

EPIC `OHANA, INC.

EPIC `Ohana, Inc. is a non-profit organization.

EPIC is not a part of Child Welfare Services (CWS). Our job is to organize and facilitate `Ohana Conferences, Youth Circles, `Ohana Finding and `Ohana Connections. EPIC helps families and CWS talk, plan, and make decisions.

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Mission Statement

Families are the foundation of our community, and their well-being is inextricably linked to the health and prosperity of the community, state, and nation. EPIC works to strengthen `ohana and enhance the welfare of children and youth through transformative processes that are respectful, collaborative, and solution-oriented.

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EPIC
`OHANA, INC.

E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE

“Helping Hawai`i’s Foster Youth
plan their future”

Youth Circle

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EPIC
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E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE

YOUTH CIRCLE ELIGIBILITY

The Youth Circle Program serves current and former foster youth in Hawaii. The program provides a group process for youth to celebrate their emancipation from foster care and to assist them in planning for their independence. DHS provides funding for youth aged 16 through 26 who are in foster care or who are receiving DHS higher education benefits.

PRE-CIRCLE MEETING OR PHONE CALL

After a youth's case is referred to the EPIC office for a Youth Circle, a facilitator is assigned. The facilitator will arrange an in-person meeting or phone call to explain the purpose of the Youth Circle and to offer it to the youth.

E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE IS YOUTH DRIVEN

The Youth Circle is a voluntary process. The youth decides whether or not to have a Youth Circle. The youth will determine the following: who is invited, how the Circle will be opened, what type of food and drink to be served, and, at the conclusion of the Circle, what the plan for independence will be.

E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE IS SOLUTION-FOCUSED

A Youth Circle is solution-focused and optimistic. The Circle focuses on hopes and dreams for the future and how the youth's goals may be attained. Having at least one reliable, permanent relationship in a youth's life is crucial to their continued growth and success. The Youth Circle helps the youth identify family, friends, mentors or others who will provide them a lifetime support system. The Circle assists the youth and this support team to think through the multiple life decisions the youth needs to consider so that he or she will have a reliable transition plan when exiting from foster care.

WHO WILL BE THERE?

The youth works with the facilitator to develop a list of supporters to invite to the Circle: friends, family, the social worker, the guardian ad-litem, teachers, counselors, service providers, and other support people the youth identifies. Case managers and GALs will be invited.

HOW CAN THE YOUTH PREPARE FOR A CIRCLE?

- 1) Think of at least five (5) goals for the future: both short and long-term goals.
- 2) Prepare an "opening" for the Circle (i.e. a poem, song, prayer, words of inspiration, etc.)
- 3) Recall some of his/her proudest accomplishments to share in the Circle.

WHAT KIND OF DECISIONS WILL BE MADE?

The youth and Circle participants will generate options for housing, education, finances, employment, documents (i.e., birth certificate, social security card, etc.), transportation, and physical and emotional health. The youth will choose the plan to pursue and the person or individuals who will assist with the implementation of that plan. A summary of the Transition Plan will be provided to the youth and the participants shortly after the Circle is held.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Youth Circles usually take between 2 and 3 hours.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?

EPIC will provide a budget for food and drink for each Circle. The youth selects the type of food and drink they would like served.

‘OHANA FINDING

‘Ohana Finding supports all EPIC ‘Ohana programs. This service includes an extensive search for family members and other kinship support for children and youth entering foster care or who have lost connections with family while in foster care.

DO YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please refer to EPIC ‘Ohana, Inc. contact information.

E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE MODEL

Welcome & Opening – If the youth does not have an opening, the participants give silent thanks to a person who helped them become who they are today.

Introductions – Everyone states their name and relationship to the youth.

Purpose and Guidelines – To assist the youth in developing a transition plan for their future independence. Participants speak one at a time, keep their comments positive, and respect confidentiality laws.

Youth is asked – “What is something you are proud of that you’ve accomplished and you’d like to share?”

Youth’s Strengths – Each person shares strengths observed in the youth.

Youth Describes Their Goals – Short and long-term goals are identified by the youth.

Group Brainstorms Resources – Participants generate resources for the youth.

Youth Private Time – A break is taken and food is provided while the youth selects a Transition Plan. The youth may ask anyone in the Circle for assistance during the selection process.

Youth’s Presentation of Transition Plan – The youth presents the Transition Plan to the Circle participants.

Volunteers and Timelines Established – Participants volunteer to help the youth carry out the plan. Timelines are established and dates are set for completion.

Supporters – A support system is identified by the youth.

Follow-Up Circle Date – A date for a follow-up Circle is selected.

Circle Closing – Participants provide words of encouragement for the youth.

