



## **What makes Circles work? Our experience at Respond.**

### **There are 6 key values underpinning circles work...**

**Support:** We believe that with the relevant support all people can make significant changes to their lives. Such changes are also necessary to end the core members' sexual offending.

**Responsibility:** Circles help the core members to be accountable for their actions. Each member is supported to gain a deeper understanding of their behaviours, feelings and attitudes with the aim of increasing their ability to be accountable for their own actions.

**Inclusiveness:** Managing safety through inclusion rather than exclusion. There is significant evidence that all those with harmful sexual behaviour referred to Respond for a COSA are very socially isolated.

**Community Involvement:** Recognising the importance of community involvement. Individuals who display sexually harmful behaviour are supported by the micro-community (the circle) that is formed around them and learn the importance of positive relationships in their life.

**Growth & Learning:** Recognising that with necessary support and challenge, people have the ability to grow, learn and change their behaviour. Such support has to be tailored to the specific abilities and circumstances of each person, especially in the case of those with a learning disability and/or autism.

**Humanisation & Respect:** Rather than dehumanisation, we see the power and importance of seeing everyone as an individual – and treating them with respect. People who commit sex offences or have harmful sexual behaviour must be considered not only as 'sex offenders' but as human beings whose lives do not revolve only around their offending.

"I used to think sex offenders were all just monsters. But then I started thinking that everyone has a story, their own background that got them where they are. We treat our core member with respect, something that's never happened before in his life. The importance this has made in his life I think is one of the main reasons he hasn't offended again." **A Respond volunteer.**