

HISTORY

Originally developed in 1994, Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) was created in Canada to help high-risk sex offenders successfully reintegrate into society.

An evaluation of CoSA in Canada revealed that it significantly reduces sex offender recidivism.

- When compared to a control group, sex offenders who participated in CoSA had a 70 percent reduction in sexual recidivism.
- CoSA offenders had a 57 percent reduction in violent crime recidivism (including sex offenses) when compared to a control group.
- CoSA offenders had a 35 percent reduction in recidivism for any type of crime.

For more information or to volunteer, contact:



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**Minnesota
Circles
of Support &
Accountability**

No More Victims MnCoSA

***You can make
the difference***

A project of the
Minnesota
Department of
Corrections



MINNESOTA CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (MnCoSA)

MISSION

When offenders return to communities after completing their sentence, they may receive limited social support. Having a lack of support may increase the risk of re-offense. The mission of MnCoSA is to substantially reduce the risk of future sexual victimization by supporting people convicted of sexual offenses as they reenter the community and lead responsible, productive, and accountable lives.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Circles of Support and Accountability consist of small groups of volunteers (four to seven in each group) who provide intensive support and accountability to sex offenders following their release from prison. The offender is called a Core Member in a MnCoSA circle.

Each MnCoSA circle lasts approximately 1 year with weekly 1-2 hour meetings attended by all circle members, including the offender (Core Member). A MnCoSA volunteer can anticipate meeting no more than 4 hours per week.

Volunteer involvement in the Circle of Support is most intense during the first 60-90 days following an offender's release from prison. Involvement gradually diminishes over time as the offender successfully reenters society and becomes less dependent on the circle.

WHAT IS MnCoSA?

MnCoSA provides a healing approach to justice by supporting the building and maintaining of healthy patterns of living for offenders as they reenter a community. Circles work to:

Walk with the offender through the often difficult transition back into the community.

Encourage offenders to live healthier lives while providing the network and support necessary to do so.

Celebrate milestones in the journey to healthy integration.

Collaborate with various systems. Circles work in cooperation with police, supervision agents, treatment professionals, social service workers, etc.

GROUP MENTORING AND THE CIRCLE PROCESS

Group mentoring in a circle setting provides the opportunity to share wisdom and build on the life experiences of others. Diversity of thinking adds opportunities for problem-solving within the group and provides new ways to relate to the community at large.

The circle represents a bond of mutual respect, understanding and ownership in the process.

TRAINING

Volunteers receive 30 hours of extensive, free training and continuous support. Training is based on a restorative justice model.

Topics include:

- Circle Processes and Guidelines
- Criminal Justice System Overview
- Police Concerns and Public Notification
- Human Sexuality and Sexual Deviance
- Process to Meet the Core Member
- Effects of Long-Term Institutionalization
- Survivor and Community Concerns
- Offender Discussion
- Boundaries and Self-Care
- Re-Offense Prevention
- Covenant Creation (part of the Circle process)
- Institution Orientation

The only thing missing is you!

Volunteer Today!