

# **Working Words**

## **Employment Skills for Aboriginal Youth**

A Curriculum Resource Package

April 1998

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## **Employment Skills for Aboriginal Youth**

*Developed by:*

**The Native Education Centre  
Vancouver, BC**

*Developed for the:*

**Province of British Columbia  
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training  
and the National Literacy Secretariat**

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## **Welcome to Students**

Is it better for me to go to school or to look for work? If you do not know the answer to that question, this may be a good program for you. This booklet is about learning job skills and real schoolwork at the same time.

### Jobs

It is hard to get a good job without going to school. We picked four good jobs that you can do without a diploma. With the lessons in this book, you can learn some of the basic skills for these jobs. At the same time you will be reading, writing, talking and solving problems. You can decide at any time to stay in school or to get a job.

### Culture

Aboriginal culture can be a source of strength for you. Your culture can help you understand yourself and the value of work in your life. It is important to see work as one part of your whole life, not something that is separate from it. Along with career skills, you will be involved in activities that help you become more aware of yourself and your culture. We call these cultural skills.

### Balance

The medicine wheel teaches us that life is a cycle of growth. To keep growing, your life needs to have balance and harmony. You must balance work time with family time, community time and individual time. The medicine wheel also teaches us that everyone has four parts to their being: the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. To live a balanced life, you need to make decisions that help you meet your needs.

### Experience

You may think that you cannot get a job because you do not have the skills or qualities that employers are looking for. Most people, though, have some life experience that can help them get a job. For example, you may have a lot of experience looking after children. This means that you have learned how to be patient, creative and responsible. You may have also learned skills like how to manage conflicts and deal with stressful situations.

### Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. If you like who you are and feel confident about your skills and abilities, then you have a high self-esteem. High self-esteem is one of the most important things you need when looking for work. Good things will happen to you if you think positively about yourself and know that you have something of value to offer an employer. Employers like people who are confident and positive.

### Community

Some people may feel alone when they are trying to make changes in their lives. When you are looking for work, remember that you are not alone. Your family and friends can be your biggest supporters. You can talk to elders and other people in your community. They can help you understand yourself and the direction of your life.

## **Introduction to Employment Literacy**

With more than half of the Aboriginal population in Canada under the age of 25, it is vital that Aboriginal youth are given the skills and support to manage the direction of their lives and careers. In today's labour market, where it is increasingly necessary to possess basic academic skills, many Aboriginal youth have limited access to employment.

While many youth experience a period of transition from formal schooling to the labour market, most Aboriginal youth have never experienced an effective and appropriate education. Therefore, many Aboriginal youth face limited literacy skills and severe restrictions in the labour market.

Employment Literacy is a new concept in education that will provide Aboriginal youth with both basic academic skills and workplace knowledge to help secure and maintain employment. More importantly, the project helps Aboriginal youth develop a sense of their place in the world around them. Activities develop skills not only for survival, but also for personal and professional transformation.

Working Words presents employment training in a way that is culturally relevant to Aboriginal youth. In Aboriginal education, knowledge is acquired through experience and learning is situated within a big picture. There is a personal and cultural connection to the work and relationships are warm and respectful of personal differences.

In workplace literacy, learning relates directly to daily work; developing vocabulary, practicing tasks, role playing interactions and 'learning to do' rather than 'doing to learn.' This program models four jobs which youth may enter with a less than high school graduation. Working Words develops the language and skills needed to work in these areas. General employability skills will also provide some of the basic skills for surviving in a working environment.

The instructor's role is to help students envision their life using a culturally relevant approach. Integrating Aboriginal cultural principles into employment training requires instructors to take a holistic approach. The medicine wheel is one concept that can illustrate how jobs and a career are part of a connected, balanced life.

Counsellors and instructors must be aware of the conscious and unconscious cultural influences that affect how youth react. Some Aboriginal youth may be close to traditional cultural values while others may hold mixed cultural values and beliefs. Still other youth may not have any identification with their Aboriginal cultural traditions.

In delivering the material in Working Words, instructors also need to be sensitive to the developmental needs of youth. The material and activities should reflect the role of youth within extended families and Aboriginal communities. A search for identity and the importance of peer groups are essential issues that all youth may be dealing with at this time in their life.

Aboriginal youth in the city are under pressure to accept the cultural values and expectations of the dominant culture. They may also view family, home and community as the center of their existence, rather than job or career. The frustration of living within a culture with different values and beliefs opens many Aboriginal youth to feelings of alienation and often anger.

An instructor can assess the students' level of cultural identification and incorporate traditional cultural perspective throughout this program. Asking students to share their cultural knowledge is a better approach than trying to be an expert on the great variety of Aboriginal culture. Instructors will learn protocol issues and traditional cultural knowledge from their students.

### Suggested Training Schedule

The material in this resource package has been designed for a 14 week training program. Each week, participants are guided through activities in three areas: Career Skills, Cultural Skills and Employment Skills. The following is an outline of the training topics for each week of the program.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Career Skills</b>	<b>Cultural Skills</b>	<b>Employment Skills</b>
1	Introduction	Family Tree	Work World
2	Food Counter Assistant	Personal Needs	Workplace Behaviour
3		Cultural Identity	Employment Standards
4		Elders & Role Models	Human Rights
5	Security	Gifts Assessment	Customer Service
6		Visioning	Speaking & Listening
7		Expressing Feelings	Personal Wellness
8	Cleaner	Cultural Comunic'n	Problem Solving
9		Personal Identity	Time Management
10		Visioning	Lifelong Learning
11	Recreation & Travel Attendant	Talking Circle	Multi-task Priorities
12		Drum Making	Teamwork
13		Career Path	Managing Money
14		Video Journal	Skills Inventory

# Career Skills

[Food Counter Assistant](#)

[Security](#)

[Cleaner](#)

[Recreation & Travel Attendant](#)

# Food Counter Assistant

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this section, the learner will be able to ...

1. Take customer orders and serve customers at food counters.
2. Prepare sandwiches, milkshakes and similar items.
3. Professionally clean tables, trays and food preparation surfaces.
4. Replenish condiments and other supplies for sandwich counters, salad bars and other food preparation and serving areas.
5. Describe basic food handling procedures and the role of cleanliness and hygiene.
6. Read food labels and follow instructions appropriately.
7. Correctly read and describe nutrition and ingredient labels.
8. Answer common customer ~on on sample menus and ingredients.
9. Describe common food allergies and the causes of food poisoning.
10. Estimate food supply quantities and the number of portions.
11. Describe the basic principles of customer service.
12. Describe the main areas of the food service industry from small to large operations.

## Suggested Activities

1. Operate the school lunch counter demonstrating good customer service and food preparation techniques.
2. Survey various food counter operations and develop a vocabulary list of menu items, ingredients and food preparation equipment.
3. Operate a made-to-order sandwich counter demonstrating good customer service and food preparation techniques.
4. Survey various food counter operations and develop a vocabulary list of menu items, ingredients and food preparation equipment.

## Suggested Resources

1. Job Futures  
([www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/664/664.html](http://www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/664/664.html))
2. California Occupational Guide  
([www.calmis.cahwnet.gov/file/occguide/KITHELP.TXT](http://www.calmis.cahwnet.gov/file/occguide/KITHELP.TXT))

# Security

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this section, the learner will be able to

1. Describe protocols relating to access to secured buildings and sites.
2. Provide excellent customer service by becoming aware of peoples' needs.
3. Assist visitors to find their way in buildings and complexes.
4. Patrol areas to prevent theft, vandalism and fire.
5. Respond appropriately to emergency security situations.
6. Describe the main employers in security including jobs such as guards, attendants and concierges.
7. Enforce rules at public events and in public spaces in a professional and appropriate manner.
8. Receive urgent telephone messages and take appropriate action.
9. Write a brief incident reports for security situations.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of schedules and shift logs.
11. Describe the use of equipment for mobile communication and monitoring parking.
12. Observe and describe the personal characteristics of people for recognition.
13. Describe situations where it is appropriate to take orders, give orders and ask for help.

## Suggested Activities

1. Tour a large airport and gather information on security procedures.
2. Tour a large sports facility to research protocol for handling large crowds.
3. Make a 'You Are Here' building directory map for your school or a local college.
4. Develop job descriptions for different types of parking attendants.
5. Role play customer service and security situations

## Suggested Resources

1. Job Futures

([www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/665/665.html](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/665/665.html))

# Cleaner

## Learning Outcomes

After completion of this section, the learner will be able to...

1. Describe bacteria and outline general procedures for disinfecting surfaces.
2. Describe the role of common types of mechanical cleaning equipment (eg. power washers, leaf blowers, vacuum cleaners).
3. List the names of cleaning jobs in the transportation, tourism, recreation, retail, health and manufacturing industries.
4. Read daily, weekly and monthly instruction sheets and prioritize tasks.
5. Read cleaning product labels, including chemical safety information.
6. Handle cleaning solutions appropriately.
7. Follow procedures for measuring and mixing cleaning solutions - proportions.
8. Read signs and symbols warning of various dangers.
9. Describe the personal health issues and environmental impact of cleaning products.
10. Perform basic security and information services such as giving directions, answering often asked questions and asking visitors for identification when a situation calls for such action.
11. Describe the role of the employment standards in setting working conditions and work schedules.

## Suggested Activities

1. Develop a job description for housekeeping staff for a large hotel. Determine what cleaning equipment is used.
2. Research the recommended procedure for cleaning a whirlpool bath and do a demonstration for the class.
3. Act as a short-term apprentice with the maintenance staff of the school and make a report on the daily tasks and cleaning equipment used.
4. Hold a class car wash, ordering equipment from a janitorial supply catalogue and charging enough to cover costs and to buy participants a small gift.
5. Arrange a tour of a large institution such as a hospital or university and speak with human resources and cleaning staff
6. Plan and implement a one-day carpet cleaning service using a rented steam cleaner.

## Suggested Resources

1. Job Futures  
([www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/666/666.html](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/666/666.html))
2. California Occupational Guide  
([www.calmis.cahwnet.gov/file/occguides/LAUNDRY.TXT](http://www.calmis.cahwnet.gov/file/occguides/LAUNDRY.TXT))

# Recreation & Travel Attendant

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this section, the learner will be able to:

1. Calculate the price of goods, services and applicable taxes.
2. Total bills, make change and handle cash efficiently.
3. Describe the use of cash, cheques, credit cards and debit cards.
4. Calculate the value of bills in American currency.
5. Read schedules of recreational programs.
6. Provide information on recreational services and schedules.
7. Describe the basic principles of good customer service.
8. Demonstrate effective telephone skills.
9. Escort and assist people to access facilities.

## Suggested Activities

1. Research the services of a medium or large recreational facility and compile information on their fees, schedules, history, plans and upcoming events.  
Examples of facilities are: amusement parks, stadiums, arenas, community centres, fitness centres, parks or ski resorts.
2. Become an apprentice to a person in your school or college who greets the public and provides information.
3. Put on a tournament (cribbage, tiddly-winks?) and charge a small entry fee, write out the rules, define the tasks and practice skills, pre-plan a peer feedback process. Don't forget to award a prize to the winner.
4. Collect information on events at a large local venue and use a wheel diagram to show their annual schedule of events (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter).
5. Research a list of 100 things to do in your area and have each learner make a brief presentation on the one category of recreation such as outdoor, aquatic, amusements or team sports.

## Suggested Resources

1. SuperHost exercises developed by the BC Ministry of Tourism
2. Sports and Entertainment information in the Yellow Pages and newspapers
3. Municipal recreation department brochures and web sites  
([www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/index.html](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/index.html))
4. Articles on security issues for attendants, fee collectors
5. Occupational information for recreation attendants
6. Job postings for recreation attendants
7. Information from ticket sales bureaus
8. Job Futures ([www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/667/667.html](http://www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/667/667.html))

# Cultural Skills

[Family Tree Activity](#)

[Personal Needs Wheel](#)

[Cultural Identity Workshop](#)

[Elders & Role Models](#)

[Positive Gifts Assessment](#)

[Visioning Workshop](#)

[Expressing Feelings](#)

[Cultural Communication](#)

[Personal Identity Workshop](#)

[Visioning](#)

[Talking Circle](#)

[Drum Making](#)

[Personal Career Path](#)

[Video Journals](#)

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[Previous](#)

[Cover](#)

[Next](#)

## **Family Tree Activity**

Create a diagram of a tree to show your extended family. Label some of the branches of tree as your brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins. Label some of the ancestor that form the trunk of the tree. Share some of your family ties with your class. You may want to build a genealogy chart to show all of your family.

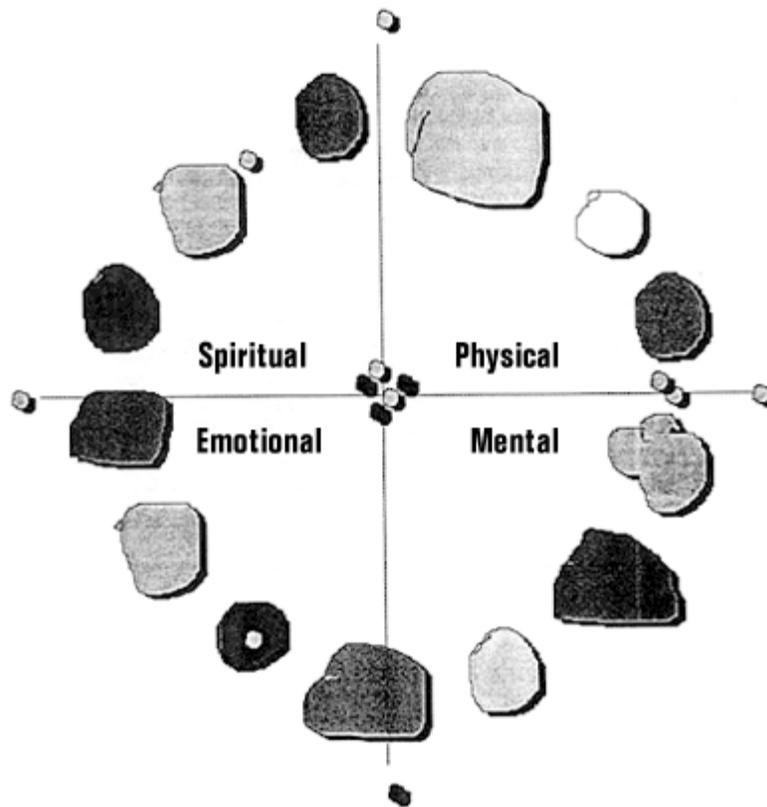
## Personal Needs

Most adults meet their personal and family needs by working. Everyone has emotional, mental, spiritual and physical needs. Working can meet your physical need for a home and good food. It can also be a place to feel confidence in yourself or the satisfaction of helping others. You need to use your body, mind, heart and soul to do a job really well. Complete the following medicine wheel activity to look at how you can meet your personal needs.

### A Medicine Wheel Activity

#### Balancing Your Needs

Beside each of the four quadrants of the medicine wheel diagram below write some examples of your personal needs. Where would you place your need for clean drinking water? Computer knowledge? Respect on the job? When you have written some of your needs in each quadrant, circle the personal needs that are better met by working than being unemployed?



## School and Work

This is a story about a mother who made a career decision to go back to school. She realized that in order to get a good job she needed more education. Read the story carefully and think about the reasons you came back to school.

*I came back to school so that I could learn more about words. You need a good education to get a good job. I can't read I came back to school because I have a three-year-old boy who will be starting school in two years. I'm scared that if he comes home and asks me what some word means I won't be able to tell him.*

*In most jobs now, you need reading, writing, and math abilities to do a good job. I really like math. I'm glad that I'm back in school to help myself and my children. When I'm finished school I would like to get a good job, and I would like to move out of this town to look for a good job. I talk to people and them that I couldn't read so I went back to school and it helped me a lot. There are a lot of people I know who can not read or write their own name, Some of the people I know are back in school and working very hard to help themselves. I'm very proud of them and myself.*

*There is another reason I came back to school. I quit school in grade eight. That was about five years ago. I wanted to become a police officer. They told me that I would have to get a lot of reading, writing, and math skills to do that. Every person should have a goal in life. My goal in life is to become a police officer. I have a long way to go to meet my goal. I will work very hard to do that. My advice to others is, don't feel embarrassed to tell anyone that you can't read. Go back to school.*

***Verda Cardinal***

**Write answers to the following questions after you discuss them with someone:**

1. What were Verda Cardinal's reasons for going back to school?
2. What are your reasons for being in this program?

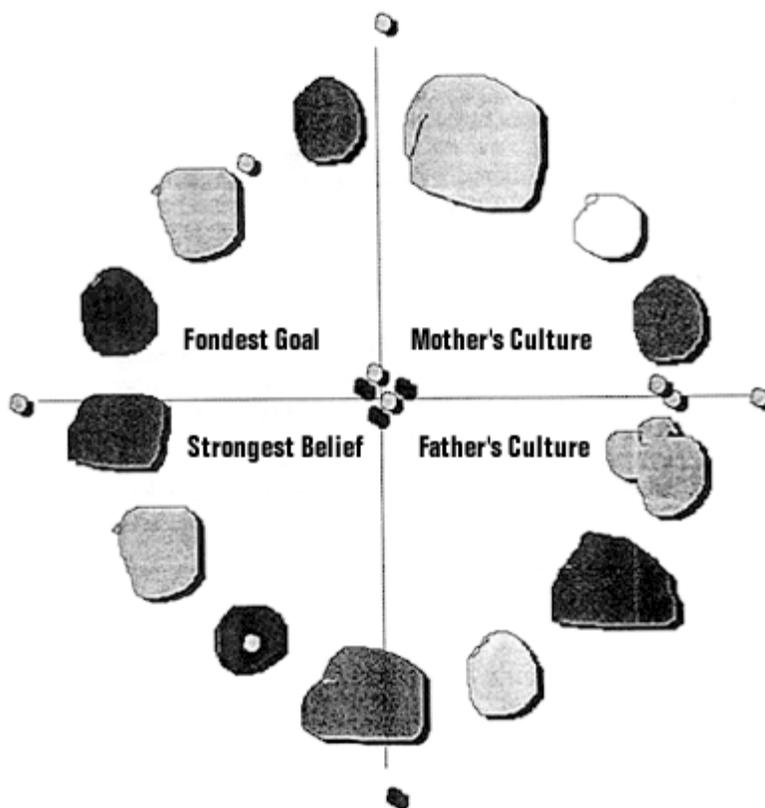
## Cultural Identity Workshop

Do all people have a culture? Are some people more connected to their culture than others? Culture is difficult to define. Cultural identity is easier to pin down. Your cultural identity is how you identify yourself to others. Some of us may have a hereditary title, a clan or a nation. You may call yourself a person of mixed heritage, a First Nations person or an Indian. However you identify yourself, it is important that you see yourself as a strong person with valuable gifts and beliefs.

### A Medicine Wheel Activity

#### Cultural Coat of Arms

On a separate piece of paper make a medicine wheel like the one below. In each quadrant replace the words with a picture that you draw or cut out from a magazine. You will end up with a medicine wheel that is a symbol of you culture and identity.



## **Elders & Role Models**

Traditionally, elders are the role models for children and youth. Many people in the community acted as role models or mentors for children and youth. They would not tell young people what to do. Young people would learn by watching and doing. The whole community was as a role model for the youth. All the elders in the community set a good example for the young people to follow.

Mentors are good role models. Mentors are usually older, experienced people who can act as a guide or advisor for you. Mentors can be coworkers, but they are usually relatives or friends of your family. Mentors can help you to set and accomplish goals. They can show you the ropes and help you gain confidence. The basis of a mentoring relationship is respect.

"Who We Are: A Celebration of Aboriginal Youth" is a video about role models from across Canada. It shows how role models can inspire Aboriginal youth with education, careers and culture. The youth in the video are proud of their culture and concerned about its future.

### **Suggested Activities:**

1. Draw a family tree and include the skills and jobs of your family members. What level of traditional knowledge and schooling do your family members have?
2. Do a role play exercise where each person asks one other member of the group to be a mentor for them. The rule of this role play is you can not use the word 'mentor.'
3. Discuss the video "Who We Are." How do you think your career could benefit you and your community? Why is it important for Native youth to value their cultural uniqueness?
4. Invite an Aboriginal Elder to your class. Prepare yourselves before they arrive to each make a brief introduction of who you are and where you come from.

## Positive Gifts Assessment

### What gifts have you been given?

Our personal gifts may be personality strengths or skills that we have been taught. Here are some of the gifts that you may already be good at. These skills relate to many different types of employment. Circle the gifts that you have already been given.

Acting	Arranging	Building	Calculating	Checking	Collecting
Completing	Creating	Deciding	Drawing	Estimating	Explaining
Fixing	Following	Gathering	Getting	Giving	Handling
Helping	Identifying	Imagining	Informing	Judging	Keeping
Leading	Learning	Lifting	Making	Meeting	Memorizing
Negotiating	Observing	Operating	Organizing	Painting	Persuading
Preparing	Playing	Presenting	Promoting	Purchasing	Reading
Reducing	Risking	Selecting	Selling	Separating	Serving
Sharing	Solving	Speaking	Summarizing	Talking	Testing
Translating	Typing	Using	Washing	Weighing	Writing

### Gifts of the Four Directions

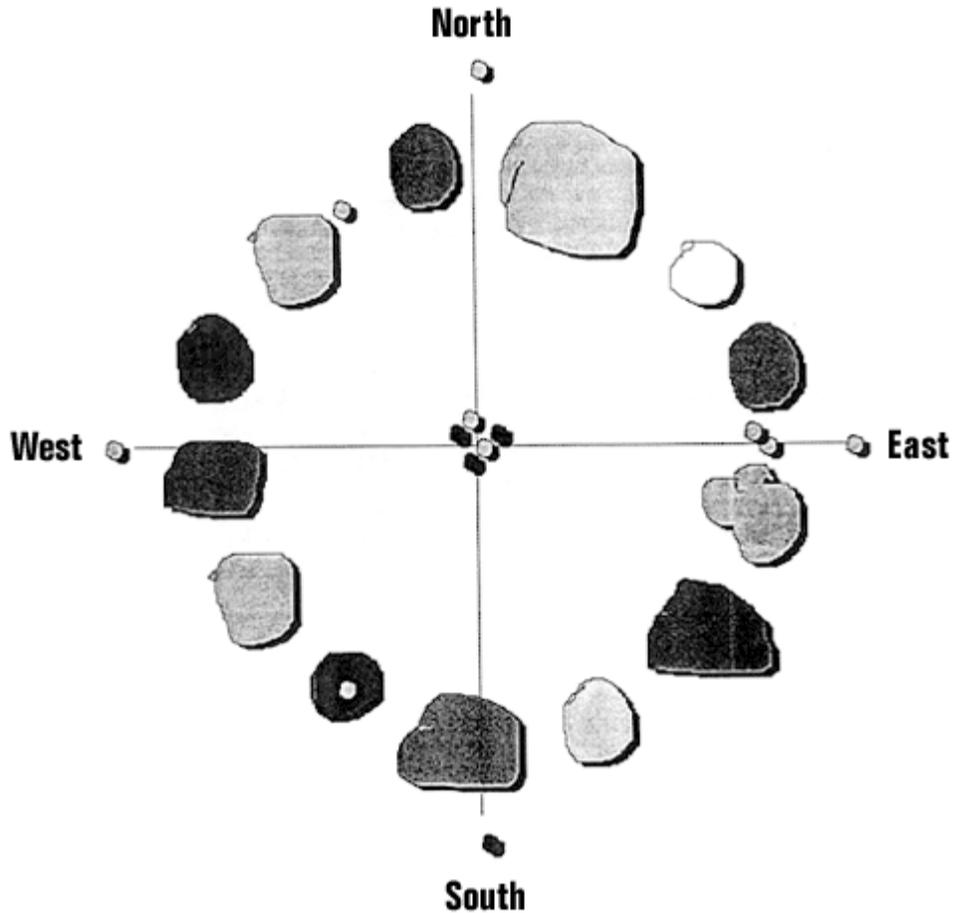
The Medicine Wheel teaches us that each of the four directions brings us different gifts or strengths. We need to balance these gifts to be truly strong. Use the list of gifts in the following table for the medicine wheel activity on the next page.

East	South	West	North
Innocence	Generosity	Perseverance	Wisdom
Hope	Sensitivity	Reflection	Understanding
Faith	Loyalty	Contemplation	Calculating
Trust	Love	Respect	Predicting
Service	Determination	Tolerance	Organizing
Acceptance	Gracefulness	Awareness	Analyzing
Courage	Idealism	Humility	Imagining
Truthfulness	Self-control	Commitment	Insight
Leadership	Passion	Self-awareness	Moderation
Guidance	Appreciation	Vision	Justice

## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### Balancing your Positive Gifts

The medicine wheel teaches us to look at the gifts of the four directions and to seek a balance from all directions. Each of the four directions has different gifts to offer. For example, the east is the direction where the sun rises and its gifts are rebirth and illumination. The south offers the gift of passion and warmth. Place the names of two gifts that you have been given into each of the quadrants of the wheel below. What are some of the areas that you may want to develop further in order to be more balanced in the future.



## Visioning Workshop

### Scoring your Life Goals

What are your goals? Most people want to be a good parent or a good friend. Some of us have ambitions to have a career or to help our community. The following story is about a woman whose goal is to get her ideal career. Read this story to help you think about your life goals.

### **What Education Means to Me**

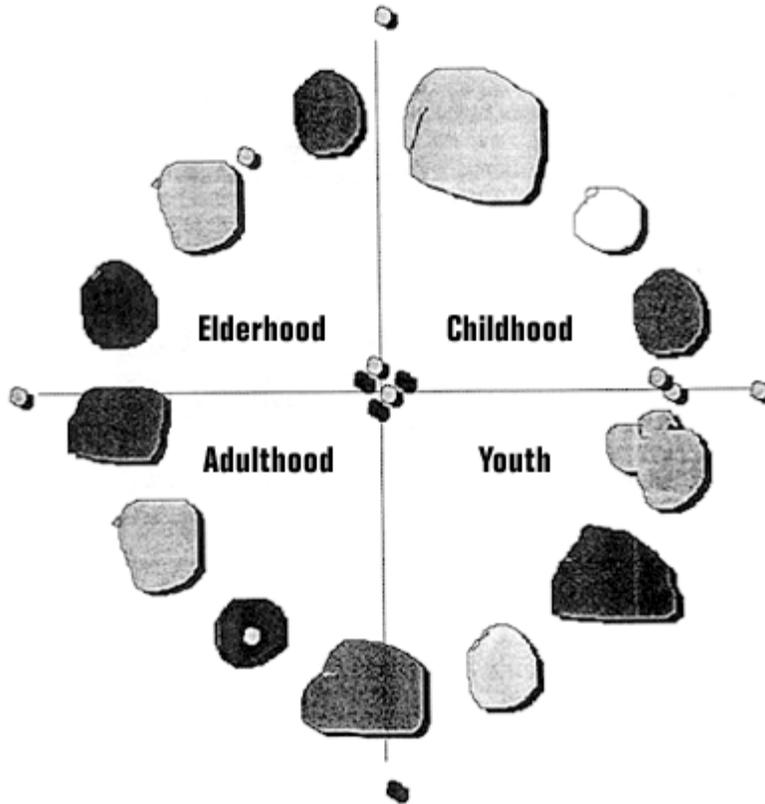
*I didn't have a chance to work much because I had a kid at such a young age. When my kid, Damian, was in school full time I took a really good look at myself and said, "I need to get my grade 12 and go out and accomplish my goals. " My goal is to become a self-contractor in construction. I am also interested in learning auto mechanics for my own satisfaction. A girlfriend told me about a school where I could go to get my education and accomplish my goals. Now, I am in school and doing just that. In another year or so I hope to have my grade 12. Then I will feel ready to work as a self-contractor. Now that I am going to school and working towards my goals, I am a good role model for Damian to finish his grade 12 and work towards his goals.*

*We all begin life as children who need protection and guidance. Children grow into youth that need encouragement and support. Youth grow into adults who continue to develop a deeper understanding of their inner self and the four elements. Adults grow into elders who understand the harmony and balance of life. As you grow, you will learn and develop new ideas about who you are. You will have visions about who you want to be. Your job interests, goals, ideas, and values will change as you grow and learn. Everyone has the potential to be successful if they focus on their goals.*

## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### Balancing Life Goals

Your goals may change as you grow and move through different cycles of your life. Beside each of the quadrants of this medicine wheel diagram, write some of the goals that you had or will have for each stage in life.



## Expressing Feelings

An emotion is a strong instinctive feeling such as love or fear. Can you name seven basic emotions? Different combinations of these emotions make up our feelings. Which of the following are emotions? Feelings? Thoughts? Actions?

1. You suspect that your brother is not home.
2. You are confused about a telephone bill.
3. You are delighted to see an old friend.
4. You wish you had not said something.
5. You ate a cookie that your sister was saving for her friend.
6. You decide to go swimming.
7. Your line-up at the supermarket is slower than all the other lines.
8. The bus you are on has no brakes.
9. The meal is delicious.
10. A neighbor is keeping you awake with loud music.

All of our emotions help us to experience life and our surroundings and to make us safe and comfortable. Emotions need to be balanced with the other aspects of our beings or we will not be healthy. Do we have control over our emotions in the same way we can nourish and develop our physical body?

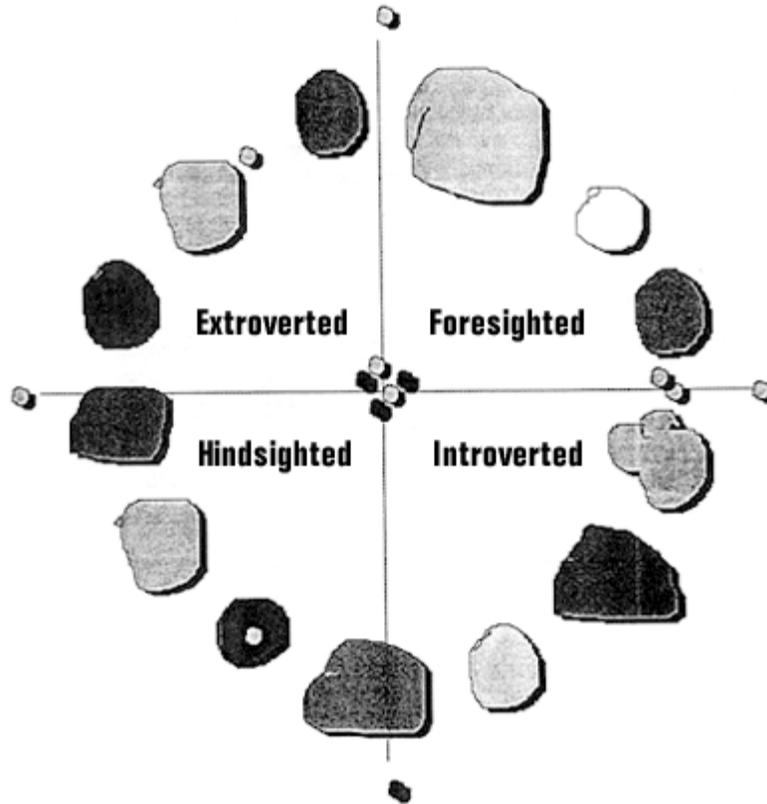
We all need to learn how to express our feelings in appropriate ways. This helps us to show respect for each other and to be respectful of ourselves. How we express our feelings is also linked to our personalities. Some people are very warm and open to others while other people are more reserved.

The following activity will help you examine some of your personality traits. Later you will participate in a talking circle to practice expressing your feelings.

## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### The Concept of Self

Aboriginal people believe that the self is the centre of the universe. All the personalities in the world appear on the sacred circle. The circle is You, the self. Using the medicine wheel below, describe some of your personality traits in each of the four quadrants shown in the wheel.



## Cultural Communication

Do you ever use some words or an expression that you learned from your mother? Can you imitate the communication style of some characters on TV programs? How much of your communication patterns are based on your background? It is difficult to generalize, however, First Nations people are often skilled at communicating in a way that has allowed them to live together in harmony in communities where everyone is related.

Most places of business expect employees to have a professional communication style. Speaking 'proper' or 'standard' English is often required. Most mainstream companies do not even realize that many people do not have the same values, lifestyles or communication patterns. Even if you do not speak an Aboriginal language, you may have learned some communication patterns that are different from professional expectations. You may need to be aware of these patterns to make sure that you can communicate effectively in your job.

Here are some examples of communication styles that could be related to a person's culture. Match the style in the left with a related but different style on the right. For each pair, try to pick one which best describes your communication style. How can a person who communicates with the styles on the left be clearly understood by a person who uses the style on the right?

<b>Repeating words or phrases for emphasis</b>	<b>Discussing people with others</b>
<b>Playing down your own abilities</b>	<b>Asking for an immediate response</b>
<b>Avoiding direct questions</b>	<b>Saying some words with great emphasis</b>
<b>Talking around a topic</b>	<b>Explaining the obvious</b>
<b>Having an unspoken agreement</b>	<b>Showing pride in your accomplishments</b>
<b>Taking your turn in a conversation</b>	<b>Initiating conversations</b>
<b>Being careful when talking about people</b>	<b>Focusing on one topic</b>
<b>Pausing for emphasis as you talk</b>	<b>Talking steadily and smoothly</b>
<b>Allowing others to express themselves</b>	<b>Talking until interrupted</b>

## Personal Identity Workshop

A person's identity is made up of

- Body awareness: how you experience your physical presence
- Self-concept: what you think about yourself and your potential
- Self-esteem: how you feel about yourself and your ability to grow and change
- Self-determination: your ability to use your volition (will) to actualize your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual potentialities.

### Why Work?

Work means different things to different people. Some people see work as a way to pay the bills, support a family or buy something they really want. Some people see work as the best way to look after themselves and their family. Some people see work as a way to keep busy and out of trouble. Some other people may see work as a natural thing that everybody does.

In traditional Aboriginal cultures, work was a natural part of living in a community. Work was necessary for the survival of the community. Work was valued as a way of sharing and cooperating for the good of the community. Everyone had a job to do. People were respected for the work that they did.

In today's society, work is mostly viewed as a social responsibility. Work is the way people take responsibility for themselves and their families. Society expects people to work and pay taxes to support the society. Most people work to increase their personal wealth or to be independent.

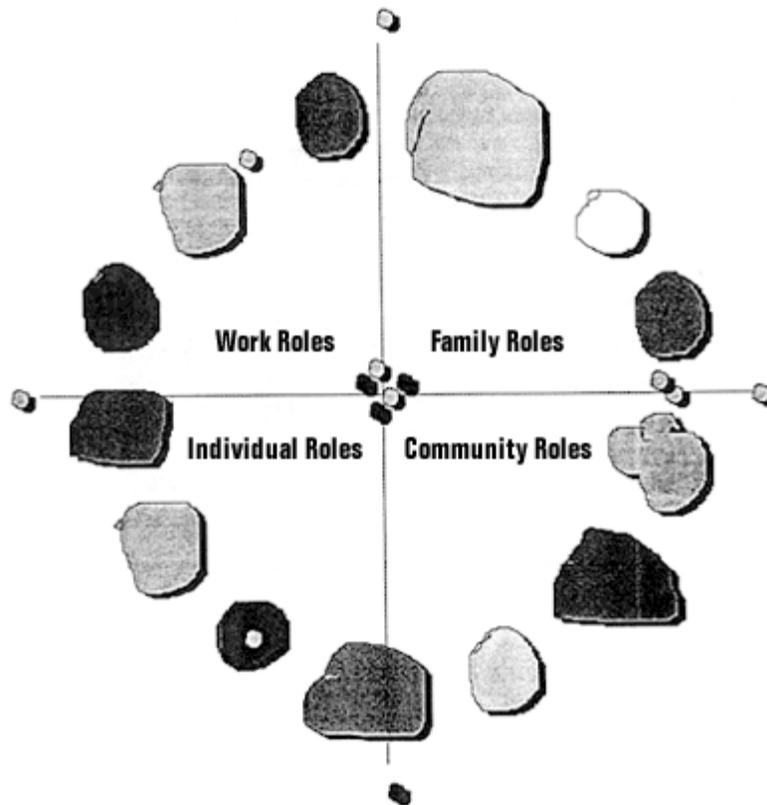
### Balancing Roles

Using the medicine wheel, you can explore the role of work in your life. Try to see your life as a balance between work time, family time, community time and individual time. Traditionally, Aboriginal people were involved in all these things in order to have a balanced life. Complete the following Medicine Wheel Activity to look at how you balance your roles.

## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### Balancing Work and Personal Roles

Beside each of the four quadrants of the medicine wheel diagram below, write some examples of how you spend your time in different roles. Think of some new ways that you could spend time in each of these categories. Now that you are in a full-time program, how can you adjust your family and personal time?



## Visioning Success

### Personal Success Stories

#### Carrie Paquette

This story is about Carrie Paquette, a grade 10 student at the Muskoti Learning Centre in Moberly lake, BC. Carrie is a member of the Saulteau Band. Carrie recently went on a five-day an environmental adventure program for youth sponsored by Leadership Initiative for Life (LIFE). Carrie was aboard the Lifeboat Flotilla for five days as they traveled through the Gulf Islands. As Carrie says, "The trip taught us about kayaking, and about coastal plants and ocean wildlife. We learned about the effects of fish farming, pulp mills, and oil spills. We explored Aboriginal stewardship, the Medicine Wheel, dancing and storytelling. The whole trip gave me a lot of motivation and left me with a positive frame of mind."

From her experience with the environmental youth group, Carrie developed a strong pride and admiration in nature and her culture. "Our band has two sacred mountains, the Twin Sisters, explains Carrie. "Tree slashing was going on, so we set up a monitoring camp staying in teepees, and performing traditional sweat lodge ceremonies. Carrie took the initiative to speak to local forest companies about her concerns for the environment. Carrie was not always concerned with protecting the environment, though. In fact, she really didn't care much about her own life, let alone the environment. Carrie says, "I really didn't know anything except when I was going to get drunk or stoned next." It was Carrie's culture that brought her back down to Mother Earth. A Aboriginal elder invited her to her first traditional ceremony and experienced a spiritual calling which influenced her to make a positive change in her life. " I was afraid and I didn't know what I was getting into, but it turned out to be one of the most overwhelming experiences I've ever had. After that, I started getting more involved in my community, and found out that culture and alcohol don't mix. Carrie has dedicated herself to rebuilding both her life and the environment. She returned to school after being away for two years and volunteers her spare time working in the community testing the quality of the water. She has also become a role model in her community. "A lot of youth come to me and say they want to change, but they keep bailing. But I know that someday they won't fail because I failed so many times, so I know what they're going through and they look up to me for support.

*(Adapted from Motiv8 Issue 1, Spring 1996)*

## Peter George

If you have ever thought about being an artist, then the story below about Peter George may show you how one person did it. You may even think that Peter could be a good role model or mentor. Peter is an artist from the Carrier nation. He says that his love of art came from his Uncle Ronnie who did many wonderful drawings. Today, Peter still remembers his Uncle's art as one of his favorite memories.

After graduating from high school in 1984, I did some carpentry work with my Grandpa Matthew. In 1986 I worked in a program that tried to save the number of salmon in the rivers and creeks. I almost drowned not knowing how to swim. During 1988, I spent most of my time sketching people that came and went from Tim Hortons. I entered my painting of my Great Grandmother at the Prince George Art gallery. I got there late with my painting and all the walls were covered with other people's paintings. So I had to lean my painting against a post. Within a half an hour, the picture had sold to an older couple on Vancouver Island. With the money, I helped my sisters get back home. I also started my cat cartoon, "Poor Boozer," in 1988. My sisters and I have always had cats, and my dad used to call them poor *boose*. *Boose* is Carrier for cat.

In 1988 I entered a carpenters course at the Prince George Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Later I was asked to go into cabinet making. We started with five people and were cut down to two people. I was let go even though I never missed a day's work. Mervin had a family to support and I didn't. After this I tried teaching art at a youth corrections institute, where the doors lock behind you. Only two students would show up. All I did was paint Cher onto someone's jean vest.

In 1992, my mother and stepfather drove me to Vancouver for an interview at Emily Carr College of Art and Design. To the interview I carried half of my sketchbook, and my mother carried the other half. All the other future art students had large sketchbooks with only a few pieces of art. I thought about how backwoods I was. I did not look very professional. The interviewers looked at one of my sketchbooks. If I had known that they would only look at one, I would have kept the other in the car.

After my interview I received the good news that I had been accepted into the College. At first the school was frightening for me, but I soon fit in. I was one of 12 First Nations people at the College. My sketching of people in coffee shops and bingo halls really paid off. My whole family helped me graduate from College in 1996. Now I've set my sights on a Fine Arts degree.

*(Adapted from First Nations Drum, August 1996, p.19.)*

### James

I've really only had three jobs in my life. The first job was building houses, the second job was working construction and my third job was working as a demolition man.

I got fired from all three jobs because I drank on the job and smoked pot. At the time, drinking and smoking pot were the only things that were important to me. I realized later that there was more to life than drinking and smoking pot. I realized that my son, my girlfriend and my family were more important to me than my drinking and smoking. So I made a promise to myself a little while ago to quit drinking and smoking pot.

I am 27 years old now, and my whole life has changed. I am back in school trying to get my life together. I want to be able to get a job and keep it. Now if I had to choose between drinking and smoking pot and my family, it would have to be my family because I was not there when my son was born, and that was my biggest mistake.

*(James is a student at the Native Education Centre in Vancouver)*

### Marina

I moved to Port Alberni in 1996. I tried going to school and finding a job but nothing pulled through. A few months later, I decided to move back to Vancouver. I was over at my friend's house when she got a phone call from a friend who asked her if she knew anybody who wanted a job in a coffee shop and could learn quickly. My friend told her about me. I got an interview the next day. I went to that interview nervous, sweating and excited. The interview was very quick. After the interview, I was thinking that this could be my first actual job.

The day after the interview, they called me and asked when I could start. I said, "Right away!" I worked at the coffee shop until August. I wanted to go back to school, so I applied to the Native Education Centre while I had this job. The school called me and told me that I start school in September. I went to work the next day and told them that I had to quit because I was going back to school. They were pretty upset and said that I didn't give them much notice. I said, "My education is important to me."

So here I am. I choose school. I need my grade 12. I think that if I want a good paying job and not have to depend on welfare, then I need my grade 12. I will be the second person in my family to graduate. I look at life more seriously now. Coming back to school changed my whole life. I realize how much I need an education. If I didn't come back, I would've regretted it.

*(Marina is a student at the Native Education Centre in Vancouver)*

**Note: Each student will be telling their own personal success story in the Video Journal activity.**

## Talking Circle

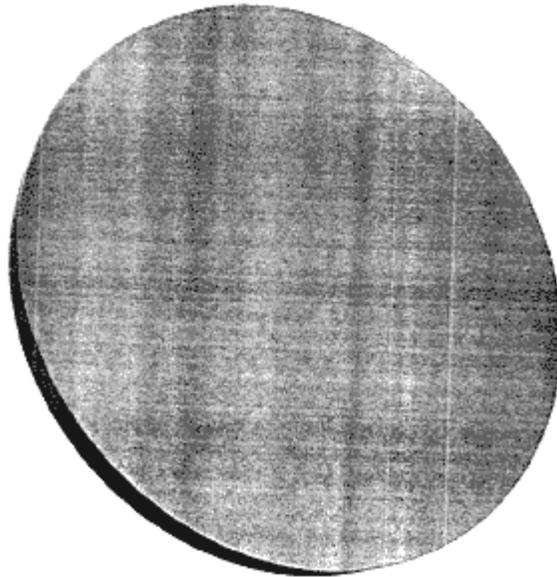
Many people see talking circles as a traditional Aboriginal spiritual practice. It is a way for a group of people to discuss their feelings and to support each other by listening and mirroring feelings. Talking circles are a teaming tool, a healing tool and a personal development tool. All participants must agree to a few very basic rules.

1. Confidentiality. Please do not discuss the information that people share in the circle with people who were not part of the circle. This will allow everyone to feel safe talking about themselves in the circle.
2. Listening. A feather, stone, talking stick or other object is passed around the circle clockwise (to reflect the path of the sun from east to west). When you are not holding the object, your job is to listen. Only the person holding the object is to talk. Laughter, brief remarks, touching or other interactions are alright, but please do not take the spotlight away from the person with the object.
3. Sharing. It is very powerful for people to have the opportunity for others to hear about their joys and sorrows. It is also very difficult for many people to share in this way. As a start you may have a topic of discussion that everyone can relate to. If you do not feel comfortable talking you may pass the object on. It is a good idea to pass the object around at least two times so that more reserved people can build their confidence to share.
4. Spirituality. What makes a talking circle more than a workshop activity is traditional Aboriginal spirituality. The circle can start with smudging and a prayer. It is important that a person with traditional teachings is involved in this aspect of the circle. Each person can end their talks with the traditional prayer ending, "All my relations." Participation in any aspect of the circle is voluntary.

## Drum Making

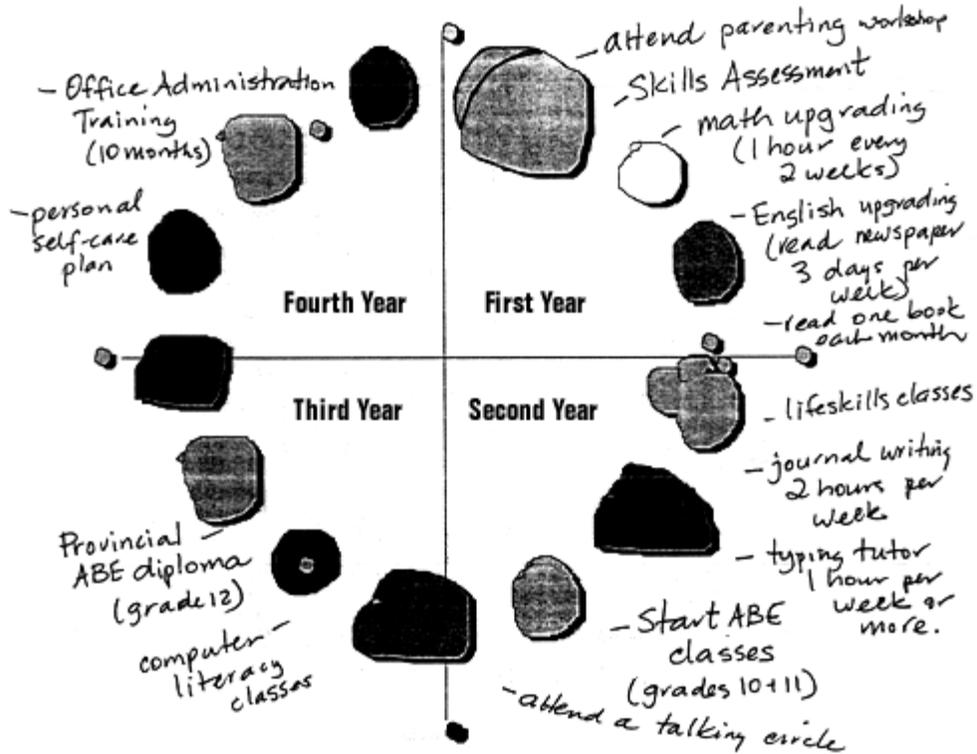
Your drum-making workshop will be conducted by someone who is experienced in the craft of Aboriginal drum-making. Drums have a very special role in many traditional Aboriginal cultures. They may be used in thinking, expressing emotions and praying as well as in celebrating, dancing and singing.

In addition to learning how drums are made and how they connect us to Mother Earth, you can paint your drum to express a part of who you are. Use the diagram below as a rough copy of the design you would like to have on your drum.



## Personal Career Path

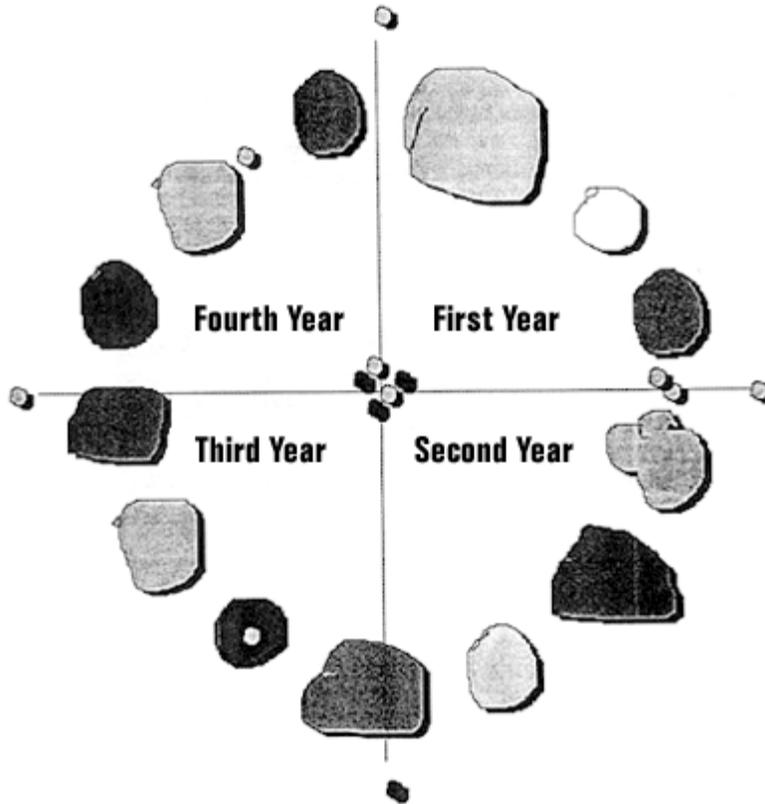
The medicine wheel below is a career path diagram for a young woman named Georgina. She wants to work in an office. In high school she finished most of grade 10. Georgina decided on this plan by working with her instructor. It may take her five years before she can work in an office. See if you can understand Georgina's career plan by answering the questions below.



## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### Building Your Personal Career Path

In the blank medicine wheel below write out the steps you will take to reach your career goal. You may include education or personal steps that you will need to take to reach your goal.



## Video Journals

### Making a Personal Success Video Journal

Your Employment Literacy program will be over in a few weeks. Your final assignment is to make a video journal to tell a story about your success, skills and goals. This video journal will help you remember what you are learning and will help you get the support you need to continue your success.

You may want to think about some of the following questions to help you decide what to talk about in your video. You will also need to think about what locations to use in your video.

1. Where are you from?
2. What is your cultural background?
3. Where did you go to school?
4. Who are your role models?
5. What are your interests?
6. Do you do any Aboriginal arts and crafts?
7. What jobs have you done in the past?
8. What are your goals for the next four years?
9. What are the steps you will take to achieve your goals?
10. Who are the people that will help you?

# Employment Skills

[Work World Overview](#)

[Workplace Behaviour](#)

[Employment Standards](#)

[Human Rights](#)

[Customer Service](#)

[Speaking & Listening](#)

[Personal Wellness](#)

[Problem Solving Techniques](#)

[Time Management](#)

[Lifelong Learning](#)

[Multi-task Priorities](#)

[Teamwork](#)

[Managing Money](#)

[Skills Inventory](#)

## Work World Overview

There are thousands of different jobs. Knowing what type of work you want can help you find a good job. Your values around work and money will also affect your views of the work world. You may be interested in comparing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values around work.

### Traditional Work

Traditionally, the work you do is based on your sex, age and where you live. Men and women often do different jobs. Everyone works for the benefit of their family and community. On the Northwest Coast, women and children gathered and harvested wild vegetables, berries and shellfish. Women were responsible for making clothing, taking care of the children and cooking.

The main work of the men in traditional Aboriginal communities on the Northwest Coast was to hunt and fish. The men also worked to make their own tools and weapons, houses and canoes. Men and women also created many carvings and art pieces for ceremonies. Both men and women were dancers and singers at traditional ceremonies.

Aboriginal people still work at these types of jobs in their rural communities. On the Northwest Coast people still rely on fishing to earn a living and for food. Many people from Aboriginal communities also make a living from their art. Many Aboriginal artists from British Columbia are well respected around the world. Aboriginal art is still used in cultural ceremonies.

### Non-traditional Work

There are many nontraditional jobs in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities hire people to run their education, health and economic programs. There are new types of jobs in Aboriginal communities that control their lands and resources. Some bands run businesses that offer many nontraditional jobs.

Lack of opportunities in some communities leads people to move to the cities. In the cities it is hard to do traditional work. There are many Aboriginal organizations that help urban Aboriginal people. Many Aboriginal people work for these groups. Your cultural knowledge and experience working with Aboriginal people can help you find work with these groups.

### Suggested Activities

1. Use your family tree to show the types of jobs that your grandparents and your uncles and aunts do? Which generation of your family first moved to the city?
2. Hold a group discussion around traditional and nontraditional types of work. Develop a list of traditional and nontraditional jobs.
3. Research the jobs available in your home community? Make a list of job that are available in your band office and any industries, schools and other places.
4. Visit two Aboriginal organizations in the city. Is a knowledge of Aboriginal cultural useful in these workplaces?

## Workplace Behavior

As a Aboriginal person you may have conflicting ideas about your responsibilities as a worker. Each job and each boss may expect different things from you. There are some basic qualities that nearly all bosses look for in their employees. Employers like workers who:

- get along with other people
- are able to talk with other people
- are able to ask questions
- are reliable and honest
- are Punctual
- don't miss work
- have positive attitudes
- understand good customer service

Some of the more important qualities that employers look for in workers are discussed below. In the following units other qualities are discussed in more detail.

### Getting Along with Co-workers

We all work with other people. Some of those people are co-workers, supervisors and customers. In many companies, people work together as a team. Having positive relations with our coworkers is very important. Arguing with the boss or complaining isn't a great idea; nobody likes a 'whiner'. To get along with others we have to co-operate and compromise. We have to make the best of things. We have to treat others with respect and show them a friendly, helpful face. People who work well with other people do these things:

- they do their share of the work,
- they help other employees when others have a lot of work and they don't,
- they ask for help when they need something,
- they see the positive side of the people they work with,
- they try to understand other people's points of view,
- they pay attention to the feelings and views of their co-workers,
- they try not to say things that will hurt other people's feelings,
- they make positive suggestions for change.

### Communication

People who have problems communicating usually run into difficulties at work. Talking to others at work helps you to do your job well and have positive relations with your co-workers. For example, talking is very important when you don't know what to do, and you need to ask for help or directions. If you pretend to know something and mess-up, it isn't a good start. It's better to ask questions and listen carefully. Most employers expect you to ask questions if you do not understand something about your job.

Maybe you've heard the story about the workers who bulldozed the wrong house. They thought they heard the boss say 13 Argyle St. when he really said 33 Argyle St. They didn't check to make sure they had the right address. The wrong house was demolished. Do you think they lost their jobs? How could this have been prevented? By checking. Talking to the boss. Asking the right questions. By talking!

Let's say you work in an office. Your job is filing papers in a file cabinet. You arrive at work one morning and find three stacks of loose files. There are no instructions what to do. How do you solve the problem? What would you say? To whom? Think about the words you would use to ask for help. How would you be polite in asking the question?

### Punctuality and Reliability

What do these words mean? Punctuality means being on time, not late. Reliability means the boss can count on you to get the job done, to finish it. Let's say you work for the Queen City Dry Cleaners. Your job is ironing clothes once they're clean. It's 4:45 p.m., and the boss asks you to finish 3 suits before you leave that day. You finish only 2 suits, and then decide to leave the other one for the next day. Are you a reliable worker? Let's look at another example.

Your sister works as a waitress at the Quality Tea Room. Noon hour is the busiest time at the restaurant. Usually she arrives at the Restaurant at 12 o'clock to start work. This time the boss asks her to come early. When she arrives, it's 12:05. Is she late? Is she a punctual worker? Employers also want workers to keep working even when the boss is away.

Let's say you work as a cleaner at the Regina Inn. Your job is to clean the 6th floor every day. You have to vacuum, change the beds, and wash the sink in the bathroom. Your supervisor arrives in the morning. She talks to you about the day's work. She leaves to talk to another worker on the 3rd floor. You decide to have a smoke and wait until she returns before you start. Is something wrong here? You didn't take initiative. You didn't start your work. Starting to do your job without being told is called taking initiative. It's an important quality for all employees to have.

### Are You A Positive Employee?

Employers want employees with positive attitudes. Positive attitudes are good for business. Do you think you are a positive worker? What does it mean to be a positive employee?

- positive employees ask questions. They know that it is OK if they do not understand everything,
- positive employees are polite and friendly with customers,
- positive employees like to learn new things,
- positive employees get their work done,
- positive employees are proud about the work they do.

Write an example of a positive employee you have met. For example, someone like a clerk in a store or a gas station attendant who helped you. What did that person do? How did that person make you feel?

### Suggested Activities

1. What is your attitude toward work? How well do you think you work with other people? Write one or two sentences about a time when you worked well with other people. Your example can be about paid work, volunteer work or some other group activity.
2. Have a role-playing exercise to practice dealing with communication, good customer service, reliability and positive attitudes in the workplace. After you have fun acting out possible problems on the job, talk about what you learned from each experience.
3. Invite an employer to class to discuss what he or she expects from employees.

## Employment Standards

There are laws that set the standard for working. The law determines the rules for wages, vacation, overtime and other things about work. The following exercise about wages will start you thinking about the basic employment standards.

### Student Exercise

Mr. Gomez works 40 hours each week. If he receives \$ 5.60 per hour, how much does he earn each week? Find the weekly earnings for each of the following:

No. of hours	32	40	37
Rate per hour	\$7.00	\$9.25	\$12.69
Total Earnings			

If the overtime rate is 1.5 times the regular rate, what is the hourly overtime rate corresponding to each of the following regular hour rates:

(a) \$ 6.80

(b) \$ 5.56

(c) \$ 6.30

Find the weekly earnings (time and a half rate over 40 hr.) for each of the following:

No. of hours	42	45	50.5
Rate per hour	\$8.75	\$10.59	\$7.64
Total Earnings			

Find the annual salary of a person earning:

a) \$ 225 per week;

b) \$ 1500 per month;

c) \$ 215.75 per week;

d) \$ 1,825 semi-monthly;

e) \$ 17.60 per hr. (40 hr. week)

If a person works 40 hours per week, what is the weekly salary, annual salary, and monthly salary at each of the following hourly rates:

- a) \$7.90?
- b) \$4.65?
- c) \$5.88?

What is your monthly salary and weekly salary if your annual salary is:

- a) \$27,700?
- b) \$9,100?
- c) \$16,500?

Which is a better wage:

- a) \$12,800 per year or \$1,080 per month?
- b) \$360 per week or \$13,500 per year?
- c) \$300 per week or \$1,250 per month?

Last year Mrs. Aku received a 5% increase on her weekly salary of \$ 480. Two weeks ago her salary was reduced 5%. How does her present salary compare with her original salary before the increase?

Scott's father receives \$ 250 per week and 4% commission on sales. Last week his sales totaled \$ 4,173. What were his total earnings for the week?

Jan receives a salary of \$ 180 per week and a 2% bonus on all sales over the quota of \$ 875. If her weekly sales are \$ 3,180, what are her total weekly earnings?

At a certain restaurant, five servers share equally all the tips they collect. If each server receives \$ 118 weekly salary plus a share of tips, how much does each receive for a week when all the tips total \$ 406.75?

# Human Rights

## Discrimination and Racism

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly or differently from others because of your:

- race or color
- national or ethnic origin
- political beliefs
- religion
- marital status
- family status (for instance if you are a single parent)
- physical disability
- sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy)
- sexual orientation
- age
- criminal charges or convictions unrelated to employment

If someone else's actions or in-actions have made you feel scared, bad, embarrassed, or harassed, that person may have discriminated against you on one or more of the grounds listed above. Discrimination may happen anywhere, in your community, at school, or at work. No matter where it happens, discrimination is wrong. You do not have to accept it. Cultural differences may lead to discrimination when someone is ignorant of your cultural background. It is important to know your rights, so that you can tell if someone is discriminating against you.

## Human Rights

As a First Nations person, you have the right not to be discriminated against because of your race or color. There are several common questions that First Nations people ask about discrimination at work.

### ***Can an employer legally fire me or refuse to hire me because I am an Aboriginal person?***

No. Human rights laws do not allow employers to discriminate against people on the basis of race. Nor can an employer refuse to hire you because you have had criminal charges, convictions or a pardoned conviction unrelated to the job.

### ***Can an employer legally refuse to promote me or pay me less than others because I am a First Nations person?***

No. If you are doing the same work as your non-Aboriginal co-workers but are being paid less than they are, that is discrimination. If you are denied a promotion and you believe it is because you are Aboriginal, that may be discrimination too.

***Can a band council, tribal council or any other Aboriginal organization discriminate against me at work?***

Absolutely not. For instance, if you are fired or an aboriginal organization refuses to hire you because of your age, physical disability, or sex, it is discrimination.

***What if I am sexually harassed at work?***

No one is allowed to sexually harass you at work or anywhere else. Sexual harassment includes such things as unwanted touching, leering (unwelcome or rude staring), and inappropriate comments, such as sexual innuendoes or comments about your body. Sexual harassment is a serious human rights violation that you have a right to complain about.

## **Student Reading**

### Mary's Job

Mary is a shy, young woman who got a job working for her band council as a land claims researcher. She was thrilled about her new position, but after a couple of days she dreaded going to work.

Mary's boss was always leering at her and making sexual comments about her body. He made her feel uncomfortable, and she was scared to be in the same room alone with him. Mary talked to the Chief, but he said that Mary's boss was just kidding around. Finally, Mary had enough and she yelled at her boss. Her boss laughed and said that she was too uptight.

Mary talked to a lawyer in her local Aboriginal community law office. He told her that she could file a human rights complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission against her boss for sexual harassment. Mary decided to do that. When her boss found out that she filed a complaint against him, he fired her.

After a long investigation, Mary's complaint ended up before a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The lawyer from the Aboriginal community law office and a lawyer from the Canadian Human Rights Commission represented her. After hearing all the evidence, the Human Rights Tribunal found that Mary had been sexually harassed and that she had also been discriminated against by being fired.

The Tribunal ordered that Mary be given her job back; be paid for wages; and be given \$2,000 for the humiliation and embarrassment that she suffered. The Tribunal also asked the band council to develop an anti-harassment policy.

### Suggested Activities

1. Discuss Mary's Story and how you would have handled the same situation.
2. Invite someone from the Human Rights Commission to discuss the issue of discrimination.
3. Hold a talking circle to discuss how we deal with the feelings of discrimination.
4. Role-play scenarios to practice responding to different forms of discrimination and harassment on the job.

## Customer Service

Knowing how to treat customers is important in jobs where you work with the public. If you are a cashier at Bi-Way, you have to give each customer the best service possible. Lets say a customer comes up to your till to buy a second-hand barbecue. One of your friends comes by and starts talking to you. What do you do? It would not be good to ignore the customer until your friend leaves. What would you say to your friend? What would you say to the customer? What are some other qualities of giving the 'best service'? Why do cashiers thank every customer for shopping at their store?

### Customer Service Quiz

Here's a test to check your level of customer service. Decide if each situation shows good customer service or bad customer service.

1. A waiter brings your ice cream before your meal.
2. A maid in a hotel hallway asks, "Can I help you?"
3. A bus driver says, "Hey you, no coffee on the bus."
4. A taxi driver helps you with your bags.
5. A cafeteria cook is wearing a hair net and rubber gloves.
6. A social service worker never returns telephone messages.
7. A sales clerk is chatting with a customer from out of town while you are waiting to pay for your purchases.
8. A cleaner that you ask for directions says, "Don't ask me."
9. When you complain about slow service, a waiter says, "I've only got two arms."
10. The person at the information desk asks, "Is there anything I can help you with?"

What kinds of jobs require good customer service?

Which jobs do not require dealing with the public?

In your ideal job, how much customer service would you be doing?

100%

50%

none

# Speaking & Listening

## Criticism

Criticism is a necessary part of most jobs. It lets you know how you are doing on your job and how you can improve your work. Criticism does not have to be a negative thing. It depends on how you take criticism and give criticism.

Sometimes criticism can be difficult to accept because it forces us to look at ourselves and say that we may need to change. If you keep an open mind and look at yourself honestly, then you will be more open to accepting criticism from others. People react to criticism in a number of different ways. Below are seven ways that people react to criticism. Which reaction style best describes your reaction to criticism?

## Reactions to Criticism

- makes excuses
- argues
- puts responsibility on others
- pouts or sulks
- complains compares self to others acceptance

## Suggested Activities

1. Role-play scenarios in which students give and receive criticism. Use examples from everyday life, traditional culture and careers.
2. Have a group discussion around personal change.
3. Invite a Aboriginal elder to class to discuss the ideal of giving and receiving criticism.

# Personal Wellness

## Nutrition

Good nutrition is a way of maintaining a high energy level. Light and heat from the sun is made into food by plants. This food sustains all life on Mother Earth. The medicine wheel stresses the importance of balancing the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects of the self. Making wise food selections nourishes you physically and has an impact on your emotional and mental health.

Here are some ways to have good nutrition:

1. Plan your meals ahead of time,
2. Make a shopping list to avoid impulse buying,
3. Reduce your fat intake,
4. Eat from the four main food groups,
5. Reduce excess calorie intake,
6. Bless your food,
7. Have a holistic approach to health.

## Health Quiz

Rate yourself on a scale of one (very low) to ten (very high) for each of the following health risks:

- \_\_\_\_\_ using a lot of salt
- \_\_\_\_\_ eating foods with a lot of sugar
- \_\_\_\_\_ eating fried foods regularly
- \_\_\_\_\_ not exercising at least 3 times a week
- \_\_\_\_\_ smoking a package of cigarettes per day
- \_\_\_\_\_ drinking a lot of coffee
- \_\_\_\_\_ drinking a lot of alcohol regularly
- \_\_\_\_\_ taking recreational drugs
- \_\_\_\_\_ eating a lot of red meat and eggs
- \_\_\_\_\_ carrying more than a little extra weight

Each of these behaviors increases your chances of having a stroke or heart attack by 10% later in life. Is there one of these actions that you can start to change now? What is one way to reduce your risk in each category?

### Why Exercise?

Exercise is necessary to oxygenate our total system. Our cells need oxygen to take in the nutrients so we can continue to live and grow. Exercise is also necessary to keep the heart healthy. The heart is a huge muscle that needs to be kept strong.

To keep the heart strong we need to do aerobic exercises like walking, swimming, jogging, cycling, roller-blading, aerobics, dancing and stair-climbing. Anaerobic exercise is also needed to make muscles and bones stronger. Anaerobic exercises are weightlifting, sit-ups, abdominal crunches and push-ups. Activities that combine both anaerobic and aerobic exercise are basketball, tennis, baseball and soccer.

### Addiction Issues

In order to grow, a plant seeks the sun, a newborn kitten seeks its mother's milk. Like a plant or a kitten, if we want to be healthy we have to seek health. We have to look for it and to pursue it actively. Having someone plant a 'seed' of sobriety and clean living in our minds and hearts is the beginning of living alcohol and drug free. How can a person with addictions seek out someone to plant this seed?

The sweatlodge is a place of power where great healing can take place. If you want to team this cultural healing methods you can ask a First Nations drug and alcohol counsellor to find a sweatlodge. They can also provide counselling to a person who is making the transition to a healthy addiction-free life.

These are some other ways that you can overcome addictions:

1. Be around healthy people and learn from them
2. Do the things healthy people do,
3. If drugs or alcohol is a problem, admit it,
4. Be willing to learn from your mistakes,
5. Ask for help and take the help that is offered,
6. Find the strength to live a healthy lifestyle,
7. Be part of a healthy community.

First Nations have a vision that, by the year 2000, individuals, families and agencies will regain the skills leadership, cultural and spiritual consciousness to give back to their communities by living as Warriors, Nurturers, Scholars and Community Activists. A study of First Nations teenagers in the United States found that their greatest problems are rejection and substance abuse.

### Questions

1. What is the opposite of harmony?
2. What is empowerment?
3. What kinds of things would a modern day warrior fight against?
4. What kinds of things would a nurturer provide?
5. What is it important to have scholars in the community?
6. What kinds of things to community activists do?

7. Are you a warrior, nurturer, scholar or community activist?
8. Why are mistakes considered great teachers?
9. Explain how addictions interfere with long-term employment.
10. What do you think of a person who asks the Creator for help and then refuses the help that is offered?

*(Adapted from the Native Education Centre's Career Planning Workbook, written by Dawn Morrison and Yvonne Hopkins)*

## **Problem-solving Techniques**

### Language Barriers

Read the following stories about people who are working. Each person has difficulty with reading or writing at work. Think about the problems each person is having at work and try to come up with ideas to help them solve their reading and writing problems.

#### **James' Story**

James is a janitor. He has to work with many cleaning solutions. Some of these solutions are dangerous if they touch his skin. They are also dangerous if they are mixed together. James needs to take a WHMIS course so he knows how to work with the cleaning solutions. James has a hard time reading. He is very worried about taking the course. Can you help him?

#### **Charlie's Story**

Charlie is working in a factory. He has to work with many machines. Charlie can speak English quite well. He has made many friends. This job is a good paying job. Sometimes a machine breaks down. Charlie knows where the manual to fix the machine is kept but he can't read the words. Once he tried to fix the machine by looking at the pictures. This caused a bigger problem because two of the parts looked very much the same. Now Charlie has to ask someone to help him. This is not good because the other person has to stop working to help Charlie. What can Charlie do so he doesn't have to ask for help? Can you help him?

#### **Janna's Story**

Janna works in the kitchen of a nursing home. Janna likes to cook and wants to get her cooks' papers. Janna works the morning shift. Sometimes the person who closes the kitchen at night leaves a note for the people who work in the morning. Once Janna found the note. She thought the note said to add salt to the soup stock that was going to be used that day. What the note said was, "Do not add salt." The soup stock was ruined. Janna was told if she made another mistake like that she would lose her job.

#### **Joe's Story**

Joe is a labourer for a small construction company. He works outside most days but today he is having a coffee in the shack. The telephone rings. He is all by himself. Joe answers the telephone. It is a supply company. They want to leave a message for Joe's foreman. Joe thinks he can remember the name of the person calling, the company name and the telephone number. Joe does not write anything down because he is afraid he will spell something wrong. Later Joe's foreman tells him that the telephone number is wrong. Joe tries to remember the number but he can't.

## Exercise

Choose one story to use when you answer the following questions:

1. Was the language barrier due to reading, writing, speaking or listening skills?
2. How can this person learn this skill?
3. How will the person know when they have reached their goal?
4. What language skills do you need to develop?

## Honesty on the Job

Aboriginal people show respect and honor towards people who are honest. People who act honestly show a strong personal character that is respected even if their actions can not be respected. Many Aboriginal people have felt the affects of dishonesty from their dealings with the government. A history of broken promises has left Aboriginal people feeling that the government is dishonest and can not be trusted. Their cultural values tell them that they can not respect people who are dishonest.

What is honest to one person may not be honest to another. People may have different views of honesty. Values, beliefs, life circumstances, and peer pressure affect how people see honesty. Read the following scenarios and say what you would do in each situation?

1. You worked 3 hours, but you were paid for 6 hours of work.
2. You are a mailroom clerk. Your mother wants you to bring some paper home from the office.
3. You work at Safeway in the receiving area. You see your co-worker putting a roast into his backpack.
4. At the nursing home, you work as a cleaner. A resident wants to have a drink of whisky from a hidden bottle. He asks you not to tell the nurse.
5. There are several other employees at the Arby's where you work. It is against company rules, but they often drink Coke and don't pay for it.
6. You work with the boss's son at a small company that cleans carpets. Sometimes he goes off to play pool. He asks you to tell his father he's working.
7. Your employer is a small gardening company. You borrowed a rake but forgot to bring it back. Your boss remembers you had the rake last. She asks you about it.
8. A small restaurant employs you as a cook's assistant. You see another employee put a cigarette in a pie as a joke.
9. You work as a bus person at the Saskatchewan Hotel. You drop some dishes you are carrying and they break. No one saw you.
10. You are a cashier at Sears. At the end of the day you are short \$10. You think you may have given someone the wrong change.

## Time Management

Time is all we've got? I've got no time? Have you heard these two statements? If they are both true, then we have nothing. Learning how to be efficient with our time is important on the job and in our daily lives. Two aspects of balancing time are completing our responsibilities to get to work on time and dealing with stress.

### Attendance at Work

In traditional Aboriginal communities, the whole community is affected if you do not show up to do your work. If your job is to gather food for the community but you do not show up for work, then everyone will be hungry. The same idea can be used to show why it is important not to miss a regular job. When you do not show up for work it affects other people.

Are their good excuses to miss work? Of course there are. Read the list below and check the reasons that cause you to miss work or school often. I miss work or school because:

- I don't like the job (or school).
- I have problems with the boss (or teachers).
- I am sick a lot
- I cant find a baby-sitter.
- I have problems at home.
- I am bored with the job (or school).
- I am not very good at my job (or at school).
- I have trouble getting to work (or school).
- I have too many other things I need to do.
- I don't like the people I'm with.
- I have trouble getting up in the morning.
- my car keeps breaking down.
- I have many jobs to do at home (or school).
- I have conflicts with my life-style.
- my family wants me to help them.
- I really don't know why I miss so much.
- other (Write out your reasons):

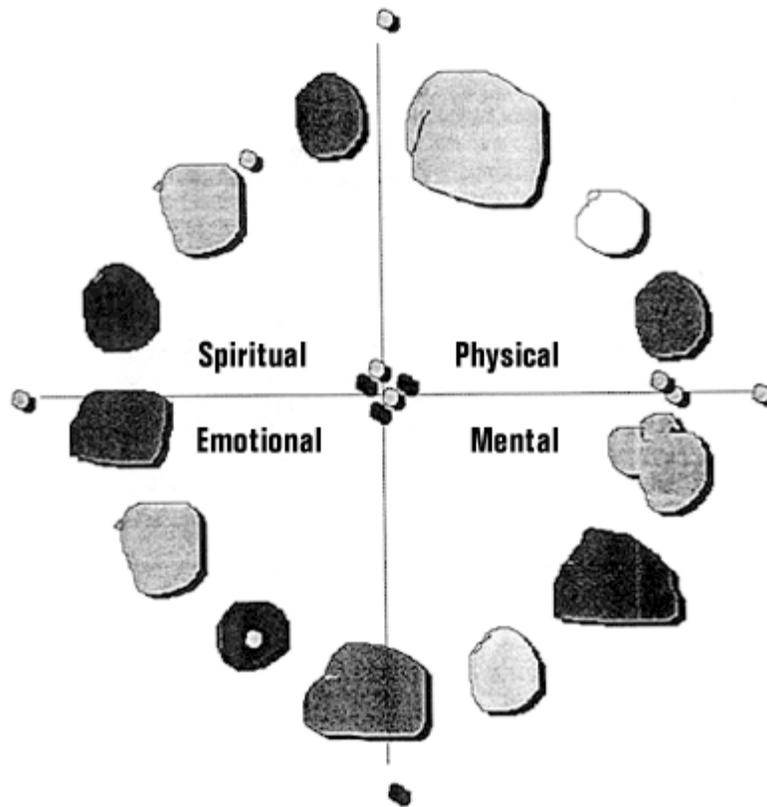
### Suggested Activities:

1. Role-play scenarios in which you are a peer counsellor for other students who have problems showing up for work. Ask them about their problem, listen and empathize and then ask them what they will do to work on their attendance.
2. Hold a class discussion around the idea of attendance policies at work and school.

## A Medicine Wheel Activity

### Dealing with Stress

People often feel stress when they feel their life is too busy or hectic. Stress can also start from having no focus or too much time on your hands. It may feel like you have no power over your life. Looking at the stress in your life from the teachings of the medicine wheel can give you a sense of power. Stress can affect your emotional, mental, spiritual or physical self. Being aware of these parts of yourself can help you to understand where your stress comes from and what you can do about it. Complete the following medicine wheel by listing stress-releasing activities that help develop each of the four areas of our beings.



## Lifelong Learning

When do we learn the most in our lives? You can think of learning as a staircase of knowledge and skills. We are always climbing up to a new level of knowledge about ourselves, and the world. In traditional First Nations cultures, elders are respected and honored for their knowledge and their survival skills. Our elders have climbed a long staircase of knowledge. It is important for each of us to realize we must continue to learn throughout our lives.

An example of lifelong learning is computer technology in the workplace. Some people who took a computer course a few years ago thought they were finished with school. Instead, they find they have to learn more and more each year. This is because computer technology changes every year. In the new office, these computer operators have to learn new ways of doing things all the time to do their job well. This is happening in most types of job these days.

Here is a list of skills that most of us need to learn in our careers or our personal lives. For each skill, decide if this is a short-term or long term goal for you. Short-term goals are ones that you would like to start learning more about as soon as possible. Long term goals are ones that you may learn about later in your life, perhaps in five to ten years. Plan some ways that you can start working toward your short-term goals.

Skills/Knowledge Areas	Short-Term	Long-Term
Operating a computer/word processing		
Writing descriptions and reports		
Participating in meetings		
Making presentations to groups		
Driving		
Communicating professionally to customers or clients		
Communicating well in person with co-workers		
Planning the steps to complete a project		
Teaching or training others		
Researching or gathering information		
Keeping records and forms		
Problem-solving		
Calculating costs and budgets		
Sorting or filing information		
Implementing plans		

Editing and proof-reading		
Evaluating results		
Leading a team/supervising other people		

## Multi-task Priorities

Have you ever not had enough time to do all the things that you need to do in a day? That situation often happens in a busy workplace. We all need an effective way to decide what to do first. Read the following scenarios to see how you decide on multi-task priorities.

### Getting ready for work

Let's say you it's 7 pm and you have to go to work tomorrow. You will need to do your laundry and make your lunch. There is nothing to make for lunch and you don't have the right change for the bus. Your supervisor asked you to pick up something at another office on your way to work. You can't find the address of this office. What would you do? Explain your reasons.

### In the deli

You are working at the sandwich counter of a restaurant and it is almost time for the lunch rush. You will need to stock up on bread, fill your mustard and mayonnaise containers from the buckets in the refrigerator, warm the soup, cook the bacon and chop the tomatoes. You need to slice some ham, salami and order some more meat for tomorrow. In what order would you do all this? Explain your reasons.

### Making security checks

Imagine you are working at a security desk in a medium to large mall. Your duties are to lock up the building at 10 pm, watch the security monitors, let in the cleaning staff at midnight and make hourly checks on the outside entrances and parking areas. At 11:45 pm there is a false alarm at one entrance and you need to turn off the alarm, talk to the police and write an incident report. In what order would you do all this? Explain your reasons.

What would happen in these case studies if you did the tasks totally randomly? On a 'first come, first served' basis? By leaving the unpleasant tasks for last? Discuss the role of common sense and experience in multi-task priorities.

## Teamwork

### Working With Others

It is not always easy to work with others, especially if they have different ideas or values than you. For example, you may have conflicts with co-workers because of cultural differences. Aboriginal cultures have always shown respect for others and the work that they do. Many people believe that it is not right to interfere with another's work. Some people who hold different values may think that it is their responsibility to always watch your work and interfere in your work. One solution is to talk with your co-worker and try to understand each other's values and style of working.

Co-operation is another cultural value held by many Aboriginal peoples. Traditionally, co-operation was needed for the survival of the community. Everybody did his or her work for the good of the whole community. Sharing with everyone in the community allowed each person do to a specific job that was needed for the whole community to grow. In the world of work today, you may or may not be expected to co-operate with others to do your job.

### Student Exercise:

Your employer, Mrs. Fargate, has assigned you a special project. She has asked that you choose three of your co-workers to work with you as a team. Below are descriptions of eight of your coworkers. They are all good workers, but each has a different style of working with others. Decide which three you would want on your team by checking the box after each description. Give a reason for each choice.

**Gary** seems very friendly at first. However, he has a way of getting you to talk about yourself and then tells everyone else what you've said when you're not around. He also tells you things about other co-workers. Sometimes you secretly enjoy hearing about who's dating whom or whom the boss yelled at, but other times you think that Gary goes too far.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Shawn** talks mostly about herself. If she's not talking about her great boyfriend or new car, she's telling you how she "told the boss off."

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Brett** always seems to act like he's something he's not. When the boss called him into her office to talk to him about a problem he was having, he told everyone that the boss just wanted to thank him for doing a good job. Several times he's made up stories about customers complementing him.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Gene** likes to tell everyone else what to do. He's a hard worker and although he has a good knowledge of what needs to be done, he tends to order other people around.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Polly** has a tendency to find something wrong with everyone. She is a perfectionist and expects everyone else to be perfect, too. She'll be glad to tell you how you could have done a better job, and you don't even have to ask her!

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Sandy** is a talented person, but she tries to out-do her co-workers. Her main concern is whether she can do a better job than everyone else.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Pat** usually has a smile and nice word for everyone. Pat helps co-workers if they get behind in their work and listens to their problems.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

**Joshua** interrupts others constantly. He breaks into conversations to give his opinion, tell a joke, or slap someone on the back.

Yes

No

Why or why not?

---

### Suggested Activities

1. In small groups, develop a list of respectful interpersonal skills for working with others. Present your group's list to the class for discussion.
2. Hold a storytelling circle where everyone tells about one experience of working in a team. Focus on the positive feelings that are part of working together.
3. Role-play a scenario where a boss expects the worker to behave in a way that is inappropriate for their cultural values. For instance, create the role of a boss who expects an employee to comment when someone is doing something that they are not supposed to be doing.

## Managing Money

### Dee Henry's Story

**This a story about a young woman named Dee Henry. Dee tells what happened to her when she lost her job, and how she found another job.**

*My life is very hard now. Five months ago I was laid off. The company I was working for was losing money, so they laid off a lot of people. The Office Manager gave my job to another secretary. She had to do her work and my work; too. She wasn't happy but at least she had a job.*

*I was very unhappy. I had that job for four years. The secretary who got my job was new. She wasn't laid off because she had many skills. She could use the computer, typewriter, and copy machine. I only knew how to use the copy machine and typewriter. I've never used a computer. I only went to school until grade 7. I quit to help my mom take care of my younger sisters.*

*After I lost my job, I moved to Vancouver to live in my brother's home. They moved to Prince George. They are trying to sell their home. I moved here because I couldn't afford the rent for my apartment in Chilliwack I'm taking good care of their home. He and his wife, Lisa, had a baby girl last year. They named her Florence*

*My life has changed since I lost my job. I have to be very careful with money. I get an unemployment check each week I only get \$150 a week, I don't pay my brother any rent, but I pay the utilities. The hydro bill is \$40 a month. My phone bill is \$25. My brother said that he would pay for the utilities, but I want to pay as much as I can. I budget \$25 a week for food My monthly bus pass is \$50. My medical insurance is only \$10 a month. The rest of my money is for other expenses. Something always happens. Last month I had to go to buy some new clothes. The bill was \$65!*

*When I was working, I had enough money. I wasn't rich, but I didn't have to worry. My monthly take-home pay was \$1200. My rent was \$550, including hydro. My phone bill was \$30 a month. My bus pass was \$50. I spent \$40 a week for food. The company paid my health insurance. On the weekends, I would meet my friends and-go to a movie or out to dinner. I went shopping for clothes when there were sales. I didn't save any money, but I had enough for a comfortable life.*

## Student Exercise

Compare Dee's paycheck budget with her budget today. Fill in the chart below.

Expenses	Before	Now
Rent		
Phone		
Hydro		
Bus Pass		
Food		
Health Insurance		
Clothes		
Total		

### Dee Henry: My Decision

I've been unemployed for 7 months now. I can only get unemployment checks for 9 months. I'm very worried. I've been looking for a job, but it isn't easy. Every day I read the want ads. I ask my friends about job openings where they work. Every Monday I talk to the job counsellor at the unemployment office. This week I looked at the yellow pages in the phone book. I called companies near my home to ask about job openings.

Since moving to Vancouver, I have had at least fifteen job interviews. I get very nervous during an interview. I know that I don't have many skills. I can answer the phone and take messages. I am polite to people. I can type a little. I don't know how to use a computer, a big copy machine, or a calculator. My math skills aren't good. I finished high school but my grades weren't good. My younger brother, Tom, went to college, but I didn't. Our parents thought an education was more important for a boy.

### Conversation

Last week Dee went to a job interview for a receptionist's job. She thought she had a good interview but the company did not call her. After one week Dee called the woman who interviewed her. This is how their conversation went:

**Dee:** *Hello Ms. Owens. This is Dee Henry. I'm calling about the job I interviewed for last week*

**Mrs. Owens:** *Ms. Henry, I'm sorry. We filled that job.*

**Dee:** *Oh no! I liked that job. I really thought I could do it.*

**Mrs. Owens:** *Ms. Henry, I feel you would be a good receptionist, but we need someone who can use a word processor.*

**Dee:** *My typing skills are good*

**Mrs. Owens:** *Yes, your typing is O.K., but we don't use typewriters in our company. We only use computers. You must upgrade your skills to use modern equipment.*

**Dee:** *Thank you, Ms. Owens for your advice. Good-bye.*

**Mrs. Owens:** *Good-bye and good luck Ms. Henry.*

### Dee Henry: A New Beginning

*I have a job! Yesterday was my first day! Last week I went to see the job counsellor at the unemployment office. I explained that I really needed a job and that I didn't have any money. The counsellor told me about a special government program for unemployed, young women. I applied and the program accepted me. I get training while I work*

*I work in the office of a school. It's a fifteen-minute bus ride from my house. My schedule is 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m., Monday through Friday. I work from 8:00a.m. to 2:00 p.m. I answer the phones and use the copy machine. The people are very nice. My supervisor is teaching me how to use the computer to type letters and to keep student records. Then I go to school for two hours. I'm studying computers and typing. The government pays for all my training.*

*I like the job, but the pay isn't good I'm making minimum wage, but I have health insurance. I'm also happy that I'm getting training. Everyday I'm learning new things. I hope that I'll get a better job!*

### **Student Exercise**

1. What is Dee's salary?
2. What benefits does Dee have?
3. How many hours a day does Dee work?
4. How many hours a day does Dee study?
5. Who pays for Dee's classes?

Think about the benefits of Dees job. Put an X in the correct column.

<b>Dee's Job</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Not Good</b>
Location			
Salary			
Insurance			
Training			
Work schedule			
Transportation			
People			

Your Budget

Which monthly expenses do you have? Put an X in the correct column and the amount in the last column.

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>I pay</b>	<b>I Don't pay</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Rent			
Hydro			
Phone			
Cable			
Bus Pass			
Gas for the car			
Car payment			
Bank loan			
Health insurance			
Car insurance			
Car repairs			
Food			
Other			
Total			

# Skills Inventory

## What Are Your Skills?

Skills are things that you can do well. Job skills can be put into three different groups.

1. Working with things
2. Working with people
3. Working with information and ideas

## Working with Things

Some people are very good with their hands. They like working with things more than working with people. Some of their skills may be:

1. Sewing
2. Woodcarving
3. Making things with tools
4. Building and repairing things

## Working With People

Some people like working with people. Some of their skills may be:

1. Helping people
2. Taking care of people
3. Meeting new people
4. Selling things to people

## Working With Information and Ideas

Working with information is very interesting to some people. Some of their skills may be:

1. following instructions
2. putting things in order
3. solving problems
4. organizing events

Many jobs require several skills. For example, Food Counter Attendants use their hands to prepare and serve foods. They also need communication skills to work with customers. We usually like to do things that we are good at. Your interests, hobbies, and other activities show the kind of person you are. Many people want to work but have no definite idea what they want to do or what they would be good at. Answering the following questions can help you decide what kind of job you are interested in and what kind of job, you might be good at.

***1. Check off the job skills that you think you are good at.***

- Working with my hands
- Working with people
- Working with information and ideas

***2. Complete the sentences with your answer.***

I am happiest when I am...

---

I most enjoy doing...

---

I have succeeded at...

---

My strongest skills and characteristics are...

---

My interests and hobbies are...

---

Skills that I have learned from my past jobs are...

---

Other people say that I am good at...

---

The most important or influential people in my life are...

---

My best qualities are...

---

The proudest accomplishments in my life are...

---

***3. Now that you have a better idea what some of your interest and skills are, choose three job, or career goals that that you have.***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Suggested Activities**

1. Work in pairs to discuss and help each other set job or career goals.
2. Make a collage with pictures and words cutout from magazines. The collage should show parts of who you are and your skills and interests.
3. Do a visioning exercise in which you visualize your ideal job or career path. Discuss the importance of visioning and strategies for staying focused on your goals.

## Resources

### Curriculum Resources:

Bopp, J., M. Bopp, L. Brown and P. Lane. 1985. The Sacred Tree: Reflections on Native American spirituality. Lotus Light Publications, Twin Lakes, WI.

Kwantlen College: Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development (1996)  
Employment and Educational Access for Aboriginals: Curriculum Guide.

Charter, G. (1994) Career Counselling for Aboriginal Youth: Facilitators Manual.  
Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Wascana Institute: Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. Literacy Vocational Planning: Academic Employment Preparation Program.

Melnyk, Julia and Janet Robertson (Alberta Vocational College, Calgary) (1995)  
Looking For Work. Edmonton: Information Development and Marketing Branch of Alberta Advanced Education Centre.

Green, H. and D. Sawyer. 1984. The NESAs Activities Handbook for Native and Multicultural Classrooms. Tillicum Library. Vancouver

Ministry of Education. 1987. Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines: A resource book or Adult Basic Education. Queen's Printer. Victoria.

Bolles, R.N. 1993. What Color is Your Parachute? Ten Speed Press. Berkeley.

### Career Newspaper Resources

Aboriginal Youth Today Winter 1996-1997. Ottawa: New Magazine Publishing Company.

Canada Career Information Partnership, "Canada Prospects." Fifth Edition, 1996-1997. Human Resources Development Canada

Youth Employment Skills Canada, "Career Paths: The Career Planning Guide" Vol. 1, No.2 Fall 1993.

Youth Employment Skills Canada, "Motiv8: The School to Work Transition Newspaper." Issue 1, Spring 1996.

### Aboriginal Employment Training Agencies

Aboriginal Skill Development and Training Centre  
United Native Nations  
Tel: 688-1821

Employment and Educational Access for Aboriginals  
Kwantlen University College and Kekinow Cultural and Educational Society.  
Tel: 599-3009

Choices Pre-employment Program for Aboriginal Women  
Helping Spirit Lodge  
Tel: 872-6649

Thunderbird Community Centre  
Employment Support Program  
Tel: 254-0427

Vancouver East Community Skills Connection Centre  
Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training  
Aboriginal Peoples Employment Network  
Tel: 666-5213

Aboriginal Personnel Services  
Tel: 688-1821

AHP-CII-UK Pre-employment Training Program  
Tel: 581-0267

Aboriginal Employment Project  
Tel: 951-4819

KW' ASHNM EK'  
First Nations Career Planning and Job Search Strategies  
Tel: 251-0993

KW' AZA'N'TSUT Aboriginal Job Finding Club  
Tel: 876-1212

Lift Indian Future Training Institute  
For Aboriginal Women  
Tel: 736-7740

Aboriginal youth Pre-employment Centre  
Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
Tel: 254-2226

Aboriginal Employment Outreach Services  
Tel: 873-2455