Through an Aboriginal Lens

Exploring Career Development and Planning in Canada

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PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. What is your personal level of awareness regarding key issues currently facing Aboriginal peoples in Canada?
2. What historical effects have Canadian legislation and policies had on Aboriginal peoples in Canada?
3. What type of career resources and supports are you aware of that are designed specifically for Aboriginal peoples?

Introduction

We hold it within our capacity to ensure that the next generation of Aboriginal Canadians become a generation of real and lasting change, the generation that stays in school, the generation that is given the tools to succeed, the generation that breaks the cycle of poverty, that writes the great music, that paints the great paintings, that discovers the secrets of science and builds the great companies. That's what this is all about.
— Excerpt from a speech delivered by former Prime Minister Paul Martin at the Inclusion Works '10 Conference (Aboriginal Human Resource Council, 2010, p. 6)

In Canada, career development and planning programs must be poised to respond to individuals' employment needs and current labour market changes. It is important to recognize that individuals have unique interests and sociocultural backgrounds.

Career development and planning programs have, and will continue to play, an important role in providing people with customized and **culturally congruent resources** that: (a) aid in the school-to-workplace transition, and (b) prepare current and future workers to proactively respond to employers' needs. For Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the concepts of career development and education, which includes formal Western-based education and **localized knowledge**, are integral parts of both individual and societal change.

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 1,400,685 Canadians identified themselves as Aboriginal (i.e., self-identified as being First Nations, Métis, or Inuit). This represented 4.3% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2013). From 2006 to 2011, the Aboriginal population increased by 20.1%, while the non-Aboriginal population grew by 5.2% (Statistics Canada, 2013). Aboriginal peoples represent the fastest-growing population in Canada. Though challenges (e.g., low labour force representation, socioeconomic hardships, discrimination, and low educational attainment) do exist for Aboriginal people in the labour market, strengths-based career development and planning strategies can greatly assist in meeting their personal career needs in a culturally congruent manner. The potential exists for Aboriginal peoples to provide the next generation of **human capital** in Canada.

We start the chapter by establishing the Aboriginal context for understanding career development and planning in Canada. This includes defining Aboriginal peoples and describing their cultural identities. (For a historical perspective on the legislation affecting Aboriginal peoples in Canada, see Appendix C). We then highlight major challenges that impact and influence career development and planning. Next, we focus on the strengths that exist — emphasizing opportunities for bringing together both traditional and Western ways of understanding the career journey. Finally, we examine career development strategies that can aid career practitioners, educators, and employers in effectively working with various groups in the Aboriginal population. Brief case study overviews and Aboriginal-specific career development resources are provided at the end of the chapter.

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Define the various groups that comprise the Aboriginal population in Canada.
2. Identify major challenges that affect Aboriginal peoples in advancing their career development and planning endeavours.
3. Explore the relationship between Aboriginal traditions, strengths, and career identity.
4. Describe culturally congruent career development strategies for Aboriginal peoples.

The Cultural Context:
Aboriginal Identities, Values, and Ways of Knowing

The number of Aboriginal persons residing in **urban** areas in Canada continues to grow. In 2006, 54% of the Aboriginal population in Canada lived in urban areas — an increase from 50% in 1996, with Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Saskatoon, and Regina having the largest number (Statistics Canada, 2008).

This is a young population. According to 2011 National Household Survey data (see Table 1), the median age of individuals who identified themselves as Aboriginal was 28 years, compared to 41 years for non-Aboriginal people. In 2011, 46% of the Aboriginal population in Canada consisted of children and youth aged 24 years or younger, compared with 29.5% of the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2013). For years, policy makers have grappled with the increase in the number of Aboriginal youth, as many reserves in remote areas face high rates of school dropout and unemployment.

2011 NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY	ABORIGINAL	NON-ABORIGINAL
Median age	28	41
Younger than 24	46%	29.5%

Table 1: Age Distribution of Aboriginal Peoples 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Being of Aboriginal ancestry ourselves, the authors can affirm that traditional ways of knowing are of equal weight and complement non-Aboriginal (or Western) counselling and development practices. Also, we recognize the diversity of **socio-cultural values** and worldview perspectives that exist across Canada's Aboriginal population of First Nations (Status and Non-Status Indians), Métis, and Inuit: Aboriginal people in these sub-groups do have distinct cultural perspectives and beliefs relative to their particular family lineage and community connections.

Unless specified, the information and resources presented in this chapter can be applied generally to all Aboriginal people of Canada. Finally, the authors have endeavoured to provide a snapshot of the diverse range of practices and associated case study briefs of career development and planning "in action." However, this is not an exhaustive list of Aboriginal resources.

Defining the Aboriginal Population

First Nations

They are the First Peoples of Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Status (or registered) Indians are individuals who are registered according to the Indian Act

and are members of a band (i.e., First Nations community). Status Indians receive supports and related services (e.g., housing and financial assistance for postsecondary education) from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). Non-Status Indians are individuals who are not recognized as Indians under the Indian Act.

At present, there are over 600 First Nations communities in Canada representing more than 50 Nations and language groups (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). A smaller proportion of First Nations people live on a **reserve** (38%) than off-reserve (62%) according to the 2011 National Household Survey.

Métis

Métis people are individuals possessing both First Nations and European ancestry and whose homeland encompasses parts of present-day Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (Ahearn, 2005; Métis National Council, 2013). Historically, Métis people were "boundary walkers" and "natural negotiators" who worked with both European settlers and First Nations people and typically through the Hudson's Bay Company. As interracial marriages flourished between First Nations and Europeans, a distinct culture of the Métis people emerged that was a fusion of French, English, and First Nations influences. Métis people were important players in opening Western North America to exploration, the fur trade, and European settlements. The traditional language spoken by Métis people is Michif (Métis National Council, 2013). In 2006, the fastest growing Aboriginal group in Canada was the Métis (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Inuit

The Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Canada's Arctic who reside mainly in Northern Labrador (Nunatsiavut), Northern Québec (Nunavik), Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories. These geographic areas comprise approximately 40% of Canada's total land mass (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2012). The traditional language of Inuit people is Inuktitut. The Inuit population had a median age of 23 years, lower than the median of 28 for all three Aboriginal groups (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Honouring Aboriginal Cultures and Values

Aboriginal Engagement in Economic and Career Development

Aboriginal engagement in local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national economies is not a recent phenomenon. Wild harvesting, gathering, hunting, fishing, forestry, entrepreneurship, and trading have and continue to be primary economic development activities and career avenues for many Aboriginal communities.

Traditional economic and career activities are mainly aimed at satisfying important social, cultural, and nutritional needs, as well as the economic needs of families, households, and communities (Nuttall, 2005).

In general, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have worldviews that embrace a holistic approach to economic and career development. In contrast to a strictly profit-driven approach to life, the Aboriginal holistic approach respects sociocultural, spiritual, and ecological interests alongside the financial drivers in local Aboriginal communities (e.g., First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative, 2007). Successful economic and career development means preserving traditional cultural values, such as the interconnectedness of all living things, and sustainability for future generations. This may mean that some Aboriginal communities will forfeit short-term monetary gain for sociocultural interests to move ahead with a holistic approach to economic and career advancement.

Aboriginal Identities

James Frideres (1998) in *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* described three concepts of **Aboriginal identity**.

- Traditional Aboriginal people are those who adhere to and are guided by the teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers in their communities.
- Non-traditional Aboriginal people are those individuals who either align their behaviours, beliefs and lifestyles to mainstream culture or who feel displaced or alienated from their Aboriginal ancestry.
- Neo-traditional Aboriginal people are those who integrate their traditional practices with mainstream beliefs.

Cultural Values

In general, cultural values represent guiding principles, ideals, aspirations, and beliefs that serve as a foundation as to how Aboriginal people live and work in their communities. Cultural values often manifest themselves in local traditions, governance, language, institutions, and protocols that are major pillars in Aboriginal society. There is often a close relationship between knowing one's Aboriginal cultural values and leading a healthy lifestyle — connecting with one's values and traditional lands as a means of managing physical, mental, and spiritual ailments such as intergenerational trauma due to **colonization**, addiction, and sociocultural disruption (Duran, 2006; France, McCormick & Rodriguez, 2004; Stewart, Reeves, Mohanty, & Syrette, 2011). Some key Aboriginal cultural values include, but are not limited to those described below:

- *Respect for the teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers*
  The traditional teachings (shared through observations, stories, cere-
  monies, and prayers) of Elders and Knowledge Keepers reflect local and
  culturally specific knowledge that Aboriginal people pass on from one
  generation to the next. Traditional teachings aid in developing world-
  view perspectives on social, physical/spiritual issues, and practices, all of
  which serve as core aspects of developing one's self-identity. Traditional
  knowledge is localized to a given culture or society and tends to be closely
  linked to survival. It often provides a basis for local decision making in
  such areas as education, and health and wellness. (Battiste & Henderson,
  2000; Sillitoe, 2002a, 2002b)
- *Importance of listening*
  Active listening involves awareness and recognition of historical teach-
  ings from previous generations. The stories, teachings, and songs are often
  fundamental aspects of one's lifestyle and are an integral part of the oral
  tradition by which values, ideals, and knowledge are shared in households
  and communities.
- *Connectedness of all living things*
  In general, the Aboriginal peoples are viewed as the caretakers of the
  land, water, air, and other living beings and hold the belief that every-
  thing has spirit. There exists interdependence and interrelationships
  among all people and the environment. Coupled with this value, there is
  recognition that group needs prevail over individual ones to maintain this
  balance and harmony (France et al., 2004).
- *The role of family*
  For many Aboriginal individuals, the connection to family, including
  extended family, is important in career development and planning. Social
  support is not limited to direct connections by blood and ancestral link-
  ages; it also includes acceptance, encouragement, reassurance, and vali-
  dation by all those in the community. An individual's family shapes and
  influences identity development and lays the groundwork for socialization
  and emotional support.

By taking these worldviews and shared interests into consideration, one can
recognize the need to include and respect local cultures, languages, aspirations, tra-
ditions, and history for each of the three Aboriginal peoples and their respective
communities. Doing so will effectively identify economic and career development
needs when designing collaborative initiatives with strategic partners (i.e., other
Aboriginal communities and organizations; municipal, provincial, territorial, and
federal governments; academia; and industry).

Societal and Organizational Challenges: Current Barriers to Career Development

Career development is a central component to building a sustainable, local, and dedicated Aboriginal workforce. For Aboriginal communities, improved career and economic development prospects not only generate increased income in local communities but also promote greater independence and improved quality of life (Hanselmann, 2003; Mendelson, 2004; Papillon & Cosentino, 2004). However, in spite of the demographic strengths noted earlier of a young and growing Aboriginal population, nearly intractable societal and economic challenges exist. Problems of high unemployment rates, low wages, and low educational attainment are pervasive. Further, there is a serious lack of culturally congruent workplace resources pertaining to career development and employment.

Unemployment and Labour Force Representation

Based on 2006 Census data, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2010) reported that the national rate of unemployment for Aboriginal people in Canada was 14.8%; for non-Aboriginal people the rate was 6.1% (see Table 2). Aboriginal youth between the ages of 15 to 24 had unemployment rates ranging from 12% to over 20% depending on the provincial or territorial location. In comparison, the average unemployment rate for non-Aboriginal youth in Canada was 6%. Therefore, Aboriginal youth are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The Government of Canada has viewed Aboriginal unemployment as a major concern. In response, equity policies have been adopted to address the recruitment, development, and retention of Aboriginal workers; however, these have not been enough to address this systemic problem (Dwyer, 2003).

2006 EMPLOYMENT DATA	ABORIGINAL	NON-ABORIGINAL
National rate of unemployment (2006)	14.8%	6.1%
Ages 15 to 24 (2006)	12 to 20%	6%
Participation in workforce (2010)	62.6%	67.1%
Employed or seeking employment ages 15 to 24 (2010)	57%	64.8%

Table 2: Aboriginal Employment Data (HRSDC, 2006).

After the Canadian labour market downturn in the fall of 2008, employment declined by 7% for Aboriginal people in 2009 and 2010 — particularly in private

sector occupations such as trades, transport, sales, and manufacturing. In 2010, 62.6% of the Aboriginal population participated in the labour force, compared to 67.1% of the non-Aboriginal population. In that same year, 57.0% of Aboriginal youth (ages 15 to 24 years) were either employed or seeking employment compared to 64.8% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The labour market downturn coupled with systemic low labour force representation by Aboriginal people further widened the socioeconomic gap (e.g., employment rates, education levels, etc.) between Canada's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations (Usalcas, 2011).

Socioeconomic Hardships

In 2005, Aboriginal people between 25 and 54 years of age earned a median income of $22,366.00 per year compared to the Canadian median income of $33,394.00 (Statistics Canada, 2012). As shown in Figure 1, median income for the Aboriginal sub-groups was: Métis at $27,728.00, Inuit at $24,782.00, and First Nations at $19,114.00. Off-reserve First Nations people had a median income of approximately $22,500.00, while on-reserve First Nations people earned a median income of just over $14,000.00 (Statistics Canada, 2012).
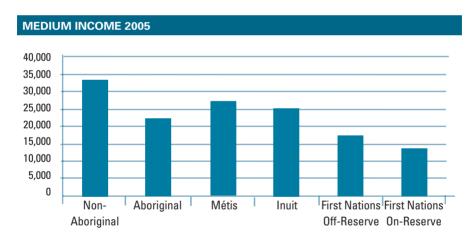

Figure 1: Median Income for Aboriginal Peoples 2005 (Statistics Canada, 2012).

The obstacles to the overall economic and career development success of Aboriginal people go well beyond unemployment to include overcrowding, lack of affordable housing, poverty, physical and mental health problems, high suicide rates, historical and intergenerational trauma (e.g., the Indian Residential School Programs), and substance abuse (Government of Canada, 1996; Kunin, 2009; St. Germain and Sibbeston, 2007). According to the **Treaty** Commission in British

Columbia, "Life under the Indian Act has meant no life at all. They are the casualties of marginalization and neglect. Many have died too young" (BC Treaty Commission, 2007, p. 13).

Cultural Losses

Another major challenge in advancing career development and planning initiatives that are culturally congruent is that much of the localized knowledge that remains in Aboriginal communities is held by a small number of people (typically Elders) and is in jeopardy of being lost forever (First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, 2010). Because of the gradual loss of traditional languages and localized knowledge in Aboriginal communities due to colonization and assimilation initiatives, there has been less sharing of traditional knowledge with younger generations. As localized knowledge tends to be passed down orally from generation to generation, there is a risk of this knowledge source becoming extinct if pertinent information, strategies, and skills are not shared and subsequently documented with each younger generation (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). For example, according to the 2006 Census,

> (W)hile the Inuktitut language remains strong overall (69% of Inuit could speak Inuktitut), knowledge and use are declining. Inuit are less likely to speak it as their main language at home — 50% in 2006 down from 58% in 1996. In addition, smaller percentages of Inuit are reporting Inuktitut as their mother tongue and a declining percentage can speak it well enough to have a conversation. (Statistics Canada, 2008, p. 7)

Of those Aboriginal communities who are carrying out traditional knowledge research in order to protect and revitalize their distinct languages and cultural practices, there is growing concern about intellectual property of local knowledge — ownership of exclusive rights of cultural practices, resources, and property. Historically, cultural property (including traditional knowledge) has been taken from Aboriginal people without informed consent or compensation. In addition, there is concern that research in Aboriginal communities may lead to commodifying and revealing traditional knowledge to those who could potentially misuse this cultural property (Battiste & Henderson, 2000).

Education

Thomas Berger (2006) stated that "you can't speak of employment without speaking of education" (p. 47). Education levels for Aboriginal people remain below that of non-Aboriginal people, particularly for higher knowledge and skill-based occupations. Wilson and MacDonald (2010) identified a very large gap by which only 8% of

Aboriginal people obtained an undergraduate or higher degree compared with 23% of non-Aboriginals. Education and employment are directly related; as the amount of education people have increases, so do their opportunities for employment (Betz, 2006). Given this relationship, the statistics regarding educational attainment for Aboriginal people as a whole in Canada do not bode well for their career attainment and success.

As shown in Table 3, the 2006 Census shows that 34% of Aboriginal people aged 20 years and older had not graduated from secondary school, and for those who lived on a reserve, 50% of the students did not finish high school (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

The gap in university graduates is also widening. In 2001, 6% of Aboriginal individuals aged 25 to 64 completed some form of university education compared to 20% of the non-Aboriginal population. Both percentages were higher in 2006, but Aboriginal grew only to 8% and non-Aborginal rose to 23%. (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

EDUCATION 2006	ABORIGINAL	NON-ABORIGINAL
Had not graduated from secondary school (25 to 64 years and older)	34%	15%
Postsecondary graduates (trade, diploma, degree)	44%	61%
Undergraduate university degree or higher	8%	23%

Table 3: Education Rates in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

These statistics reflect the limited access to education and the consequent limitations for career development and career outcomes. Battiste (1998) explains this disparity in education as resulting from the colonial experience, which has left generations of Aboriginal people and communities with multiple healing issues, limited access to health care and education, and in a state of economic marginalization.

Organizational Development

Some employers, practitioners, and educators continue to have difficulty working with Aboriginal people in a culturally congruent manner (i.e., acknowledging and respecting various Aboriginal cultures and traditions in relation to career development and planning). Findings from O'Donnell and Ballardin (2006) pointed to inadequate access to career-planning information (e.g., types of careers available in the public and private sectors, current job vacancies, and key skills needed in today's labour market) as a major obstacle for Aboriginal job seekers. More likely than not,

employers also lack adequate resources and support networks to make Aboriginal employees feel welcomed and included in the workplace.

In addition to adopting postsecondary training, workshops, and adult education training programs, Aboriginal communities need to build organizational capacity at the local level. This means empowering the communities in developing core competencies, organizational structures, and incentives that make effective use of skills in promoting the concepts of economic and career development (Kumar, 2006). If organizations do not have the capacity to effectively use the skills developed by Aboriginal peoples, the newly acquired skills tend to disappear.

Cross-Cultural Relations

Researchers such as Gone (2004) have suggested that employing a Western paradigm is a form of colonial oppression and discrimination whereby Western ideologies and related points of view are imposed on Aboriginal peoples rather than integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into various facets of life (e.g., economic, employment and career development). Although there has been some legislative action (in the areas of human rights, employment standards and employment equity) and accompanying workplace policies and procedures have been implemented in various work settings, discrimination continues to exist in today's society. Discrimination often manifests itself in overt racism, ignorance of customs and practices, and stereotyping or racial profiling based on misinterpretations of Aboriginal identities, lifestyles, and cultural values.

One example is the perception that Aboriginal people are not productive members of Canada's economy and labour force. In 2001, according to the Canadian Labour and Business Council's (CLBC) Viewpoints Survey, only 13% of business leaders and 21% of labour leaders surveyed thought that hiring more Aboriginal workers would help the company meet skill and labour shortages. These national findings appear to reflect a lack of awareness regarding Aboriginal people's skills and an unfavourable view by employers of Aboriginal people's workforce capabilities (Canadian Labour and Business Council, 2001; Lamontagne, 2004).

According to Stewart and colleagues (2011), many young people experience discrimination and racism when working outside of the Aboriginal sector. For example, some Aboriginal youth report that they would often hide their true ancestry in order to protect themselves from ill treatment and disparaging remarks, and to gain a sense of emotional and physical safety in their place of work. Others, in university or workplaces, felt they were treated unfairly (i.e., being singled out as the voice of all Aboriginal people, working beyond their job description, or working for unfair wages) due to their identity as an Aboriginal person (Stewart & Reeves 2009; Stewart et al., 2011).

Oteenow Training & Employment Centre

by Priya S. Mani

Oteenow Training and Employment Centre is located in Edmonton, Alberta, and has been serving the community since 1992. The organization offers various employment and training programs to First Nations and Inuit people in Alberta. The mandate of the organization is to help individuals find meaningful work and to become self-reliant. <http://oteenow.com/>

Funding

Limitations on both human capital (i.e., career opportunities) and financial resources create barriers for Aboriginal people to fully engage in economic and career development in Canadian society. Until government policy makers (provincial, federal, and Aboriginal) collectively work together and commit to designing national Aboriginal career development strategies (including linkages to education, economic development, and skills training with multi-year funding models), programs and related curricula will be short term and ineffective and will only aid in widening the socioeconomic divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada.

Career Development Approaches and Supports

Career development requires the same rigour and attention as any other human resources management or organizational development activity. If well managed, career development and planning can deliver the right people with the right competencies at the right time, enabling organizations to deliver on their mandate, objectives, and outcomes. Accessing general employment and education supports such as academic and vocational services is not a problem for many Aboriginal youth, especially those residing in urban areas (Stewart & Reeves, 2009; Stewart et al., 2011). However, what does appear to be lacking are employment opportunities, vocational training, and postsecondary supports that are specifically geared towards the needs of Aboriginal youth. Stewart and Reeves (2009) and Stewart et al. (2011) show that while there may be an availability of some employment opportunities and employment programs developed for Aboriginal people, these opportunities remain unknown to many and are therefore inaccessible (especially if there is no access to information and other resources at school).

The career development approaches and supports presented in this section highlight general culturally compatible strategies and customized approaches for various segments of the Aboriginal population in Canada. Though not exhaustive in nature, these approaches and supports begin the process of awareness and recognition, and hopefully implementation of strategies that are congruent with Aboriginal people's career context and needs during their life journey.

Guiding Circles

Guiding Circles is an Aboriginal career tool that blends current career development knowledge with traditional Aboriginal perspectives and values to assist people to discover and value their identity as they craft their life/career journey. Gray Poehnell (Métis), Norm Amundson, and Rod McCormick (Mohawk) authored the initial programs and partnered with the Aboriginal Human Resource Council for publishing and marketing. Since 2003, Gray Poehnell has trained thousands of life/career practitioners in this approach in workshops across Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. His most recent book, *Hope-Filled Engagement*, sets forth the primary concepts and tools of the approach.

SPOTLIGHT: *HOPE-FILLED ENGAGEMENT AND GUIDING CIRCLES*
by Gray Poehnell

Hope-Filled Engagement and Guiding Circles are a positive illustration of the contribution that Aboriginal values and perspectives can bring to the career field. They address many personal and career issues that others are struggling with; many even in the mainstream are looking for practical answers to issues of creativity, spirituality, connectedness, community, values, and life balance. Many people, such as the young, immigrants, the disabled, and even some mainstream, also have difficulty relating to the traditional career approaches. Guiding Circles has been effectively used not only with Aboriginal people in urban and reservation contexts but also with a wide range of people (young and old, the disabled, immigrants, professionals) in a wide range of contexts such as schools, colleges/universities, employment centres, reservations, and correctional institutions. Awareness of the breadth of Hope-Filled Engagement's application can assist in normalizing some of the struggles of Aboriginal peoples while bringing a sense of renewed pride in their own values and culture.

References
- McCormick, R., Amundson, N. E., & Poehnell, G. (2002). *Guiding circles: An Aboriginal guide to finding career paths, Booklet 1: Understanding yourself*. Saskatoon, SK: Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council and Ergon Communications.
- Poehnell, G., Amundson, N., & McCormick, R. (2006). *Guiding circles: An Aboriginal guide to finding career paths, Booklet 2: Finding new possibilities*. Saskatoon, SK: Aboriginal Human Resource Council and Ergon Communications.

In an increasingly diverse world, it is essential that life/career practitioners expand their toolkit of tools and processes to embrace the diversity of people whom they seek to assist. Guiding Circles is an inclusive approach that supplements traditional career development approaches by making careers accessible to people who do not relate well to traditional career processes and language because their life journeys have been different from the traditional mainstream. It is a holistic approach that embraces practical creativity, spirituality, connectedness, community, values, and life balance. Lastly, it is a hope-filled approach that seeks to create an environment of hope, especially for people who believe that they have no hope.

The program has two parts:

1. Step 1, *Understanding Yourself*, assists people in discovering and valuing who they are. People learn to identify and tell their life stories, to do positive focused self-reflection, and to connect their personal discoveries to their world (including families, communities, school, and work).
2. Step 2, *Finding New Possibilities*, utilizes the discoveries from people's life stories to generate and explore realistic career alternatives and then make effective career decisions in association with the significant people in their lives.

Social Networking and Liaising

In today's digital age, social networking via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn offers diversified access to career resources and supports for Aboriginal peoples. By connecting with educators, career specialists, employers, and role models in an online environment, individuals may tap into the hidden job market — establishing contacts and related organizational networks for recruitment and job search purposes.

Offline, Aboriginal-employee networks are typically based on a collaborative and united effort by various parties to (a) identify employment opportunities for Aboriginal job seekers in a particular jurisdiction, (b) develop support systems for Aboriginal employees to meet and share experiences, and/or (c) connect Aboriginal employees and non-Aboriginal employers to discuss methods and strategies for improving recruitment, training, career development, and promotion/advancement opportunities.

Aboriginal Government Employees' Network
Established in 1992, the Aboriginal Government Employees' Network (AGEN) is dedicated to promoting a supportive environment for Aboriginal employees in the workplace and raising awareness about Aboriginal issues. Key activities of AGEN are liaising with provincial government departments and unions, facilitating discussion on barriers to employment in government departments, and providing a support mechanism for Aboriginal employees (Aboriginal Government Employees' Network, 2012a).

Royal Eagles

Since 1990, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) has provided Aboriginal employees with opportunities to establish local networking and mentoring for fellow RBC Aboriginal employees. Royal Eagle members meet as a national group to share best practices and strategies for ensuring that RBC is inclusive and an Aboriginal-friendly workplace. In addition, Royal Eagles mentor Aboriginal youth as part of the Stay-in-School Program, co-ordinate annual celebration activities for National Aboriginal Day (June 21), and support local Aboriginal communities through various outreach initiatives (Royal Bank of Canada, 2012).

Job Autobiography

In a career counselling setting, a job autobiography provides an opportunity for Aboriginal clients to list jobs (paid and volunteer) that they have held. Clients reflect upon why they took the job and why they left, and what they liked and disliked about each job. Through the autobiographical process, career practitioners elicit themes, patterns, implicit values, beliefs, and assumptions in clients' narratives that they are hearing (e.g., enjoys new situations and the influence of pleasing others, etc.). As a career development tool, the job autobiography brings clients' personal experiences to the sessions and enhances their awareness of their decision-making strategies in the career/job arena. Career practitioners interact with their clients to facilitate the storytelling process by clarifying and exploring in-depth areas of significance.

Possible Selves

This technique/approach involves career practitioners working with their clients to discuss their possible selves: (a) what they hope for, (b) what their desired future states are, and (c) what are possible feared future outcomes (Shepard & Quressette, 2010). The possible selves of individuals tend to be based on the available social and cultural roles present in their environment. Possible selves have a concrete impact on how people initiate and structure their actions, both in realizing positive possible selves and in preventing realization of negative possible selves (i.e., "I think I am most able to be, I think that … could happen").

Life Mapping

Life mapping is a career-counselling tool that is useful in understanding someone's context (e.g., cultural context for an Aboriginal client). Practitioners ask their clients to map important influences in their lives, or values that are important to them in their world (Shepard, 2004). Afterwards, practitioners draw connections between different aspects of their clients' maps to identify worldviews, cultural values, and

CAREERS Aboriginal Youth Initiative

by Lara Shepard

CAREERS is designed to bring career education and workplace learning opportunities to Aboriginal youth across Alberta. The Aboriginal Youth Initiative (AYI) assists young Aboriginal Albertans in completing high school equipped with career development experiences. AYI promotes a stay-in-school message, provides career awareness through workshops, and co-ordinates hands-on internship opportunities. CAREERS is composed of an Aboriginal team who work directly in Aboriginal communities to facilitate learning and training opportunities. Elders, band councils, parents, industry, and the education community welcome and support CAREERS' work.

For more information, see <http://www.nextgen.org/employers/hire-a-student/aboriginal-initiatives>.

beliefs in relation to self-identity (including career self-identity).

Dependable Strengths

This is a technique that practitioners can utilize to help clients uncover the strengths and assets that they may have minimized, taken for granted, or been entirely unaware of (Haldane, 1989). A "dependable strength" is a skill, talent, or quality that has been developed over a lifetime, from childhood to the present. Practitioners engage in dialogue with clients to determine "when clients did something well, when they enjoyed doing an activity or skill and felt proud of it."

Aboriginal Youth (25 Years of Age and Younger)

Targeted career development strategies and campaigns for Aboriginal youth help to promote the value of learning/skills development from kindergarten to postsecondary education, and promote the value of higher education and its relationship to career success in various industries. Gaiko, Wikle, and Kavanaugh (1999) point out that education and career development promotion need to be directed towards Aboriginal youth and their families. The families of Aboriginal youths provide a key support mechanism for them in achieving success in school and subsequently transitioning from school to employment (Gaiko et al., 1999).

Educational Achievement

In addition to guiding and developing Aboriginal peoples in the current workforce, it is equally important to promote the value of education to the next generation of workers. Some employers are leading the way by providing scholarships and grants to Aboriginal students. SaskTel (a Saskatchewan telecommunications company), for example, offers the Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence to Aboriginal youth (aged 13–19) in recognition for their outstanding achievement in 10 categories ranging

from leadership and education to community services and technology/science (SaskTel, 2012). Cameco Corporation, a private sector uranium company in Saskatoon, offers the Bernard Michel Scholarship to provide a renewable $5,000 scholarship over four years to a Saskatchewan Aboriginal student enrolled in a geology, toxicology, chemistry, or geography program at the University of Saskatchewan (Cameco Corporation, 2012). Syncrude, a private sector crude oil producer, confers the Rod Hyde Aboriginal Award to an Aboriginal student from the Municipality of Wood Buffalo who is pursuing studies in fields such as sports, recreation, or education (Syncrude Canada Limited, 2012).

Modeling and Mentoring

Modeling (the act of emulating specific behaviours and/or social roles of another person who is a source of inspiration and motivation) is well documented in the career development literature as a key to success for individuals of all cultures. For Aboriginal populations in Canada, there is greater need for supports of this nature due to the lack of existing models that are directly applicable to Aboriginal people. For many Aboriginal people, their social support networks of mothers, partners, friends, and educators help to keep them motivated to continue with their program of study. Research shows (McCormick, 1997; Stewart & Reeves, 2009; Stewart et al., 2011) that many Aboriginal youth feel that inspiration and support from their families underpin their connection with their specific Aboriginal culture. As these young people define themselves, they will need positive career-related role models to help direct them towards the required competencies for various professions.

Researchers have begun to look at Aboriginal youth and the factors that determine their career opportunities. Stewart and colleagues (2011) completed a study that looked at the employment experiences of Aboriginal youth in downtown Toronto, in order to understand career development for urban Aboriginal youth. The youth who participated in this study reported that career supports and services often existed in their communities but were difficult to access if certain criteria could not be met, such as being a student enrolled in full-time studies in a postsecondary institution or being in receipt of some form of social assistance.

Indspire Awards
by Lara Shepard

Formerly known as the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, the Indspire Awards are presented annually to 14 Aboriginal professionals and youth from across Canada in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in careers ranging from health, public service and arts/culture to education and law/justice. One of the key aspects of the Indspire Awards is to provide Aboriginal youth with role models of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit ancestry by showcasing their career accomplishments and their journey towards success.

For more information, visit Indspire at <www.indspire.ca>.

The Aboriginal Government Employees' Network (AGEN) Speakers Bureau in Saskatchewan (or Pîkiskwêwak) provides opportunities for Aboriginal employees in the public service and **Crown** corporations to speak with Aboriginal youth to encourage them to stay in school and understand the variety of career opportunities available to them in the Saskatchewan public service. In addition to providing Aboriginal youth with valuable career information, the Speakers' Bureau representatives serve as role models in their respective communities. Typically, AGEN Speakers Bureau representatives speak to students about their personal histories, career paths, and how they have integrated their Aboriginal cultures into their workplaces (Aboriginal Government Employees' Network, 2012b).

Future Bound: A Lifeworks Expedition Workshop for Rural Youth (Shepard, 2010) was designed by rural youth to address their unique needs. Participants had difficulty in integrating the available career information in ways meaningful to their particular life situations, and observed that resources and information needed to be relevant for youth living in small communities with limited services. Youth also identified positively with their rural community, feeling intimate ties to those they lived close to. Sense of place, proximity to nature, and relationships within the community were strong themes in the interviews. Sense of place, then, became a strong determinant in life-career decision making. Integrating lifestyle and career information in personally relevant ways was achieved in the workshop through the process of circling back, revisiting, and building upon activities and work done in previous loops using a hiking metaphor.

Work Experience Programs

Work experience programs (e.g., internships and summer employment programs) provide Aboriginal youth and postsecondary students with opportunities to apply their skills and gain work experience. In addition, work experience programs expose Aboriginal youth to the diversity of careers in several organizations and occupations. Cross-training to expand competencies also allows individuals who have already mastered one set of skills to become proficient in another.

Case Study Brief: The Aboriginal Internship Program —
Government of British Columbia
From 2007 to present, the Government of British Columbia (BC) has implemented a one-year paid internship for Aboriginal youth residing in BC who are 29 years of age or younger. The internship program provides experiential-based learning experiences for Aboriginal youth. It includes a placement for nine months in a government ministry, followed by a three-month internship at an Aboriginal organization. Job placements can range from policy development and community engagement to research analysis and negotiations.

The major goals of the program are to: (a) develop leadership skills; (b) encourage Aboriginal youth to consider employment in the BC public service or in Aboriginal organizations; (c) enhance relationships between the provincial government and Aboriginal organizations; and (d) aid in decreasing the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in BC.

Interns receive career development resources and associated cultural supports from the internship program staff (consisting of a program lead, co-ordinator, and administrator). Also, supervisors and mentors are available from the government and Aboriginal organizations to coach and guide the interns throughout their career development journey. From 2007–2011, 86 Aboriginal youth completed the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program.

For more information about this program, visit <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr /social/fcf/ayip.html>. (Source: Government of British Columbia, 2012)

Aboriginal Women

Aboriginal women are disadvantaged in the workplace and labour force by all the traditional social and systemic barriers affecting women as well as by all the racial and geographical barriers affecting the broader Aboriginal population. All too often, Aboriginal women are among the working poor or the unemployed (Kenny, 2002; Levesque et al., 2001). Women are often denied skills training from their employers because they hold part-time or other non-standard employment (e.g., temporary or seasonal employment; Kenny, 2002; Levesque et al., 2001). Given the escalating costs in education, some Aboriginal women may not be able to participate in training opportunities outside of their workplaces as a means of enhancing their skills, abilities, and knowledge. Wilson and MacDonald (2010) noted that other socioeconomic hardships facing Aboriginal women include high rates of victimization and violent crimes (e.g., domestic abuse), single parenthood, and reliance on government transfers (e.g., income assistance, welfare, disability payments, etc.).

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

by Lara Shepard

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* (UAPS) Study sought to understand and document the identities, experiences, and goals of urban Aboriginal people, recognized as an important and rapidly growing segment of the Canadian population. The study was guided by the Advisory Circle of Aboriginal people, and conducted by the Environics Institute. Aboriginal people's unique perspectives are an important part of the national discourse and provide new areas of inquiry about factors that are currently leading Aboriginal people towards success, autonomy, and cultural confidence.

For more information, go to <http://uaps.ca/>.

As a means of mitigating some of these various barriers to career development and planning, organizations such as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and Vancity Credit Union are tailoring their social and financial supports to address Aboriginal women's needs.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2013) developed *Journey to Success: Aboriginal Women's Business Planning Guide*. This guide provides information about entrepreneurship from the perspective of Aboriginal business women; and was developed from consultations with Aboriginal women across Canada who were entrepreneurs and/or representatives from Aboriginal women's organizations.

Vancity Credit Union located in Vancouver, BC, was the administrator for the Women Entrepreneurs, Financing Opportuntities for Growth (WE-FOG) project from 2011–2013. The purpose of the project was to help Aboriginal and newcomer women in building their own businesses. The project is intended to assist Vancity in reviewing its own practices and raise awareness about barriers (Vancity Community Foundation, 2013).

Aboriginal Adults and Urban Aboriginal Peoples

To address the unique issues facing urban Aboriginal peoples, the Government of Canada developed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). Developed in 1997, the UAS is a community-based initiative to address socioeconomic hardships (e.g., securing meaningful and sustainable employment, accessing quality education, etc.) facing Aboriginal people living in 13 designated urban centres, among them Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Toronto. Through the UAS, the Government of Canada partners with the private sector, provincial and municipal governments, the community, and Aboriginal organizations to support projects that respond to local priorities, including urban Aboriginal learning and urban Aboriginal family, health, and wellness. National priority areas include: (a) improving life skills; (b) promoting job training; (c) skills and entrepreneurship; and (d) supporting Aboriginal women, children, and families (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2012).

Case Study Brief: The Institute for Integrative Science & Health
"Science can be defined in many different ways depending on who is doing the defining. But one thing that is certain is that 'science' is culturally rela-tive. In other words, what is considered science is dependent on the culture /worldview/paradigm of the definer." (Excerpt from Leroy Little Bear in *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* [Cajete, 2000, p. ix].)

The Institute for Integrative Science & Health (<http://www.integrativescience.ca/>) provided a postsecondary, scientific learning environment for students, educators, and researchers who are interested in advancing **integrative science** — a harmonization and bringing together of indigenous and **Western science**. From 2006–2013, the Institute utilized multidisciplinary approaches culturally compatible with Aboriginal ways of knowing, in particular, Mi'kmaw language and knowledge, and promoted authentic participation with Aboriginal people. Regrettably, upon the retirement of its founder, Dr. Cheryl Bartlett, the Institute closed June 2013. (Institute for Integrative Science & Health, 2013)

First Nations People on Reserve

Results of the study by Stewart et al. (2011) described barriers associated with accessing and maintaining work in Aboriginal organizations both on-reserve and in urban areas. Concerning First Nations people on reserve, participants spoke of the importance of having the status of a "community insider" in order to gain employment in this sector. Researchers noted: "…'outsiders' faced barriers such as nepotism and hiring within circles of friends and family; if one is outside of such circles, there can often be challenges to gaining entry into these types of work opportunities" (p. 40). Another barrier is that many jobs are held by non-Aboriginal people who often have high levels of postsecondary education and related work experience, though they may lack the cultural understanding and sensitivities to effectively carry out the job in a sustainable and culturally congruent manner.

Through bilateral Labour Market Agreements (LMAs), Aboriginal-specific career strategies and programs were brokered between Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (renamed Employment and Social Development Canada in 2013) and provincial and territorial governments. The purpose was to help unemployed or underemployed Aboriginal youth, Aboriginal peoples with disabilities, and Aboriginal peoples in urban centres. These programs provide financial, social, and technical supports for people transitioning from pre-employment skills training to sustainable employment. Notable strategies and programs include, but are not limited to, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) and the Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP).

Community-Owned Businesses

The Osoyoos Indian Band in British Columbia is one of three First Nations in Canada to receive certification from the First Nation Financial Management Board (FMB).

Certification from the FMB provides a signal of the health of a First Nation's financial management system and fiscal performance. It is part of the regulatory regime established by the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (FSMA) that enables First Nations to raise money to build new infrastructure and attract more public and private sector development on reserves.

Senkulmen Business Park is a 10-year plan to develop 112 acres for light industrial use. It will eventually accommodate up to 40 business tenants and create upwards of 1,000 new manufacturing and supporting jobs in the region.

Other major capital projects underway include the Canyon Desert Resort, a 350-unit residential and vacation resort development in Oliver and a 44-residence unit located at the Band's Nk'Mip Resort in Osoyoos (<http://oibdc.ca/2012/01/indian-band-raising-its-profile/>).

Small Business Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship is a human, creative act that builds something of value from practically nothing. It is the pursuit of opportunity regardless of the resources, or lack of resources, at hand. It requires a vision and the passion and commitment to lead others in the pursuit of that vision. It also requires a willingness to take calculated risks. (Timmons, 2000, p. 14)

According to Statistics Canada (2006a), in 1981 there were 7,485 self-employed Aboriginal persons. By 2001, that number surpassed 27,000 and continues to grow. While many entrepreneurs pursue more traditional businesses such as fishing, trapping, farming, and the construction trades, Aboriginal entrepreneurs now own businesses in the areas of software design, tourism, the arts, and health care. Small business provides First Nation peoples and communities with the means to become self-determining and free from corporate and governmental control, manipulation, and exploitation. Communities with more resources and experience with governance can provide stable footing for potential entrepreneurs.

Aboriginal peoples represent a significant potential workforce available to replace aging Canadian workers who are currently entering into retirement. They also offer unique skills and knowledge in the Canadian labour market. For example, Aboriginal leaders can enhance collaborative partnerships between local Aboriginal communities (both in urban and rural settings) and employers — taking the form of providing insights into entrepreneurship, joint ventures, and niche market opportunities for goods and services that have not been fully realized in the broader marketplace (Hanselmann, 2003; Lamontagne, 2004). Dwyer (2003) acknowledges the benefits of an Aboriginal leadership style in the workplace, in particular one that values collectivism, co-operation, group cohesiveness, and consensus-based decision making — many of which are becoming key organizational competencies in today's workforce.

Case Study Brief: Community Wildfire Training and Employment Program for First Nations People in the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council Area

The BC First Nations Forestry Council (FNFC), in partnership with Community Futures Development Corporation of the Central Interior First Nations (CFDC of CIFN) and the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) designed and implemented an Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP) specializing in community wildfire protection. Funded by the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, this program was composed of on-campus and distance education, including on-site and field-based learning experiences. Journaling was utilized to supplement the classroom and field work, which afforded participants an opportunity to track their personal career journey and progression throughout the program. Participants' journal entries were shared and discussed in one-to-one sessions between facilitators/trainers and participants, which allowed participants to reflect on their personal learning experiences, thereby facilitating a storytelling process to clarify and explore individual learner's career journeys.

Within this framework, the following approaches were utilized:

1. Storytelling and oral dialogue, which ensured that a culturally congruent learning atmosphere was created to foster success for participants.
2. Multiple "classrooms" to provide training that reflected traditional Aboriginal ethics of respect and care in the management and protection of forests, grasslands, community members, and wilderness resources.
3. Existing pre-employment courses supplemented (where appropriate) with traditional knowledge or related cultural teachings via guest speakers (e.g., local Elders and Aboriginal community protection specialists), videos, and texts.

These supports and resources reflected the local and culturally specific knowledge of First Nations people. (Source: FNFC, CFCD of CIFN, & FNESS, 2012)

Since the implementation of this initiative, FNESS has continued its wildland firefighting skills training and employment work through subsequent ATEPs in the Lillooet Tribal Council area (in collaboration with CFDC of CIFN) and Carrier Sekani Tribal Council area (in collaboration with the Aboriginal Business and Community Development Centre and the First Nations Technology Council).

Implications for Career Practitioners, Employers, and Educators

The role of social justice and culture is becoming more recognized in career development and planning. Multicultural teaching, counselling, and organizational

development strategies are needed as fundamental resources and supports for our diverse Canadian population. When working with Aboriginal peoples, the following considerations should be observed:

For Career Practitioners

- Be aware of personal attitudes, conditioning, and beliefs involving acceptance, understanding, and the accommodation of cultures that are different from one's own cultural heritage. (Torres, Howard-Hamilton & Cooper, 2003)
- Develop thorough knowledge of individual and systemic discrimination of Aboriginal peoples.
- Have thorough knowledge of the meaning of Aboriginal cultures, including an openness to learn about the beliefs and practices of Aboriginal spirituality.
- Commit to being a lifetime learner of cross-cultural issues (informal and/or formal training) in order to recognize personal feelings of defensiveness, resistance, mistrust, and vulnerability regarding ethnicity.
- Be comfortable with and be able to listen to silence as well as the words.
- Build rapport as a counsellor to establish trust by being consistent, straightforward, genuine, and honest.
- Be in the session and in the moment by listening and not jumping to conclusions and judgements. As a practitioner, gently challenge or provide options where possible.
- Be aware that direct/experiential learning takes precedence over theoretical learning.

For Educators

- Invite local and visiting Elders, consultants and/or Knowledge Keepers to be part of classroom discussions/presentations and include the use of Aboriginal stories and film within the learning environment.
- Recognize that traditional career development, lifespan, education, and personality theories are typically based on mono-cultural experiences. Failure to recognize the limitations of these traditional Western-based theories may create situations where an Aboriginal person's behaviours and perspectives are perceived as symptoms of a disorder as opposed to strengths-based attributes.

For Employers

- Organizations across all sectors and industries need to design and implement sustainable Aboriginal employment strategies by (a) setting aside designated funding and resources (i.e., human and technical resources) for Aboriginal-specific human resources management programs and practices (i.e., recruitment and career development activities); and (b) aligning key competencies, skills training, and career development initiatives that support existing and future labour market needs.
- Design targeted recruitment strategies for Aboriginal peoples, in general, and for each of the three groups (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit). In order to engage Aboriginal people in today's workforce, employers need a comprehensive targeted recruitment strategy to identify where Aboriginal job seekers go to find job postings and career information (e.g., Aboriginal radio, Aboriginal television programs, local newspapers, magazines, community newsletters, etc.).
- Identify the company's **succession planning** needs and advise the Aboriginal communities of these needs. By understanding employers' succession planning needs, Aboriginal communities can begin training and career development programs to meet current and future labour market demands across various occupations in management, science, and technology.
- Do more Aboriginal awareness training so that non-Aboriginal people can learn about Aboriginal cultures, traditions, and histories. Training programs of this nature present an opportunity for Aboriginal staff and non-Aboriginal employers to learn more about one another, discover ways to effectively communicate, and work together in their organizations and the broader society.

For career practitioners, educators, and employers, there is a continuing need to implement career strategies and practices that reflect the diversity of our society. In working with Aboriginal peoples, career practitioners, educators, and employers must recognize the barriers that face this population, yet at the same time have respect and sensitivity to transform these challenges into opportunities through participation in meaningful education and subsequent employment in Canada's labour force.

Conclusion

Aboriginal peoples have had to overcome numerous hardships and challenges that have affected their career life paths. Career practitioners must assist clients in

drawing from their cultural strengths to facilitate their career development. The success of Aboriginal peoples continues to grow as they strive for higher levels of education and employment. Career practitioners, educators, and employers can support this growth by taking time to get to know Aboriginal people and becoming aware of Aboriginal cultures. Moreover, career practitioners should maintain a list of culturally congruent resources and supports to aid Aboriginal clients in developing their careers now and in the future.

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Glossary

Aboriginal identity is an indicator of a person's affiliation with an Aboriginal group that is North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit.

Colonization was the deliberate attempt by Canadian governments to destroy Indigenous institutions of family, religious belief systems, tribal affiliation, customs, and traditional ways of life through enacted and enforced legal sanctions. Colonization is marked by cultural assimilation and destruction tactics in the form of residential schools, removal of Indigenous groups from ancestral lands, and cultural genocide.

Crown refers to all provincial and federal government departments, ministries and agencies, including all government employees that carry out work on behalf of the government.

Culturally congruent resources include water, plants, people, and animals.

Elder is any person recognized by the Aboriginal community as having knowledge and understanding of the traditional culture of the community, including spiritual and social practices. Knowledge and wisdom, coupled with the recognition and respect of the people of the Nation, are key characteristics of an Elder.

Human capital is investment undertaken by employees in the form of their knowledge, skills, capabilities, and experience within a given profession and/or organization.

Integrative science is an approach to recognizing and utilizing the complementing strengths of indigenous and Western science. For example, understanding basic relationships, patterns, and cycles in the world; embracing curiosity about the natural world and careful observation to acquire scientific knowledge; ensuring that scientific knowledge contributes to the community; and appropriate technologies that must be developed to meet societal needs while simultaneously protecting the environment.

Knowledge Keeper is any person recognized by the Aboriginal community as having knowledge and understanding of the traditional culture of the community, including spiritual and social practices. Knowledge Keepers are identified based on the community's respect for them and peer recognition for their depth and breadth of localized knowledge.

Localized knowledge is the knowledge that Aboriginal people have gained through generations of social, physical, and spiritual understanding of the world around them, traditional lands, and associated practical experience. Such knowledge can be localized and specific to certain communities, families, and even individuals.

Reserves are lands set apart for the use and benefit of a band and for which the legal title rests with the Crown of Canada through the Indian Act. The federal government has primary jurisdiction over these lands and the people living on them.

Sociocultural values are the guiding principles, ideals, aspirations, and beliefs that serve as a foundation in how Aboriginal peoples (as individuals and as a group) carry out work in their respective Nations. Cultural values manifest themselves in local traditions, institutions, and protocols that are major pillars that define the given Aboriginal society.

Succession planning is an organizational planning process that ensures continuity of leadership and core staff skills by identifying, developing and replacing key people (in mission-critical positions) over time.

Treaty is a legal document that was signed with Indian bands and various British colonial, and later Canadian governments, before and after Confederation in 1867. No two treaties are identical, but they usually provide certain rights, including annual payments for ammunition and annuities, clothing every three years, hunting and fishing rights, reserve lands, and other entitlements. In signing a treaty, the Indian bands surrendered their prior rights, titles, and privileges to the designated lands.

Urban refers to large cities or census metropolitan areas.

Western science is a system of knowledge that relies on certain laws that are established to understand phenomena in the world around us. The process of the scientific method begins with an observation followed by a prediction or hypothesis, which is then tested. Depending on the test results, the hypothesis can become a scientific theory or "truth" about the world.

Discussion and Activities

Discussion

Discussion Questions

1. Poverty, ill health, educational failure, family violence, and other problems reinforce one another to create a circle of disadvantage — where family violence leads to educational failure, which leads to poverty, which leads to ill health and back to violence. All these conditions must be considered when working with some Aboriginal clients. How can you work with Aboriginal individuals who are struggling to improve their lives while re-discovering their traditional values after years of oppression and possible trauma? What approaches can you take as a career practitioner?

2. The following seven good life teachings are values/principles that are central to the Anishinabek: respect, love, bravery, wisdom, humility, honesty, and truth. How would you use these values in working with Aboriginal clients? <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Toulouse.pdf>.

Career Practitioner Role

1. An effective strengths-based approach involves asking questions to prompt client identification of strengths. Because self-esteem and self-confidence are, in many cases, challenging to Aboriginal clients, what sorts of questions might you ask?
   Think about:

   - survival questions,
   - support questions,
   - possibility questions,
   - esteem questions,
   - exception questions.

   Visit the website <http://www.discoveringstrengths.com/>.

2. As a prospective career practitioner in a community-based setting, what do you see as the challenge of integrating aspects pertaining to spirituality within your practice?

3. What do you see as essential qualities of a career practitioner who works with Aboriginal people?

Personal Reflection

In your opinion, to what extent should career practitioners adopt an "ahistorical" (i.e., a lack of attention to social and cultural contexts) or a "historical" approach to the integration of Aboriginal history when developing career interventions or initiatives for their clients?

Activities

1. The Ontario National Literacy Coalition (ONLC) worked with the Ontario
    Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to create a new position entitled
    "Native Literacy Practitioner."

    The practitioner standards model development project, prepared by Kate
    Thompson for ONLC, identifies the training requirements of a Native literacy
    practitioner and suggests ways to assess the required skills and knowledge.

    Review this report at <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/practstn
    /practstn.pdf>.

    Form groups to discuss the initiative proposed in the report.

2. Give groups of two or three students a newspaper article on a current life-career
    issue facing Aboriginal people. Each group is asked to summarize their article
    and provide a handout of the summary to each class member prior to their panel
    presentation. Each group is asked to creatively present their information and ask
    for audience participation in a 15-minute period. For example, you could debate
    the issue from two different points of view and then give time for the audience to
    ask questions. The guiding principle is that you make the presentation informative
    and interesting to your audience.

    Examples:

    *   violence against Aboriginal girls and women;
    *   finding ways to move forward on First Nations ownership of First Nations
        education;
    *   lack of sports funding for Aboriginal communities;
    *   intergenerational effects of the residential school experience;
    *   lack of learning enrichment initiatives outside of the formal educational
        system (e.g., mentorship programs, summer camps, transitional services for
        students and families, and leadership programs);
    *   families living in poverty.

3. Imagine that you are working as a career practitioner at a college that has a large
    number of Aboriginal students in attendance. You are asked by administration to
    develop an Aboriginal career centre. You decide to include the following
    career-planning services:

    *   **Self-Assessment**, or a profile of interests, skills and abilities, personal
        preferences, and important values. You will provide different resources
        including two assessment inventories. Explain what resources might be
        appropriate for your clientele?
    *   **Exploring Your Options**, or resources that provide more information on
        educational programs, different occupations, and careers paths of interest.
        What types of online and print resources might be appropriate?

- **Re-evaluating Your Direction**. Many students decide to change their major or career direction after completing a few courses. Given the value of hands-on, experiential learning in many Aboriginal cultures, how might you assist students to explore or "test the waters" in their different interest areas?
- **Employment and Job Search Coaching**. How might you assist Aboriginal students find out more information about employment opportunities? How could you involve the Aboriginal community?

4. The process of being mentored is a valued aspect of Aboriginal communities. You have a number of clients who have identified a need to increase their business skills in order to move their business to the next level. You decide to ask the Aboriginal Healing Foundation of Canada (<http://www.ahf.ca/>) for funding to develop a program to provide Aboriginal business persons with a mentoring experience that guides and supports them as they identify and pursue their business goals. In your proposal, you are asked to identify the benefits to the Aboriginal entrepreneur and the benefits to the mentor. What do you say?

Resources

Web Resources on Building a Business

Aboriginal Business Guide <http://v1.canadabusiness.mb.ca/home_page/guides/aboriginal_business_infoguide/>.
Aboriginal Entrepreneurs <http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2006/2239/ceb2239_002-eng.htm>.
Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Branch Overview <http://www.designingnations.com/wp-content/uploads/JG2012-Feb-Ab-Entrepreneurship.pdf>.
First Nation Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada <http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/warren_weir.pdf>.
IdeaConnector Network <http://www.ideaconnector.net/aboriginal-entrepreneurs/>.
Starting a Business — for Aboriginal peoples <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/audiences/aboriginal/business.shtml>.