

Who is in your circles?

When offering support, it can be helpful to evaluate your relationship with the grieving person. [Susan Silk and Barry Goldman](#) developed a simple exercise to help us know what to say and to whom to say it when we seek to support someone in crisis. It's called *Ring Theory*, and it's very simple.

This exercise can be used in a number of ways:

- Grievors can use it to help them identify who their key support people are.
- Supporters can use it to help identify where they fit in the circles around the grieving person.

Haven't had a crisis situation to apply this to? It can still be helpful to use it to:

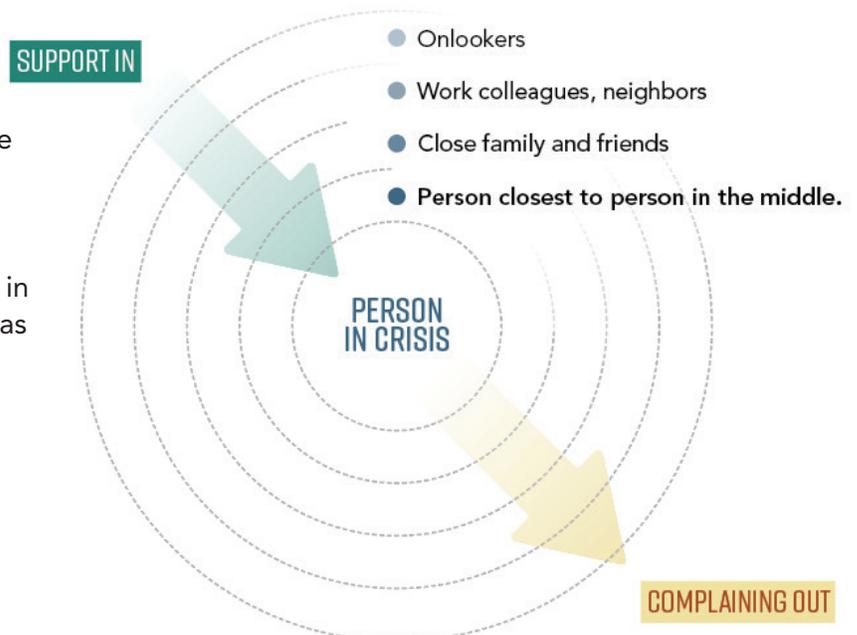
- Determine who would be in your circles when a crisis affects you.
- Reflect on whose circles you are in and prepare yourself to support others in their times of need.

INSTRUCTIONS

- In the center circle, write the name of the person who is struggling. Moving outward from the center circle, write the name(s) of the people next closest to the person in the center. Repeat as many times as necessary.

RING THEORY GOLDEN RULE: SUPPORT IN, COMPLAINING OUT.

- The person in the middle can say anything they want to anyone in any circle. They can be frustrated, they can have a tantrum, they can question, anything is fair game.
- People in the outer circles can only complain to people who are outside of their own ring.
- Only support should move toward the center.



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