

# Learning Circle



**Develop and maintain positive permanent connections between youth and caring adults**



# Youth Permanency

## Permanency means:

- Is safe and meant to last a lifetime;
- Offers the legal rights and social status of full family membership;
- Provides for physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual well-being;
- Assures lifelong connections to extended family, siblings, other significant adults, family history and traditions, race and ethnic heritage, culture, religion and language.

*Source: A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood. April 2005.*

## Elements of Youth Permanency

- The involvement of the youth as a participant or leader in the process;
- A permanent connection with at least one committed adult who provides a safe, stable and secure parenting relationship, love, unconditional commitment, lifelong support, a legal relationship if possible;
- The opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons, including siblings.

*Source: Models Programs on Youth Permanency. California Permanency Project and California Permanency for Youth Task Force.*

**Achieving permanency outcomes** requires the optimal balance of physical, emotional/relational, legal and cultural dimensions of permanency within every youth's array of relationships.

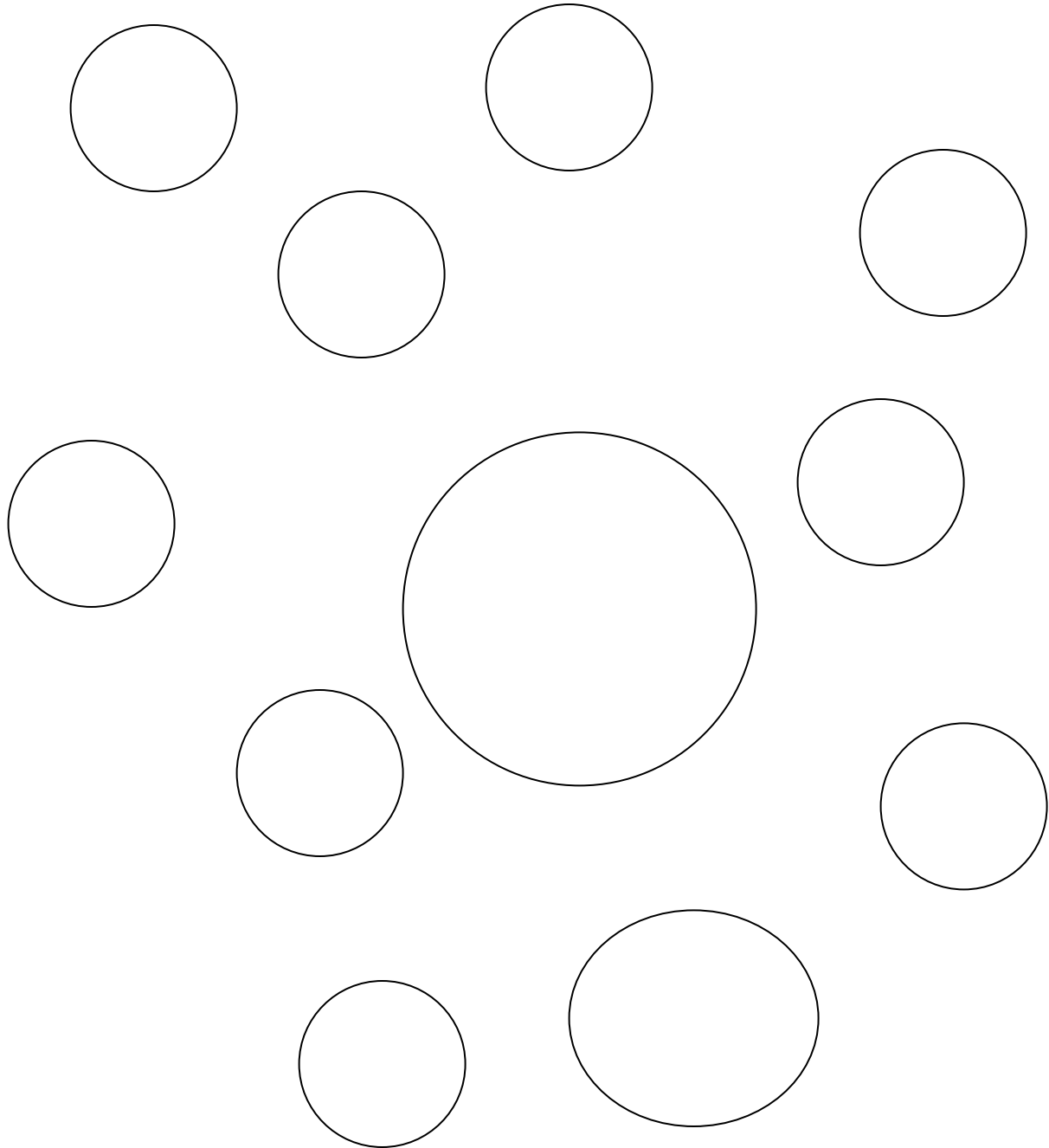
- Physical permanency relates to a safe and stable living environment.
- Emotional/relational permanency relates to the primary attachments, family and other significant relationships that offer trust and reciprocity.
- Legal permanency relates to the rights and benefits of a secure legal and social family status.
- Cultural permanency relates to a continuous connection to family, tradition, race, ethnicity, culture, language and religion.

*Source: A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood. April 2005.*

# Worksheet: Influential People

List the five most influential people in your life:	List three of their qualities:

# MY ECO-MAP



# Six Steps for Family Finding

- **Step One: Setting the Stage:** Step one lays the foundation by examining and recognizing the need for permanency. The social worker and supervisor consider clinical issues that may arise for them, analyze the youth's network and safety considerations, and begin to create the youth's permanence team.
- **Step Two: Discovery:** The social worker uses all available means to (1) find as many relatives and important adults and as much information as possible, (2) complete a family tree to show the youth and family, and (3) prepare for the initial call or visit. After the visit, he/she keeps the youth and others informed of the results and begins engagement with family within one week of discovery.

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (Mormon Church)  
[www.genealogytoday.com](http://www.genealogytoday.com)  
[www.people-finder.com](http://www.people-finder.com)  
[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)  
[www.obituary.com](http://www.obituary.com) (information on deceased relatives)  
[www.peopleprofileusa.com](http://www.peopleprofileusa.com)  
[www.usatrace.com](http://www.usatrace.com) (search by name or Social Security number)  
[www.people-data.com](http://www.people-data.com)  
[www.reunitetonight.com](http://www.reunitetonight.com)  
[www.myfamily.com](http://www.myfamily.com)  
[www.intelius.com](http://www.intelius.com)  
[www.death-records.net/ssdi](http://www.death-records.net/ssdi) (Social Security Death Index)  
[www.ussearch.com](http://www.ussearch.com)  
[www.merlin.com](http://www.merlin.com)

- **Step Three: Engagement:** This step requires sensitivity to each family member's needs, as well as to everyone's safety and discussion of participants' feelings, roles and expectations. Debriefing after the meeting should occur with the youth, family members, team members, caregivers, and other professionals. Assure that permissions and background checks have not been overlooked.
- **Step Four: Exploration and Planning:** In step four, the team and the social worker as a team member, design how the relationship with the youth will develop, outline the youth's needs, and consider and assess permanency options and how to support them.
- **Step Five: Decision Making and Evaluation:** In step five, the team finds a permanent family for the youth and develops a realistic plan for supporting and sustaining that relationship, taking into account the

inevitable problems that will arise. The team is now taking responsibility for the youth's success, whereas the social worker acts as a facilitator, raising questions to help the team assess solutions and consider challenges.

- **Step Six: Sustaining the Relationship(s):** To assure long term success, the youth, family and team have developed plans to resolve current and future legal, financial and safety needs. They understand how to support each other and how to locate additional resources when or if necessary.

# Remembered People Chart

<b>Age</b>						
<b>Where I lived</b>						
<b>Who I remember</b>						
<b>What I'd like to do</b>						

Source: Adolescents and Families For Life A Toolkit for Supervisors developed by Robert G. Lewis and Maureen S. Heffernan. April 2000.