Circle of Security Journey with you.

After having my own children and working as centre Director for an Indigenous organization, I left the field of ECE for 15 years.

Fortunately for me, while I was away from ECE centres I was employed with a nurturing, supportive and professional organization called Villa Rosa. I worked with pregnant and parenting women and even with dads. My role as Parent Educator was to facilitate parenting programs, observe and report, as well as foster relationships between parents and their children. Many of our parents at Villa Rosa had CFS involvement, experienced homelessness and poverty, and carried tons of their own intergenerational trauma. I've always been a fan of attachment theory and loved learning all I could about brain development. I was introduced to brain science, Harvey Karp techniques (pick up your baby) and eventually COS. Since then, even though I had previous training as an ECE, I have never looked back to the "old ways" of interacting with children.

When I returned to child care in 2015 I found an amazing job at Thrive Community Support Circle. I noticed that the ECE staff were totally burned out, and the children were mostly unhappy. The staff felt helpless and I felt even more helpless not knowing how to support them. The children were either ignored or "running the show". The Childcare Centre ECE staff wanted me to "fix the behavior problems" and I really tried my best through room arrangement and scheduling extra support on the floor.



This didn't help whatsoever, and the more support staff on the floor, the more chaotic and dysregulated the environment was!

I started reaching out for help from Joanne Brown, clinician at New Directions. She was able to come observe and provide feedback about what was going on within our centre.

The problem was not the children. There was in fact NO PROBLEM. The children needed connection! The little ones were trying to let us know that they needed us as adults to help them manage big feelings.

Joanne was a huge influence and ultimately prompted me to learn about Circle of Security. I took the Circle of Security at New Directions with a group of ECEs. I participated through a parent's lens. Self reflection helped me evaluate all my relationships. This way of looking at things started working, and I became a better leader and a more attuned mother to my adult children. I became really excited and couldn't stop talking about how easy it was to meet EVERYONE's needs!

Through Communities 4 Families I was able to obtain funding to take the course to become a registered facilitator of Circle of Security. I spent a week with other therapists, teachers, and professionals. I felt so lucky to be able to be involved with such a passionate group.

The first group that I facilitated was my own staff.

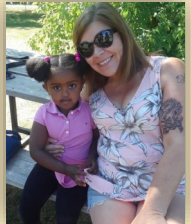


We all became used to speaking the same language of COS. Our centre began to hum like a well-oiled machine.



I was asked by ELCC to be a part of a pilot project to teach other ECEs COS because it had helped our centre so much. The issues we had with "problem behaviors" could be handled easily. We began to see behaviors as a puzzle that we could solve together at Thrive. Along with other centre Directors and with the support of ELCC (precovid) I attended monthly cohort meetings for facilitators. Eventually all ECEs who were interested in adapting the COS philosophy started to attend the meetings. For a good year and a half, we lived and breathed COS!

I took a couple of attachment-based workshops "Attachment Strategies for Supervisors" through Joanne Brown and it helped me look at my colleagues and community through the eyes of COS. This has made such a difference in my leadership, and the way I support my staff. My staff totally think that I can handle anything.



However, I feel a little sheepish, because I am not a professor, therapist or clinician but I do know that Circle of Security changed our centre for the better. All relationships at our centre have changed in a positive way, and I also know that when I am feeling vulnerable, I can reach out! I know how to support parents in a way that encourages them, and creates a stronger bond between community members.

I cannot wait to meet you all.
Jess Smith ECE III