

*COLORADO*

*CIRCLES OF*

*SUPPORT &*

*ACCOUNTABILITY*



**NO MORE VICTIMS**

**NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE**

**A Guide to Colorado CoSA**

## WELCOME TO CIRCLES OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

This Guide provides an overview of Circles of Support & Accountability as a way of ensuring community safety while assisting people convicted of sexual offenses as they transition back into the community. CoSA models originated in Canada and have been implemented across the globe - - and in Colorado.

Most people convicted of any offense will either be supervised on probation in our towns or cities, or they'll eventually be paroled from prison back to those same towns and cities. People convicted of sexual offenses will be back in the community, and it's up to the community to determine how that will occur. Community safety is significantly increased when offenders develop healthy connections to the community - - work, community engagement, physical & mental health supports, spiritual outlets and, most importantly, relationships with other people. Our relationships help us be successful, and they also hold us accountable - - that's the basis of CoSA, in which people convicted of sexual offenses who are on community release are surrounded by people who care about them and who care about making sure that there are no more victims created. It's effective in preventing crime - - it's cost-effective - - it's effective in integrating people back into society - - it's humane.

Welcome to the community of CoSA, where everyone wins.

*THIS GUIDE IS A PRODUCT OF:*

## Colorado CoSA

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

## QUICK NAVIGATION GUIDE TO THE GUIDE!

If you're reading this *Guide*, you're interested in and committed to community safety and to retrieval, true rehabilitation and integration of all members of society. Thank you for your commitment and energy - - this *Guide* is for YOU as you start and deepen your journey with *Circles of Support & Accountability*.

Why would a Colorado community be interested in starting a CoSA project with the support of Colorado CoSA?

- ⌘ A person who has been in prison due to a sexual assault conviction is being released to your community and there's concern that he's not on parole, has few connections in the community, and there's not enough supervision & support to prevent him from hurting someone else.
- ⌘ A person who has been convicted of a sexual assault and who is on parole or probation in your community has been assessed as being at a high risk to commit another crime and doesn't have much support in the community.
- ⌘ Your organization or faith community is dedicated to embracing those who are forced to live at the fringes of society.
- ⌘ Your community understands that it can take responsibility for public safety and the wellness of its citizens.
- ⌘ Your community appreciates the prevention of harm and the cost-savings that accompany a well-run project based in evidence.

The *Guide* is primarily intended to support Local Circle Coordinators and Inner Circle Volunteers who've had initial levels of screening and training to participate in a Circle project in their town or city. It'll also be useful for anyone seeking to gain more understanding of what CoSA does, why it does what it does, and why it works.

Like any program-specific material, it contains terms that might be unfamiliar - - there's a complete glossary starting on Page 53, but here are some definitions to get you on your way and ease the process of reading the Guide:

### Roles & Specialized Terms in Circle Projects:

- **Circle of Support & Accountability** - - A group of 4 or 5 highly trained and highly committed and highly supported community volunteers who meet regularly with a core member to assist in his integration into the community, thus greatly reducing the chances that the core member might re-offend. Outside of this Inner Circle of volunteers & the core member is an Outer circle of professional advisors who are consulted on specialized issues relating to the core member's integration. CoSA processes have been shown to reduce re-offense rates by up to 83% compared to people on parole without a Circle\*, so it's very effective and very inexpensive - - good combo!
- **Community Supervision** - - People who are convicted of crimes can be ordered onto Probation supervision at the time of their sentencing, or they might have a Parole Officer when they're released from prison at some point during the sentence that they're serving. Probation & Parole services are provided by officers of the court & Department of Corrections respectively (sworn to uphold Colorado & U.S. laws) and the person under supervision lives in the community. Probation & Parole both have a number of "terms & conditions" that the person under supervision must follow - - for instance, he might have to get a job, participate in treatment, abide by a curfew and avoid intentional contact with a victim of his crimes or people of a certain age who might trigger a re-offense.
- **Containment Model** - - Colorado relies on this approach to community supervision of people who've been convicted of sexual offenses. The Containment Model primarily employs external controls (sanctions from Parole or Probation, pressure from POs, polygraphs & other tests, frequent check-ins between members of the Community Supervision Team, etc.) in combination with behavioral management strategies taught to the person under supervision for a sexual offense.

\* According to a study done by Wilson, Cortonni & McWhinnie (2009).

- **Core Member** - - A person who is under or will be under supervision by Probation or Parole in the community following conviction on a sexual offense; core members are typically assessed as having few or no social supports in the community where supervision will occur, are at a high risk to re-offend, and have voluntarily agreed to minimize their re-offense risk by participating in a Circle.
- **Covenant** - - An agreement / contract that is forged between the core member and the Inner Circle, laying out the expectations and responsibilities of all members of the Circle of Support & Accountability. Law-abiding behavior, communication, honesty, meeting frequency and other details are typically included and the covenant is signed by all members of the Circle.
- **Fidelity to the Evidence-Based Model** - - An evidence-based model is a program that is internally consistent (the same process happens wherever it's being implemented) has been tested & reviewed multiple times using solid methods, demonstrating that it will achieve specific positive goals when done with fidelity (correctly and consistently based on the model described).
- **Good Lives Model** - - This is a case management & rehabilitation model that builds on the core member's strengths and that seeks to increase personal capabilities and skills in order to reduce their risk of re-offending. The premise is that the offending behavior came out of a harmful or antisocial approach to achieving a natural human goal (intimacy, closeness, relationship) and the way to prevent recurrence is to heal the deficits that led to that approach. A quote from their website says a lot: *"Intervention should be viewed as an activity that should add to an individual's repertoire of personal functioning, rather than an activity that simply removes a problem, or is devoted to managing problems, as if a lifetime of restricting one's activity is the only way to avoid offending."*

- **Inner Circle & Inner Circle Volunteers** - - The heart & soul of CoSA! We said it before but it's worth repeating: The Inner Circle is a group of 4 or 5 highly trained and highly committed and highly supported community volunteers who meet regularly with a core member to assist in his integration into the community, thus greatly reducing the chances that the core member might re-offend. Inner Circle volunteers work with the core member on the relationship level, building healthy friendships with healthy boundaries and providing an example of the Good Lives Model. Circles frequently last a year or more; some are lifelong, as the core member and the Inner Circle forge true connections with each other beyond the labels.
- **Local Circle Coordinator** - - This is the person who makes the magic on the local level! The Local Circle Coordinator is usually part of an organization and/or faith community that is concerned about community safety and about effective, compassionate integration of core members back into their town or city. The LCC works with Colorado CoSA to obtain training for all who will be involved (LCC, Inner Circle volunteers, Outer Circle volunteers, other interested community members) and then to establish local processes. The LCC recruits volunteers and connects with core members who are referred by Parole or Probation, then matches the core member with the right 4 or 5 volunteers for his circumstances. The LCC also recruits and communicates with the Outer Circle of advisors (who might also serve as the local advisory group for the Circle). The LCC does troubleshooting with local Circles, collects data and feedback and reports it back to Colorado CoSA.
- **Outer Circle & Outer Circle Volunteers** - - The Outer Circle is comprised of professionals and subject matter experts with a lot of knowledge about the criminal justice system, sexual offenses and victims' rights and issues. The members might include Parole / Probation Officers, law enforcement officers, therapists specializing in treatment of people who commit sexual offenses, victims' advocates, community activists, and people who've successfully completed supervision and treatment for sexual offenses. The Outer Circle is available to be consulted when there's a specialized question or situation related to the core member's integration into the community.



- **People-First Concept** - - "People First" is a philosophy of putting an individual ahead of a mental health diagnosis, conviction or disability. The intention is to emphasize that any given individual has a lot more going on than just one thing. For instance, instead of saying "disabled man", a People-First approach would be to write "man with a disability." This applies to CoSA in the terminology for core members in particular - - instead of branding someone a "convicted sex offender", Colorado CoSA commits to the People-First approach of "person convicted of a sexual offense."
- **Re-Offense / Recidivism** - - "Re-offense" is just what it sounds like: a new offense that is committed by someone previously convicted (or otherwise found to be guilty) of a similar offense or any criminal offense. "Recidivism" is a fancier word for the same thing: a relapse into criminal behavior.
- **Sexual Offense** - - This is a criminal act involving sexual activity in some way; the Colorado Revised Statutes detail 24 categories of offenses (misdemeanor or felony) and these are listed in the appendix. Sexual offenses in Colorado range from "public indecency" to serious sexual assaults and everything in between.

If you'd like to jump to a specific section that better fits your needs, check out the Table of Contents on Page 3 and leapfrog to the section that works.

Now that you've got the basic lingo down, read on for a detailed look at how Circles of Support & Accountability got started and how they function...

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COSA MODEL

Summer 1994. Ontario, Canada. Temperatures were running hot and the anger and frustration of a community were running even hotter. A man named Charlie was just about to be released from prison after finishing his sentence - - he wouldn't have any parole supervision, he wouldn't have any treatment and he had a long history of multiple sexual offenses involving young boys.

This wasn't the first time Charlie had been released from prison - - the concern was that release almost certainly meant that he would commit another crime against yet another vulnerable child. The community of Hamilton, where Charlie was scheduled to be released, was horrified by the imminent arrival of this "monster" and the trail of hurt and pain that would no doubt accompany him. Community meetings were held, flyers with Charlie's picture were produced and handed out, and community outrage mounted.

Meanwhile, Charlie's prison therapist, Dr. Bill Palmer, wasn't just going to let re-offense and failure of community reentry happen. He connected with a community corrections expert in Toronto, Dr. Robin Wilson, and they put their heads together in order to figure out what could be done. No parole - - no services - - nothing but police surveillance was currently available as an option. So, they were going to have to create something new.

It turned out that a circle of support had been growing around Charlie since his last release to the community. A small core group of friends had been discussing ways to help Charlie succeed on the outside when he was released again, and they were put in contact with a local Mennonite church led by the Reverend Harry Nigh. Rev. Nigh had been running a prison ministry for years and was interested in helping people who had been in long-term institutionalization as they transitioned back into the public to live crime-free lives. In the face of much anger from the people and law enforcement entities in Hamilton, Rev. Nigh and his congregation joined forces with Charlie's former friends to become a "circle of ongoing support" around him. The group became known as "Charlie's Angels," of course.

Charlie was at extremely high risk to re-offend, and he posed other challenges for the circle of dedicated volunteers. They quickly realized that support alone wasn't going to be enough for Charlie or for the safety of the community, so they added an accountability element - - becoming the first Circle of Support & Accountability (CoSA). The Mennonite congregants welcomed Charlie into their number and did whatever was necessary to ensure that Charlie stayed law-abiding (NO MORE VICTIMS) and that he was able to live a good and productive life (NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE).

At the point of his release from prison, Charlie had been assessed as being 100% guaranteed to re-offend. Eleven or so years later, Charlie died from complications of diabetes. He had lived outside prison walls for eleven years without harming another person, and he had forged true friendships with a group of people who never thought they'd find themselves in a relationship with a sex offender. The volunteers themselves were irrevocably changed by the experience of getting to know a "pedophile" as a person first and a person with many parts to him - - Charlie the sex offender was also Charlie the son and Charlie the friend and Charlie the employee and Charlie the member of the Mennonite church.

Very soon after this first Circle formed around Charlie and was demonstrating success, a second man was released from prison in Canada, was chased out of the community to which he was released, fled to Toronto and entered a Circle to support his crime-free integration into another community that initially wanted nothing to do with him. The success of Charlie's Circle was replicated and a breakthrough was acknowledged - - Canada had created a cost-effective way to dramatically drive down re-offense rates of people released after conviction of sexual offenses while assisting them in becoming integrated, contributing community members.

## AND EVEN BRIEFER HISTORY OF COSA IN COLORADO

Colorado's CoSA project officially got rolling in May 2011, when the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) collaborated with the Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB), Colorado Criminal Defense Bar (CCDB), and the Ethical Education Task Force of the United Methodist Church, Rocky Mountain Conference, to organize a Sex Offender Symposium. Their intent was to drive down re-offense & re-incarceration rates while simultaneously figuring out how to realistically and safely parole people with indeterminate sentences arising from sex offense convictions. Conference speakers from successful CoSA programs included pioneers like Dr. Robin Wilson and Andrew McWhinnie, M.A., from Canada and Dr. Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower Program Director of CoSA at the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies of Fresno Pacific University in California.

Inspired by the information provided at the conference, a multi-disciplinary working group of governmental agencies and nonprofit faith-based and community organizations continued to meet for more than a year to determine the most effective way to ensure community safety as newly paroled sex offenders integrate back into our towns and cities. The CoSA model, with its reliance on pro-social and accountable relationship building and its track record of tremendous success in driving down re-offense rates, greatly appealed to the working group. This collective recommended that a Colorado CoSA nonprofit be formed that was independent of the governmental agencies but able to receive their invaluable input through the continued involvement of the advisory board.

Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability (COCO SA) was registered as a nonprofit on March 12, 2012, to act as the umbrella organization providing assistance to local Circles of Support and Accountability across Colorado through funding, resources for program design and implementation, and training workshops that encourage fidelity to the CoSA model. COCoSA's board of directors includes expertise in sex offender treatment, legal representation, victim rights, law enforcement, employment, and faith-based resources. The Colorado organization will always hold the line on fidelity and on the dual visions of ***NO MORE VICTIMS*** and ***NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE***.

## INTRO TO CIRCLES OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

### CoSA Dual Visions:

**No more victims**

**No One Is Disposable**

### International CoSA Mission:

To substantially reduce the risk of future sexual victimization of community members by assisting & supporting released men and women who have committed sexual offenses in their task of integrating into the community and leading responsible, productive and accountable lives.

### Colorado CoSA Mission:

Colorado CoSA will support and encourage the development of high-quality, high-fidelity local Circles of Support & Accountability wherever they are needed. Our commitment is to assist local sites with community education and volunteer recruitment, to offer consistent effective volunteer training by CoSA experts, and to collect data that will ensure CoSA program integrity as demonstrated by reduced recidivism and safer communities.

### Colorado CoSA Core Values:

- ⌘ Doing what works, with integrity
- ⌘ Being honest
- ⌘ Being inclusive
- ⌘ Assuring community safety
- ⌘ Being accountable for our actions
- ⌘ Reaching out to others, especially those who are struggling
- ⌘ Building on the strengths of people & communities
- ⌘ Facing up to what's difficult & solving it
- ⌘ Never accepting less than excellence

Overview of Circles of Support & Accountability:



## Definition / Explanation

Circles of Support & Accountability are a community-based, constructive response to a challenging social issue: How do we, as a society, deal with people who've been convicted of sexual offenses when they come back to our communities?

Most people can agree on the bottom-line concerns in this situation: We want the community to be safe. We want the sex offender to abide by the law. We want our community to be healthy. We want the parolee or probationer to contribute in some way. Circles of Support & Accountability can help to achieve all of these common goals.

The success of Circles is founded on friendships. Think about your friends for a moment - - they get in there and support you when times are tough, they go with you to appointments when you don't want to or can't go alone, they listen when you're struggling, they talk you through your dilemmas, they model something you admire, they sometimes get in your face and hold you accountable when you need it, and they celebrate with you when your hard work pays off.

That's the essence of the Circle model. The Circle volunteers support a core member in efforts to integrate into the community by: 1) **SUPPORTING** the core member in meeting his practical needs (physical health, financial assistance, job seeking, housing, treatment, transportation and the like) while they also serve as a consistent network of emotional support; 2) **MODELING & ENCOURAGING** workable pro-social strategies that will fit into the core member's everyday life; 3) **CHALLENGING & HOLDING ACCOUNTABLE** for attitudes & behaviors that are potentially harmful or part of the core member's offense cycle; 4) **CELEBRATING** not only the achievements of the core member but also the local Circle project successes of ensuring that there are **NO MORE VICTIMS** while recognizing that **NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE**.

Here are the **typical steps** of formation and function of a local Circle:

⌘ Identification / Referral of a Core Member

- CoSA Core Member Characteristics:
  - Convicted of a sexual offense
  - Assessed as having few or no supports in the community
  - Assessed as being at high risk to re-offend if something like CoSA isn't mobilized
  - Willing to participate in the Circle & abide by the covenant
  - Usually under some type of supervision by the courts (parole, probation, or community corrections)

⌘ Recruitment / Training of a Local Circle Coordinator

- This is usually a member of a local organization or faith community.
- The LCC goes through the same training regimen as Circle volunteers, plus some additional guidance on the recruitment & screening of volunteers and program evaluation.
- The LCC gets familiar with the Core Member's referral and correctional file to understand the strengths and risks with which the Inner Circle will be working; the LCC determines what information from the correctional file will be shared with the Inner Circle.

⌘ Recruitment / Training of a Minimum of Four to Five Diverse Volunteers

- CoSA Volunteer Characteristics:
  - Maturity (that doesn't mean old! But at least 21...)
  - Healthy boundaries
  - Stability in the community
  - Available to volunteer during the necessary flexible hours
  - Healthy in their own lifestyle and viewpoints
- CoSA Volunteer Training:
  - Orientation (3 hours)
  - Basic Training (6 hours)
  - Skill-Building Training (12 hours)



## ⌘ Recruitment / Orientation of the Outer Circle of Advisors

- Outer Circle Members might include:
  - Court supervision experts (parole, probation, community corrections)
  - Therapeutic experts (therapists working with the Sex Offender Management Board, other practitioners)
  - Victims' rights advocates
  - Law enforcement
  - People who were convicted of sexual offenses and who have completed their treatment and supervision
- The Outer Circle can also serve as the ongoing Advisory Board for the local project as it works with a variety of core members
- Ideally, the Outer Circle participants go through full CoSA training, but orientation can suffice along with their professional expertise...

## ⌘ Initial meeting with the Core Member and the LCC / Circle volunteers

- If the Core Member is referred before being released from prison, the local Circle coordinator and possibly some or all members of the Inner Circle meet with him inside the facility to start the processes of writing a covenant and making the transition to life outside the prison walls.

## ⌘ First community-based meeting with the Circle & the Core Member

- When the Core Member is released from prison, or if the Core Member was referred while on community supervision, the Inner Circle meets with the Core Member in a neutral, safe, private setting. Their mutual tasks at that point are:
  - Getting to know each other
  - Starting to build a healthy relationship
  - Solidifying the details in the Circle's first covenant
  - Confirming the Circle's agreements, such as honesty and communication and a dedication to a crime-free life
    - This includes compliance with the terms & conditions of parole or probation, so the Circle volunteers need to have a working knowledge of the goals and restrictions that the Core Member is working under in the community.

- Understanding the Core Member's needs and starting to figure out how to address those needs
- Setting up schedules for individual meetings between Circle volunteers and the Core Member to continue to build healthy connections and to accomplish tasks related to needs.
  - Examples of individual meeting activities are: Working on car repairs together at a volunteer's home (if all agree and are comfortable), helping the Core Member establish a banking account or get needed identification documents, going to the grocery store together and maybe doing a cooking lesson, lifting weights at a gym, that kind of stuff.
  - These individual meetings can have a lot of great outcomes - - a more relaxed opportunity for building a friendship, an opportunity to model healthy interactions with the community, a chance to solve some of the barriers facing the Core Member, and demonstration of community acceptance of all its inhabitants.

#### ⌘ Ongoing Circle activities

- Initially, the entire Circle meets weekly and individual Inner Circle volunteers will also meet with the Core Member on their own as agreed in the Circle - - so the level of contact is frequent and pretty intense.
- As time passes, the Circle (volunteers and the Core Member) will start to recognize that the Core Member is getting connected in other ways (work, recreational / social, faith, etc.) and that the Core Member has healthier boundaries / thought patterns and a really workable plan for avoiding and dealing with triggers of his crime cycle. At that point, the frequency of the Circle meetings could decrease a bit. Meeting frequency continues to taper off throughout the life of a Circle but is always combined with individual time with the Core Member.

- There are times when a Core Member might be feeling shaky and tempted to re-offend or when a Circle volunteer notices some warning signs of a build-up to relapse - - the Circle can call meetings whenever needed to get in front of potential problems, and they can reach out to the local Circle coordinator and the Outer Circle of advisors to support their efforts to keep the community safe and encourage successful integration.
- In many Circles, true friendships and trust are built between the Circle volunteers and their Core Member - - there have been many instances of volunteers inviting Core Members over to their homes for holidays or other kinds of celebrations. **The entire Circle always makes these decisions together, though, to ensure that the healthy boundaries of friendship, safety and respect are in place.**

#### ⌘ The end of the formal Circle

- Most Circles of Support & Accountability last about 1 to 2 years, in terms of formal meetings.
- Some Circles continue much longer. Remember Charlie? His Circle pretty much lasted for the rest of his life, about 11 years. If the benefits of meeting (reducing / eliminating risk to the community, addressing ongoing needs of the Core Member, and so forth) justify ongoing meetings and the volunteers remain engaged, why not?
- Many Circles stop meeting formally but the connections and friendships between volunteers and the Core Member continue and hopefully will remain a source of support and accountability for years to come.

## Foundational Concepts / WHY It Works

What would happen if you took a Wraparound program and mashed it together with a Restorative Justice program? You'd have something that's a lot like Circles of Support & Accountability.

⌘ **WRAPAROUND:** Wraparound is a large-scale facilitated process that typically serves families who are struggling to deal with complex issues of all sorts, such as mental health needs, criminal system involvement, child protection, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, disabilities and the like. Wraparound came into its own in the 70's and 80's - - the approach got its start in Canada in the Brownsdale program operated by John Brown, was elaborated on and refined by Karl Dennis in his Chicago-based Kaleidoscope project, and was adopted by the Alaska Youth Initiative under John VanDenBerg's leadership in an effort to improve outcomes and decrease out-of-home placements of children diagnosed with serious mental health issues. Here's how Wraparound influenced Circles of Support & Accountability:

- Wrap is not a program or service - - it's a process and an ATTITUDE
- Wrap is a collaborative strategic planning process driven by the needs of an individual human person
- Wrap plans are strength-based & needs-driven
- Wrap involves natural supports who wrap themselves around the individual / family, providing support & accountability
- Wrap depends on community-based processes & solutions
- Wrap takes time - - about a year and a half to two years
- Wrap typically costs a LOT less than court and prison

⌘ **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:** Restorative Justice is an approach utilizing facilitated circles to promote healing in the wake of a criminal or harmful act. Restorative Justice projects all operate on three key principles: 1) The harmful act of the offender affects not only the most clearly identified victim but also the surrounding community and restoration of both are necessary; 2) Anyone who harms anyone else has an obligation to make amends, to the victim AND to the surrounding community; and 3) The one who caused harm or offense (the offender) also needs to be healed and, in a successful RJ process, all three parties (victim, community, offender) will be unburdened of

their pain and restored. Here's how Restorative Justice influenced Circles of Support & Accountability:

- RJ brings community members into the Circle to both heal the offender and hold him accountable for harmful actions
- RJ involves the offender in its actions
- RJ Circles are problem-solving groups
- RJ plans are needs-driven & strengths-based
- RJ processes typically cost a LOT less than court and prison

It's important to note that both Wraparound and Restorative Justice INFLUENCED Circles of Support & Accountability, but CoSA is different in some vital ways - - CoSA core members always have few or no natural supports in the community and their families are not usually involved in the process (as opposed to Wraparound, where extended family and friend systems are always an element, even if you have to build them from scratch), and CoSA processes never bring the core member together with anyone he victimized (as opposed to Restorative Justice processes, which frequently involve facilitated dialogue between victim and offender).

You might be wondering why Circles of Support & Accountability are utilized specifically with core members who are assessed as posing a **HIGH RISK TO RE-OFFEND** and who have **FEW OR NO SOCIAL SUPPORTS** - - here's the rationale:

#### ⌘ The Risk / Needs / Responsivity Model for Assessment & Rehabilitation

- Andrews / Bonta (2007)
- The Risk Principle
  - Risk of re-offending should be assessed through a combination of static (already happened / can't change) factors like age at first arrest & gender AND dynamic (changeable) factors like substance abuse and attitudes about people & society. The level of service should match the level of risk - - so, more intensive services (like CoSA) should be provided to people who are at a high risk to re-offend in the community.

- The Needs Principle
  - Certain needs / challenges have been shown to be indicators of criminal behavior or re-offense risk - - stuff like having an anti-social attitude or anti-social friends, experiencing a lot of problems in the family in which someone grew up, uncontrollable anger, ineffective skills for self-control and problem-solving, lack of empathy for other people, substance use, and unemployment.
  - Any intervention or service has to address THOSE needs and address them effectively - - otherwise, the program is missing the target and won't affect re-offense rates.
- The Responsivity Principle
  - Interventions and services have to be RESPONSIVE to identified areas of risks and needs in order to be effective, and those interventions and services have to be tailored (responsive) to the individual and not a "population". The criminogenic needs described above are best tackled by cognitive / behavioral treatments - - approaches that help someone correct their flawed thinking patterns and stop themselves from expressing faulty thinking in negative emotions and behavior that's harmful to themselves and others.
- How this applies to Circles of Support & Accountability
  - CoSA is a long-term, intensive community intervention. It's also a precious resource that relies on very special volunteers who commit a lot of time and energy. Because of its intensity and duration, CoSA is a match for people assessed as having high risk to re-offend AND being high-need (criminogenic needs plus few social supports).
  - It's the clear intent of CoSA projects to prevent re-offenses in the community - - if it's used with someone who is a low risk to re-offend, then this precious resource is being wasted.
  - **High Risk + High Need = High Intensity Service = CoSA !**

Circles of Support & Accountability in Colorado work within a system that utilizes the Containment Model for people convicted of sexual offenses, while incorporating many elements of the Good Lives Model. Here's how these two approaches are bridged beautifully and effectively by CoSA:

⌘ **ACCOUNTABILITY = Containment Model**

- The Containment approach uses a combination of external controls (supervision, house arrest, polygraphs, relapse prevention planning, Community Supervision Team collaborative approaches, etc.) along with treatment that encourages further development of internal controls so that the core member can identify his own warning signs and move himself away from his offense cycle. There's also an assumption that the core member can only be "contained" and that rehabilitation is unlikely if not impossible.
  - Some means of external controls in use in Colorado:
    - Community supervision (probation / parole)
    - Electronic home monitoring / GPS devices
    - Restraining orders
    - Indeterminate sentencing / lifetime supervision
    - Community notification
    - Sex offender registries
  - A look at sex offender registries:
    - The intent: To establish a list of all persons who have sexually offended and been released to a given jurisdiction; provide community with information to make wise choices in regard to themselves and their children; provide law enforcement with a more narrow field for investigation when certain crimes are alleged.
    - The upside: Registries are intended to bolster community safety and are viewed as a choice made by the offender through his sexually offending behavior.
    - The downside: Registries create the impression that anyone who has committed a sexual offense is "predatory" or a "pedophile"; they emphasize "stranger danger" when the fact is that most sexual assaults are committed by

someone known to the victim, frequently someone who lives with them; registries also create an illusion that all local sex offenders are known and are being watched because they're highly likely to re-offend, when the fact is that the re-offense rate is very low (3%) and the registry can't predict sex offenses by people not yet on it.

- CoSA volunteers and projects work alongside the Containment approach by supporting the core member in identifying his warning signs and discussing them when they crop up - - CoSA volunteers meet with the core member for a year at least and often much longer, providing long-term accountability.

- **Warning Signs / Red Flags** to watch for:

- Substance use (lowers inhibitions on behavior)
- Missing Circle meetings, therapy or supervision appointments
- Falling out of communication with Circle
- Faking it without really dealing with antisocial thinking, feeling and associations
- Avoidance (focusing on small stuff instead of criminal conduct and beneficial strategies)
- Secret-keeping or lying (watch for inconsistencies in conversations about events)
- Increased connectedness with antisocial peers
- Statements/actions that seem to treat antisocial thinking as a legitimate way to go
- Disrespectful statements/actions in regard to authority and/or healthy relationships
- Repeated opportunities for choosing criminal, risky or unhealthy behavior
- Signs of planning, grooming, stalking and/or hiding deliberate contact with potentially vulnerable people
- Manipulation of events/people for personal gain



## ⌘ **SUPPORT / PREVENTION = Good Lives Model**

- The Good Lives Model works on the idea that people convicted of sexual offenses are motivated by the same inherently human and normal impulses that we all have, but they have some deficits or weaknesses that result in the offending behavior. Good Lives advocates a strengths-based approach that builds on the interests and capabilities of the core member, assisting him in figuring out that he can achieve those natural and human needs in ways that are pro-social, sustainable and law-abiding.
- CoSA volunteers and projects fundamentally adopt a Good Lives approach to working with the core member as they model healthy & pro-social ways of interacting with people and dealing with challenges, and as they confront the thoughts and actions that led up to offending behavior in the past.
  - **Good Signs / Green Flags** to watch for & support:
    - Showing up for Circles, therapy & supervision meetings
    - Eliminating drug / alcohol dependencies
    - Getting involved and staying engaged
    - Demonstrating persistence
    - Reducing criminal or unhealthy peer associations
    - Increasing association with peers who have positive life goals
    - Maintaining a respectful, positive attitude
    - Showing incremental improvements in attitudes and behavior
    - Increasing self-control, self-management & problem-solving skills
    - Shifting toward rewards for behavior that is pro-social versus criminal
    - Developing effective safety plans to manage high-risk situations
    - Facing up to and confronting personal barriers to change
    - Maintaining an effective relapse prevention plan

## The Evidence

The CoSA model can do amazing things when it's done right - - here are results from two separate studies of Canadian CoSA projects:

- Wilson, Pacheca & Prinzo (2005):
  - ⌘ Compared 60 CoSA core members to 60 nonparticipants
  - ⌘ Matched all 120 people on a number of measures to ensure equivalence
  - ⌘ Found that sex offending behavior in CoSA group was **70% lower** than the control group!
  - ⌘ Also found that violent offending behavior was 57% lower in CoSA group, and general re-offenses were 35% lower
- Wilson, Cortonni & McWhinnie (2009):
  - ⌘ Compared 44 CoSA core members to 44 nonparticipants
  - ⌘ Similar matching strategy to ensure equivalence
  - ⌘ Found that sex offending behavior in CoSA group was **83% lower** than the control group!
  - ⌘ Also found that violent offending behavior was 73% lower in CoSA group, and general re-offenses were 72% lower
- Theory: Wilson & his colleagues have forwarded the stance that Circles of Support & Accountability provide people convicted of sex offenses with pro-social sources of support that can counter the negative effects of societal rejection and isolation. Wilson, et al, remarked on how this relates to the Risk / Needs / Responsivity Model as well as Good Lives, in which a focus on strengths and capabilities and related skill-building can reduce the likelihood of re-offenses.

Other benefits gleaned from CoSA implementation include:

- **ACCURATE INFORMATION** being provided to communities about the nature of sexual offenses, actual re-offense statistics and proven ways of preventing recidivism.
- **TRUE, HUMANE INTEGRATION** of the core member into the community where he was released, with a good opportunity to live a law-abiding, healthy & accountable life.

Another interesting study has been completed in 2012 in the United Kingdom by Elliot & Beech, where the cost of participation in CoSA was compared to the cost of re-offense - - the researchers found that the cost of re-offense is more than 12 times the cost of a well-run CoSA program. Where that CoSA program is able to reduce the re-offense rate by 50%, or 70%, or 84% (as found in the Wilson research above), there are significant and tangible cost savings to taxpayers. The intangibles - - saving people from the pain of victimization and years of recovery, the transference of that pain to entire generations - - are more difficult to quantify but are estimated to be vast.

Circles of Support & Accountability work AND they save the community money as well as heartache - - this is good stuff.

The following sections help ensure that every local Circles project can get the same great results and the same cost savings by providing guidance for each of the irreplaceable players in CoSA:

***THE LOCAL CIRCLE COORDINATOR***

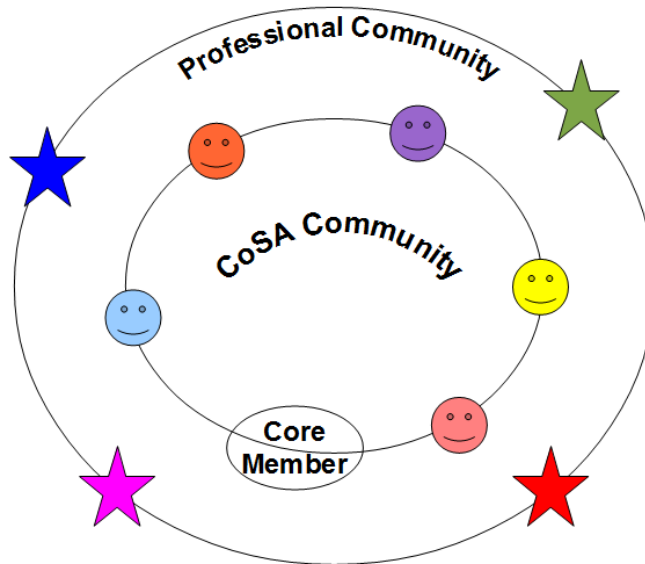
***THE CORE MEMBER***

***THE INNER CIRCLE VOLUNTEER***

***THE OUTER CIRCLE***

Keep going!

***FOR:  
THE LOCAL CIRCLE  
COORDINATOR***



## Definition

If you're a Local Circle Coordinator, you're the nearly invisible magic that makes the process really work in the community. The LCC is typically housed in a nonprofit or faith-based organization that provides a supportive structure, possible meeting sites, potential access to a pool of volunteers, and usually one person who will oversee the efforts of multiple Circles that are all running at the same time. You know that street performer who keeps a whole bunch of plates spinning on thin poles all at the same time? That's the Local Circle Coordinator.

Local Circle Coordinators don't need to have professional training in corrections or work with sexual offending behavior - - what they do need to have is:

- Training as a CoSA volunteer (orientation / Basic / Skill-Building)
- A 100% commitment to the CoSA model
- A commitment to public safety
- An appreciation for the issues facing people convicted of sexual offenses
- An ability to convey their commitment and passion to others
- A willingness to reach out to diverse pools of potential volunteers
- An ability to engage an Outer Circle of professional, knowledgeable advisors
- Organizational skills to keep all the plates spinning
- Flexibility of thinking and process
- A sense of humor, some patience, proactive responses versus reactive
- Some knowledge of local resources and an ability to ferret out new ones

## Tasks of the LCC

Responsible for:

- Setting up structures that work for their organization and for CoSA:
  - ⌘ Financial - - CoSA stipend, other grants
  - ⌘ Referral Process for Core Members - - knowledge of criteria for core members, CoSA documents, access to DOC visitation processes, access to local parole / probation reps / treatment professionals
    - In the classic CoSA model, the process is seamless and there's no gap in assurance of public safety; the core member enters the Circle prior to being released from prison and agrees to a draft covenant at that point.

- The Local Circle Coordinator would ideally be able to meet with a prospective core member before he's paroled to the community, which would mean entering a DOC prison facility and doing an in-person interview/screening and then getting a draft covenant underway. A Circle Volunteer might join you for this.
  - Colorado CoSA can help with negotiating the DOC process for gaining admittance to the facility
- ⌘ Volunteer Management
- ⌘ Reporting - - Data, finances
- Maintaining CoSA model integrity, with support & resources from COCoSA
  - ⌘ The right core member
  - ⌘ The right volunteers in the Inner Circle
  - ⌘ A knowledgeable & supportive Outer Circle
  - ⌘ Cooperation / communication between Inner & Outer Circles
  - ⌘ High quality interactions between Inner Circle members (vols & CM)
- Recruitment & screening of excellent volunteers
  - ⌘ Identification of good places to recruit long-term volunteers
    - Faith communities of all kinds
    - Service organizations
    - Restorative justice organizations & coalitions
    - Universities & law schools
    - Political organizations
    - Bar associations
    - Retired Senior Volunteer Programs
    - Law enforcement retirement programs
    - Online volunteer matching
  - ⌘ Making the pitch to individuals and groups
    - Talking points
    - Balance between support & accountability
    - Great, engaging materials (CO CoSA can help)
  - ⌘ Fielding contacts from interested potential volunteers
  - ⌘ Conducting initial interviews & collecting applications from volunteers
  - ⌘ Screening **IN**volunteers who are a good fit for CoSA
    - At least 21 years of age
    - Relatively settled in community & can commit a year minimum
    - Can volunteer at least once a week
    - Can supply references and can pass a criminal background check
    - Has demonstrated maturity & healthy boundaries
    - Comes across as balanced in lifestyle and viewpoints relative to people who've committed sexual offenses

- ⌘ Screening **OUT** volunteers who aren't a good fit for CoSA
  - Younger than 21 years of age
  - Life is unsettled; can't commit to a year or once-weekly
  - There's some risk of potential to over-empathize / collude with the core member
  - OR, is overly punitive and interested only in locking down CM
  - Exhibits a lot of nervousness about being in a Circle with a core member or meeting with core members individually
  - Has troubling / unresolved criminal info on background check
  - Motivation for volunteering seems unhealthy
- Training of volunteers & LCC, with assistance of CO CoSA
  - ⌘ Orientation
  - ⌘ Basic Training
    - There's more info in "For the Inner Circle" section
    - Some volunteers may decide to opt out at this point, as they learn more about sexual offending behavior.
    - Or, you may decide to screen a prospective volunteer out based on your observations in the training sessions.
    - Should you and the volunteer decide to go forward, a criminal background check occurs at this stage...
  - ⌘ Skill-Building Training
    - There's more info in "For the Inner Circle" section
    - Usually by this time, you're working with volunteers who understand the Circle process and have made an informed decision to participate.
  - ⌘ Ongoing Development
    - Some LCCs hold quarterly workshops featuring a local expert on a specific topic, like:
      - Polygraphs and Plethysmographs: How Are They Used?
      - Developmental Disabilities and Sexual Offending Behavior
      - Women Convicted of Sexual Offenses
      - Walking the Core Member's Path: A tour through the judicial system from the core member perspective
- Recruitment & orientation of a local Outer Circle of professional, knowledgeable advisors
- Ensuring confidentiality on all sides - - core member info, volunteer info
- Coordinating celebrations / observations of significant events in the lives Circle members, like birthdays, marriages, anniversaries (of marriages and sobriety and other things), deaths.

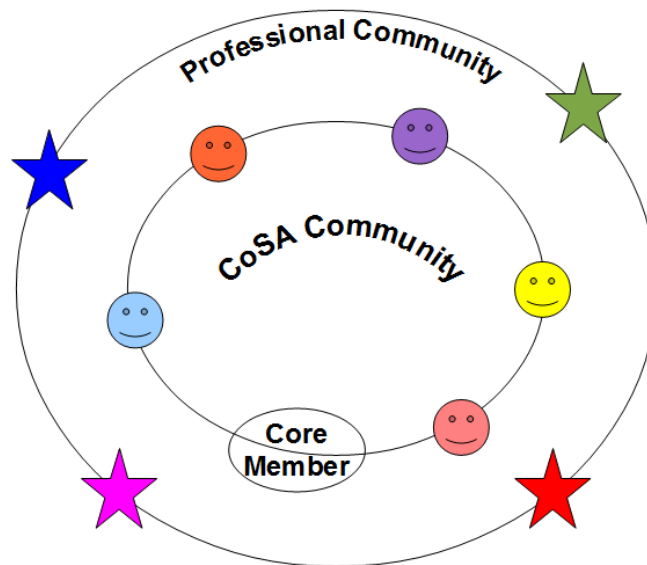
## Supports for the LCC

You are never, ever alone in this. Multiple layers of support are available for you to tap into at a moment's notice - - please don't hesitate to use these resources!

- Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability, 720.207.9203 or 720.854.8548
  - ⌘ Brainstorming solutions to tricky or urgent situations
  - ⌘ Talking through issues around fidelity to the model
  - ⌘ Conducting community information meetings
  - ⌘ Talking to the media
  - ⌘ Recruiting volunteers
  - ⌘ Training incoming volunteers
  - ⌘ Completing criminal background checks
  - ⌘ Providing forms
  - ⌘ Researching ongoing training for you and your volunteers
  - ⌘ Supportive funding for your efforts
- The CoSA Workplan (separate document)
  - ⌘ Gives a more detailed, task-by-task approach to creating the infrastructure of your Circles, recruiting / training / retaining volunteers, screening referrals for core members, starting the Circle, and so forth.
- Your Inner Circles
  - ⌘ Insights about specific core member concerns
  - ⌘ Info on local community resources
- Your Outer Circle(s)
  - ⌘ Expertise specific to crime cycles, sex offenses, treatment, noncompliance with community supervision, community safety resources
  - ⌘ Connections to local community resources
- The Literature
  - ⌘ This Guide - - it contains most of what you'll need to keep your local Circles running smoothly with great effect
    - In particular, the Appendix contains all the forms & documents you'll need to run a super-tight local Circle project
  - ⌘ Dr. Robin Wilson's website: <http://www.robinjwilson.com/circles.shtml>



# ***FOR: THE CORE MEMBER***



## Definition

Welcome to Circles of Support & Accountability - - we're looking forward to getting to know you and to figuring out, together, how we can achieve the two missions we agree on: NO MORE VICTIMS and NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE.

The term "core member" is used in CoSA instead of "sex offender" because we know you're more than that. You're someone who has been convicted of a sexual offense, AND you're also somebody's son or daughter, you're a person who has strengths and interests and talents and flaws that have nothing to do with a sexual offense cycle, you're someone who can go on to live a good life.

The core member is the person around whom a Circle of Support & Accountability is formed. He works with 4 or 5 trained volunteers to interrupt his offense cycle and to find ways to live successfully and healthfully in the community to which he was released, and to permanently maintain a life as a law-abiding, accountable, contributing citizen.

## What Other Core Members Have Said About CoSA:

So, why would you want to participate in Circles of Support & Accountability? Circles help core members to succeed in the community without committing new crimes. They also foster new friendships and supports where none existed before, and they encourage a healthy life in which core members are productive, contributing and accountable members of the community. From a study of core members, here are some thoughts from core members who participated in a Circle:

*Without my Circle, I may have...*

- Had difficulty adjusting to life in the community
- Had difficulty in relationships with others
- Become isolated and lonely
- Turned to drugs or alcohol
- Re-offended

*After being in a Circle, I was...*

- ✓ Less nervous, afraid and angry
- ✓ More realistic in my perspective
- ✓ More confident and felt more accepted
- ✓ Proud that I maintained healthy changes

## Tasks of the Core Member

Responsible for:

- Agreeing to participate in the Circle process:
  - ⌘ Someone from the Dept. of Corrections, Parole, Probation or a therapy service will refer you to the process - - you can ask for someone to refer you, if you think CoSA would help and if you fit the criteria!
  - ⌘ Your agreement to participate in the Circle will be recorded on the referral and will also be reflected in the Covenant / Agreement that you'll work on with your Circle and which you'll all sign.
- Agreeing to share personal and case-related and treatment information that will help your Circle process succeed in preventing new crimes and supporting you in your own success in the community:
  - ⌘ A Limited Waiver of Confidentiality is in the Appendix, and your parole / probation officer or the Local Circle Coordinator will go over it so that you fully understand it before you sign.
- Helping to create the Covenant / Agreement and signing it and abiding by it:
  - ⌘ The Covenant / Circle Agreement is a pact between the core member, the Circle volunteers and the community, in which everyone agrees to a code of conduct that will achieve the CoSA outcomes: ***NO MORE VICTIMS*** and ***NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE***.
    - The Covenant / Agreement will almost always address **CONFIDENTIALITY** - - yours and that of the Circle volunteers.
      - It's important for the Circle to know you and to know about the criminal behavior that brought you to the criminal justice system and CoSA. To support you in never, ever, ever violating the law again, the volunteers are going to have to know some of the details. They'll be protective of your information and keep it confidential.
      - On the other hand, for you to build friendships with the volunteers and trust them with your own sensitive info, they'll also share personal information with you. You might have their phone numbers and, in some cases, you might learn their home addresses. It's extremely important that you keep this information private and confidential as agreed in your Circle, OK?

- ⌘ Examples of Covenants are in the Appendix so you can see what they're like - - you and your Circle will develop one that works for all of you.
- ⌘ Once you've all signed the Covenant / Agreement, you've indicated that you'll follow all the items listed on it. Some of the usual items are:
  - Living crime-free
  - Agreeing to comply with your community supervision terms & conditions
  - Agreeing to talk to the Circle if / when you're struggling
  - Keeping everyone's contact info and personal info confidential
  - Agreeing to attend meetings & contact Circle volunteers
- ⌘ Your Covenant / Agreement can be updated over time, depending on your needs and the needs of the Circle or depending on circumstances like a substance abuse relapse or violation of community supervision.
  - As life gets easier for you in the community and as it becomes more evident that your ability to live a crime-free and productive life is stronger, the Covenant / Agreement will reflect that...
- Participating actively in **weekly Inner Circle meetings**
  - ⌘ Especially in the beginning, these meetings take place in a neutral public meeting spot where you all feel safe and where everyone's confidentiality can also be maintained.
  - ⌘ Working with the Circle volunteers to address basic living tasks:
    - Many core members will come out of prison or onto probation with challenges for the most basic needs - - getting housing while still abiding by the restrictions imposed by community supervision under Sex Offender Management, getting identification that will support eventually obtaining employment, learning to cook, getting needed medications, setting up appointments, and even personal protection if the community is really upset.
    - Working together to meet these basic living considerations is a tremendous opportunity to build trust and build connections with each other.
    - Some of the basic living considerations can be solved during Circle meetings, but there probably will be a need to set up time with Circle volunteers outside of the Circle meeting to follow up on task completion.
  - ⌘ Building relationships
    - One purpose of the Circle is to combat the isolation and frustration you might face in the community - - the Circle volunteers can be emotional supports for you.

- ⌘ Living a *GOOD LIFE* that incorporates effective problem-solving, healthy day-to-day choices, good boundaries & honesty
  - This might not be easy at first, but ideally your treatment providers and your supervising officer have all provided you with tools and strategies for:
    - Identifying unhealthy thinking/behavior early in the cycle.
    - Making the switch from old, unhealthy patterns to new, healthy choices.
    - Asking for help when you're really struggling.
    - Being completely honest with yourself and with your Circle so that you can all work together on your goal of living a happy, successful, crime-free life.
    - Choosing good people to hang around and avoiding people or activities that don't support your goals and freedom.
    - Owning up to the choices you make that could hurt other people or risk your own success and freedom.
    - Respecting the boundaries of all people you encounter, in the Circle and outside of it.
- Participating in **additional contacts** with Circle volunteers as agreed in Circle
  - ⌘ Especially in the early weeks / months of a Circle, you might be meeting with a Circle volunteer in-person or by phone every day. Being back in the community can be overwhelming, confusing and isolating - - talk through what you need with your Circle and come up with a plan that works for everyone.
  - ⌘ This is an area where there's lots of flexibility, depending on your needs and the needs of the Circle volunteers. Additional contacts could be:
    - Going with one or more Circle volunteers to mandatory appointments, job searches, interviews, errands, stuff like that.
    - Meeting up with one or more Circle volunteers for a workout or other recreational activity.
    - Having a Circle volunteer or two along if you have to pass a restricted area (per your supervision plan) on your way somewhere else.
    - Hanging out socially with a Circle volunteer or two.
    - Going out to celebrate significant events in your life or the lives of the Circle volunteers.
    - Having an escort of Circle volunteers if safety from the community becomes an issue (rarely...).

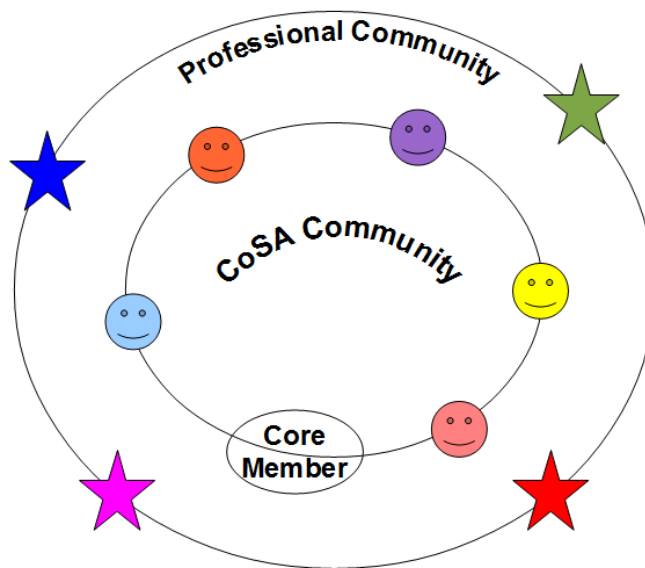
- Participating in **additional, specialized meetings**
  - ⌘ Housekeeping Meetings - - There may be a need at times for the Circle to meet to deal with internal process problems. These meetings almost always will involve you, but there might be a rare occasion when the Circle volunteers need to meet privately.
  - ⌘ Emergency Meetings - - These are meetings that are typically held with you when there are serious concerns about signs of slipping or actively relapsing into the offense cycle or possible harm by self or others. Very rarely, these meetings will be held without you.
  - ⌘ Ongoing Volunteer Skill-Building Sessions - - Some Circles meet monthly or quarterly for skill-building and fellowship; there's no end to the topics your Circle could explore, such as traumatic brain injuries, dementia, developmental / cognitive / intellectual disabilities, legislative updates, and more. Talk to your Local Circle Coordinator about the challenges you're facing or about your Circle's interests - - core members frequently attend these sessions!
  - ⌘ Celebrations - - Woooooo hooooo! The best kind of meeting, when your Circle gets together (in private or public) to honor achievements or significant life events of its members. ANY members - - that means volunteers as well as the core member. Be sure to give back by honoring these folks who are there for you so much of the time...
- Your major job during this time is to live a **GOOD LIFE** - - to be an asset to the community, to do no harm, to live crime-free, to contribute your strengths and talents. It'll get easier as time goes on and as you are increasingly surrounded by people and activities that support those goals. In a year or so, you might start feeling like a formal Circle process isn't necessary anymore - - and it probably won't be necessary. You'll have the internal and external resources to live that good life.

## Supports for the Core Member

The goal of you & your Circle, same as your parole / probation, is to keep the community safe while supporting you in living a healthy, productive, crime-free life. Don't ever hesitate to reach out for help when you start to feel like you're struggling - - the sooner the better. A list of possible resources follows, and there's also a phone / email list document in the Appendix that your Circle will use to stay in contact with each other between meetings.

- Your Inner Circle of volunteers!
  - ⌘ These 4 or 5 dedicated and wonderful people are going to be a primary resource for you when you need someone to listen to your fears, your joys, your temptations, your struggles and your triumphs.
  - ⌘ Along with your Covenant / Agreement, you'll have a contact list for the volunteers in your Circle - - treat it carefully and keep it confidential, but do use it between meetings.
- Your weekly Circle meeting
  - ⌘ Make it productive - - share what's going on - - be open & honest about what you're thinking and what you need.
- Your parole or probation officer
  - ⌘ This person is going to know a LOT about community resources and about strategies that work for someone facing community reentry and potential triggers for criminal behavior. Let them know when you need help, long before things have gotten bad, and let them help you.
- Law enforcement
  - ⌘ Yeah, that one surprised you a little, didn't it... But, if you ever feel like you're in danger, either from the community or from yourself (thoughts & plans for suicide), please get help right away by dialing 911.
- The local Circle coordinator working with your Circle
  - ⌘ If you have concerns about the functioning of your Circle, talk to the local Circle coordinator and let that person know what's up. They want the Circles to be running smoothly and effectively, and they'll appreciate hearing from you directly & productively.
- Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability, 720.207.9203 or 720.854.8548
  - ⌘ If you're having difficulty with the Circles process, Colorado CoSA would be kind of a last resort after you've talked to your Circle and the local Circle coordinator and your P.O.
  - ⌘ We'd also welcome your feedback on how this process is working for ya!

***FOR:  
THE INNER CIRCLE***





## Definition

The Inner Circle - - you are the beating heart of Circles of Support & Accountability, and your volunteer contribution toward the dual missions of NO MORE VICTIMS and NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE is invaluable. Thank you in advance for agreeing to be part of this important work, and for challenging your own preconceptions and barriers in the process. This is the beginning of a journey for the core member AND you.

The Inner Circle is comprised of 4 or 5 highly trained, highly supported and highly committed volunteers who interact directly with the core member. Inner Circle volunteers commit to participating in the CoSA process for no less than a year - - in the beginning, when the core member is first released to the community or enters the Circle, the time commitment is greater and the activities of support & accountability are more intensive. In the first few months, the Inner Circle and the core member typically meet once a week, plus Inner Circle volunteers will also have some individual interactions with the core member by phone or in person.

Inner Circle volunteers usually don't have training in corrections or work with sexual offending behavior - - what you do need to have is:

- Concern for people who are pushed to the margins of society
- A commitment to public safety
- Stability & maturity in your own life
- Training as a CoSA volunteer (orientation / Basic / Skill-Building)
- A 100% commitment to the CoSA model & volunteer time required
- An appreciation for the issues facing people convicted of sexual offenses
- Flexibility of thinking and process
- A sense of humor, some patience, proactive responses versus reactive
- Some knowledge of local resources and an ability to ferret out new ones

Where great volunteers are found...

- Faith communities of all kinds
- Service organizations
- Restorative justice organizations & coalitions
- Universities & law schools
- Political organizations
- Bar associations
- Retired Senior Volunteer Programs
- Online volunteer matching

Volunteer safety is Job One - - and it's guaranteed by the CoSA model in several different ways:

- Excellent screening and preparation of volunteers
- Excellent resources around the volunteers (LCC, Outer Circle)
- The group setting:
  - ⌘ You meet together and provide safety for each other and the core member
  - ⌘ You make decisions together and come to consensus for GREAT decisions
- A proven, effective process that has operated for almost 20 years

### **Tasks of the Inner Circle**

Responsible for:

- Attending CoSA Orientation
- Submitting a CoSA Volunteer Application (in the Appendix)
- Completing an in-person meeting with the Local Circle Coordinator
  - ⌘ Interview
  - ⌘ Questions and Answers
- Attending CoSA Volunteer Basic Training:
  - ⌘ The Philosophical and Research Basis for CoSA
  - ⌘ Overview of the Colorado Criminal Justice System
  - ⌘ Overview of Police / Community Concerns, Including Public Notification and the Sex Offender Registry
  - ⌘ Understanding Human Sexuality and Sexual Deviancy
  - ⌘ Practice Session: Mock Circle Meeting
- Attending CoSA Volunteer Skill-Building Training:
  - ⌘ Crime Cycles, Relapse Prevention, Safety Plans & Therapeutic Issues
  - ⌘ Understanding the Effects of Long-Term Institutionalization
  - ⌘ Victim / Survivor / Community Safety Concerns
  - ⌘ Group Dynamics / Personal Boundaries / Volunteer Self-Care
- Passing a criminal background check
  - ⌘ Prior criminal history will NOT automatically rule you out as a CoSA volunteer; in fact, it might make you a more empathetic and skilled volunteer. Your Local Circle Coordinator will talk over legal history stuff with you - - one of the most important things, in this stage of the process and in Circles in general, is to be scrupulously honest.

- Participating actively in **weekly Inner Circle meetings** with the core member
  - ⌘ In a neutral setting...Some Circles have met in private residences, but it's recommended, especially in the early months of a Circle process, to meet in a neutral meeting spot where you all feel safe and where the core member's confidentiality can also be maintained.
  - ⌘ Possibly serving as Circle Keeper / Facilitator:
    - Many Circles choose one of their members to help keep order, focus and achievement of agreed-upon goals - - this role is known as the Circle Keeper or facilitator.
    - This role can be permanent or it can be passed around from Circle member to Circle member.
    - The Circle Keeper helps to establish the agenda for each meeting, facilitates completion of the agenda during meetings, helps bring the group back around when it gets off-topic, keeps Circle documents up to date, and facilitates communication between meetings.
      - As the Circle Keeper, you'll get great support from The Colorado CoSA Workplan document, Task 14 on. It really lays your role out step-by-step. This is a separate doc that'll be provided to you by your Local Circle Coordinator or at CoSA Volunteer Training.
    - The Circle Keeper also typically acts as the primary Circle contact with the Local Circle Coordinator.
    - Some suggestions and associated documents for Circle Keepers / Facilitators are included in the Appendix...
  - ⌘ Assisting the core member with his efforts to meet basic needs in the community:
    - Many core members will come out of prison or onto probation with challenges for the most basic needs - - getting housing while still abiding by the restrictions imposed by community supervision under Sex Offender Management, getting identification that will support eventually obtaining employment, learning to cook, getting needed medications, setting up appointments (missing required appointments can result in revocation of community supervision and could send the core member back to incarceration), and even personal protection if the community is really upset by his release.
    - Working together to meet these basic living considerations is a tremendous opportunity to build trust and build connections with the core member and with each other.

- Some of the basic living considerations can be solved during Circle meetings, but there probably will be a need to set up time with the core member outside of the Circle meeting to follow up on task completion.
- ⌘ Helping to **establish the Covenant / Agreement** & living by it!
  - The Covenant / Circle Agreement is a pact between the core member, the Circle volunteers and the community, in which everyone agrees to a code of conduct that will achieve the CoSA outcomes: NO MORE VICTIMS and NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE.
  - Sample Covenant documents are in the Appendix - - there are lots of ways to frame the document, but the intent remains the same.
- ⌘ Building relationships
  - Inner Circle volunteers combat the isolation & alienation that contribute to offense cycles by connecting with the core member and getting to know him as a PERSON.
- ⌘ Role modeling effective problem-solving, healthy day-to-day living, good boundaries & honesty
  - This doesn't need to be forced - - just be yourself in the group process of thinking through challenges and barriers, as well as in discussion of who you are.
  - **HONESTY** is a lynchpin concept for Circles and for people who want to avoid ever committing another sexual offense for the rest of their lives. One of the best things you can do, as a Circle member, is be scrupulously honest:
    - With the core member about his strengths & challenges
    - With the facilitator / local Circle Coordinator about how the process is going for you
    - With YOURSELF - - about who you are and your own struggles and challenges and strengths
- ⌘ Supporting the core member in pro-social activities
  - Circle volunteers have a great opportunity to reinforce the Good Lives approach, which places the greater emphasis on building and supporting ABILITIES and CAPABILITIES rather than pounding away on the things the core member does "wrong."
  - Circle volunteers can help the core member think through responses to positive and challenging situations and assist him in choosing the pro-social response, helping him understand the benefits to him and to the community.
  - When the core member makes great choices and reports successes, the Circle volunteers are on the spot for celebration and congratulations!

- ⌘ Holding the core member accountability on relapses / anti-social activities
  - Inner Circle volunteers should have a good working knowledge of the core member's triggers for the crime cycle and should be prepared to call the core member on intentional or unintentional movement toward those triggers.
  - Inner Circle volunteers listen carefully for inconsistencies in relating incidents, insincerity, attempts at manipulation, and anything else that could push the core member further into a crime cycle.
  - Circle volunteers, along with the core member, are responsible for adherence to the Covenant / Agreement - - if ANY Circle member is violating that agreement, there's an obligation to speak up and talk about it.
- Participating in **additional contacts** with the core member as agreed in Circles meetings
  - ⌘ Especially in the early weeks / months of a Circle, it's best to arrange for contact with the core member every day. Being back in the community can be overwhelming, confusing and isolating - - attention to supportive, friendly activities and accountability is heightened.
  - ⌘ This is an area where there's lots of flexibility, from the beginning of the Circle to the end. The way additional contacts occur depend on:
    - Decisions made within the Circle - - All decisions about strategies and additional contacts are made collectively by the Circle membership (which includes the volunteers and the core member). This group will take into account all the following factors and will come to a mutually satisfactory decision on additional contacts.
    - Circle volunteer safety - - Meeting individually with the core member will depend on the comfort of the volunteer, the profile of previous victims of the core member's prior sexual offenses, the settings in which individual contacts will take place, etc.
    - Community safety - - As the core member goes about completing terms & conditions of community supervision or basic living tasks, having someone (or a couple of someones) come along can be a way of providing accountability while also supporting the core member.

- Core member needs - - You'll be using a needs assessment document that's in the Appendix, and it'll help Circle volunteers and the core member in prioritizing and strategizing tasks that'll meet his basic, human and therapeutic needs. Some of these tasks will necessarily have to be completed outside the Circle and would benefit from the involvement of one or more Circle volunteers. As usual, it's the balance between SUPPORT and ACCOUNTABILITY...
- ⌘ Some of the strategies & activities for additional contacts would include:
- Phone contact with the core member - - least risky
    - Sometimes there's just a need for a check-in as to whether a task was completed or an appointment made or emotional wellness maintained. A phone call could suffice.
    - But...Circle volunteers shouldn't over-rely on this strategy. There's no replacement for face-to-face personal time with the core member in order for you to get to know him as an individual and for him to increasingly know and trust you.
  - One-on-one meeting in a public place - - mitigates risk
    - The volunteer could accompany the core member to an appointment or on an errand for basic living purposes.
    - The volunteer might go with the core member to a recreational activity, like working out at the gym or going for a walk or taking a class.
    - The volunteer might hang out with the core member to improve socialization and integration - - over coffee in a coffee shop and stuff like that.
  - One-on-one meeting at the home of the Circle volunteer - - riskier
    - This might be one of those strategies that the Circle keeps in reserve until you all know each other better...
    - Having said that, though, it can be a powerful tool for integration and intimacy. Circle volunteers in other successful projects have invited core members over for holiday celebrations of all sorts or for backyard barbecues.
    - It's really important to take the core member's restrictions into account - - violating terms & conditions, even with the best of intentions and the best of risk management, exposes the core member to the possibility of revocation and exposes the community to potential harm. This doesn't help anyone.

- So...this might be a time to ask the Local Circle Coordinator to consult your Outer Circle of experts, but the core member's probation / parole officer & SOMB therapist should all approve the plan.
  - Two-on-one meeting - - may mitigate some risks, no matter the location of the meeting
    - If a volunteer is concerned about meeting alone with the core member and/or the core member poses a significant risk to the community, this can be a really good approach - - the goals of having additional contacts can be met with reduced risk to everyone.
- ⌘ The purpose for additional contacts
  - Generally speaking, the more the core member gets to know you as a Circle volunteer AND as a potential friend and supporter, the more honest he's likely to be with you. This both promotes healthy relationship intimacy AND promotes public safety, as the core member is also more likely to talk to you about his struggles and temptations.
  - Perceived and actual community safety are bolstered by the presence of Circle volunteers with the core member as he tackles his daily tasks - - particularly where there's been a media / community outcry at his release, your presence can be calming and can role model to the community that the core member is a person, that he's being supported but NOT at the cost of community safety and offender accountability.
- Participating in **additional, specialized meetings**
  - ⌘ Housekeeping Meetings - - There may be a need at times for the Circle to meet to deal with internal process problems. These meetings may happen with the core member or might need to occur without him.
  - ⌘ Emergency Meetings - - These are meetings that are typically held WITH the core member when there are serious concerns about signs of slipping or actively relapsing into the offense cycle or possible harm to the core member by self or others. Sometimes these meetings will be held without the core member, particularly if he's been arrested and the Circle needs to debrief that situation.
    - When a core member is reincarcerated, Circle volunteers frequently form a visitor corps that will stay in touch with the core member and provide continued support.
    - It can be tricky at times like this, but core members and everyone else in society are innocent until PROVEN guilty. Be realistic, but hang in there with the core member.

- ⌘ Ongoing Volunteer Skill-Building Sessions - - Some Circles meet monthly or quarterly for skill-building and fellowship; there's no end to the topics your Circle could explore, such as traumatic brain injuries, dementia, developmental / cognitive / intellectual disabilities, legislative updates, and more. Talk to your Local Circle Coordinator about the challenges your core member is facing or about your Circle's interests!
- ⌘ Celebrations - - Woooooo hoooooo! The best kind of meeting, when your Circle gets together (in private or public) to honor achievements or significant life events of its members. ANY members - - that means YOU as well as the core member. When the Circle draws few distinctions between the Circle volunteers and the core member, that's when you know you're hitting on all cylinders.
- A last word about **meeting in public settings** - - Always stay conscious about the personal information being shared, both on behalf of Circle volunteers and the core member.

## Supports for the Inner Circle

You are never, ever alone in this. Multiple layers of support are available for you to tap into at a moment's notice - - please don't hesitate to use these resources!

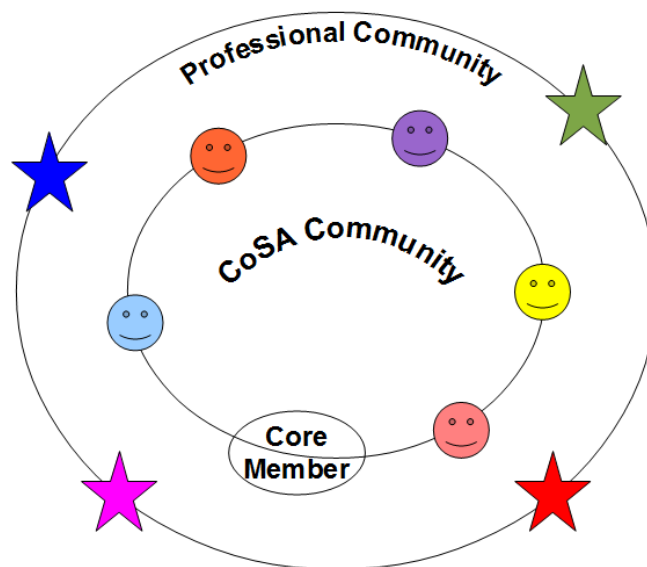
- Each other
  - ⌘ One of the many cool outcomes of the Circle process is that you, as a Circle volunteer, also create a new network of support with a unique group of people.
  - ⌘ There are a couple of things to be cautious about, though:
    - Creating a perception of a division or triangulated communication
      - It's only human and natural that some people will form closer bonds and friendships - - it might help to keep the focus on the purpose and mission of the Circle and to put the new friendship on hold until a year has elapsed and the Circle is meeting less frequently.
      - This could be something that you discuss at a Circle meeting, in an effort to keep everything honest & upfront.
    - Actually creating a division or triangulated communication
      - If you find yourself talking through concerns about the core member or other volunteers or the process OUTSIDE of the Circle, do a self-check and bring the discussion back to the Circle. This is what you're asking the core member



and all other Circle volunteers to do - - to be forthright and honest with the Circle.

- Stick to the Covenant / Agreement at all times, even when it isn't easy.
- The core member with whom you're working
  - ⌘ As you know better than anyone else, the core member isn't solely someone who was convicted for a sexual offense - - he's also a human with lots of life experiences and knowledge. It can be tremendously flattering for a core member to be asked for advice by a Circle volunteer, by someone who can see past the label. Do it!
  - ⌘ In respect to difficulties the core member is experiencing or with the Circle process, the core member is frequently going to be your subject matter expert - - if asked the right way and with patience, he most likely has the answers to his own struggles or the Circle's struggles.
- Your Local Circle Coordinator
  - ⌘ This is your primary support, for tough issues with...
    - Processes / relationships within your Circle
    - Potential relapse / community harm by the core member
  - ⌘ The LCC is your access point to the Outer Circle
  - ⌘ The LCC is most likely going to be your source for ongoing training
  - ⌘ The LCC is your one-stop-shop for your volunteer needs (time off, support, resignation, etc.)
- Your Outer Circle, through your LCC
  - ⌘ This group of subject matter experts & professionals is a bottomless well of information and critical thinking about tough issues.
  - ⌘ Seek their expertise through your Local Circle Coordinator
- Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability, 720.207.9203 or 720.854.8548
  - ⌘ Brainstorming solutions to tricky or urgent situations
  - ⌘ Talking through issues around fidelity to the model
  - ⌘ Conducting community information meetings
  - ⌘ Talking to the media
  - ⌘ Recruiting volunteers
  - ⌘ Training incoming volunteers
  - ⌘ Completing criminal background checks
  - ⌘ Providing forms
  - ⌘ Researching ongoing training for you and your volunteers
  - ⌘ Supportive funding for your efforts

# ***FOR: THE OUTER CIRCLE***



## Definition

The Outer Circle is a safety net for the Inner Circle and for the Local Circle Coordinator - - in a project where community safety is paramount and where the volunteers are meeting frequently with someone who's been assessed as being at a high risk to reoffend, the Outer Circle backs up the Inner Circle with professional knowledge, resources and advice. The Local Circle Coordinator will recruit this pool of subject matter experts and will be the primary contact with them. Outer Circle members could include but wouldn't be limited to:

- Parole / probation officers
- Treatment providers certified by the Sex Offender Management Board
- Law enforcement officers
- Representatives of the victim community (advocates, survivors)
- Representatives from the Department of Corrections
- Representatives from faith-based organizations
- Representatives from nonprofits that serve people convicted of sex offenses

## Tasks of the Outer Circle

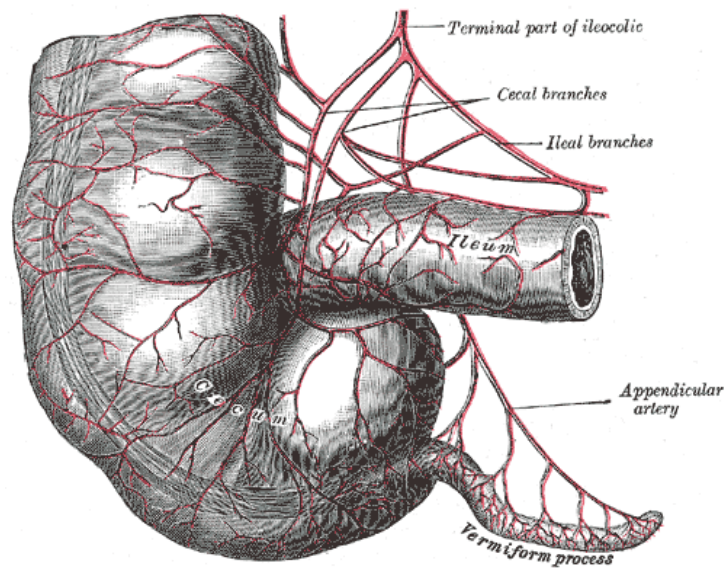
Responsible for:

- Serving as subject matter experts for the Local Circle Coordinator:
  - ⌘ For multiple Circles formed in your community
  - ⌘ When there are questions about potential relapse of a core member
  - ⌘ When there are non-emergency legal issues
  - ⌘ When there is potential serious violation of terms & conditions of community supervision
  - ⌘ When Inner Circle volunteers need specialized training
  - ⌘ When community education / public notification sessions are held
- Researching & recommending local resources for a specific core member
- Educating their own agencies about the CoSA model
- Maintaining a view of CoSA that's balanced between support & accountability

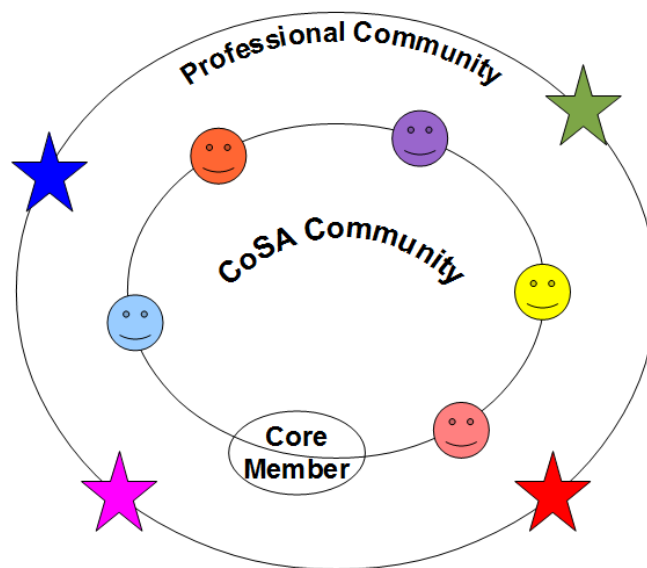
## Supports for the Outer Circle

- Your Local Circle Coordinator
- Your agency / organization
- This Guide!

# APPENDIX



# ***GLOSSARY Of CoSA TERMS***



## CoSA GLOSSARY

*There's a lot of terminology specific to criminal justice & CoSA;  
this list is a START and you'll add to it!*

**Antisocial:** Unwilling or unable to associate in a normal or friendly way with other people. Antagonistic, hostile or unfriendly toward others; menacing; threatening. Opposed or detrimental to social order or the principles on which society is constituted.

**Boundaries:** Physical (space / time) and psychological boundaries are limits we establish for ourselves to be safe or to feel safe, or to maintain our mental health. In a Circle, examples of healthy boundaries might include guidelines for frequency of phone calls, limits on the time a volunteer will offer, or careful access to a volunteer's home. Boundaries may also refer to the division between various roles (Circle Keeper, local Circle coordinator, core member, et al).

**Consensus:** General agreement; unanimity. Group solidarity in sentiment & belief.

**Containment Model:** An approach to community supervision of people who've been convicted of sexual offenses. The Containment Model primarily employs external controls (sanctions from Parole or Probation, pressure from POs, polygraphs & other tests, frequent check-ins between members of the Community Supervision Team, etc.) in combination with behavioral management strategies taught to the person under supervision for a sexual offense.

**Core Member:** Person convicted of a sexual offense around whom a Circle of Support & Accountability is formed.

**Court Orders:** Requirements imposed by the court on the person under its supervision.

**Crime Cycle:** A predictable sequence of circumstances and/or behaviors that, if uninterrupted, will typically lead a previous offender to commit a similar crime. Ideally, early symptoms & warnings are identified and used to interrupt an escalating cycle.

**Detained / Detention:** When someone is held securely in jail, they are being detained; jails are also known as detention. The state of being held securely is known as being in detention.

**DOC:** Department of Corrections; the state entity responsible for providing "...protection & public safety by managing offenders in controlled environments of prisons, community-based facilities and parole programs that are safe, humane, appropriately secure and provide work and self-improvement opportunities to assist offenders in community reintegration."

**Faith Community:** A group of people who share a set of religious or spiritual beliefs in common.

**Federal Sentence:** Federal institutions (Bureau of Prisons) hold people convicted of federal offenses or being held pending their legal process on federal charges; on rare occasions, a state prisoner is held in a federal facility.

**Good Lives Model:** This is a case management & rehabilitation model that builds on the core member's strengths and that seeks to increase personal capabilities and skills in order to reduce their risk of re-offending. The premise is that the offending behavior came out of a harmful or antisocial approach to achieving a natural human goal (intimacy, closeness, relationship) and the way to prevent recurrence is to heal the deficits that led to that approach.

**Group Dynamics:** The interplay of personalities, styles and roles at work in a setting of three or more people. Some of the fluid dynamics include: how decisions are made, how conflict is handled / resolved, how tasks are accomplished, how communication occurs, how power is shared or not shared, etc.

**Index Offense:** The main offense for which someone is convicted and sentenced. Someone may be convicted of many offenses, but the index offense is the primary reason for arrest, detention, conviction and sentencing.

**Institutionalization:** The condition that results from adapting to life in an institution like a prison, characterized by a need for rigid routines, excessive dependence and norms of personal behavior that generally don't work well once released to the community.

**Local Circle Coordinator:** The person or organization that oversees a Circle or multiple Circles in a community; the LCC recruits/screens/trains volunteers, accepts referrals for core members, forms an Outer Circle of professionals, helps get the Circle started, offers support to Circle members, and oversees administrative duties related to the Circle.

**Noncustodial:** Not in custody; not being held / detained / controlled by another entity.

**Offense:** A breach of law; a crime. An offense can be a misdemeanor (less serious) or a felony (more serious).

**Offense Cycle:** See "Crime Cycle".

**Paraphilia:** The experience of intense sexual arousal to atypical objects, situations or individuals. Some paraphilias can be harmless / victimless; others may be classified as a sexual offense (pedophilia, sexual sadism/rape, exhibitionism for example).

**Parole / Parole Officer:** An offender might be released from prison before serving his entire sentence; in this case, he'll be supervised on parole in the community. Parole entails a specific list of terms & conditions that the parolee has to follow; this might include a curfew, restrictions about who he can contact or where he can go, mandates to get a job or finish school or start therapy, payment schedules for fees and fines, etc. A parole officer is the state employee who oversees this set of court orders and ensures that the parolee is complying and that he has what he needs in order to succeed in the community. Parole status can be revoked for new offenses or violations of the terms & conditions; revocation might result in a return to prison to serve the rest of the sentence or a new sentence.

**Probation / Probation Officer:** When an offender has pled guilty or been found guilty, one sentencing option the court has is probation - - this is a supervised status in the community for a defined period of time (3 - 5 years, 3 years to life, for example). On probation, the offender has a set of terms & conditions to follow; this might include a curfew, restrictions about who he can contact or where he can go, mandates to get a job or finish school or start therapy, payment schedules for fees and fines, etc. Compliance is overseen by a state employee called a probation officer, who works with the probationer to accomplish their terms and complete their probation sentence successfully. Probation status can be revoked for new offenses or violations of the terms & conditions; revocation might result in jail or prison to serve the remainder of the original sentence or a new sentence.

**Relapse / Relapse Prevention:** Generally, relapse means going back to old, unhealthy and unproductive patterns of behavior. For CoSA, relapse means that the core member is engaging in illegal, sexually deviant behavior. Relapse prevention is a set of strategies that will help the core member to never engage in illegal, sexually deviant behavior again - - typically, a relapse prevention plan will involve cognitive / behavioral strategies that allow the offender to interrupt unhealthy thinking, along with new coping skills that allow the offender to deal with stress and anger and other challenging situations. Early identification / warning signs are usually part of relapse prevention.

**Restorative Justice:** A criminal justice / social justice approach that promotes healing for all parties to an offense - - the victim(s), the community and the offender. The emphasis in RJ is on repairing harm to all who were injured and making them whole again.

**Risk Assessment:** In CoSA, risk assessment is performed by practitioners in the Department of Corrections and /or therapists working with a core member; standardized assessments are used to determine how likely someone is to re-offend. Typically, more than one assessment tool is used and a variety of approaches are employed, including a look at unchangeable present/past events (static assessment) as well as characteristics / situations that can be changed in the future (dynamic assessment).

**Risk Factors:** Situations, circumstances and behaviors that can trigger a return to unacceptable and/or illegal activity.

**Sex Offender:** A person who has been convicted of and sentenced on a sexual offense.



**Sexual Deviation:** Sexual behavior that is outside acceptable norms set by society, as defined by psychiatry and/or the law.

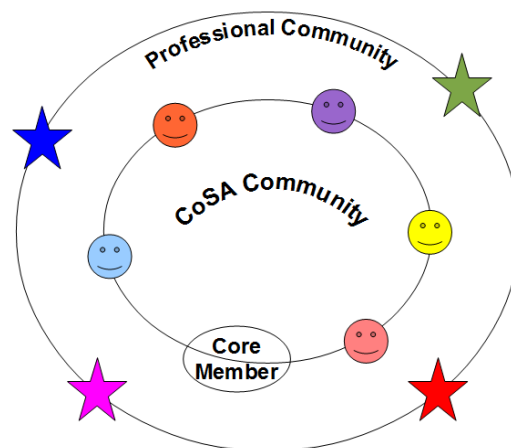
**SOMB:** Sex Offender Management Board; a multidisciplinary group that has the responsibility of developing a basis of the systematic management and treatment of sex offenders, which has resulted in the creation of a set of standards and guidelines for evaluation, treatment, and behavioral monitoring in Colorado.

**Victim Advocate:** A person or organization that supports people who've been victimized by criminal acts ; services may include coordination of resources, provision of emotional support and/or speaking up on behalf of that person or class of persons.

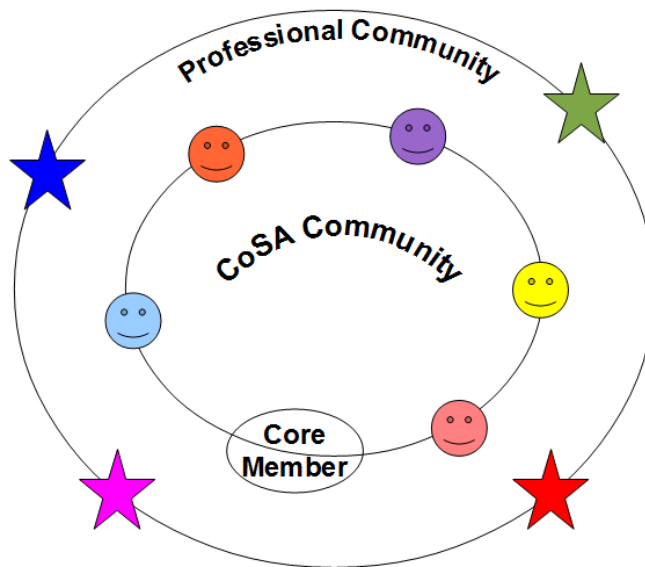
**VOMP:** Victim / Offender Mediation Program; a restorative justice approach that brings the offender together with the victim of his crime (facilitated by a trained mediator). The victim is able to express the impact and damage, and the offender is able to apologize and offer restitution face-to-face.

**VORP:** Victim / Offender Reconciliation Program; another name for VOMP, VORP is a face-to-face restorative justice approach that allows the offender to take responsibility and make direct restitution while empowering the victim to give voice to the harm done.

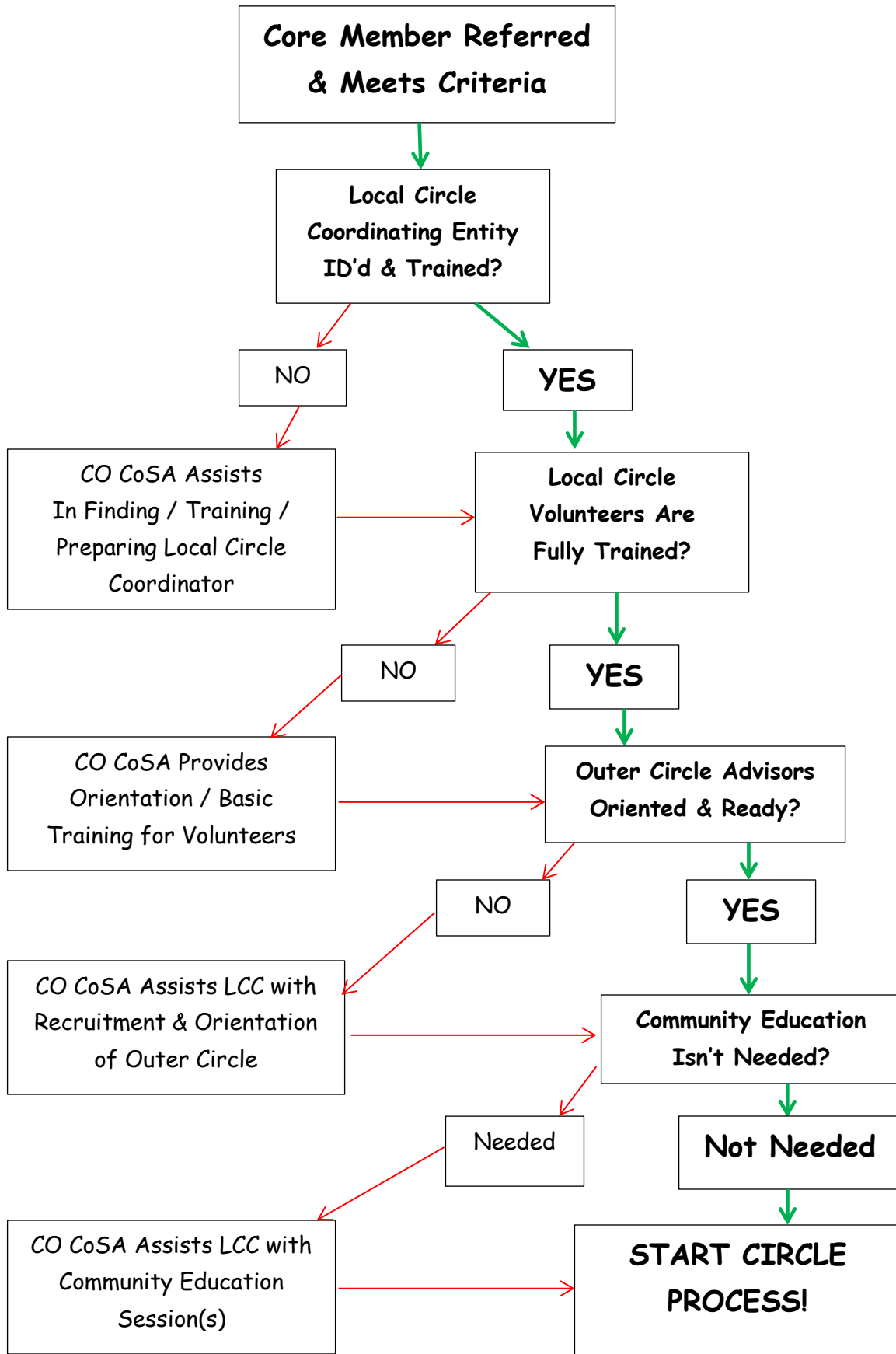
**Wraparound:** A large-scale, facilitated process that assists people with complex needs in identifying the core issues and solving them one at a time. Wrap mobilizes natural supports to create a circle of support around the individual or family and enlists experts as needed in the problem-solving process. Along with restorative justice, Wrap was part of the inspiration for CoSA.



# *FORMS & OTHER EXTRAS*



# LOCAL CIRCLE PREPARATION FLOWCHART





## ***CoSA CIRCLE READINESS SELF-CHECK***

Completed by the Local Circle Coordinator  
Keep in the Core Member File

DATE

READINESS TASK

\_\_\_\_\_ A potential Core Member was referred & meets criteria

- A completed Referral Form submitted & reviewed
- All five boxes are ticked on the assessment of suitability

\_\_\_\_\_ Essential materials / information have been received & reviewed

- The Core Member's File
- Interview with the Core Member by LCC and/or Inner Circle
- Any additional questions have been answered by person referring

\_\_\_\_\_ You have 3 - 5 fully trained volunteers ready to rock it!

- All volunteers have applied and passed screening & interviewing with LCC
- All volunteers have passed a background screen (with DOC or probation)
- All volunteers have attended Orientation AND Basic Training
- All volunteers have been chosen specifically for this Core Member
- All volunteers have been oriented to the Core Member's history

\_\_\_\_\_ You've created an Outer Circle and/or Advisory Group for this Core Member

- Parole/Probation     SOMB Tx Provider     Victim's Advocate
- Corrections     Law Enforcement     Faith Community

\_\_\_\_\_ A draft covenant / contract has been created with the Core Member

\_\_\_\_\_ You're ready to have a Circle! **"No More Victims" and "No One Is Disposable"**

# CoSA VOLUNTEER READINESS CHECKLIST

Completed by the Local Circle Coordinator  
Keep in the Volunteer File

DATE	READINESS TASK
_____	Has submitted a volunteer application
_____	Has had an in-person interview with the local Circle coordinator
_____	Has attended a Volunteer Orientation for CoSA
_____	Has completed Basic Training & Skill-Building workshops and loved them! <input type="checkbox"/> Why CoSA Works <input type="checkbox"/> Deviant Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Community Supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Police Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalization <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Victim Notification <input type="checkbox"/> Justice System <input type="checkbox"/> Restorative Justice <input type="checkbox"/> ROLE PLAYS!
_____	Has read the associated materials and gotten questions answered
_____	Has passed a "Family & Friends" background screen via DOC
_____	Has read even more materials and asked even more questions...
_____	Has signed any necessary documents for participation
_____	Has met with veteran Circle volunteers (social or a formal meeting)
_____	Can't wait to support safe, accountable, humane community integration...





Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability  
14221 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street #330, Aurora, CO 80011  
720.207.9203 or 720.854.8548  
www.cocosa.org

*NO MORE VICTIMS*

*NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE*

## ***VOLUNTEER APPLICATION***

Completed by Prospective CoSA Volunteer & Provided to Local Circle Coordinator  
Please retain in the Volunteer File

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                      MI                      Maiden                      First

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:        M        F  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in this community? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Skills / Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Education (circle highest completed):    HS   9 10 11 12                      GED / HS Diploma  
                    College   13 14 15 16                      Graduate School                      Graduate Degree

Are you currently a student?        YES   NO   Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

What faith community do you attend (if any)? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Circles Interest & Availability:**

How did you hear about CoSA? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever done this type of work or volunteering before? (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to be a CoSA volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

What days of week / times of day will you be available to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

CoSA requires a year commitment, several hours a week - - does that work? YES NO  
 Are you able to attend all mandatory volunteer training sessions? YES NO  
 Have you or someone close to you ever been a victim of a violent crime / trauma? YES NO  
 Please tell a bit about it, if yes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Did it involve a sexual offense? YES NO  
 Is there a particular kind of sex offender with whom you don't want to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Offender Relationships:**

Related to any DOC offender, including probationers & parolees: YES NO  
 Has visited with any DOC offender within last two years: YES NO  
 Has written/corresponded with any DOC offender within the last two years: YES NO  
 Has been victimized by a current DOC offender: YES NO  
 Knows someone who has ever been victimized by a current DOC offender: YES NO  
 Please explain any YES answers from above: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK:**

Driver's License: State: \_\_\_\_\_ #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ethnicity (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Have you EVER been arrested, charged or convicted of any felony? YES NO  
 Have you EVER been arrested, charged or convicted of any misdemeanor? YES NO  
 Have you EVER been incarcerated in a correctional facility or jail? YES NO  
 Are there ANY charges pending against you for any criminal offense? YES NO  
 Please explain any YES answers from above: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**References:** Please provide three personal references (not relatives) who have been close to you in the last five years and who can give an evaluation of your character and abilities. Ideally, at least one will be a work / school colleague and one will be a personal friend.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that completion & submission of this form is the first step in becoming a volunteer with Circles of Support & Accountability and CDOC. I know that I will be required to complete CoSA Volunteer Basic Training & Skill-Building Training (about 20-30 hours). I agree to abide by CDOC rules if entering their facilities and I agree to live and breathe the CoSA principles.*

*I authorize representatives of the Colorado Department of Corrections and/or Probation to make any and all appropriate inquiries regarding my background and I release CO CoSA, CDOC, Probation and their representatives from any liability that may result from such action. I also authorize DOC and/or Probation to share the results of background inquiries to my Local Circle Coordinator so that the local project has what it needs to ensure I'm a great fit for CoSA.*

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## CoSA SUGGESTED VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*The Local Circle Coordinator will meet in-person with a prospective volunteer to conduct this interview.  
Please record answers and maintain in the volunteer file.*

### NEW QUESTIONS

There's no need to repeat the questions that are already answered to your satisfaction on the application - - the in-person interview with a prospective volunteer is intended to dig deeper into motivation, experience and fit for a specialized project like CoSA. Here are some ideas:

- ⌘ Tell me a little bit about what brought you to Circles of Support & Accountability - - why do you want to volunteer with us specifically?
- ⌘ What do you enjoy about volunteering in general?
- ⌘ What was your most rewarding volunteer experience so far? Why was it so gratifying?
- ⌘ What was your toughest challenge as a volunteer so far? What made it difficult?
- ⌘ What do you think will be rewarding and tough about volunteering with CoSA?
- ⌘ What do you do to keep yourself refreshed and balanced?
- ⌘ Talk a bit about what "personal boundaries" mean to you.
- ⌘ You'll be volunteering with a team of 3 or 4 other people. Talk about how you've worked with teams in the past to work toward solutions.
- ⌘ What do you think about people who are convicted of sexual offenses?

### FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FROM APPLICATION FORM

Once you've gotten the application, you might have some additional questions that are spurred by the volunteer's responses. Definitely follow up on any questions you might have - - here are some suggestions:

- ⌘ On your application, you mentioned that you've been in contact with a current DOC inmate - - could you talk to me more about that?
- ⌘ On your application, you indicated that you don't want to volunteer with "child molesters" - - could you explain a bit more?
- ⌘ You mentioned that you were the victim of a sexual assault - - would you be comfortable talking about why you want to volunteer with people convicted of sexual offenses and how you think that volunteer service might affect you?



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*NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE*

## **CORE MEMBER REFERRAL**

The following checklist guides our assessment of an applicant's suitability for a Colorado Circle of Support and Accountability

- Has been convicted of a sexual offense and admits to committing a sex offense in the past; AND
- Has been assessed as posing a high-risk to re-offend sexually; AND
- Has high needs (has little or no support in the community, low functioning, etc.); AND
- Agrees to share his DOC / Probation file with Colorado CoSA by signing a Consent Form; AND
- Displays genuine commitment to turn his/her life around by voluntarily entering into a supportive relationship with his Circle Volunteers. Indicators of commitment include:
  - ⊙ Honoring the terms of his Covenant (an agreement between the Core Member and his volunteers) by communicating openly with his volunteer members in order to identify offense triggers and to avoid lapses and re-offenses
  - ⊙ Participating in counseling, or other community-based programs as recommended, such as relapse prevention, anger management, AA/NA (as appropriate and/or as ordered by Parole or Probation)
  - ⊙ Agreeing, by signing a consent form, to open communication between the CoSA Coordinator and his professional network including, but not limited to, his psychologist/psychiatrist, therapist, parole officers

If all the boxes are checked, then your client is a potential candidate for our program! We welcome you to complete the referral form and thank you for your ongoing collaboration.

Carla Turner  
Colorado CoSA Executive Director

## REFERRAL FORM for Colorado CoSA

Your name & role/institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person being referred: \_\_\_\_\_

Her/his contact information (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to her/him: \_\_\_\_\_

Has s/he been convicted of a sexual offense? Yes  No

Her/his level of risk to re-offend sexually: Low  Moderate  High

Destination city upon release: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of release? Parole  No Parole  Probation

Supervising Officer (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date When Parole / Probation Supervision Ends: \_\_\_\_\_

Does core member have community support? Yes  Limited  No

Support, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Referral completed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this form  
(by mail, email or fax),  
completed and signed, to:**



**Carla Turner with Colorado CoSA**  
MAIL: 14221 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, #330  
Aurora, CO 80011  
FAX: 720.222.0739  
EMAIL: [carlaturner@cocosa.org](mailto:carlaturner@cocosa.org)



Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability  
14221 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street #330, Aurora, CO 80011  
720.207.9203 or 720.854.8548  
www.cocosa.org

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND WAIVER OF LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Completed by the Core Member at time of referral & provided to Local Circle Coordinator

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Name of Core Member*), born on \_\_\_\_\_ (*DOB*), consent to the unrestricted communication and/or disclosure of information regarding my prior offense(s) and risk factors between Colorado Circles of Support & Accountability, local Circle projects working with CO CoSA and the Colorado Department of Corrections / Probation (circle one), including, but not limited to, Colorado Sex Offender Management Board personnel.

- I am requesting re-entry services, specifically a CoSA Team with CO CoSA.
- I understand that CoSA Team Volunteers have an obligation to inform the Department if my behavior presents a clear and imminent danger to either myself or other persons.
- This form has been fully explained to me. I fully understand it and voluntarily give my consent.
- I understand that this is a limited waiver and not a general waiver of my rights, and I retain full authority for all other disclosures not specifically waived by this agreement.
- I understand that I may revoke this waiver at any time.
- I further understand that such a revocation may result in my termination from participating in a Circle of Support & Accountability.
- 

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(*Core Member*)

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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*NO MORE VICTIMS*

*NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE*

## ***CORE MEMBER NEEDS ASSESSMENT***

### **Part One**

Completed by the Local Circle Coordinator or Designee with the Core Member  
 Please retain in the Circle File for the Core Member

#### **Who You Are**

Name of Core Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Destination on Release: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parole / Probation Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervising Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Documents You'll Need**

Valid driver's license:     Yes         No  
 Birth Certificate:         Yes         No  
 Other forms of identification: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Your Living Arrangements**

Upon release, do you have a place to live?     Yes         No  
 Are you able to live on your own?                 Yes         No  
 Can you cook?     Yes         No  
 Are you comfortable doing your own shopping?  Yes         No  
 Are you comfortable doing your own laundry?    Yes         No  
 Will you have adequate clothing (for the climate/season)?  Yes         No

#### **Transportation**

Will you have your own transportation upon release?  Yes         No  
 Will you be able to insure your vehicle?         Yes         No  
 Are you able to use public transportation at your destination?  Yes         No

**Employment**

- Upon release, will you be starting a job?  Yes  No
- What work have you done in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
- What work would you enjoy doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you manage your own money?  Yes  No
- Will you need social / DHS assistance?  Yes  No
- Are you planning to apply for a disability pension of any sort?  Yes  No

**Education**

- What education do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you intend to pursue further studies?  Yes  No
- Do you need to apply for a student loan / financial aid?  Yes  No

**Medical Details**

- Do you have health insurance?  Yes  No
- Do you have any specific (diagnosed) medical conditions?  Yes  No
- Are you on medication (including methadone treatment)?  Yes  No
- Do you have a family doctor?  Yes  No

**Counseling Details**

- Do you intend to seek counseling?  Yes  No
- Do you need a referral?  Yes  No
- Are depression, anger, grief, suicide, relationships, and/or sex matters of concern for you?  Yes  No

**Legal Details**

- Do you have any outstanding legal concerns?  Yes  No
- Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- If a restraining order were sought:
- What conditions could you live with? \_\_\_\_\_
- What conditions would be most difficult? \_\_\_\_\_

**Free Time / Recreation**

- How will you manage your free time? \_\_\_\_\_
- How have you managed free time in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have hobbies, recreational or sports interests? \_\_\_\_\_

## Relationships

What are your relationships with the following people like?

Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Friends: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighbors: \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual and/or cultural groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Media: \_\_\_\_\_

If you plan to live with or be in touch with family or friends, you may find it helpful for us to contact them and they may even be interested in being part of your Circle.

Whose telephone numbers could you share with us?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Victim Concerns

Will you have contact with any of your victims?  Yes  No

Will there be restrictions on your movements?  Yes  No

What were your offenses? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were they against?  Women  Men  Children (male/female/both)  
 Family  Friends  Strangers

## Relapse Prevention Planning

What have you learned about relapse prevention for yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your risk areas?  Alcohol  Drugs (Type : \_\_\_\_\_)  
 Solvents  Boundary Testing  
 Pornography  Sexual Behavior  
 Isolation  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Resources

What skills / interests / strengths can you share with your friends in CoSA?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What will your contributions to the community be? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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*NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE*

## ***CORE MEMBER NEEDS ASSESSMENT***

### **Part Two - Worksheet**

Completed by the Local Circle Coordinator & Inner Circle; retain in Core Member's File

Name of Core Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

NEED	YES	NO	Support Provided By Whom & How
Victim Safety			
Place to Live			
Privacy			
Supervision			
Income / Employment			
Money Management			
Cooking			
Shopping			
Clothing			
Laundry			
Medication / Health Mgmt			
Boundary Setting			
Alcohol Control			
Time Management			
Literacy / Education			
Recreation / Hobbies			
Family Relationships			
Police Relations			
Legal Matters			
Neighbor Relations			
Sexual Behaviors			
Social Services / DHS			
Spiritual / Cultural Issues			
Mood Management			
Crisis Response Plan			
Media Relations			
Opportunities for Celebration			
Identification Documents			
Anything Else?			



## **GUIDELINES FOR CIRCLE MEETINGS**

For the Circle Keeper / Facilitator

### **Starting the Circle: First Meeting (About 2 Hours)**

- 1) Kick-Off - - Reiterate the Circle concept, values and principles; go over the agenda
  - a. Touch on purpose and frame sharing of info within the achievement of the larger goals of "No More Victims" and "No One Is Disposable"
  - b. Touch on confidentiality of all info shared by all Circle members
- 2) Introductions - - In-depth intros for the volunteers and the core member
  - a. Ask gentle facilitating questions to encourage the core member to share information about the offense(s) that brought him to this process
  - b. Spend some time on this part of the agenda - - this meeting is about starting the process of connecting and building trusting, healthy relationships
- 3) Centering - - For this Circle, have each person share why they got involved in CoSA
- 4) The Covenant / Agreement - - Share the draft covenant & review
  - a. Lead Circle in coming to consensus on any needed revisions
  - b. Sign altered document & let everyone know that you'll get revisions to them soon
  - c. Create a contact list (either part of Covenant or separate) with email/phone #s
- 5) Go over the Core Member Needs Assessment
  - a. For this initial meeting, address the most urgent / imminent needs
  - b. In this discussion, decide on additional contacts that will occur in the week that will elapse between this meeting and the next
    - i. Task-oriented individual meetings with the core member & volunteer(s)
    - ii. Relationship-oriented hang-outs for the core member & volunteer(s)
    - iii. Phone contact check-ins
- 6) Decide on opening & closing rituals for the Circle (to occur at every meeting)
- 7) Set weekly meetings as far in advance as practical for all involved
- 8) Wrap-Up - - Use the ritual agreed upon or close with a prepared quote/reading

### **Keeping the Circle: Subsequent Meetings (About 2 Hours)**

- 1) Opening Ritual
- 2) Circle Member Check-Ins - - encourage each member to talk about their week, not just about the contact they had with the core member
- 3) Continued Core Member Needs Assessment:
  - a. Lead the Circle in continuing to problem-solve the needs identified by the core member and to set timelines for completion of shared tasks

- b. As part of this exercise, continue the process of getting to know the core member, including:
    - i. Learning about the offense that brought him to the Circle
      1. "What were you charged with?"
      2. "What were you convicted of?"
      3. "What's your understanding of what you did?"
      4. "What would your victim's view of the offense be?"
    - ii. Learning about his crime cycle and relapse prevention plan
      1. "What are your triggers / areas of risk / red flags?"
      2. "How would we know that you're manipulating the Circle?"
      3. "What can we help you with on your safety plan?"
      4. "How can we help you avoid relapsing into the crime cycle?"
    - iii. Learning about the terms & conditions of his parole / probation status
  - c. As part of this process on an ongoing basis, help the Circle move toward building capacity and capitalizing on core member strengths in living a GOOD LIFE:
    - i. Coping skills
      1. "What's your main struggle right now and what would you like to do about it?"
      2. "What's the hardest thing about being on probation/parole?"
      3. "What made it possible for you to get through prison and how will that help you in the community?"
      4. "How are you different now?"
      5. "How do you see yourself 5 or 10 years from now?"
    - ii. Relationships / Intimacy
      1. "How did your family react when they found out you had been arrested for a sexual offense?"
      2. "How's your relationship with them right now?"
      3. "Are you able to have contact with your children?"
      4. "Do you have any romantic interests right now?"
      5. "Do you feel like your sexual preferences are healthy & normal?"
    - iii. Empathy
      1. "How do you think your victim is still affected today?"
      2. "What would you say to your victim if you had the chance?"
- 4) Honoring the Covenant / Agreement:
- a. Lead the Circle each meeting in a check-in on the Covenant / Agreement to ensure that members are complying with their agreement and that the document still meets the needs of all members of the Circle
  - b. Set up any additional contacts that'll occur in the next week or so
  - c. Revise as needed and have the Circle members sign the new document
- 5) Closing Ritual

## Ongoing Circle Meeting Tasks of the Circle Keeper / Facilitator

- 1) Coordinate the meeting schedule - - contact Circle members regarding schedule changes
- 2) Coordinate additional contacts between core member & volunteers (in-person & phone)
- 3) Facilitate discussion of specific topics brought up by the core member, with a balance between support & accountability
- 4) Coordinate celebrations of significant life events of all Circle members
  - a. Also celebrate achievements of the Circle & the core member!
- 5) Coordinate supportive activities during tough times in the lives of all Circle members
- 6) Communicate regularly with the Local Circle Coordinator:
  - a. Complete Circle Meeting Reports & email them to LCC & CO CoSA
  - b. Contact LCC when there is an issue to bring to the Outer Circle for consultation
- 7) AFTER SIX MONTHS: Facilitate increased focus on activities / conversations around victim empathy
- 8) AFTER ONE YEAR: Lead the Circle in assessing what it has accomplished and whether or not the Circle should continue meeting formally
  - a. Is the core member interacting in the community with healthy boundaries & relationships?
  - b. Is the core member making a contribution through a job or volunteer work?
  - c. Is the core member crime-free and does he have strategies to stay crime-free?
  - d. Does the core member accept responsibility for his actions and demonstrate effective problem-solving when a challenge comes up?
  - e. If the Circle has ANY concerns that the core member will struggle without the formal meeting process, then the meetings should continue



# CIRCLE OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Weekly Circle Meeting Report for \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Circle Members Present

Core Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Topics Discussed: Employment Housing Relationships Parole/Probation Offense Finances  
Risk Areas Relapse Prev Goals/Planning Victim Concerns Transportation Other

Summary of Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Achievements: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goals for the Future: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Circle volunteers, Circle Keepers and Local Circle Coordinators must report any and all inappropriate and/or illegal behaviors to the Community Supervision Team of the core member (and possibly to law enforcement). Failure to do so can result in serious harm to the community, to the freedom and future of the core member and to the CoSA program.

## SAMPLE SAFETY PLAN

(Please use the safety plan provided by the core member's therapist if at all possible)

SAFETY ISSUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Before it happens:

- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_

If it happens:

- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PEOPLE:

- \_\_\_\_\_

SAFETY ISSUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Before it happens:

- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_

If it happens:

- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PEOPLE:

- \_\_\_\_\_

SAFETY ISSUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Before it happens:

- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_

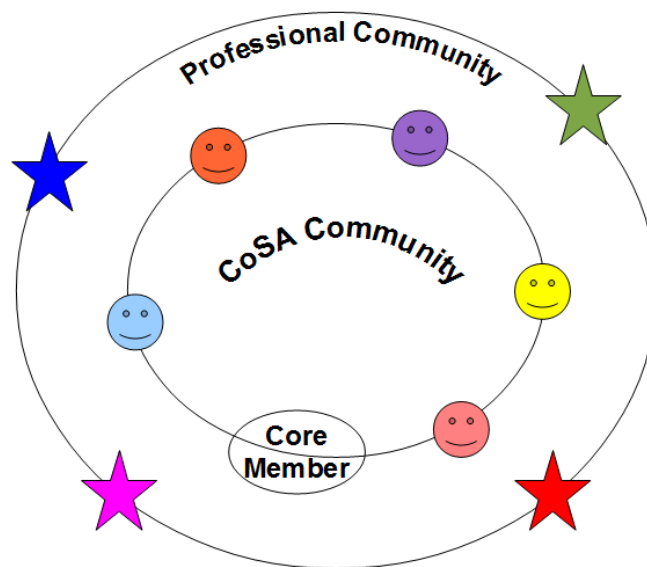
If it happens:

- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PEOPLE:

- \_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE COVENANTS / AGREEMENTS



**COVENANT / AGREEMENT - EXAMPLE #1**

***Core Member***

As the core member I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit myself to both acknowledge and claim the support of the CoSA by:

1. Communicating with one or more of the circle members several times each week;
2. Doing everything I know how to do to contribute to an atmosphere of mutual trust;
3. Sharing as openly and honestly of myself as I am able;
4. Remaining crime-free in the community;
5. Being part of the weekly Circle meeting, maintaining confidentiality; and
6. By following up on actions for which I have agreed to be responsible as recorded in the minutes of each weekly meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature core member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

***Circle Volunteers***

As members of the Circle, we commit ourselves to support the core member by:

1. Being available to him/her at whatever times he/she determines he/she needs to contact us.
2. Doing everything we know how to contribute to an atmosphere of mutual trust.
3. Sharing as openly and honestly of ourselves as we are able.
4. Providing every possible support to assist him/her in achieving his/her goal of full reintegration into the community.
5. Being part of the weekly meeting of the CoSA, maintaining complete confidentiality, and by following up on actions for which we have agreed to be responsible as recorded in the minutes of each weekly meeting.

Signed by: Circle Members

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## COVENANT / AGREEMENT - EXAMPLE #2

This is a covenant between \_\_\_\_\_ and the people in the community who have formed a Circle of Support & Accountability around him/her to assist his/her successful return to the community. \_\_\_\_\_ is committed to making a successful return to the community and is dedicated to the promise that he/she will make no more victims.

### General Commitments

#### Confidentiality

As the core member or as a Member of the Circle, I agree to respect the confidentiality of the Circle. I will hold any information shared inside the Circle as private and privileged information which will stay within the group unless the whole Circle agrees that it should be released.

I understand that it is essential to maintain a high level of trust within the Circle. We cannot heal each other unless communication is open and honest. We recognize and appreciate openness with the Circle and will reciprocate by being available for emergencies, to talk, and just for company. I agree to make the building of confidence a priority, committing myself to maintaining open communication with every other member of the Circle.

#### Safety of the Community

We recognize that the reason for hostility in the community is that it is fearful of offenders who have committed sexual offenses. As part of the Circle, I commit myself to the safety of the community as a first priority. If, at any time, there is concern about that safety, it must be urgently discussed within the Circle. I accept this as my responsibility. I agree that the Circle will be aware of patterns of previous offenses and seek to prevent a reoccurrence of the circumstances which led to them. Any occasion of re-offense or showing high risk of re-offense will occasion an emergency meeting of the Circle.

#### Conformity to Legal Requirements

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will comply with the legal conditions imposed on me until they are appealed or changed.

#### Responsibilities of the Circle

As Circle members, we recognize that we have a particular role to play in support of the core member. We will fulfill the requirements of our tasks to the best of our ability.

As the core member, \_\_\_\_\_, agrees to respect this agreement with each of the other Circle members and will not change it without discussion with the whole Circle. I will comply with any conditions that are agreed within the Circle and maintain regular contact at the stipulated intervals.

As members of the Circle, we will be available to meet with \_\_\_\_\_ as needed and will support his/her positive efforts to live according to the acceptable behavior agreed to. We agree to assist \_\_\_\_\_ with issues which may



arise regarding his/her residence, managing leisure time, seeking employment or retraining, making contacts for medical or psychological aid, negotiating with police and media, and any other needs as they arise.

\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to inform the Circle of any lapses or relapses to discuss the situation together before taking any measures.

\_\_\_\_\_ has determined not to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18. The Circle will hold him/her accountable to this determination. The Circle will challenge any lapse in this resolve and search for ways to correct such behavior and associated attitudes. A relapse consists of any sexual contact with a minor under the age of 18. All relapses must be reported to the police.

The COSA will encourage participation in counseling and other treatment deemed appropriate by parole, probation, SOMB professionals and the Circle members in discussion with

\_\_\_\_\_.

I agree to observe the terms of this contract and to commit myself to each member of the Circle to assist the successful completion of our purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Core Member & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signed by Circle Members:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**COVENANT / AGREEMENT ADDENDUM EXAMPLE**  
**Added to Agreement After a Relapse with Alcohol**

\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to:

1. Continue to comply with the original covenant(s) in addition to this one.
2. Comply with all terms and conditions of supervision, treatment and the Circle.
3. Extend stay at \_\_\_\_\_ (detox?) to a total of at least four days.
4. Find an appropriate counseling program or one-on-one counseling.
5. Arrange for supervised Antabuse administration at a pharmacy at least three times weekly (every other day) until the group decides otherwise.
6. Arrange more frequent visits with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ or his/her designee.
7. Attend AA or faith community every day for the next three months.
8. Participate in sex offender treatment at an approved provider.
9. Inform family, friends and neighbors that you are on Antabuse and cannot drink.
10. Get involved in activities such as a Twelve Step Program and pursue volunteer opportunities so as not to become isolated.
11. Notify the police if there is another occurrence of drinking - to be initiated in consultation with \_\_\_\_\_ (a Circle member) as the bail bondholder.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature core member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

Signed by: Circle Members

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

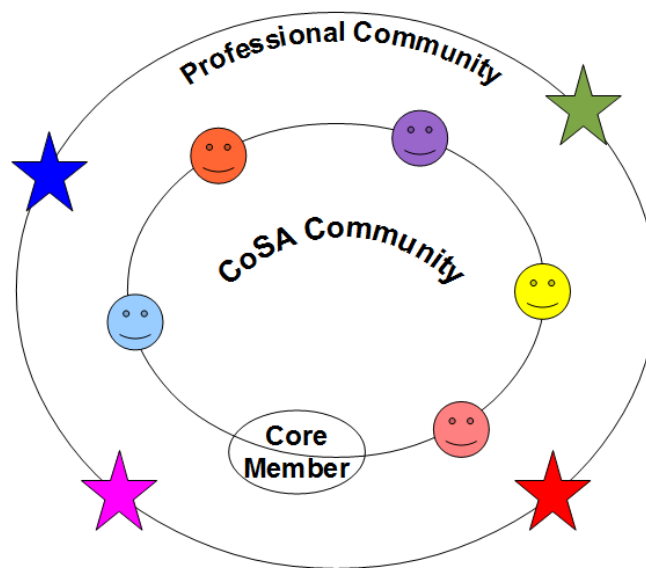
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# *REFERENCES*

&

# *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*



## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

No CoSA guide should ever be written ANYWHERE without props to the originators of the model: Dr. Robin Wilson, Dr. Bill Palmer, the Reverend Harry Nigh & his courageous congregation and, of course, Charlie.

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, Andrew McWhinnie and Ian Elliot have all had a hand in forming and improving the Colorado manifestation of CoSA - - their patience and relentlessness are much appreciated.

The original Board of Directors of Colorado CoSA and the original Advisory / Working Group had a dream, and they made it come true. So many projects never come to fruition, but this dedicated group made it happen. You all know who you are.

The Department of Corrections in Colorado has been pursuing quality implementation of CoSA for years - - they never gave up, and they've put much time, money and expertise into the pursuit. Thank you to DOC for lending us Suzanne McKinnon and for making absolutely certain that this happens right.

**Many of these materials have been modeled on the excellent resources out there in CoSA-land - - in return, this document lives in the public domain and is yours to use for good.**

## ***REFERENCES***

*Robin J. Wilson, PhD., ABPP, Wilson & Associates, Clinical and Forensic Psychology, [www.robinjwilson.com](http://www.robinjwilson.com)*

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