



# The Ring Theory

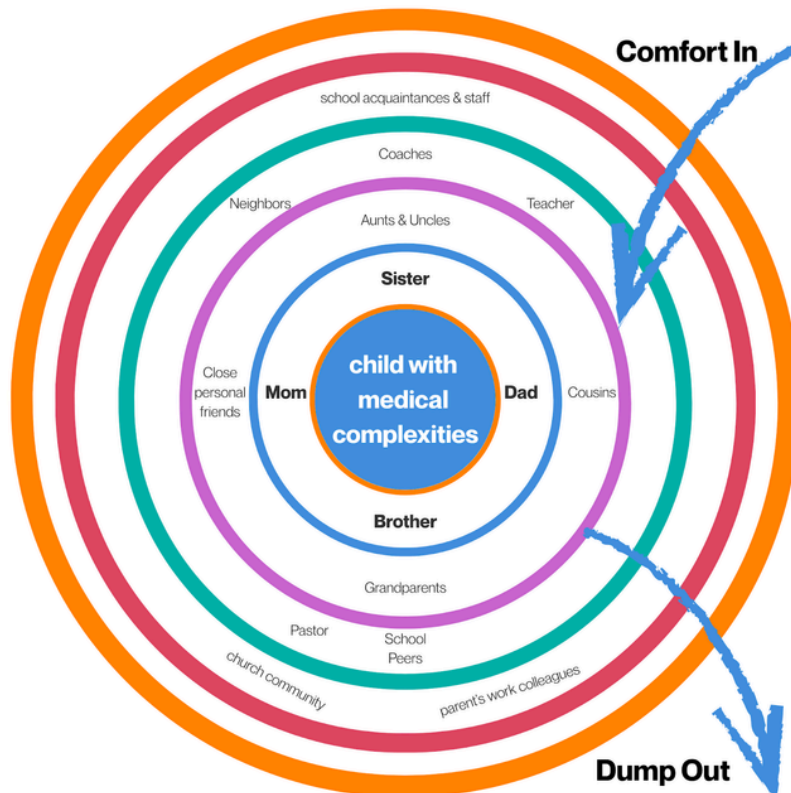
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One helpful approach easily illustrates who can/should support others during times of crisis when looking at a person's network of support. Psychologists Susan Silk and Barry Goldman suggested a simple exercise in their 2013 article, "How Not to Say the Wrong Thing," called the Ring Theory. The theory follows a simple principle: "comfort in, dump out."

Here's how to apply it:

1. Draw a small circle and write the name of the child with the diagnosis inside.
2. Draw a larger circle around it and write the names of those closest to the child—usually immediate family members such as parents/guardians and siblings.
3. Continue drawing outward rings, placing people based on their closeness to the child. The next layer out might include close extended family and best friends.
4. Keep drawing circles outward as you move further out into the network of support.

This exercise helps clarify where you stand in that person's support network to avoid "dumping" additional emotional weight in the wrong direction. During a highly emotional situation, it is normal to want to vent or talk about your feelings. It is imperative that you only do so with someone who is in your ring or outward. Adding stress and extra feelings to those closest to the situation only makes their burdens higher.



# Build Your Ring

