



# CERIC

Advancing  
Career  
Development  
in Canada

Promouvoir  
le développement  
de carrière  
au Canada

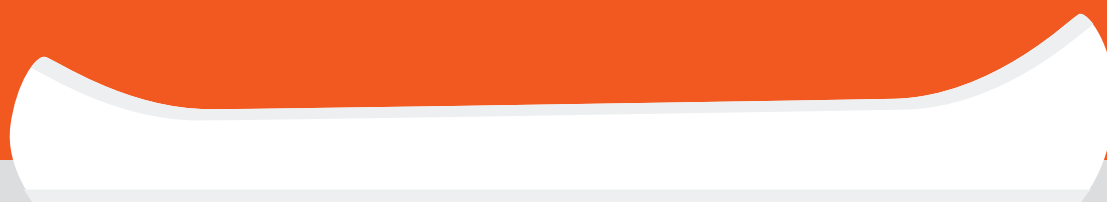
## **Career Work in Action**

Discussions and Activities for  
Professionals

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KAREN SCHAFFER & JULIANA WIENS

**NEWCOMERS TO CANADA**



**Based on CERIC's Guiding Principles of Career Development**

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Discussions and Activities for  
Professionals

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KAREN SCHAFFER & JULIANA WIENS

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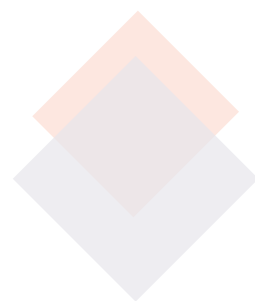
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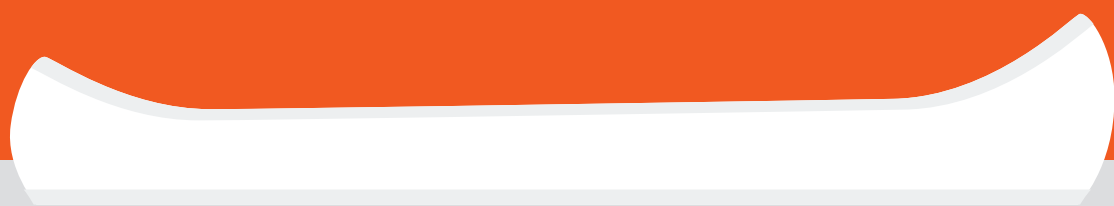
## ■ Table of Contents

- 01 | Introduction: Where are we starting from?
- 05 | The Guiding Principles: Situating newcomers to Canada within the principles of career development
- 15 | The Organic Career Support Framework: How do we help?
- 19 | Guiding Principles in Action: Suggested Discussions and Activities for use with newcomers to Canada
- 39 | Appendices
- 47 | CERIC further resources: Where can I find more information?
- 49 | About the Authors





**Introduction:**  
Where we are  
starting from?





## ■ Purpose

The purpose of this action plan is to provide you - the professional - with insights and ideas for working with your clients that align with the CERIC Guiding Principles of Career Development. We begin by painting a picture of newcomers to Canada that speaks to how they are situated within the Guiding Principles, and we then suggest discussion questions and activities that professionals can use when providing career support to this particular population. We have grouped these questions and activities according to 5 five key areas of career work, and we anticipate that professionals will draw upon each of these areas based on client need, and according to the Organic Career Support Framework that we present and define in the *How do we help?* section.

## ■ Definitions

Throughout this document, we use the term **professionals** to refer to the action plan's intended recipients because we recognize that individuals from a wide range of occupations - both inside and outside of the career development field - may provide career-related support to those with whom they work. You will notice as well that we define the demographic group in question - newcomers to Canada - very precisely. Our intention is not to exclude anyone, but rather, to provide specific enough parameters to allow for meaningful discussion. We recognize that lives and circumstances vary widely, and that not all newcomers to Canada will identify with the themes and ideas that we discuss. We also recognize that some of the discussions and activities described below could apply to individuals who do not fit within our identified parameters.

“

“This work is not standardized and cannot be scripted.”

“

“Working effectively with clients means recognizing that career is lifelong and complex.”

## ■ Philosophy

As authors, we adhere to certain philosophies in our work that stem from our professional identities as Career Counsellors, and our experiences of working with a range of populations. We believe in the importance of locating ourselves, and for that reason, we identify as white, middle class, and raised in a colonial system. We emphasize that other worldviews, cultures, and social locations are equally valid, and that each professional has a responsibility to understand how their own location impacts their practice.

**Most importantly, we believe that while recognized best practices do exist within the career development field, this work is not standardized and cannot be scripted. Each client is different, and working effectively with clients means recognizing that career is lifelong and complex.** Navigating career work requires knowledge, empathy, patience, compassion, intuition, cultural competence, and the effective use of theories and frameworks. We invite you to engage with this action plan as it works for you and for the client in front of you.

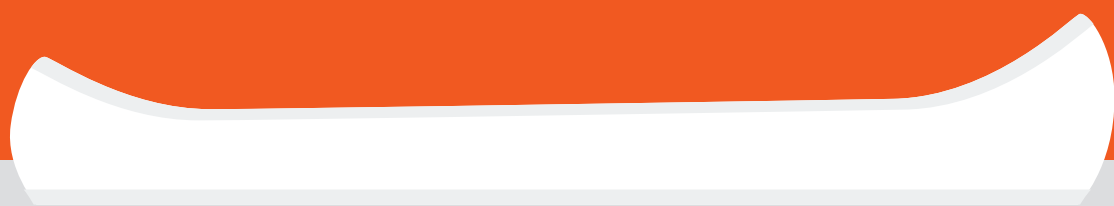
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“Navigating career work requires knowledge, empathy, patience, compassion, intuition, cultural competence, and the effective use of theories and frameworks.”





# **The Guiding Principles:** Situating newcomers to Canada within the principles of career development



## Who's in Front of You?

### Newcomers to Canada

Adults who have come to Canada within the past several years in order to re-establish themselves (as opposed to international post-secondary students). Some will have chosen to immigrate in order to access opportunities for themselves and their children, while others will have had to flee unrest or unsafe conditions. While all newcomers experience great upheaval and change, some may carry residual trauma, grief, and loss as a result of their circumstances and experiences. The newcomer population includes individuals who speak English or French as a second or third language (if at all), with widely varying degrees of fluency. Some newcomers are financially stable and even wealthy, while others have limited or no financial resources. Many are unfamiliar with Canadian/North American work culture.

Before getting to the action, let's look at how the experiences of newcomers to Canada line up with each of the Guiding Principles...

**For a full version of  
the Guiding Principles  
infographic, see  
Appendix D.**

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



IS A LIFELONG PROCESS OF BLENDING AND MANAGING PAID AND UNPAID ACTIVITIES: LEARNING (EDUCATION), WORK (EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP), VOLUNTEERISM AND LEISURE TIME.

Depending on their cultures of origin, many newcomers to Canada will not necessarily perceive their activities outside of paid work as career development, even in cases where they are learning and developing skills. For example, some might define volunteering as a form of community participation that is separate from work and holds no professional meaning. In addition, newcomers who are focused on providing education and career opportunities for their children may prioritize their children's activities over their own career development.

While some members of this group may understand career development as a lifelong process, for others, a move to Canada may feel more like the end of one career and the beginning of another, especially in cases where they end up in very different types of jobs. Individuals who come to Canada by choice in order to access specific types of career opportunities are likely to connect more easily to the concept of lifelong career development.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...

ENTAILS DETERMINING  
INTERESTS, BELIEFS, VALUES,  
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES –  
AND CONNECTING THOSE WITH  
MARKET NEEDS.



“Do what you love” is a very North American concept. Mainstream culture glorifies self-exploration and the pursuit of meaningful work. But for some newcomers to Canada, self-exploration may feel like a waste of time as compared to job searching, and they may resist such a process or not understand its purpose. In many countries and cultures, work is necessary for survival and requires extreme pragmatism, and one needs to be even more pragmatic in a new country. Some newcomers will therefore prioritize survival, stability, and financial security over and above their own interests and desires. For many, working hard and providing for family are sources of pride and identity.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



SHOULD BE SELF-DIRECTED;  
AN INDIVIDUAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
HIS OR HER OWN CAREER, BUT IS  
NOT ALONE – WE ALL INFLUENCE  
AND ARE INFLUENCED BY OUR  
ENVIRONMENT.

Newcomers often come to Canada expecting to be highly self-directed, especially if they don't have many community supports or connections. Taking initiative is part of the immigrant identity. These are people who have left familiar environments and structures and who intend to put in the hard work required to start over in another country.

While mainstream Canadian culture embraces individualism, newcomers to Canada may not seek separation and independence, but may instead prioritize bringing over other family members, sending money back home, and/or fostering and supporting their children's career aspirations. Depending on their cultures of origin, some newcomers may make career and work-related decisions collectively, together with their families and communities.



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



IS OFTEN SUPPORTED AND  
SHAPED BY EDUCATORS, FAMILY,  
PEERS, MANAGERS AND THE  
GREATER COMMUNITY.

Newcomers to Canada face unique challenges, depending on who is supporting and shaping their career development. Many cultures outside of North America value a collective approach to decision-making (i.e. family/community vs. individual), meaning that family expectations shape career expectations. When newcomers are exposed to Canadian voices and values around individual achievement, career development can become confusing to navigate, especially in cases where family expectations and individual desires clash. Newcomers will sometimes experience pressure to succeed from family and community members back home. The success of their integration into Canada is a reflection on the whole community.

Newcomers often seek out what is familiar, and will gravitate toward those who share their culture, such as family friends, or people from similar cultural backgrounds who are settled already. They may access their first work opportunities in Canada through these communities.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



IS DYNAMIC, EVOLVING AND  
REQUIRES CONTINUOUS  
ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE  
THROUGH MULTIPLE TRANSITIONS.

Immigration is by definition an intense transition, as individuals have to adapt to so many new things all at once. Newcomers are resilient because they have to be. Those who have had time to prepare for immigration psychologically may find the transition somewhat easier.

This group experiences high stress, and that stress can manifest in different ways. Some individuals may appear confused or disinterested in career development or may even seem resistant, but these behaviours could be manifestations of stress or trauma. If trauma is part of their transition, newcomers may require additional resources and support, as the trauma may interfere with normal coping mechanisms and responses.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



INVOLVES UNDERSTANDING  
OPTIONS, NAVIGATING WITH  
PURPOSE AND MAKING INFORMED  
CHOICES.

This principle represents an advanced stage of career development for newcomers who are adjusting to all of the small details of work and job search culture. Most newcomers are first trying to map out the landscapes of their new worlds in order to understand the context of any options or possibilities. Many will need to learn new styles of resume-writing and job searching, and initially, navigating with purpose may consist of seeking to find out what types of jobs or educational possibilities even exist. That said, many newcomers to Canada possess a strong drive to integrate and to succeed, even if they don't yet have the context required to understand fully the nuances of Canadian work culture. The ability to communicate in English or French (depending on location) is a huge piece of the puzzle when it comes to understanding options and making informed choices. Basic language skills open up options and opportunities.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



MEANS MAKING THE MOST OF TALENT AND POTENTIAL, HOWEVER YOU DEFINE GROWTH AND SUCCESS – NOT NECESSARILY LINEAR ADVANCEMENT.

Newcomers to Canada often have to forgo linear career advancement, at least temporarily. Previous job experience, certifications, and designations may not transfer easily to Canada, and some newcomers may find themselves starting from scratch, facing barriers to recertification, or moving in a whole new direction. Restrictions in the immigration process can also slow down advancement, as individuals may not be able to move to a different province or work at certain kinds of jobs until they gain permanent residency.

Some newcomers experience resentment because they were promised a “land of opportunity,” only to face obstacles once they arrive in Canada. Additionally, many are likely to encounter barriers around language or racial bias when they do apply for jobs, and this type of systemic discrimination can have a negative impact on well-being.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT...

CAN BE COMPLEX AND COMPLICATED, SO CONTEXT IS KEY – THERE MAY BE BOTH INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS (FINANCIAL, CULTURAL, HEALTH) OR EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS (LABOUR MARKET, TECHNOLOGY).



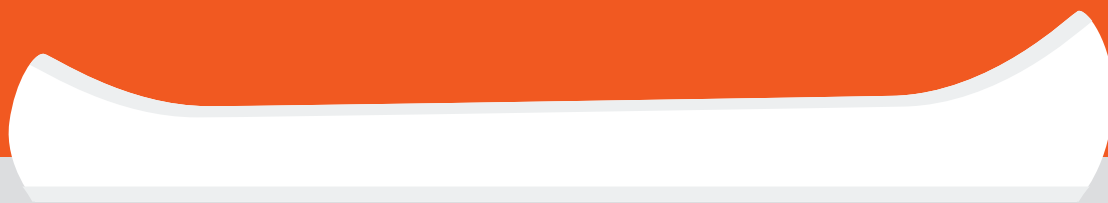
Family systems and dynamics can present additional complexities. A family that comes to Canada and does not speak English or French will often find themselves in a system that focuses primarily on the employability of the male head of household. Women who stay home to raise children often have less access to support than their male counterparts, and as such, do not integrate as easily into the workforce. Children assimilate much more quickly than adults, especially if they enter the school system. Yet generational conflict and tension can occur as children have to navigate Canadian culture while also managing parental expectations and demands that relate more closely to their cultures of origin. Some children may end up having to provide support to their parents around language and integration.

One of the biggest external constraints that newcomers to Canada face is employer perceptions of “foreign” work experience. Generally speaking, Canadian employers place higher trust in North American experience than they do in experience gained elsewhere, and newcomers to Canada sometimes struggle to communicate the value of their work histories, even in cases where they possess rich arrays of skills and qualifications.

As a final consideration, some newcomers will have lived through traumatic experiences in their home countries or in their journeys to Canada, but may react to these experiences in very different ways. Some might not want to speak about trauma, some might not interpret or frame what happened to them as trauma at all, while some might need to focus on trauma recovery before being able to engage in career exploration or job search. Professionals who work with this population can benefit from continuing to learn about trauma-informed practice while also remaining conscious of their own biases and interpretations.



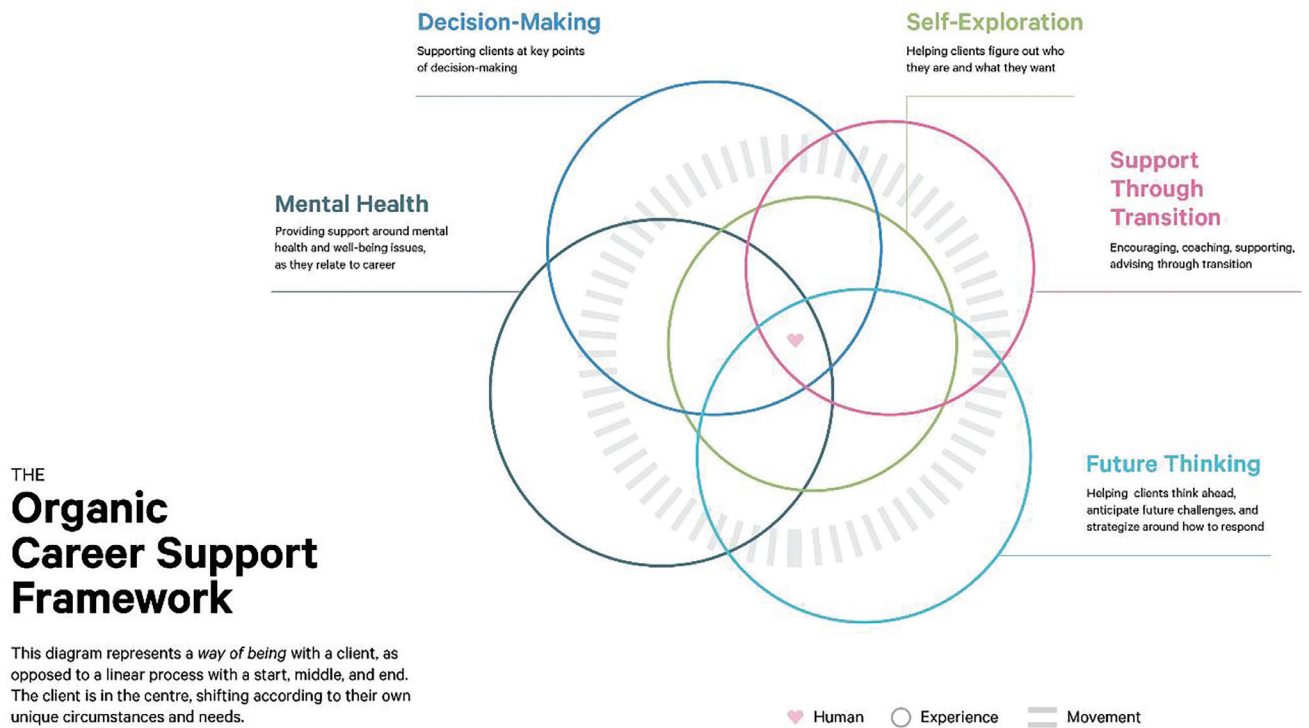
# The Organic Career Support Framework: How do we help?



Having situated Newcomers to Canada inside of the Guiding Principles and having seen where this group’s particular complexities lie, it may seem as though the next logical step would be to present a “script” of what to do next - a step-by-step process outlining exactly how to deal with identified issues. **We can tell you with certainty that no such script exists, and that no predetermined process can speak to all needs and situations.**

Instead, each professional’s style of communication and understanding of what’s essential evolves over time. No two professionals will say the same thing in quite the same way - nor should they. The art of career work lies in striving to understand a person’s experiences and then working with the presenting need. That need can shift from session to session, or even within the session itself. The goal of the professional is to be able to move fluidly, and to provide the types of discussions, interventions, and information that will support the client in moving forward.

We capture this fluidity using the Organic Career Support Framework, a client-centered approach that highlights movement among 5 key areas of practice. We then move on to Suggested Discussions and Activities. Our intention is to provide some relevant discussions, conversational starting points, opening questions, concrete interventions, and fun activities for each of the 5 key areas of career support.



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## Career Work in Action: Newcomers to Canada

This diagram represents a *way of being* with a client, as opposed to a linear process with a start, middle, and end.

In the sections below, we capture this fluidity using the Organic Career Support Framework, an approach that highlights movement among 5 key areas of practice. The positioning of the client in the middle of the diagram emphasizes the importance of client-centeredness, as each client navigates the world of career development according to their own unique circumstances and needs, while the professional plays a supportive role in this process.

The smaller circles in the diagram represent the 5 key areas that together form the scope of career development support:

- **Self-Exploration:** Helping clients figure out who they are and what they want
- **Decision-Making:** Supporting clients at key points of decision-making
- **Support Through Transition:** Encouraging, coaching, supporting, advising through transition
- **Future Thinking:** Helping clients think ahead, anticipate future challenges, and strategize around how to respond
- **Mental Health:** Providing support for issues around mental health and well-being, as they relate to career

The arrows pointing back and forth represent the multiple ways in which clients can shift among these 5 key areas. *Career is complex, and as such, this movement occurs organically*, sometimes within a series of sessions, sometimes within the space of one session, rarely in a linear fashion, and always according to the unique journey of the individual in question.

Examples:

- ✓ Alia identifies key values and interests (**Self-Exploration**), decides to apply to a Continuing Care Assistant program (**Decision-Making**), and receives support throughout the application process (**Support Through Transition**), but needs to return to self-exploration when she realizes that she can't sustain the physical demands of care work and her plan no longer feels doable.
- ✓ While accessing job search support (**Support Through Transition**), Sarah becomes increasingly anxious about her situation, to the point where she is not able to focus on any of her goals or activities (**Mental Health**).
- ✓ Elian begins working toward an eventual relocation to a different province (**Future Thinking**), only to realize that he first needs to think more deeply about his desired lifestyle (**Self-Exploration**).

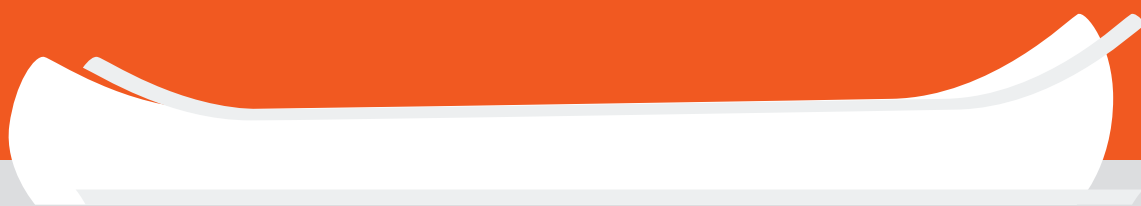
Organic career support is fluid and dynamic, and as such, professionals must be prepared to shift with their clients in and out of these 5 areas, as needed.







**Guiding Principles  
in Action:**  
Suggested  
Discussions and  
Activities for use with  
newcomers to Canada



## From Principles to Action: Discussions & Activities

### Starter Discussion

On a scale of 1-10, how hopeful are you feeling about the process of finding work?

### Important Because

This initial assessment question can help guide where to go next within the Organic Career Support Framework. For example, an individual who's feeling very hopeless about their employment situation may require support around Mental Health before moving forward with any further exploration, while someone who has to make pressing decisions around finances or a school program may benefit the most from Decision-Making support. This starter question can also be useful as a means of checking-in at the beginning of each session.

### A Note About Language & Culture

It will be important to assess your client's English/French language skills carefully in order to engage with them effectively. If language is a barrier, your job will be to help your client feel comfortable, which may be just as important as helping them reach a career "finish line." Ultimately, creating a safe space for your client, taking the time to really understand them, and helping them get used to the flow of conversational language will likely prove more valuable than any insight or information that you could provide. Also, stay alert to how cultural norms might influence communication. For example, a client who perceives you as a teacher or elder might remain quiet or avoid eye contact out of respect, depending on their cultural background.

# Self-exploration: Helping clients figure out who they are and what they want



## Suggested Discussions

### 1. My Career Story:

This discussion provides your client with an opportunity to share their experiences, and also provides you with an opportunity to help your client identify their strengths and successes. Your client's career story encompasses not only what they've done, but also the external and internal pressures they've faced, as well as the decisions and choices they've made that reveal their overall character and values.

- **Questions to Ask:** Tell me about your work prior to coming to Canada. What did you like best/least about this work? Which parts of your work are you most proud of? What is your greatest accomplishment? Which parts of your work have taught you the most, and what have you learned? (If chosen freely) Why did you decide to come to Canada? (If not chosen freely) How do you feel about living in Canada so far?
- **Following Up and Adding Value:** Make sure that you're reflecting on your client's stories and adding insights. For example, "I hear that you were working on logistics, but it sounds like you also took it upon yourself to explore new merchandise delivery methods, is that correct? We call that 'taking initiative,' and it's a trait that Canadian employers value."
- **Important Because:** Clients can sometimes find comfort in having an opportunity to talk about their experiences in a safe, compassionate space, without having to protect the feelings of others or minimize their frustrations. For professionals, this discussion provides an opportunity to build trust, to gain a sense of what steps the client has taken thus far, and to start to identify what might need to happen next.

## 2. Why Knowing Yourself is Important:

This discussion highlights the importance of being able to articulate one's skills, strengths, key personality traits, and core values in order to find work in Canada, given that Canadian employers want to hear more than just "I'm a good worker."

- **Questions to Ask:** How do people typically find work in your country? Can I share with you some of the things that Canadian employers usually want to know before they hire someone? Why do you think it's important to be able to speak about yourself to employers? Why do you think they want you to talk about your strengths in relation to your previous jobs?
- **Important Because:** Clients who are anxious to start working may find the process of self-exploration unusual and unnecessary, especially in cases where they're used to hiring practices that differ from those that are typical in Canada. In order for clients to commit to self-exploration, they need to understand why it's important. This discussion encourages clients to think about how they might use self-exploration as a starting point for connecting to employment.

## 3. Exploring Values

This discussion brings to light the kinds of meanings that your client attaches to work, as well as the factors that they take into consideration when determining the range of work they're willing to pursue.

- **Questions to Ask:** What does work mean to you? What makes a job a "good" job? In Canada, many people want to work at jobs that they enjoy and find satisfying. Is this something that you want for yourself, either now or in the future? What do you need in order to feel happy and satisfied in a job?
- **Important Because:** This discussion is as important for you (the professional) as it is for your clients. North American culture places high emphasis on the quest for "meaningful work," but this culture-driven value may not resonate with all individuals or groups. Some clients may be very satisfied with jobs that don't appear meaningful but do provide stability and consistency for their families. Understanding your client's goals and priorities clearly will help you to provide effective job search support.



## Suggested Activities

### 1. Around the World in 6 Objects

#### Instructions:

- Find 3 objects that represent your home culture, and bring them with you to your session. These objects (or photographs) can relate to any aspect of life in your country of origin - family, geography, language, community, traditions, etc.
- Find 3 objects that represent life in Canada - anything you may have found surprising, amazing, or confusing - and bring these with you as well.

#### Directions for Professional

This activity provides your client with an opportunity to connect with what they're missing and with what they're learning. Your job is to draw out their stories, and most importantly, to listen.

#### Debrief

Your clients may not realize that people are interested in learning about their cultures and experiences. Encourage them to practice telling the stories they've shared with you in order to connect with Canadian employers, contacts, and potential new friends.

### 2. Personal and Community Values

#### Instructions:

- Read through the List of Values (Appendix A).
- Using a green pen, circle all of the values that are important to your family and/or your community.
- Using a blue pen, circle your values (i.e. anything that's important to you personally).

### Directions for Professional

Read through the List of Values with your client.

### Debrief

1) Talk about the values that overlap: Why is [value] important to you? How have these values been present in your life up until now? How can you connect to these values here in Canada? What can this exercise tell us about what might be important to you in your work? 2) Talk about the values that don't overlap: Why is [value] important to you? How did you come to hold this value, given that it's different from what your family and community believes is important? What do you want this value to look like in your life going forward?

## 3. Transferring Skills to Canada

### Instructions:

- Read through the list of Transferable Skills (Appendix B).
- Circle all of the skills that you've used in any area of your life - home, family, previous jobs, etc.
- Put a star beside the 5 transferable skills that you've used the most or feel the most confident about. For each one, write or share an example of a time when you used that skill.

### Directions for Professional

Make sure that your client is clear on the definition of each skill.

### Debrief

Once your client has shared their examples, ask them to think about how they might use those same skills in a new job. Talk about the importance of being able to identify one's skills when applying for jobs.

# Decision-Making: Supporting clients at key points of decision-making



## Suggested Discussions

### 1. Immediate Needs

This solution-focused discussion is all about finding an immediate direction, and is appropriate in cases where it's clear that your client is not interested in self-exploration, and is focused primarily on getting a job.

- **Questions to Ask:** What kind of job do you need right now? Do you have any limitations (physical, etc.)? What strengths or experiences we can lean on right now in order to find a job?
- **Important Because:** Even though self-exploration almost always puts clients in a better position to land a job, sometimes getting into action is the most important thing. In these cases, professionals can best demonstrate client-centeredness by supporting immediate action and by offering self-exploration as a possible future step.

### 2. Language

The purpose of this discussion is to establish how confident your client feels about their language skills, and to determine whether they are either overestimating or underestimating their current abilities.

- **Questions to Ask:** How confident do you feel about your language skills (speaking and writing)? How is language affecting your job search?
- **Important Because:** Some clients may be limited to jobs that require minimal communication. Encourage these clients to continue learning and practicing their new language so that eventually, they can have access to a wider range of opportunities.



### 3. Further Education and Certification

The purpose of this discussion is to explore any options that your client may be considering around further education, including upgrading and pursuing new areas of study.

- **Questions to Ask:** Are you interested in going to school? Have you looked into any school programs? What plan or timeline would fit best with your current situation?
- **Important Because:** Newcomers to Canada may well have an advantage in the job market if they can pair previous experience with some kind of Canada-based upgrading or certification. School can help clients improve their language skills and confidence, while providing them with valuable experience to add to their resumes. That said, it's important for clients to have opportunities to think through their options carefully in order to make sure that they will get what they need and expect out of the learning paths they choose.

### Additional Discussion Questions

- What immigration requirements do we need to keep in mind when making decisions?
- Who do your decisions affect, either here or back home? What do these people expect from you?



## Suggested Activities

# 1. Using Mind Maps to Explore Decisions

### Mind Map Exercise #1 – Clarifying Concerns

- Write the words “My Possible Job Options” in the middle of a blank piece of paper and circle them.
- Write down job possibilities anywhere on the page, circle each one, then draw lines to link possibilities back to the centre.
- For each possibility, write down any related concerns or obstacles. You can also add another layer by breaking each concern down further (e.g. “apply to bookkeeping jobs” ⇔ “written skills good enough?”)
- Use different colours to highlight various concerns. For example if language skills are an issue, use an orange marker to circle the jobs that have low language requirements, and use a green marker to circle the jobs that have higher language requirements.
- Review your mind map. Pay attention to which points highlight specific actions that you could take in order to make a decision.

### Mind Map Exercise #2 – Areas of Interest

- Write the words “My Possible Options” in the middle of a blank piece of paper and circle them.
- Write down general areas of interest anywhere on the page, circle each one, then draw lines to link all of your areas of interest back to the centre.
- For each area of interest, dig down one layer, and write down more specific interests that relate to the general area (e.g. “hospitality” ⇔ “front desk,” “security,” “catering”)  
Using a different colour, circle the ideas that interest you the most.
- Brainstorm one or two actions that you could take to learn more about each of the ideas you’ve circled.

### Directions for Professional

Mind Maps can help clients consider their options from different angles as they dig down into deeper layers of a particular decision. Introduce this exercise in session. Encourage your client to spread their ideas around the page (See Appendix C). **Hot Tip:** Make it fun! Use big paper and coloured markers.

### Debrief

Invite your client to reflect on their experience of mind-mapping, and explore with them any insights that may have emerged in the process.

## 2. Job Idea Field Trip

### Instructions:

- Pick one job that interests you and brainstorm ways in which you might be able to observe someone else doing that job - e.g. volunteering, job shadowing, visiting a business, etc.
- Observe what people are doing and how they're interacting with one another.
- Answer the following questions: What do I like about this job? Can I see myself doing this job? What experiences or knowledge could I bring to this job?

### Directions for Professional

Helping your client prepare for this activity will likely take time, and may include practice sessions on how to make requests and follow up.

### Debrief

Invite your client to talk about what they learned through their observations. If they're interested in pursuing a job similar to the one they observed, help them draw connections between the job requirements and their own experiences.

# Support through transition: Encouraging, coaching, supporting, advising through transition



## Suggested Discussions

### 1. Finding Community

This discussion encourages your client to think about where they might find support within their contacts and/or cultural community, and how they might access that support effectively.

- **Questions to Ask:** Who do you trust? Who provides you with support already, and who might also be supportive? How are your current supporters helping you? What kinds of support would you find helpful right now? What kinds of support might be helpful in terms of job search specifically? How can you go about asking for support? How important is community to you? What does your community look like?
- **Important Because:** Ongoing community support is not only vital to well-being, it can also help with networking for job search, especially in cases where community members with professional ties can serve as contacts.

### 2. Check-ins, Encouragement, & Job Search Support

This discussion belongs in all regular meetings throughout your client's job search, and consists of talking through steps taken thus far so that your client can tell stories, receive support, and ask questions in order to understand the job search process fully.

- **Questions to Ask:** How is your job search going? How does it feel to be taking these steps? Do you have any questions? Do you have any upcoming meetings for which you would like to practice what to say?
- **Important Because:** Providing a safe support structure through change can help clients stay positive, especially when they know they have a place to go to learn about a job search culture that may at times seem overwhelming.

### 3. Canadian Workplace Norms

The purpose of this discussion is to help your client sort out some of the cultural differences between Canada and their home country, specifically with regard to workplace culture.

- **Questions to Ask:** Are you encountering any practices in your work (or job search) that seem confusing? What are some common cultural practices around work in your country? How do people act at work? How do co-workers interact with one another? What actions are considered rude? What actions are considered polite?
- **Sample Topics:** Physical norms (e.g. eye contact, handshakes, smiles), workplace expectations (e.g. when to ask questions, when to challenge the boss, politeness), interactions with co-workers (e.g. rapport-building, socializing at work, staff parties).
- **Important Because:** In order to find and maintain employment, clients to learn what's expected of them in the workplace, and how to navigate a series of social and cultural norms effectively.

### 4. Dealing with Racism

This discussion becomes important when your client shares an experience of racism, or when you sense that they may be encountering some form of racism or immigration bias in their job search or work. They might experience overt racism and/or microaggressions, or at times they may experience negative treatment and question the extent to which race was a factor in how they were treated. Do not try to brush off or explain away these experiences. Instead, allow your client to process, vent, and respond to their experiences, validate their fears and frustrations, name the injustice, and refer to additional supports if appropriate.

- **Questions to Ask:** What did you experience? How has this experience affected you? How would you like to respond? What do you need in order to move forward?
- **Important Because:** Clients who are new to Canada are vulnerable to racism and discrimination. A client's vulnerability is amplified if English/French is not their first language, and is further amplified if they are female, racially visible, LGBTQ+, and/or living with a disability. It is important for professionals to be aware that issues around social (in)justice will arise, to provide a non-judgemental safe space for clients, and to help clients connect with communities in which they feel supported and understood.



## Suggested Activities

# 1. Interview Preparation & Practice

### Instructions:

- Thinking about your own work experience, write down the following: 3 strength areas, 1 challenge that you've overcome, 3 examples of "good work" (i.e. work you've done that you're proud of).
- Find a job posting that represents the kind of job you'd like to interview for.
- Imagine a few questions that an employer might ask, then think about how you might answer these questions, drawing from your notes.

### Directions for Professional

You may need to guide your client through these initial steps, but once they've identified their strengths and success stories, play the role of interviewer and take them through a mock interview. Remind your client that the more they practice interviewing, the more prepared they will be to answer all kinds of different questions.

### Debrief

During the initial preparation stage, encourage your client to draw from what they've learned through Self-Exploration. Debrief the mock interviews by reviewing each question and discussing responses. Make sure that your client delivers their ideas and answers clearly. Remember that the goal is effective communication, not perfect English.

# 2. Community Connection

### Instructions:

- Identify people in your cultural community who are established and working in Canada. If no one local comes to mind, you may need to reach out via the internet.
- Choose one person, and ask if they'd be willing to meet with you for 30 minutes to talk about their transition into the Canadian workforce.
- Prior to the meeting, create a list of questions. E.g. What challenges did you encounter and how did you solve them? What advice do you wish you'd received when you started this process?

- At the meeting, be sure to mention your own job goals in case your new contact is able to help.
- After the meeting, write down what you learned.

### Directions for Professional

Explain to your client the difference between an information interview and a regular interview. If your client is willing to reach out to their community members, encourage them to speak to a variety of people in order to obtain a more balanced perspective.

### Debrief

Many different insights can come from these conversations, especially with regard to the complexities of navigating a major transition. Invite your client to talk about what they learned. Emphasize stories of resilience as well as stories that exemplify the length of time it takes to adapt to a new culture.

# Future thinking: Helping clients think ahead, anticipate future challenges, and strategize around how to respond



## Suggested Discussions

### 1. Envisioning a Successful Transition

The purpose of this discussion is to help your client envision a positive future - one that will signify to them that they've transitioned completely to a life in Canada.

- **Questions to Ask:** What do you want your life to look like in 3, 5, 10 years? What will a successful transition to Canada look like for you? What will signal to you that you are safe and settled? How will you know when this transition is complete? Who will be with you?
- **Important Because:** A positive vision of the future can provide hope and motivation, even when life is difficult and challenging in the present.

### 2. Geographic Location

This discussion applies to clients who intend to move to a different location in Canada.

- **Questions to Ask:** What brought you to this particular town/city? Where you want to live in the future? What factors are important to you in choosing a place to live? What can we do now to support this next transition (e.g. learn more about the new location, connect with people who have lived there, etc.)?
- **Important Because:** Clients who are newcomers may consider their initial point of arrival to be their first stop, and not their final destination. They might have relatives in other parts of Canada, or they might wish to relocate to a smaller town or a larger city at some point down the road. While these clients will likely have many immediate needs, they may also require support in moving toward future goals - and locations.





## Suggested Activities

### 1. Transition Role Model

**Instructions:**

- Think of someone who arrived in Canada as a newcomer, and transitioned in a way that you admire. They don't have to be from your specific cultural community, and you don't need to know them personally.
- Answer the following questions: What's their story and why are you drawn to it? What is it about their experience that you find so appealing?

**Directions for Professional**

Invite your client to tell you an inspiring story. If your client is visual/artistic, you may encourage them to create a collage of inspiring words and pictures of their role model, in order to help them stay focused on what they want.

**Debrief**

Use the inspiring story to help your client envision their own ideal future.

# Mental health: Providing support around mental health and well-being issues as they relate to career



## Suggested Discussions

### 1. Culture Shock

If your client is new to Canada, they are very likely experiencing culture shock (i.e. the natural anxiety that comes from being surrounded by the unfamiliar), and supporting them may consist of normalizing culture shock and the ways in which it pervades everyday experiences. Name the “shock” regularly. Encourage your client to identify those aspects of life in Canada that they find most “shocking.” Encourage them to seek out things (spaces, foods, books) that feel familiar, and to create familiar routines.

### 2. Trauma

Your client may have experienced trauma, depending on their life circumstances and/or on the circumstances of their transition to Canada. Some signs of trauma include disordered thinking, resistance, hyper-attention (over focusing), and hypo-attention (inability to focus). Ensure that your space is welcoming to those who might have experienced trauma (e.g. create a calming space with soothing colours and decorations, ensure that the door is within your client’s line of vision so that they don’t feel trapped, ask open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions). Avoid making assumptions about who may or may not be suffering from the effects of trauma, and continue your own learning around trauma-informed practice. Refer to additional supports if appropriate.

### **3. Grief and Loss**

Grief and loss are expected parts of a newcomer's transition to Canada. Normalize grief, and provide space for your client to talk about who and what they miss from home. Instead of asking deeply probing questions, invite your client to tell their loss story if they wish. Allow clients to identify and define losses for themselves.

### **4. Weight of Responsibility for Others/Anxiety of Needing Everything to Work Out**

In some cases, clients may have family members in their countries of origin who are relying on them to be successful, send money home, bring them to Canada. The weight of this responsibility can cause anxiety as clients wait to see how events will unfold. Many clients may be relieved to come into a space in which they can express their fears and concerns.

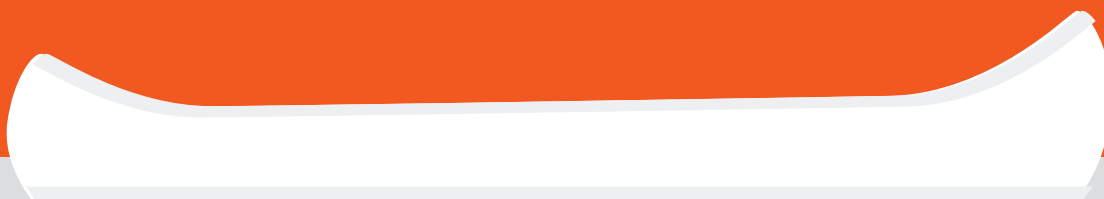
# Mental health: Steps for the Professional

1. Use scaling questions to evaluate feelings and symptoms. (E.g. “On a scale of 1–10, how anxious are you feeling?”)
2. Support your client in learning more about their issues through local or online groups, blogs, articles, or podcasts.
3. Support your client in identifying when they need to see a doctor for prescriptions, refills, medication adjustments, checkups, changes in symptoms, etc.
4. Provide information as needed/requested on accessible mental health services, including crisis lines and counselling resources.





# Appendices



For a full version of the Guiding Principles infographic, see Appendix D.

# Values checklist

<p><b>Achievement</b></p> <p>Accomplishing something noteworthy in work and life</p>	<p><b>Advancement</b></p> <p>Moving into positions of increasing responsibility</p>	<p><b>Adventure</b></p> <p>Doing things that involve risk-taking and exploration</p>	<p><b>Aesthetics</b></p> <p>Making things beautiful &amp; enjoying beauty</p>
<p><b>Belonging</b></p> <p>Feeling connected to a group of people or an organization</p>	<p><b>Change and Variety</b></p> <p>Engaging in activities that often change</p>	<p><b>Competition</b></p> <p>Being energized by competing with others</p>	<p><b>Continuous Learning</b></p> <p>Learning new things throughout one's career/life</p>
<p><b>Creativity</b></p> <p>Creating new ideas and projects that have not yet been developed</p>	<p><b>Fantasy/Play</b></p> <p>Experiencing unrestrained imagination and personal amusement</p>	<p><b>Friendship</b></p> <p>Developing close personal relationships with others</p>	<p><b>Helping Others</b></p> <p>Helping others directly, individually or in groups</p>
<p><b>Helping Society</b></p> <p>Contributing to the betterment of the world</p>	<p><b>Independence</b></p> <p>Working without direction; deciding what to do and how to do it</p>	<p><b>Influence</b></p> <p>Being in a position to change people's attitudes and opinions</p>	<p><b>Intellectual Status</b></p> <p>Being regarded by others as an expert</p>
<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>Finding a place to live (town, geographic area) that matches my lifestyle</p>	<p><b>Moral Fulfillment</b></p> <p>Feeling that my work matches my personal moral standards</p>	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <p>Being organized; making things more orderly</p>	<p><b>Physical Challenge</b></p> <p>Doing things that involve movement and strength</p>
<p><b>Power and Authority</b></p> <p>Having control over the activities of others</p>	<p><b>Problem Solving</b></p> <p>Finding solutions to complex problems and challenges</p>	<p><b>Recognition</b></p> <p>Being recognized publicly for my work &amp; accomplishments</p>	<p><b>Risk Taking</b></p> <p>Engaging in activities that involve calculated risks</p>
<p><b>Stability</b></p> <p>Being in situations that are largely predictable and not likely to change very much</p>	<p><b>Status</b></p> <p>Occupying roles that carry status and respect within society</p>	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p>Having large amounts of money and/or possessions</p>	

## Appendix B

# List of transferable skills

### ■ Communication

- Speaking effectively
- Writing concisely
- Listening attentively
- Expressing ideas
- Facilitating group discussions
- Providing appropriate feedback
- Negotiating
- Perceiving nonverbal messages
- Persuading
- Reporting information
- Describing feelings
- Interviewing
- Editing

### ■ Research and Planning

- Forecasting, predicting
- Creating ideas
- Identifying problems
- Imagining alternatives
- Identifying resources
- Gathering information
- Solving problems
- Setting goals
- Extracting important information
- Defining needs
- Analyzing
- Developing evaluation strategies

### ■ Organization, Management, and Leadership

- Initiating new ideas
- Handling details
- Coordinating tasks
- Managing groups
- Delegating responsibility
- Teaching
- Coaching
- Counseling
- Promoting change
- Selling ideas or products
- Decision making with others
- Managing conflict



### ■ Work Survival

- Implementing decisions
- Cooperating
- Enforcing policies
- Being punctual
- Managing time
- Attending to detail
- Meeting goals
- Enlisting help
- Accepting responsibility
- Setting and meeting deadlines
- Organizing
- Making decisions

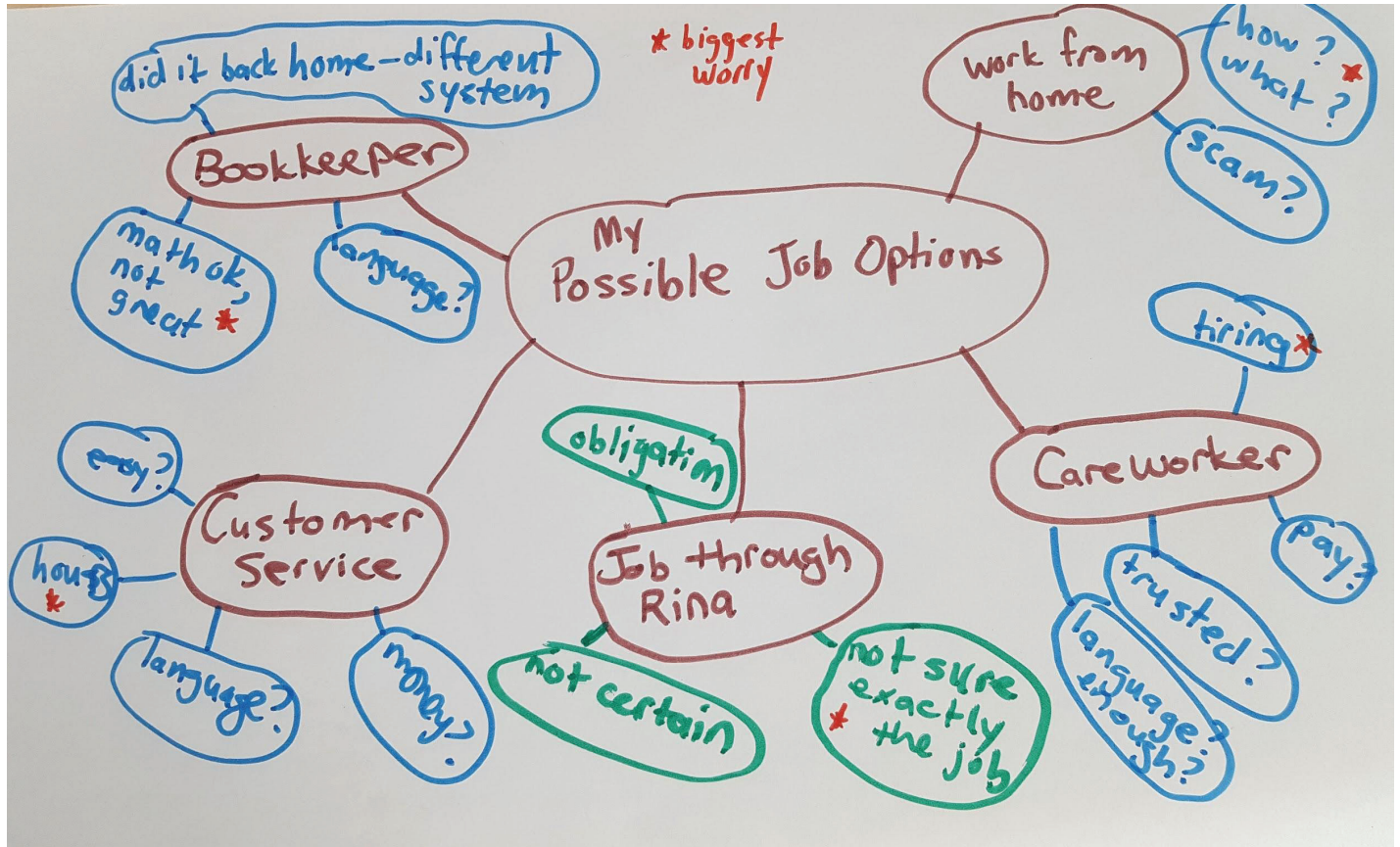
### ■ Human Relations

- Developing rapport
- Being Sensitive
- Listening
- Asserting
- Providing support for others
- Motivating
- Sharing credit
- Counseling
- Cooperating
- Delegating with respect
- Representing others
- Perceiving feelings, situations

(Source: [http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable\\_skills\\_set.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_set.html))

## Appendix C

# Mind map example



# Guiding Principles of Career Development

## Guiding Principles of Career Development



THE WORD "CAREER" COMES FROM THE LATIN FOR CART OR CHARIOT (CARRUS), A MEANS TO CARRY YOU FROM ONE POINT TO ANOTHER. A CAREER IS ABOUT THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LEAD – NOT JUST A JOB, OCCUPATION OR PROFESSION. IT INVOLVES DECIDING AMONG POSSIBLE AND PREFERRED FUTURES. IT ANSWERS: "WHO DO I WANT TO BE IN THE WORLD?," "WHAT KIND OF LIFESTYLE AM I SEEKING?" AND "HOW CAN I MAKE AN IMPACT?"

AS CANADIANS, WE LIKE THE METAPHOR OF A CANOE TO REPRESENT OUR CAREERS – WE USE IT ON OUR JOURNEY, WE STOCK IT WITH THE TOOLS WE NEED, AND WE PROACTIVELY STEER IT TO OUR DESTINATION; SOMETIMES WE FACE RAPIDS, AND AS CONDITIONS CHANGE SO MIGHT OUR COURSE.



### PURPOSE

THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO BRING GREATER CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY TO OUR NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CAREER DEVELOPMENT. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES UNDERPIN CERIC'S VISION TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WEALTH OF CANADIANS THROUGH CAREER COUNSELLING AND CAREER EDUCATION. THEY ARE A STARTING POINT TO INFORM DISCUSSIONS WITH CLIENTS, EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY-MAKERS, FAMILIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, AND A BASIS FOR COLLABORATION.

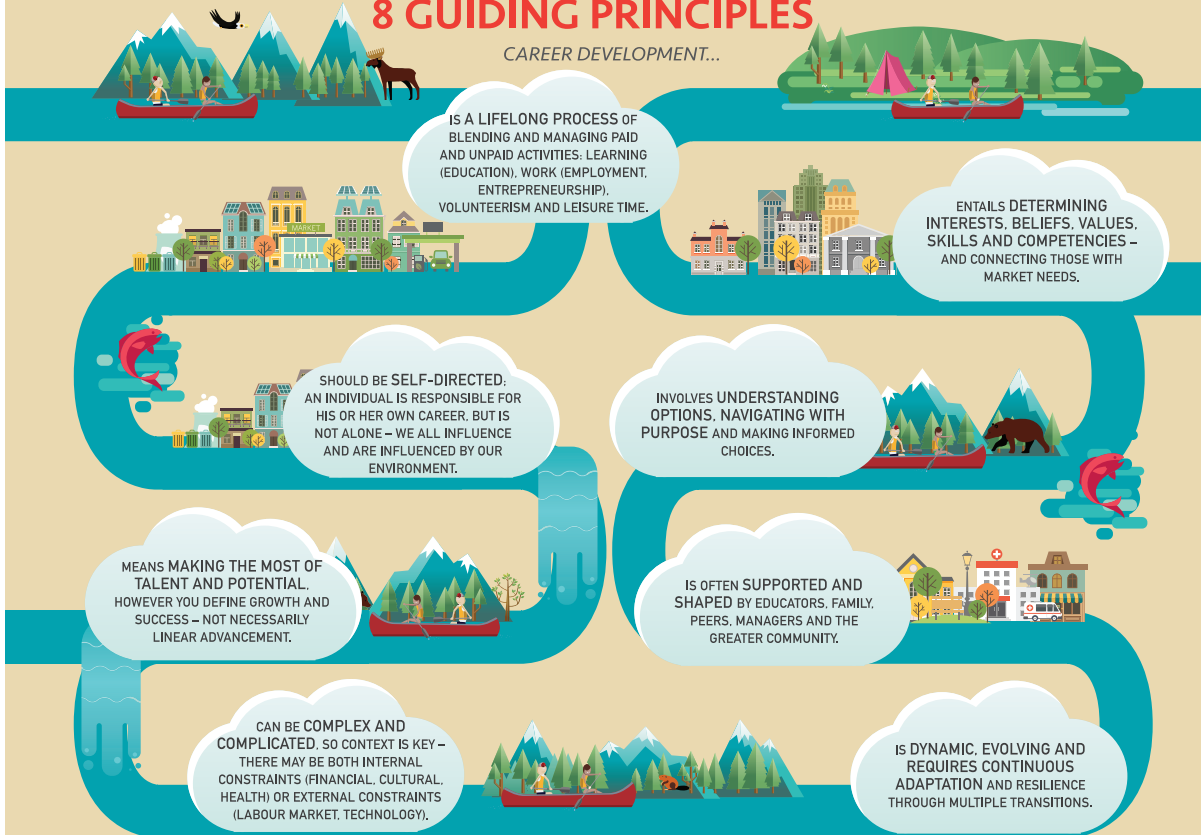
### BENEFITS

RESEARCH SHOWS CAREER DEVELOPMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH MANY EDUCATIONAL, SOCIETAL AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS. INDIVIDUALS REALIZE GREATER WELL-BEING AND SATISFACTION IN LIFE. SCHOOLS LIFT STUDENT SUCCESS AND GRADUATION RATES. ORGANIZATIONS FILL SKILLS GAPS AND IMPROVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY. GOVERNMENTS REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT, BOOST SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC GROWTH. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF AN INCREASINGLY FREELANCE ECONOMY AND THE RAPIDLY SHIFTING NATURE OF WORK, CAREER DEVELOPMENT MATTERS MORE THAN EVER.



## 8 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CAREER DEVELOPMENT...



THESE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT REFLECT MULTIPLE VOICES FROM CERIC. CERIC

[ceric.ca/principles](http://ceric.ca/principles)

# CERIC further resources: Where can I find more information?

We have provided a basic overview of circumstances you may encounter when working with newcomers to Canada, as well as some accessible discussion questions and activities. At this point, you may wish to go deeper, and to gather more information. The CERIC website contains a rich array of career development resources:

- For information specific to working with refugees, check out the following resource bibliography: **<https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/refugees-career-development-issues/>**
- CareerWise by CERIC is an ongoing initiative that provides up-to-date career related news and information. Visit **<https://careerwise.ceric.ca/>** to subscribe, browse, or conduct a site search on “refugees,” “immigrants,” “newcomers,” “transition,” etc.
- For additional information that is primarily research based, try a similar search through the Canadian Journal of Career Development archives: **<http://cjcdonline.ca/>**
- CERIC’s publications page features a wide range of resources pertaining to career development theory and practice: **<https://ceric.ca/publications/>**

# About the authors



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Karen Schaffer is the author of three books on careers (*Hire Power*, *The Job of Your Life*, and *The Complete Book of Resumes*) and writes screenplays in her spare time. She has been a Career Counsellor for over 20 years, for the last 10 at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and is currently doing narrative research in the career development field. Karen holds an MA in Counselling Psychology from the Adler School.



## ■ Juliana Wiens

Juliana Wiens is a Registered Counselling Therapist (RCT) with experience in career development, counselling, facilitation, management, research, and writing. She is currently employed as a Career Counsellor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Juliana holds an MEd in Counselling from Acadia and an MA in Women's Studies from Dalhousie. She is passionate about helping others navigate meaningful career paths, and is happiest when the sun is shining.





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