

**Emma’s Story**

Emma is 19. She still has a number of years left in education but is wanting to do more outside of the home.

Because Emma\* has a learning disability and can be vulnerable her parents were concerned for her safety so the college tutor suggested finding out about Circles of Support and how that could help her make plans.

When we met Emma we found a lively, vibrant young lady who lives at home with her dad and sisters. Her mum lives a long way away but was keen to be involved when she could. Emma is fun, caring and enthusiastic about life, but dad had lots of worries. What dads don’t? But Emma was determined to not let this affect her dreams.

On looking at her relationship map it seemed that Emma did not have many people outside of her family network and did not take part in many activities outside of home and college.

Sally\*, a family friend worked with the Circles of Support Manager to learn about facilitation and then led the first circle meeting with some agreed questions. Together they used the information to record, a MAP for Emma.

A number of actions were also identified at this first meeting which members agreed to take on.

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

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Over the last year Emma and her small circle have invited people to join the circle, including a college friend. Still small in number the Circle meets once every couple of months in a local coffee shop (a social event in itself), to review the goals set at the first meeting and to decide what to do next.

Emma is now more confident in asking for what she would like to do and dad worries less.

Her sisters found that in the circle they were able to be a strong voice for Emma and persuade dad that it was ok for Emma to go out.

They helped to arrange sleep overs with her college friend, a girl’s night out and are now working on how Emma could form her own IPAD & Coffee group.

The Circle have talked about who would be a great PA for Emma to support her to achieve more, drawing up a job description, person specification and advertisements for the post.

This summer with the support of her Circle Emma is going to try Cycling, a new dance group and start a savings plan for a holiday.

Life is definitely not going to be boring.

\*real names not used



 Circles of Support is funded by the James Trust