

BUILD YOUR BACKUP CIRCLE

Four-Circle Worksheet for the Grown-Ups Who Stepped Up

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The four circles are four kinds of support, not four levels of closeness. One person may fit more than one circle.

1. EMERGENCY
If I am sick, delayed, or stuck.

Name: _____
Phone: _____

2. PRACTICAL
Pickup, dinner, errands, tasks.

Name: _____
Phone: _____

MY BACKUP CIRCLE

3. LISTENING
A safe adult who can simply listen.

Name: _____
Phone: _____

4. RESOURCE
Someone who helps navigate systems.

Name: _____
Phone: _____

If a circle is empty, do not judge yourself. That empty circle simply becomes the next support problem to solve.

YOUR FOUR SUPPORT ROLES

Write down the people who can actually do something when you need them

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1. EMERGENCY PERSON

Who can answer if you are sick, stuck at work, delayed, or the car will not start?

Name: _____

Phone: _____

What I can ask this person to do: _____

Anything they need to know before an emergency: _____

2. PRACTICAL PERSON

Who can do a concrete task such as groceries, school pickup, laundry, dinner, errands, or sitting through an activity?

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Tasks this person could realistically help with: _____

A small recurring task I could ask for: _____

3. LISTENING PERSON

Who can hear "Today was awful" without turning your private life into family gossip or trying to fix everything?

Name: _____

Phone: _____

What makes this person safe to talk to: _____

What I need from them when I call: _____

4. RESOURCE PERSON

Who can help you navigate systems? This may be a kinship navigator, caseworker, school counselor, pediatrician, support-group leader, attorney/advocate if involved, or another professional connected to your situation.

Name: _____

Role / organization: _____

Phone / email: _____

The first question I need to ask them: _____

MAKE THE BACKUP USABLE

Specific requests are easier to answer than vague requests for “help”

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ASK FOR ONE TASK, NOT “HELP”

Vague: “Let me know if you can help.”

Specific: “Can you pick them up Thursday at 4:00?”

- Can you bring dinner on _____ at _____?
- Can you do school pickup on _____?
- Can you sit with them for _____ hours on _____?
- Can you help me make this phone call / understand this form on _____?
- Can you take care of _____ once a week / once a month?

MY ONE SPECIFIC ASK THIS WEEK

PUT ONE SMALL BREAK ON THE CALENDAR

A break does not have to be a vacation. Ninety quiet minutes can count.

- A quiet grocery run.
- Coffee with another adult.
- A haircut or appointment without rushing.
- A nap.
- A walk.
- Errands alone.
- Sitting somewhere quiet with nobody asking you for a charger.

My next small break: _____

Date / time: _____

Who or what makes it possible: _____

IF ONE CIRCLE IS EMPTY

Start with systems, not shame. Ask the people already connected to the child or your community what support exists.

- School or school counselor
- Caseworker or placement worker, if one is involved
- Kinship navigator / grandfamily program
- County or local family services
- Caregiver or support group
- Faith or community organization
- Medical provider or social worker, when appropriate

EMERGENCY INFO CARD

A quick-reference page for the backup person who may need to step in

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Keep this page secure. Share only the information a backup caregiver is authorized to have and actually needs.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION TO PREPARE	
Your phone number	
Emergency contact	
Known allergies	
Medications / instructions, when appropriate	
School / pickup information	
Who to call if you cannot be reached	

If the child's placement, guardianship, foster-care arrangement, or other legal situation has rules about who may supervise, transport, travel with, or provide respite for the child, verify those rules before using a backup caregiver.

GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. Requirements differ by caregiving arrangement and location.