



Family Support Link

Supporting families affected by drug or alcohol use

Circle Of Control

Things I CAN'T control

*Whether they use
substances*

Things I can INFLUENCE

*Whether people respect
my boundaries*

Things I CAN control

*How I take care of
myself*

What is the Circle of Control?

The Circle of Control is a simple tool that helps us focus our energy on what we *can* control, rather than what we *can't*. When someone else's substance use impacts our life, it's easy to feel overwhelmed, stuck, responsible or out of control. This tool helps separate what is within our control and what is not so that we can make start to regain a sense of control in our lives.

Things we CAN control

These are things fully within our control. Our choices, reactions, boundaries and self care. We can control how we respond, how we look after ourselves and what we think is okay for us.

Things we can INFLUENCE

These are things that we have some impact on, but not full control over. This can involve things like how other people respond to our boundaries. It is important to remember we can control our efforts in this circle, but not necessarily outcomes.

Things we CAN'T control

These are things that are outside of our control. Another persons substance use, their choices , relapses. Letting go of control here can help reduce exhaustion and guilt.

What next?

When things feel difficult, pause and ask. Which circle does this fit in? If it's outside of your control, practice letting go. If it's in your influence remember you do not have full control. If it's in your control, take action, especially around your wellbeing and safety.