



Brandt - Bold. Proactive. Effective.

Those words might be some of the best adjectives to describe Linda Brandt, the professional health promotion specialist, Linda Brandt, the Lean In advocate —and maybe even Linda Brandt, the person! Those words might also best describe Brandt’s deep appreciation for the free use of the [Peer Support Circles](#) (PSC) now being offered by Authenticity Consulting founders, Carter and Teri McNamara and associates.

Brandt has successfully used the support circles concept with worksite wellness coordinators in Hennepin County. She also used circles in Lean In groups aimed at increasing gender equity.

“People rarely get listened to with someone’s full attention at work or in their personal lives, I’ve found,” Brandt explains. “But I’ve discovered that anyone using support circles – even if just 2 hours a month for 8 months -- provides lots of benefits and makes a difference.”

Brandt believes the best benefits the support circles offer are:

- 1) **Encouraging participants to take ownership of their decisions and actions personally and professionally.**
- 2) **Providing a support system to improve self and work.**
- 3) **Helping people set expectations for what is required of them.**
- 4) **Helping them establish honest evaluations of their roles, challenges and outcomes.**

“The McNamara’s have generously given us free use of Peer Support Circles, so all of us should help spread their use during this intense period where we have a global pandemic, and social unrest over chronic racial and socio-economic issues,” she says.

“People need as much support as they can get during this period.”

Her past experience with the McNamara’s Peer Coaching Circles model involved working with Hennepin County worksite wellness leaders in small groups to provide peer support for major objectives like goal setting, entrepreneurship and improving communication skills. Even though these circles (usually seven people at most) just met monthly for 2 hours, the impact was noticeable: “Leaders got the support they needed because their concerns were heard, and support among group members was strengthened time and again.”

She sees similar results of peer group circles in her years of using them in her Lean In work. Now Brandt welcomes them as a free resource that almost any organization can implement that is looking for ways to connect during COVID-19 and social upheaval: “They help everyone be more strategic, they make people circle ambassadors, and they will help buttress our communities at a time when they really need it.”