

Circle of Friends

Homework handout for understanding closeness, trust, and healthy friendship

1 Inner circle

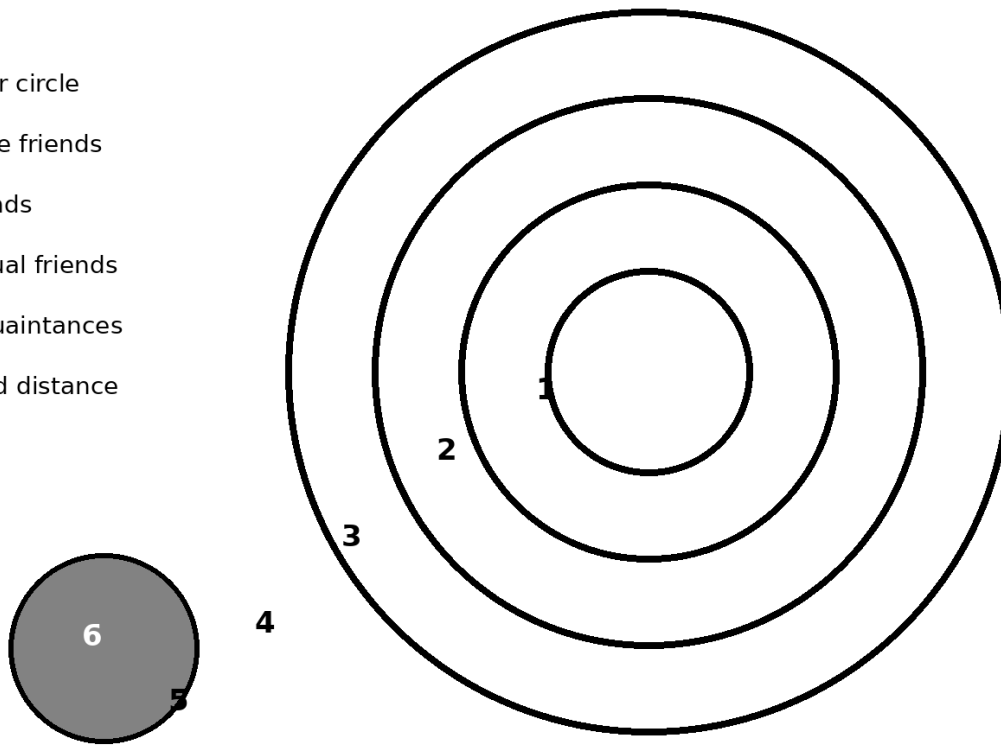
2 Close friends

3 Friends

4 Casual friends

5 Acquaintances

6 Need distance



You can write names directly on this map or use the worksheet pages later in the packet.

How to use this activity

- Write initials, first names, or relationship roles in the circles on the diagram or in the worksheet pages that follow.
- Sort people based on trust, emotional safety, consistency, mutual care, and how much access they should have to your inner life.
- Not every person belongs in the center. Different relationships can be good while still belonging in different circles.
- This is about your current reality, not who you wish someone would be.

What Each Circle Means

Circle 1 - Inner Circle / Best Friends

These are the people you trust deeply. You feel emotionally safe with them. They know the real you, and they have earned access to your vulnerable thoughts and feelings.

- I can be honest and real with this person.
- They are dependable in hard moments.
- The relationship feels mutual, safe, and respectful.

Circle 2 - Close Friends

These are people you care about a lot and feel connected to, but they may not be your deepest or most relied-on relationships.

- There is trust and warmth.
- I would share meaningful parts of my life with them.
- They matter to me, even if the relationship is not my most intimate one.

Circle 3 - Friends / Fun Friends

These are people you enjoy, but the friendship is lighter, more activity-based, or less emotionally deep.

- We enjoy time together.
- The relationship may be built around shared settings or interests.
- I like them, but I do not share everything with them.

Circle 4 - Casual Friends / Community People

These are friendly, familiar people in your life such as neighbors, coworkers, parents from activities, church contacts, or other community connections.

- The relationship is positive but limited.
- We may chat, help each other, or see each other regularly.
- They are not part of my inner emotional world.

Circle 5 - Acquaintances

These are people you know lightly. There is recognition and politeness, but very little closeness or trust.

- We may know each other by name.
- We interact occasionally or in specific places.
- There is little expectation of emotional support.

Circle 6 - People I Need Distance From

This circle is for people who may be unsafe, draining, manipulative, invasive, disrespectful, or simply not healthy to keep close right now.

- I need stronger boundaries here.
- This person may leave me feeling anxious, confused, used, or emotionally worn out.
- Distance does not make me cruel; it may make me wise.

How to Decide Where Someone Belongs

Questions to ask yourself	Signs of healthy friendship
Do I feel safe being myself with this person?	I feel accepted, not constantly judged or managed.
Can I trust them with personal information?	They respect privacy and do not weaponize vulnerability.
Do they show up consistently?	Their care is not random, confusing, or only convenient for them.
Is the relationship mutual?	Support, effort, and care move both directions over time.
How do I feel after spending time with them?	Mostly grounded, valued, and clearer - not chronically depleted.
Have they earned deeper access?	Closeness grows through behavior, not hope, guilt, or history alone.

Common traps to notice

- Giving inner-circle access to people who have not earned trust.
- Keeping safe people far away because vulnerability feels scary.
- Confusing chemistry, history, or intensity with emotional safety.
- Staying close to someone mainly out of guilt, habit, or fear of conflict.

Reminder: A person can be enjoyable without being trustworthy, and a relationship can matter without belonging in the center.

Worksheet: Sort Your People

Write names, initials, or roles. You do not need to fill every line. Add more on the back if needed.

Circle	Who belongs here right now?
1 - Inner Circle / Best Friends	
2 - Close Friends	
3 - Friends / Fun Friends	
4 - Casual Friends / Community	
5 - Acquaintances	
6 - Need Distance / Boundaries	

Optional prompt: Put a star next to anyone who feels emotionally safe, and a question mark next to relationships you need to think about more.

Reflection Questions

Use the questions below to reflect after you sort your circles.

1. What did you notice as you looked at your circles?

2. Which circle felt easiest to fill? Which felt hardest?

3. Are there people who currently have more access to you than they have earned?

4. Are there safe people you keep farther away than you really want to?

5. What qualities help someone move toward a closer circle?

6. What behaviors make trust shrink or disappear for you?

7. Which relationship may need a clearer boundary right now?

8. What is one healthy friendship you would like to strengthen this week?

Closing thought

Healthy friendship is not about putting everyone in the center. It is about matching closeness with trust, safety, and mutual care.

