

Circle of Accountability

PROTOCOL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY CIRCLES FOR SOLICITATION OR PROMOTION OF PROSTITUTION CASES

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*Repairing harm to victims,
holding clients accountable and
building a better community.*

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Accountability Circle Protocol Overview

WCCC, Inc. has been taking Circle cases from the courts and community since 1998. The organization incorporated in 2008 and was certified as a non-profit corporation. WCCC's goals are to repair harm to victims, hold clients accountable, and build community. WCCC's core communities are in Cottage Grove, Stillwater, and Woodbury, but serve participants and victims of crime across Washington County and the surrounding region.

With the Washington County Attorney's Office, WCCC proposes the following protocol to hold Accountability Circles with men and women charged with solicitation in Washington County.

The information below includes proposed guidelines for Accountability Circles with WCCC, Inc.

Protocol for Accountability Circles

Scope of Circle

A Circle of Accountability brings together community with a client, a perpetrator

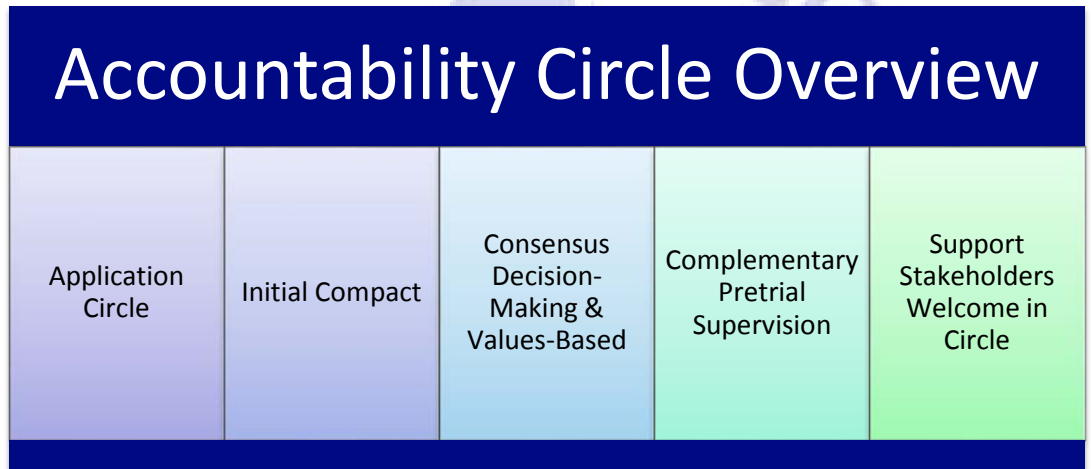
of conflict or crime, to explore the harm caused by the crime or conflict, encourage the client to take accountability for the client's role in that harm, and support the client to ensure the behavior does not happen again.

The focus of Accountability Circles with Solicitation cases will focus on exploring why the client (defendant) committed the crime, explore what type of harm results from solicitation for prostitution, and to identify what is needed to stop the behavior in the future.

Based on conversations with the Washington County Attorney's Office, the duration of the Circles will typically be 12 months, and successful completion of Circle will be a requirement of a plea agreement and conditions for a stay of adjudication, continuance for dismissal, or any other conditions/agreement agreed to by the defendant, prosecutor, and Court.

The Circles will also include the following informational sessions, which will be further discussed in Circle, to educate clients on the legal, health, and crime victimization risks in commercial sex exploitation:¹

- Sex Trafficking and Prostitution Legal Consequences and Public Health Risks
- Dynamics of Commercial Sex: Pimping, Recruiting, and Trafficking
- Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Survivor Speaker



¹ To the extent that there may be costs to bring in these speakers, the costs will be borne by clients. Community volunteers will be encouraged to attend these sessions as well so that discussion of the sessions can occur in Circle.

- Sexual Addiction & Recovery

Speakers will be selected with the assistance and advice of the Washington County Attorney's Office and other subject matter experts that WCCC will seek for partnership.

Depending on the number of cases referred, WCCC may or may not currently have capacity to take all of the referred cases, but capacity growth is a goal of WCCC.

Training for Community Volunteers

Training will be provided by the County Attorney's Office, law enforcement, and sexual assault experts on September 7, 2017 at Family Means. Specifically, the training should cover:

- Overview: The current state of solicitation stings, sexual assault, and sex trafficking in Washington County
 - County Attorney's Office, Law Enforcement
- Other topics to cover:
 - Profile of the defendants
 - Recidivism rate for charged defendants
 - How are the courts changing the way they deal with solicitation cases?
 - What programs are available now to treat these defendants?
 - What part do court partners believe community/Circles will play in dealing with these cases?
 - What do we as community members need to know in order to work with these clients?

In addition to the initial training, community volunteers will continue to work with court partners for additional training, as necessary, and will attend the information sessions that the clients will attend.

Application

Participation in an Accountability Circle will consist of trained volunteers from WCCC, clients, and the client's support people/stakeholders such as family members or friends. Clients would complete an application and participate in an Application Circle. This Application Circle would ideally be scheduled within one month of referral. If accepted, the individual would be referred to Circle.

The Circle is looking for clients who are willing to accept responsibility and accountability for their actions and want to change their behavior. The Circle will look for this in the Application and Application Circle.

WCCC will also be open to including multiple defendants in the same Circle, depending on the individual cases/clients and the number of referrals received.

Accountability Circles Curriculum

- ✓ Circles for 12 months, twice a month for 4 months, once a month for 8 months
 - Circles will discuss and debrief the quarterly information sessions
 - Circles may include multiple clients
- ✓ Quarterly Information Sessions with Speakers (1 ½ hour sessions with 1 hour Circle following)
 - Sex Trafficking and Prostitution Legal Consequences and Public Health Risks
 - Dynamics of Commercial Sex: Pimping, Recruiting, and Trafficking
 - Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Survivor Speaker
 - Sexual Addiction & Recovery
- ✓ Circle Completion Assessment, completed by the client examining their Accountability Circle Experience
- ✓ Total Projected hours in the Accountability Circle Process for the Client: **35**

Process

Circles derive their strength from community participation in a valued-based process. The core values of the WCCC are reflective of both the necessary qualities, which need to be present for each Circle to have meaning, as well as important values of the area communities.

Participation in the Circle process indicates acceptance of these values in both word and action. The values are interdependent, sharing certain features among them. The values for WCCC, Inc. are:

WCCC Values

Respect

Respect acknowledges the dignity and worth of each individual. It ensures that every participant experience *acceptance* into the Circle, and ensures that everyone is heard with *equality*. It requires every participant listen to everyone else. Respect means that all members of the Circle participate within the guidelines set by the Circle. Furthermore, respect is critical in achieving the *consensus decision-making* necessary for Circles to be successful. Respect is also important in understanding the concept of *honoring the talking piece*. When others are holding the talking piece, it is important for participants to view the piece as an opportunity for reflection. When the talking piece is held out for open discussion, it continues to have importance and should be honored by conducting discussion in a respectful manner. The talking piece is a symbol of the *interconnectedness* and shared responsibility of the participants in the Circle, and it should be held respectfully.

Humility

The *strength of character* to recognize the *humanness* of self and others, and to be *inclusive* and *thankful* for everyone's participation in Circle, is to have humility. Humility helps create *partnership* between participants. Humility is closely tied with the value of honesty, mostly in terms of honesty with self.

Compassion

Compassion indicates a *genuine concern for the welfare of others*. For the supportive relationships of Circles to be built, participants need to enter the Circle process open to feeling compassion for the others whom they will join on the Circle journey. A compassionate *focus on harm*, combined with the *flexibility* of Circles, allows victims to be involved in the Circle process in whatever ways are comfortable for them. This harm-focus opens the Circle to visiting many issues, which may underlie the committing of the offense, and which would probably not otherwise be acknowledged. Compassion felt by Circle participants enables the Circle to take positive action to repair those issues, which contributed to the harm done.

Spirituality

Spirituality celebrates the wholeness of each person and the oneness of the Circle. It allows all participants to *speak from the heart*, so that everyone can share with each other in the spirit of moving beyond conflict together, to find understanding and healing. Holding a Circle means *creating a sacred space*, where these values are honored.

Honesty

Accountability is an indisputably important element in the Circle process; *trust* is necessary for accountability. But neither of them can be achieved without honesty. People need the support of others to make affirmative changes in their lives, and honesty is the basis for building those strong relationships within communities. Furthermore, dishonesty can quickly result in hostile feelings, which undermine the Circle process. Therefore, it is necessary for each participant

to strive for honesty with themselves and others, and to speak with honesty in a Circle so that victims, offenders, and other Circle participants can view the Circle process as a positive experience.

Consensus Decision-Making

All decisions made in the Circle process are determined by consensus. Consensus requires that those who come together for discussion and decision-making agree to listen to all perspectives and that all participants are flexible in working toward a common agreement. Participants understand from the onset that they will likely not come away with a group decision exactly like their preference, but they are usually able to come away with a group decision they can live with. Everyone, regardless of their titles or roles, has an equal voice in the Circle, and they each have many opportunities to express their points of view. The consensus may also be that there is no consensus of the Circle.

Consensus does not mean unanimity. An individual may not agree with the general conclusion or opinion reached as the shared common position of the group, but it is something that they can support or “live with.” The opposing, or at least differing, view is given a full opportunity to be presented, heard, and discussed, possibly influence the fine-tuning of the consensus.

Accountability Circle Procedure & Eligibility

All clients referred by the County Attorney’s Office are eligible to apply. The Circle holds an Application Circle and evaluates the following:

1. The potential client completes an Application and has the Application Circle within one month of referral.
2. The Circle accepts or rejects the Application.
3. If accepted, the Circle will work with the client to ensure the client completes the sentencing components resulting from the plea agreement, as well as complete the other components outlined in this proposal, as well as any other recommendations of the Circle (established through consensus of the Circle).
4. The client must complete all components of the Accountability Circles Process (see page 3), including an assessment that requires them to examine their experience in the process in order to successfully complete Circle.
5. When the Circle for a client concludes, the Circle Keeper will write a letter to the County Attorney’s Office and client summarizing the Circle process with the client.
 - a. The Circle Keeper will summarize the sentencing conditions, whether the client met the conditions, and the number of volunteers who worked on the case, and the hours spent in Circle.

Confidentiality & Mandated Reporting

Personal and sensitive issues that are discussed in the Circle are kept confidential between the Circle participants, including the names of juveniles who may be involved as participants or family members. Brief summaries of Circle meetings are kept, but only outline the general progress of the client. The following are exceptions to the confidentiality of Circles. If any of the following are disclosed in a Circle, participants will report it immediately to law enforcement, a client’s supervised release agent, or Washington County Community Services:

1. Threats of homicide
2. Threats of suicide
3. Abuse of a child
4. Abuse of a vulnerable adult
5. Use of (a) controlled substance(s) by a pregnant woman

Responsibilities & Roles

The following Circle participants have the following responsibilities. If any participants are unable or unwilling to follow these responsibilities, they will no longer be invited to participate in Circle.

Community Volunteers

1. Abide by the WCCC values of the Circle during the Circle process.
2. Keep the specific discussions held in Circle confidential, with the exception of mandated reporting requirements.
3. Report to the Circle any previous relationships with the client or their support persons OR choose to not to participate in the Circle.
4. Assist the Circle Keepers in keeping Circle members in contact with each other, recording Circle activities, or support the Circle in any other appropriate manner.
5. Assist the individual in being accountable to the community.
6. Attend Circle 101 training and training by prostitution and sexual assault experts.
7. Once committed to serving on a Circle the community members will keep the Circle Keeper informed when unable to attend a Circle.

Circle Keepers

Circle Keepers carry all responsibilities of community participants and additionally will:

1. Notify the parties upon receipt of the application and schedule an Application Circle.
2. Make certain that a Compact is created at or near the time the application is accepted.
3. Notify the appropriate parties of the results of an Application Circle.
4. Notify the appropriate parties when an individual Circle has been accepted and has ended.
5. Keep basic records of the Circle meetings for reporting purposes.

Client/Participant

1. Complete and return the Circle application.
2. Participate in the Circle Application.
3. If accepted attend all scheduled Circles and participates fully and honestly in Circle meetings as any other member of the Circle.
4. Abide by the WCCC values of the Circle during the Circle process.
5. Follow the Circle's confidentiality rules.
6. Follow any Compacts developed in Circle.

Pretrial Release Agents/Probation Officers

1. Support WCCC by responding to questions and requests by the Circle as appropriate, including violations of pretrial release.

Appendix

Proposed Calendar of Events

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
Application Completed	Circle Session + Circle	Circle Circle	Circle Circle	Circle Session + Circle	Circle
Application Circle					
Circle					

Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Circle Session + Circle	Circle	Circle	Circle Session + Circle	Circle with Assessment Results	Completion Circle

Template Application to Participate in WCCC's Accountability Circles

First Name: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State & Zip: _____
 Home phone: _____ Work/Cell phone: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Email _____

Please complete the following four (4) items for all court-ordered cases:

Charge	Next court date on this charge	Court file number

Attorney _____ Attorney's telephone (____)-_____
 Attorney's Email _____
 Attorney's Address _____

List those you feel you have harmed by your behavior.

List the steps have you taken to help yourself.

Humility

Describe how you feel the Circle process can help you.

List the additional steps you need to take in order to prevent this behavior in the future.

List the steps you will take to restore yourself in the community.

Permission and Agreement

- I grant permission for my criminal record, pre-sentence reports and other probation information to be released to Community Circles.
- I will commit my time to attending an Application Circle.
- I understand that I will be given the opportunity to participate fully in any decisions made in the Circle, and I will attend future Circle meetings as agreed in the Circle.
- I will inform Circle members of the steps I am or will be taking to achieve my goals.
- I will commit my time to any other agreements decided upon in the Circle.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Parent / Guardian Signature (if applicable)

Date

Support People

Please list at least 2 support people. Preferably these individuals will be family members or friends that you feel comfortable talking to about personal issues.

Print name

Telephone number

Print name

Telephone number

Print name

Telephone number

Client Assessment for Completion of Circle

To be developed

