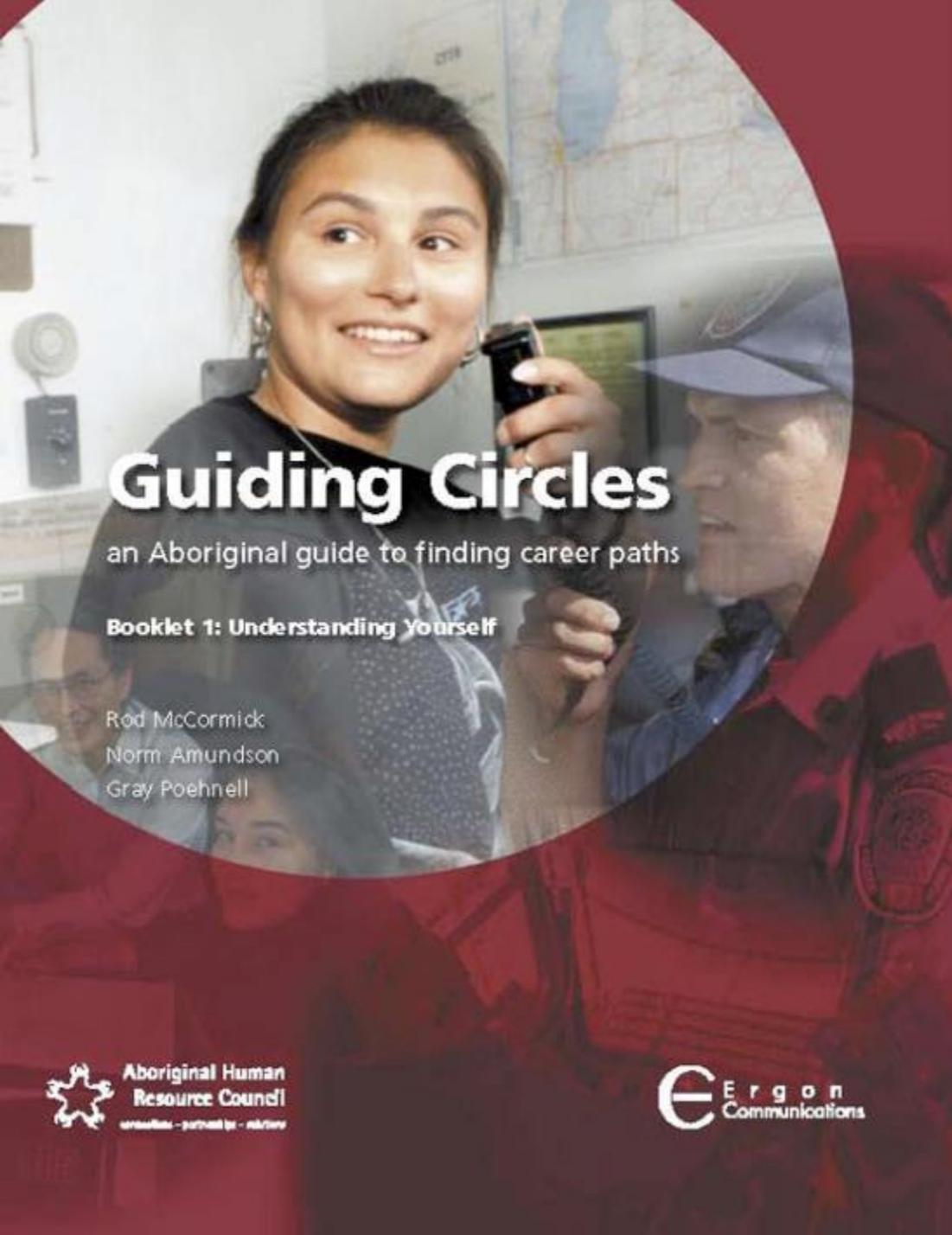


# The Guiding Circles Approach to Career Development & Minority Cultures

Norman Amundson, PhD  
UBC Professor Emeritus

# Guiding Circles Background Story

- An Invitation and Consultation with Dr. Rod McCormick (Mohawk)
- Building the Guiding Circles Program
- Over 10,000 career practitioners trained by Gray Poehnell (Metis) and Trina Maher (Ojibwe), primarily in Canada and Australia
- Program applied in many different contexts: schools, employment centres, mental health agencies, correctional facilities, and so on.



# Guiding Circles

an Aboriginal guide to finding career paths

**Booklet 1: Understanding Yourself**

Rod McCormick  
Norm Amundson  
Gray Poehnell

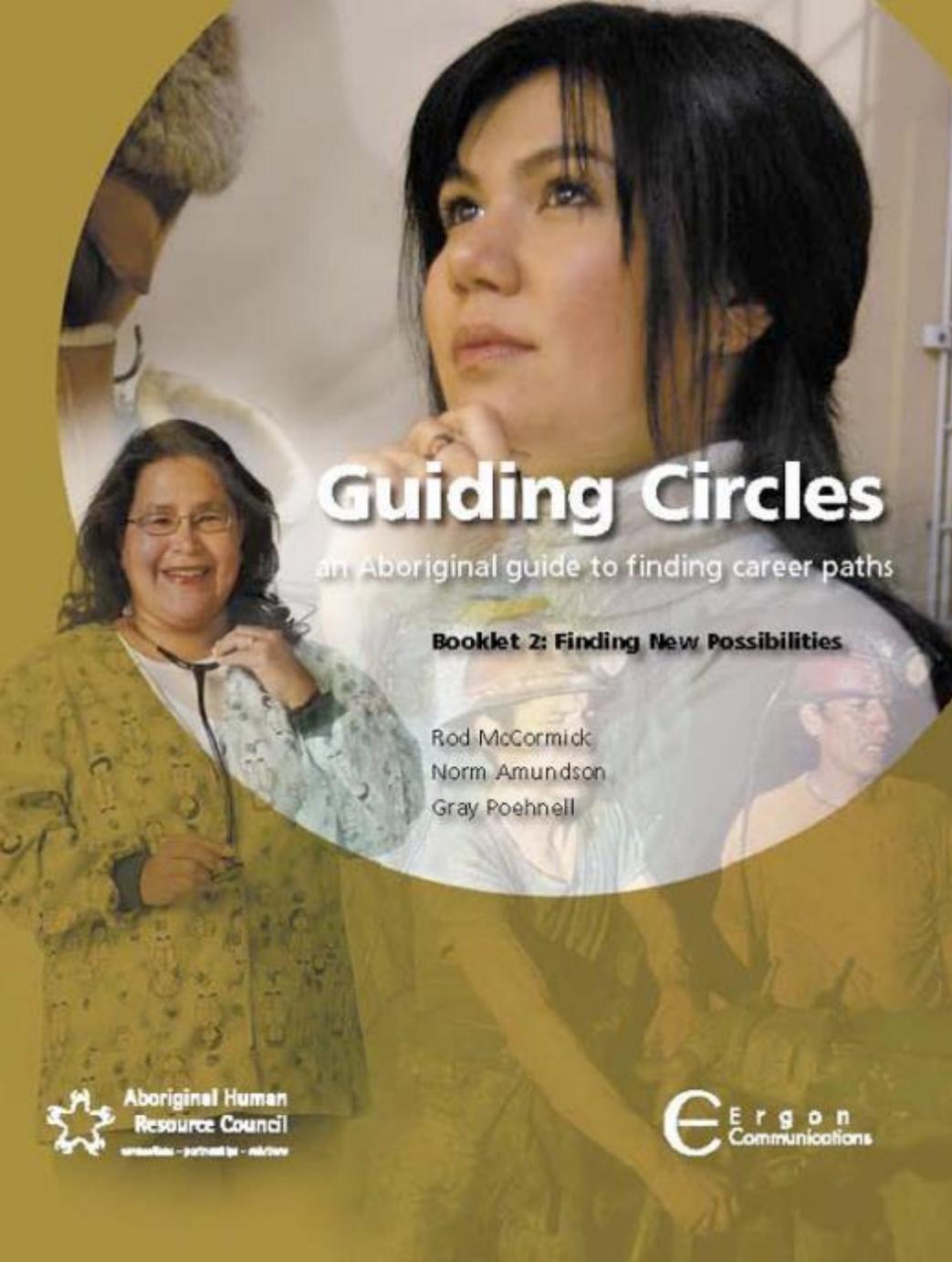
## Guiding Circles:

an Aboriginal guide  
to finding career  
paths

Booklet 1:  
understanding  
yourself

**Focus:**  
**Self-assessment:**

Who am I?



# Guiding Circles:

an Aboriginal guide  
to finding career  
paths

Step 2:  
finding new  
possibilities

Focus:  
Career Exploration &  
Decision Making:

What can I do?

# Developing the GC Approach

- MATTERING
- METAPHORS: CAREER CIRCLES
- RELATIONSHIPS (COMMUNITY)
- BALANCE (MEDICINE WHEEL)
- ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISES

# Feeling That You Are on the “Margin” or that you don’t “Matter”

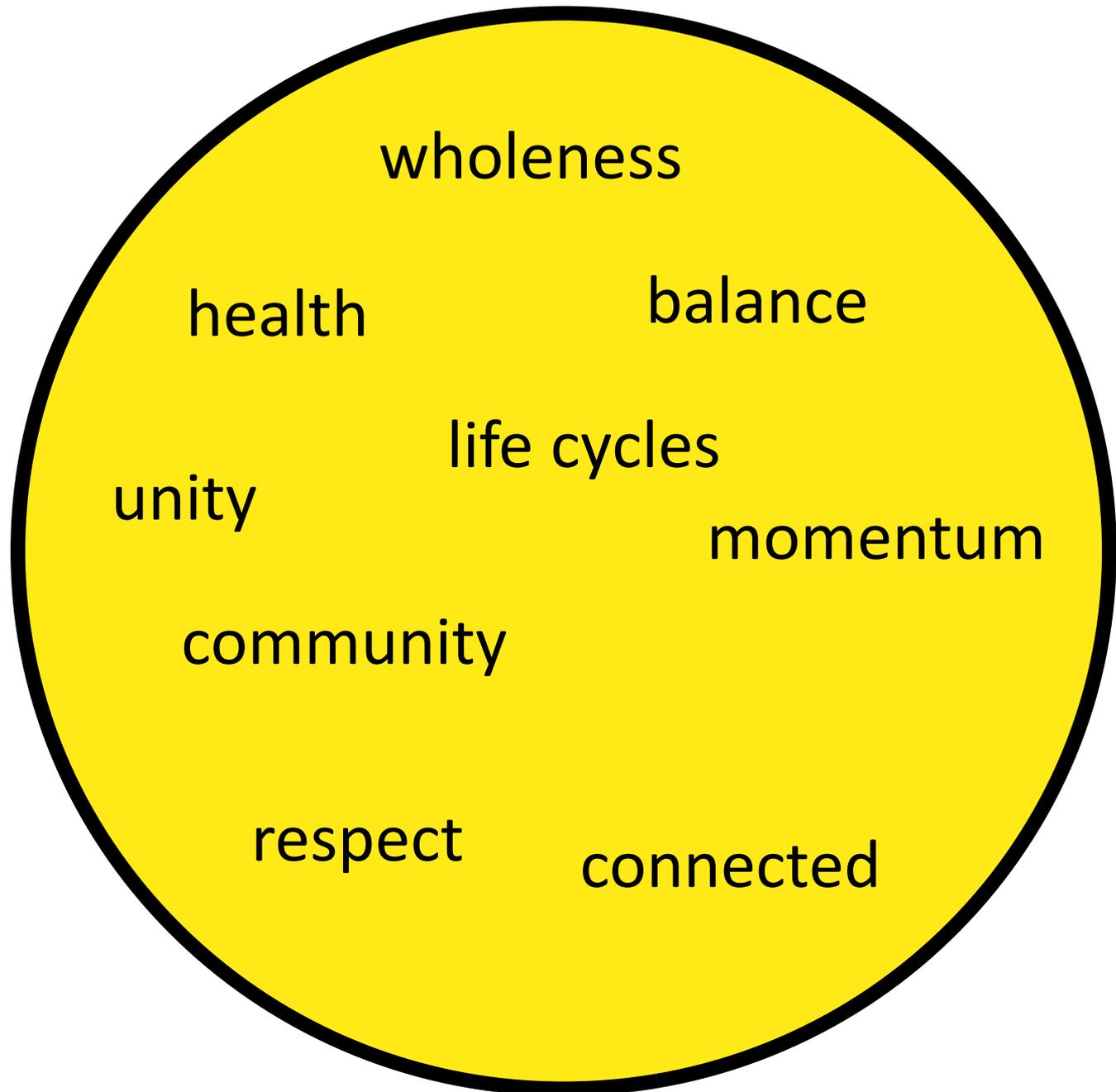
Rosenberg and McCullough

- Mattering - the belief that you are worthwhile / significant
- Attention
- Importance
- Reliance
- Personal Caring
- Appreciation

**“Circle”**

**Metaphor**

?

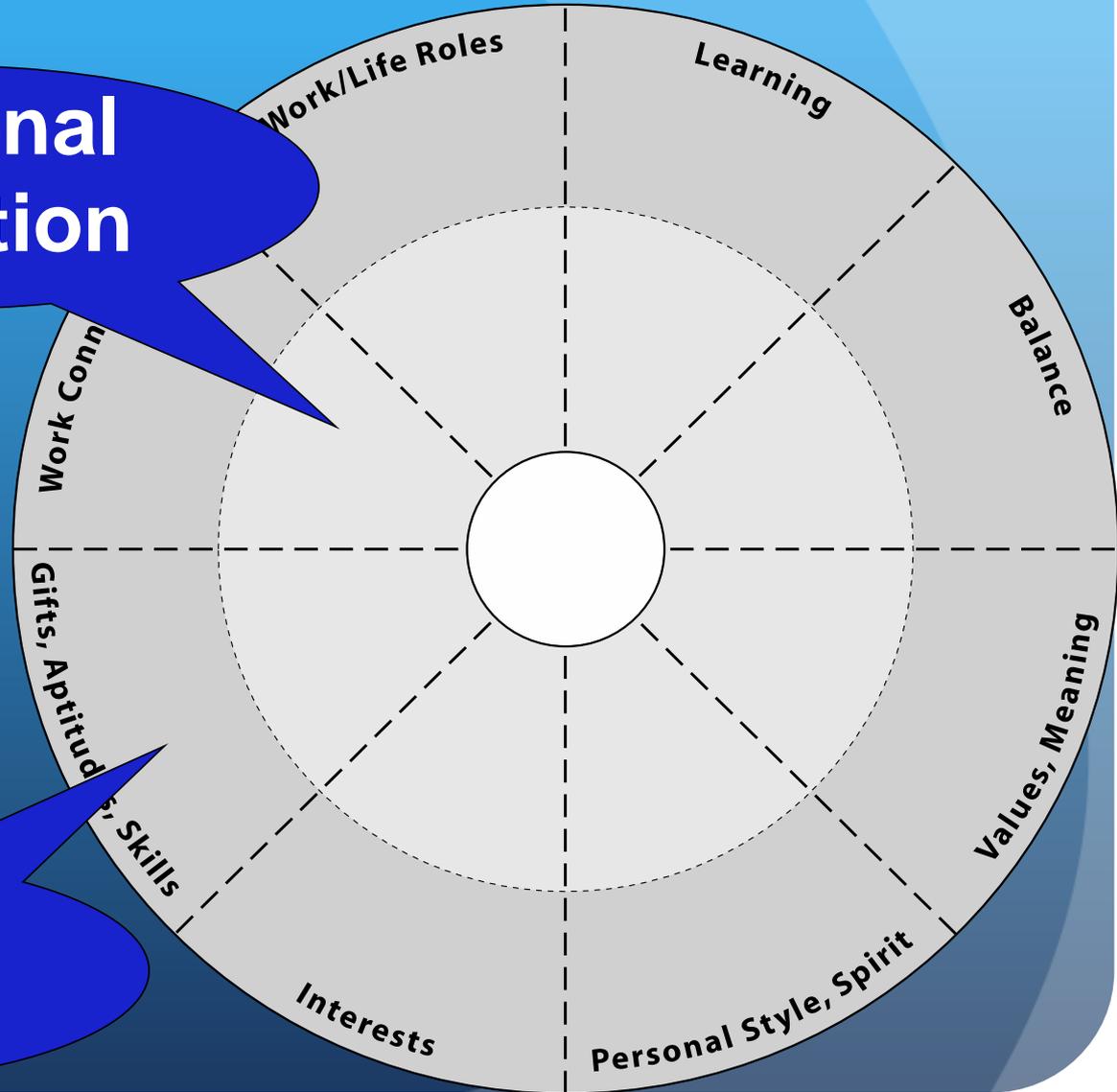




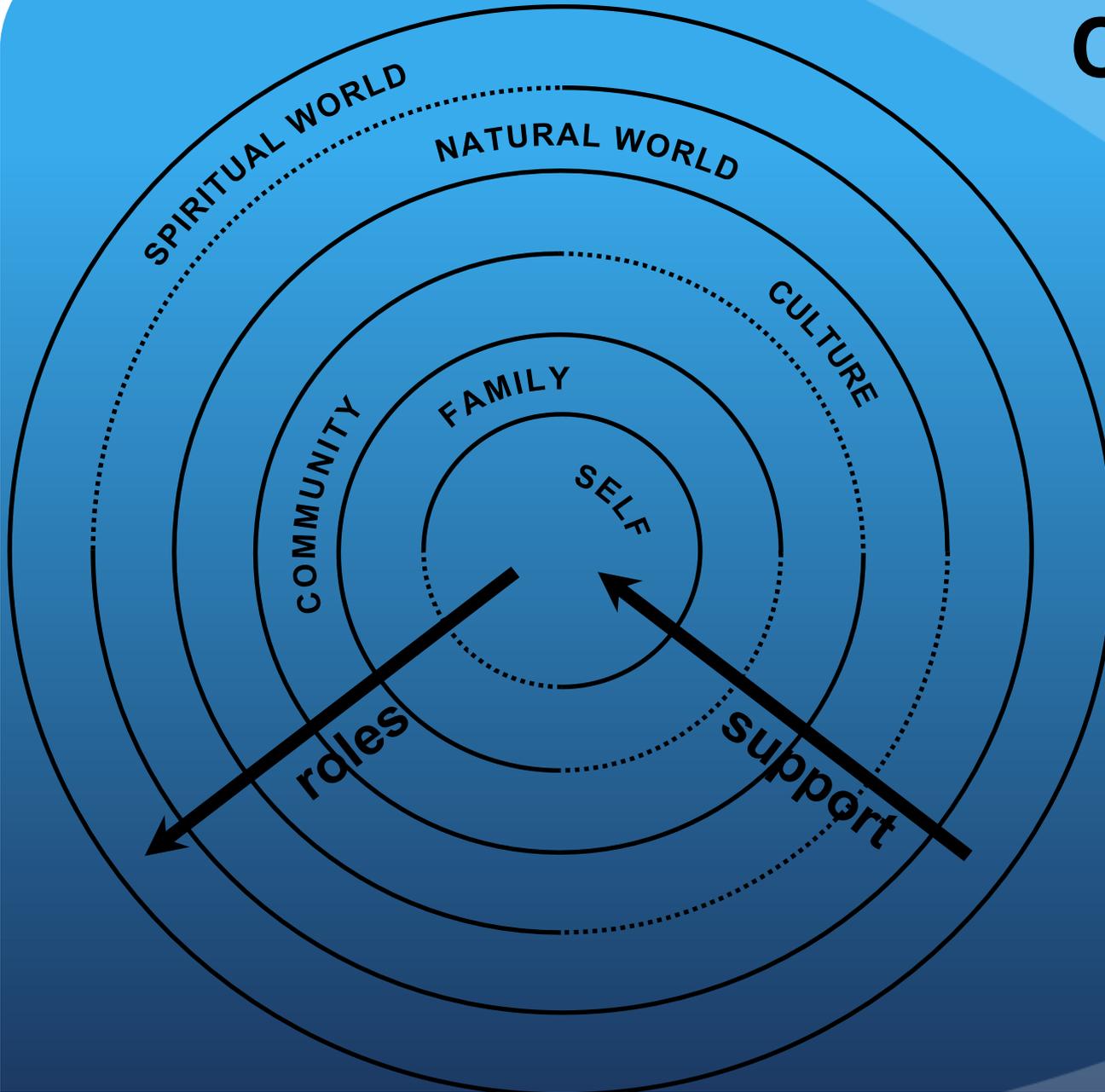
# Guiding Circles: Expanding the Circle

**personal  
reflection**

**others'  
feedback**



# Connections

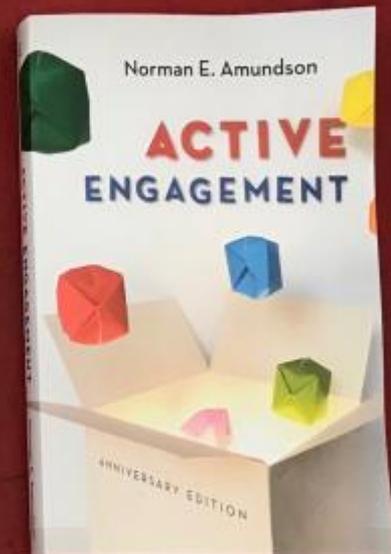
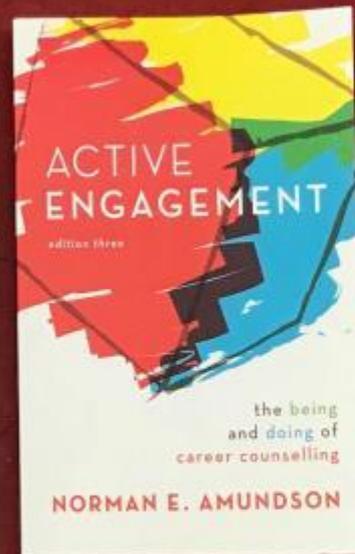
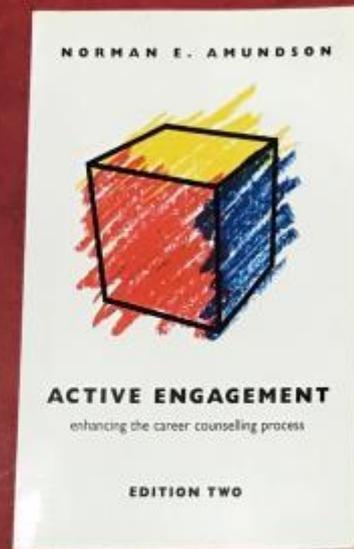
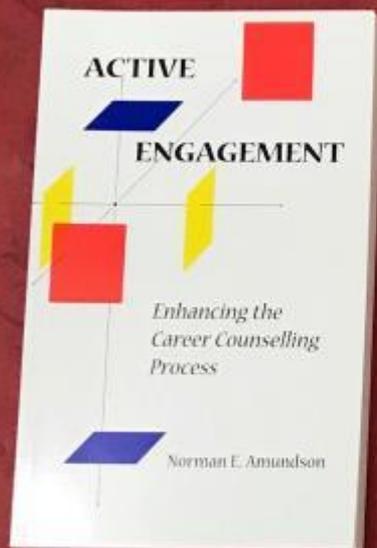




# Balance

Which area is the closest to being “just right” for you at this time?

# Active Engagement - an Intervention Framework



# Some Active Engagement Exercises

- Favorite Things Activity
- Patterns Identification
- Storytelling: Circle of Strengths
- Metaphors like the “Backswing” and “Psychological DNA”

# **The G.C. Book**

**Tyler Blyan & Justine Dumais**



**Well first it was the R P S, War Party to be the best  
And Buffalo Lake they want to test  
They ain't never heard no rappers rip like us  
Métis Mafia now who's ready to bust  
I'm telling all you rappers put you mic straight  
down  
Because you're trying to beat a king  
and you got no crown.**

# **The G.C. Book**

**I heard of four stabbings in Buffalo Lake  
Native, you end up in a body bag.  
Then first off it was AADAC Class  
And sometimes I wonder even if I did pass  
And if I didn't I'm just a kid with FAS  
But I'm trying to live my life just to make it the best**

# **The G.C. Book**

**Yo! The GC Book  
Gotta' take a look  
Yeah, it helps me see  
It's okay to be me  
It's a real cool tool  
Says ya' gotta stay in school  
Don't get off track  
Gonna' land on your back  
But June our friend  
Will help us again  
Gotta' stay in gear  
Gotta' find my career  
So you need this tool  
Ya' gotta' stay in school  
Don't be you Mama's fool  
Get a job!**

# **The G.C. Book**

**Now we're rappin' on stage and we're doing it live  
I'm telling you all who think of suicide  
Think of who you know  
Before you're ready to die  
I don't want no one to think like that  
That's why you listen to the words that I put in this rap  
I'll rap all day just so you get the message  
Of what I'm trying to say.**

# **The G.C. Book**

**Well, did you get it  
Or did you even think  
Don't you get the message  
That we're trying to bring  
If you didn't let me tell you one more time  
So let's kick it up a notch and let me bust a rhyme.**

**Do ya' get it? Do ya' get it? Do ya' get it?**

**Yo! The GC Book**

**Gotta Take a look**

**Yeah, it helps me see**

**It's okay to be me**

**It's a real cool tool**

**Says ya gotta stay in school**

**Gotta' stay in gear**

**Gotta' find my career**

**Do ya' get it?**

# An Indigenous Practitioner Speaks

(Debra Bob -First Nations Centre for Excellence)

- I have needed to find tools that speak to my people in a way that was familiar and relatable.
- Guiding Circles addresses my client need for community connection with a strong storytelling and family component.
- Active Engagement has given me the single most valuable resource in my practice. I have countless stories of people that other counsellors had deemed impossible to move forward who have benefited greatly from ACE.

# Moving Towards Hope Filled Engagement

- Readiness, Recruitment and Retention
- Building Ramps as well as Stairs
- Accessible language
- Focusing on Self Affirmation and Hope
- A 'Better Story'

# HOPE-FILLED ENGAGEMENT



*new possibilities  
in life/career counselling*

Gray Poehnell  
Norman E. Amundson

1. Introduction
2. Diversity and Challenges
3. Key Themes
4. Creativity, Spirituality, Imagination, and Hope
5. Self-Assessment

6. Storytelling
7. Career Exploration
8. Creative Vision/Decision/Action Planning
9. Keeping in Step with a Changing Career

# Some Takeaways

- Creating a mattering climate
- Collaboration - beginning with an invitation; stepping aside
- Importance of family and friends
- Making room for cultural practices and spirituality
- Focusing on the uniqueness of each person and group

# More Takeaways

- Externalizing the problem (metaphors)
- Storytelling - strength affirmation
- Engaging the physical
- Having fun
- Flexibility and adaptation

# PILLARS OF GC PROGRAM

- Relationships - Mattering, Collaboration, Involvement of Significant Others
- Appropriate Cultural Concepts (Balance; Medicine Wheel) and Images (Metaphors - Circle)
- Active Involvement - Physically and Mentally Engaging, Storytelling, Fun

# Endings can lead to new Beginnings

- To continue the dialogue

[neamundson@gmail.com](mailto:neamundson@gmail.com)

[www.normanamundson.com](http://www.normanamundson.com)

