

children's circle tool

Diabetes is different for children



let's talk about you

The children's circle tool

The children's circle tool is designed to stimulate dialogue between the diabetes support team, children and young people with diabetes and their families. It focuses on non-medical issues which impact upon quality of life and diabetes self-management. It is a simple tool which can be used in a flexible way to support both young people and their parents' involvement in defining wishes and needs for a better life with diabetes. Some simple but powerful dialogue techniques are shared below.

Using the children's circle tool

The children's circle tool focuses on the six main areas which interact in the life of a child or young person with diabetes: the child, their family, their diabetes support team, their school, their local community, their friends and leisure activities and their cultural or local traditions.

The circles illustrate how these different aspects of the child's life affect each other and influence the treatment and well-being of the child and the family. These are important topics for dialogue between the diabetes care team and the family.

By illustrating how these circles are related, you can spark meaningful dialogue with children and their parents. This form of conversation will reveal potential barriers to effective diabetes management and will provide a platform for you to discuss possible measures and available support structures. The children's circle tool is designed to inspire your conversation, so you can either follow the sequence outlined below, or improvise to follow the course of your conversations.

The children's circle tool is best implemented by using open-ended questions, e.g.:

- What is the most important thing to talk about today?
- How do these different areas interact with the child's diabetes management?
- In which areas are things going really well?
- And in which areas are things not going so well?
- In which areas do the diabetes care team, the family and the child believe that improvement can be made through a collaborative effort?

Asking open-ended questions can help to identify barriers to effective diabetes management and

lead to agreement on specific actions or support activities that may be relevant.

Each page of the map can be torn out and given to the child or parent at the end of the consultation to provide a visual reminder of the talk. It may be helpful for them to write down notes and sketch action plans on the actual map so they can take them home at the end of the consultation and refer to them later.

The key spheres of responsibility are:

Child

The child or young person with diabetes is the centre of attention in the consultation, and this is reflected with the child being positioned in the very center of the illustration. Understanding the child's wishes and needs in regard to each of the circles provides a good platform for identifying the best ways to improve the child's quality of life. It is valuable to consider how the child's age affects their ability to cope with the challenges represented by the illustrations in the map.

Family

The family is the child's primary support team. Understanding the parents' perspective on their child's diabetes management, and how the family works together to manage diabetes at home, is key to developing a realistic, well-functioning treatment plan. It is equally important to understand the parents' concerns and need for emotional and educational support to take on the role as coach and supervisor for the child.

Diabetes Support Team

The diabetes support team is responsible for providing the medical treatment and ongoing self-management, educational, emotional and psychological support. Children with diabetes and their families depend on a diabetes support team which listens to their anxieties and provides age-appropriate information and emotional support tailored to their specific needs.

School, Sport Activities and Friends

Every child with diabetes requires a safe and supportive educational environment that understands and cares for their needs. Parents, health professionals, school personnel and local authorities all have a role to play in ensuring that children with diabetes are cared for and supported 24 hours a day. It should always be clear who is responsible for helping and keeping the child safe during school hours and who is responsible

for educating the school personnel and relevant others about the child's diabetes. This should not mean the child misses out on the health and social benefits of an active lifestyle, and they should be encouraged to pursue sporting activities as far as is safe and practical. Parents and school personnel also play a key role in promoting diabetes awareness amongst the child's peer group so that they can establish emotionally supportive and understanding friendships.

Community

The local community can provide a wider, social sphere of support for the child and their family, and includes the child's social networks and involvement in community initiatives. Community activities such as children and family camps, peer support programmes for parents and families and other special educational initiatives are often available to families with children with diabetes. Making use of local activities requires knowledge about their existence and encouragement and means to attend.

Culture

The culture circle represents the wider community the child's family is part of. It includes religion and ethnic traditions which may impact upon things such as dietary habits, stigmas regarding illness, attitudes to health care and other factors. Important culture-specific barriers or opportunities for improving diabetes management may be identified by talking about these issues.

The children's circle tool was developed by DAWN Youth, a global Novo Nordisk initiative in partnership with the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD). It is based on the ecological model Bronfenbrenner, U. Harvard University Press 1979 and an adaptation of this developed by Dr Barbara Anderson, a member of the international DAWN Youth Steering Committee.

The DAWN Youth initiative aims to improve the quality of life and health of young people with diabetes by focusing more on the psychosocial aspect of managing the condition. The DAWN Youth initiative drives advocacy, research, concrete initiatives and better practices worldwide for better child-centered diabetes care.

For more information, please see dawn youth.com