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# **Image result for man clip art freeCircles of Support**

# **One man’s story**

47-year-old Bill\* lives on his own. He loves charity shops and can often be found rummaging about in one when he is not at his job at a local factory.

Two years ago Bill had lost his mum and moved into a flat on his own for the first time. Although he kept the place clean and tidy, just like mum taught him, he felt sad, lonely and a little lost at times.

Bill told us that he had very little social life and lacked in confidence, he was struggling to understand money and had no support.

Bill was never formally diagnosed with a learning disability because his mum had not trusted doctors, so with no support he just muddled on alone. However the family were known to the pastoral support team at a local church. They noticed Bill was struggling to cope and stepped in to help.

Stuart\*, one of the team called Sutton Mencap to find out about local activities and was told all about Circles of Support. He felt it would be a great structure to use as they wanted to support Bill in the best way they could.

We met and Bill’s Circle was formed. They started by thinking about what Bill did during the week, what his dreams and goals were and where he was facing challenges. They used the discussion to make a plan.

If you would like to know more about Circles, please call me on 020 8647 8600 or send me an email. [Jude@suttonmencap.org.uk](mailto:Jude@suttonmencap.org.uk)

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This helped guide the way forward and at the next circle meetings Bill talked about what he really wanted, his idea of a ‘good life’.

Bill’s circle members had a good range of life skills so shared out circle actions accordingly to ensure Bill had some practical and emotional help. They applied for support he was entitled to. Most importantly they made sure that Bill had his voice heard.

Bill wanted to have a better social life so one of the first things his circle did was to connect him to a local pub. One night a week a group of people with disabilities gathered there and it felt safe and friendly.

Bill liked the fact they all had a meal together and then chatted the night away. He was not ignored as he had been in other pubs in the past.

In the year since we first met Bill, he has learned to manage his money a little better, has become a regular at the pub night and made at one special friend who he has gone on holiday with. He hopes she might become his girlfriend someday.

Bill already had some positive aspects in his life, like his job and his flat, but with the extra support he received from his circle he now has so much more to look forward to. He is happier, less lonely and more in control.

Bill’s circle continue to support him to access the services needed to ensure good health and wellbeing and although they meet up less often they will be there when Bill needs them. \*real names not used



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