



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



**YOUTH  
WORK**

**Career Circles™  
Guide for Facilitators**

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission [Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union]. This report reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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## Overview of Career Circles™

As part of the Youth 2 Work project, two series of Career Circles™ will be carried out in five consortium countries - Austria, Greece, Portugal, Switzerland and UK. An initial pilot will take place from April 2013 to August 2013. Following this, any adjustments necessary will be made, and adaptations to suit both the target audience and local needs will be made. A second pilot will be run from January 2014 until May 2014, in order to test how effective the modifications prove to be with the target group.

Career Circles™ will be carried out by the following partners:

- Inova Consultancy (UK)
- SOL (Switzerland)
- BEST (Austria)
- SPI (Portugal)
- K-MOP (Greece)

Each Career Circle™ will consist of a minimum of 5 mentees (young people who are not in education, employment or training- NEET). One trained female facilitator will facilitate the group in each country, following the attendance of a training the trainers workshop on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013 facilitated by the Work Package Leader, Inova Consultancy (UK).

The first Career Circles™ will meet for three sessions (as a minimum) over the period April 2013 – August 2013. The second series of Career Circles™ will meet for three sessions (as a minimum) over the period January 2014 until May 2014. It is expected that the length in between sessions will be agreed upon by each Career Circle™ separately as this depends on group availability. Each session will last approximately three hours and should take place in a room where participants are able to contribute in confidence.

Depending upon the number of learners in a Career Circle™, the style becomes more or less directive by the facilitator. For example, in a bigger group with more than five learners, more tools will be used with more direction from the facilitation. In a smaller group with five or fewer learners, fewer tools would be used and greater use of the time-slots method to discuss and question over individuals' issues. This facilitator's guide aims to guide the Youth 2 Work Career Circles™ facilitator through both approaches.

After each session, participants will complete an evaluation form and the facilitator will write up their working notes from the facilitator's perspective. In addition, during the first session participants will complete a soft skills audit form. The facilitator will keep all evaluation forms at the end of each session. At the end of the third or final session, participants will complete a second soft skills audit form, a final outcome evaluation form and she will write up a summary report in English which summarises the individual evaluation forms per session, the final outcome forms and their own facilitator's notes/experiences. The report should contain interesting quotes from participants and audio files/photos of the Youth 2 Work Career Circle™ where possible. This summary report should be approximately 6 pages A4, the first phase report should be sent to Inova by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013; the second should be sent to Inova by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014, to be collated into an overall summary report in July 2014.

## What are Youth 2 Work Career Circles™?

This guide has been produced to give facilitators knowledge of Inova Consultancy's approach to Career Circles™ and to outline our recommended process for working with Career Circle™ groups for the Youth 2 Work project.

We recognise that the process of looking for work or trying to make the first steps to developing a career can be full of anxieties and uncertainties for many young people. Inova has developed a unique group mentoring process which brings together skilled facilitation using action learning techniques, coaching and mentoring, combined with career development/self reflection tools. In order to support young people to increase their career options and develop valuable soft skills, this Career Circle™ methodology will be piloted for Youth 2 Work. In a Career Circle™, a facilitator works with approximately 5 mentees (5 young people NEET) in a group setting. The programme blends group discussion and individual airing of issues, reflection, goal setting and personal action planning. Career Circles™ are led by skilled facilitators with expertise in action learning or by facilitators who have been trained in the methodology by Inova Consultancy directly.

### ***Career Circles™ Purpose and Methodology***

- Career Circles™ enable an individual to share their problems, issues, opportunities and challenges with others.
- Career Circles™ provide a safe yet challenging environment where ideas can be explored and tested.
- Possible options for action can be generated and discussed.
- The individual is helped to find the next steps forward.
- Encouraging development of self-reflection and self-belief.

There are also other benefits of participation:

- Opportunities to network with other young people facing similar issues.
- Opportunities to make new contacts and expand their networks.

### ***Career Circles™ - Underpinning Philosophy***

Career Circles™ are learner led and learner focused. The concept of Career Circles™ is built on the process of learning as a journey which requires that the individual can be helped to reveal what they need to know, that some knowledge is already within and needs to be brought forward, and that shared knowledge and learning from others can be valuable. The focus is very much on questioning to reveal insights- whether this is through group discussions, completion of exercises and guided questioning from other participants. For example, through guided questioning sections within a Career Circle™, participants take it in turns to have a time slot to talk about their problem or opportunity and the other group members offer questions. The questioning is about discovery, trying to understand more fully any underlying issues which it would be fruitful to explore further. Thus the focus is on questioning rather than advice giving. Similarly when completing exercises regarding self-development or self-reflection, participants are encouraged to question their responses and to support other group members in questioning why they responded to an exercise in a certain way. This process strengthens the development of self-reflection.

The two models below (Action Learning Process and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle) are useful in further explaining the purpose and process of Career Circles™.

Fig 1. Action Learning Process

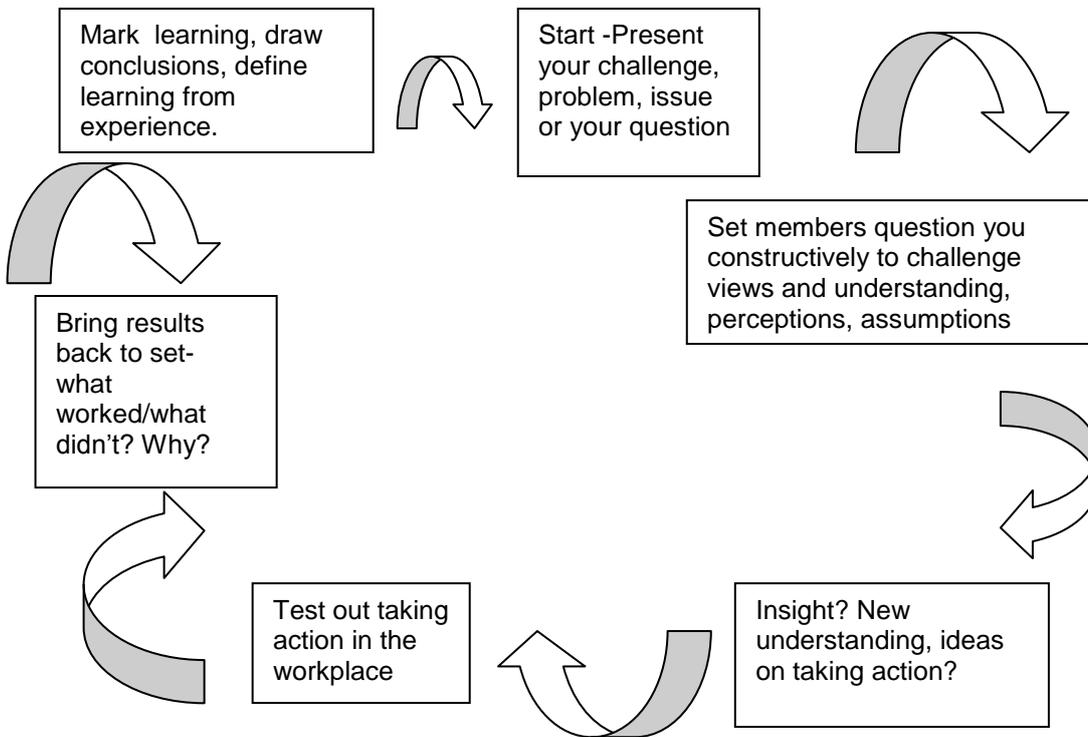
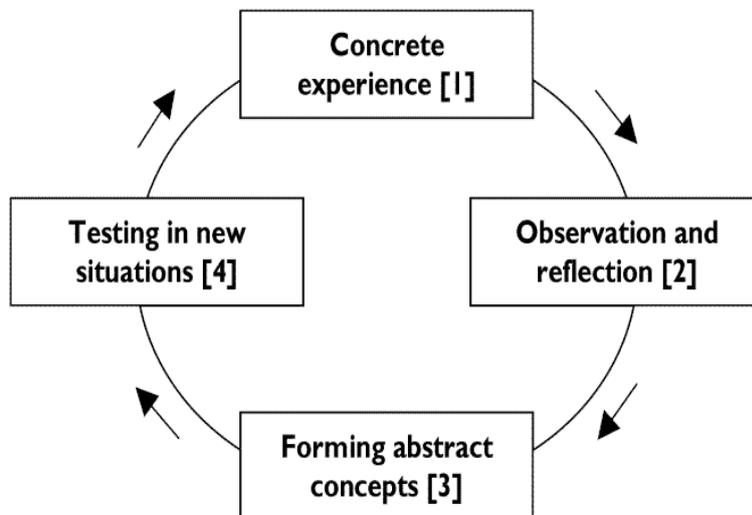


Fig 2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1975)



## **Career Circles™ - Facilitation Aims.**

Career Circles™ are generally facilitated in a fairly non-directive manner; however each facilitator will have their own style which may be more or less directive. It may be necessary to use a more directive approach when appropriate e.g. when an individual might be about to undertake risky or damaging actions which can be foreseen. As mentioned previously, the size of group dictates the level of direction required. Larger groups tending to be led in a more directive fashion than smaller ones.

We would expect the learning process to feature some of the following exploration for participants:

- Exploration of what may cause particular conditions or consequences; reviewing decisions or actions and reveal how this has led to the current situation. Could problems have been avoided? What are the implications if a similar situation occurs in the future? What have they learned from this situation?
- Examining their own thinking that led them to believe something or act in a certain way. Is a decision built on fair assumptions? Have assumptions been tested?
- We can also **learn from mistakes**; Argyris (1993) suggests that learning occurs whenever errors are detected and corrected.
- The facilitation should also be **future focused and solution focused**. It is useful to assist members in predicting possible outcomes. Have they taken everything into account? What is the back up or contingency plan? Have they considered all the options in a situation?
- Your facilitation will explicitly get people to **commit to goal and action plans**, report on their own progress, redefine goals and review outcomes.
- The facilitation should also involve awareness of **group dynamics and group process**; this may occasionally require that the facilitator may have to intervene to protect someone's time, to keep issues on track when challenge may be causing distress, when someone is perhaps using power inappropriately or behaving in a way that frustrates or blocks the group's learning.
- Participants might wish to experiment with behaviours in the Career Circle™ (with the agreement and support of their colleagues) and obtain feedback. Perhaps a member would like to be more assertive and offer more suggestions in group settings or develop the confidence to disagree with people.
- Encourage group members to be creative, to work outside comfort zones and to maximise opportunities.
- Contracting: defining an agreement with the Career Circle™ members about roles and responsibilities in order that a) you can best facilitate: b) they can get most out of the process in a climate which is conducive to learning. Agreements need to be revisited frequently and rules of operation need restating at the start of each session. The following section on Contracting outlines this process in more detail.

## Outline of Session Content

SESSION INDICATIVE CONTENT	<i>Suggested tools/exercises</i>
<p><b>MEETING 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary contracting</li> <li>• Personal introductions-your introduction and Career Circle member introductions</li> <li>• Introduction to Action Learning principles</li> <li>• Administration and materials signatures on attendance record, check agreements signed, show and explain mentee pack</li> <li>• Completion of audit skills form</li> <li>• Go through examples- approach, difference between advice giving, using questions, turning questions into statements, outline way of working</li> <li>• Ground rules agreement</li> <li>• Exploration of issues</li> <li>• Goal setting and action planning</li> <li>• Summary of actions and learning</li> <li>• Evaluation forms</li> <li>• Ensure you have agreed next session, date, time, venue (may be prescheduled)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Seeing Yourself Differently</b></li> <li><b>2. Thinking Differently (Roman numerals)</b></li> <li><b>3. Mapping it Out</b></li> <li><b>4. Wheel of Skills</b></li> <li><b>5. Resilience at Work</b></li> <li><b>6. Goal Setting</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>MEETING 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re contracting- checking agreement on ways of working</li> <li>• Progress review: discussion of successes, difficulties</li> <li>• Articulation of new challenges and opportunities</li> <li>• Exploration of issues</li> <li>• Goal setting and action planning</li> <li>• Summary of actions and learning</li> <li>• Evaluation forms</li> <li>• Ensure you have agreed next session, date, time, venue (may be prescheduled)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>7. Metaphors</b></li> <li><b>8. Recipe for Job Success</b></li> <li><b>9. My Fantasy Job</b></li> <li><b>10. Reflecting on Personal and Career Values</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>MEETING 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re contracting- checking agreement on ways of working</li> <li>• Progress review: discussion of successes, difficulties</li> <li>• Articulation of new challenges and opportunities</li> <li>• Exploration of issues</li> <li>• Goal setting and action planning</li> <li>• Summary of actions and learning</li> <li>• Complete audit skills form (discussion of outcome)</li> <li>• Evaluation forms</li> <li>• Exchange contact information, agree any further informal networking</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>11. Motivators</b></li> <li><b>12. Finding Flow</b></li> <li><b>13. What's Weighing You Down?</b></li> <li><b>14. Putting It into Practice - Interviews</b></li> </ol>

<p><b>MEETING 4 (optional)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re contracting- checking agreement on ways of working</li> <li>• Progress review: discussion of successes, difficulties</li> <li>• Articulation of new challenges and opportunities</li> <li>• Exploration of issues</li> <li>• Goal setting and action planning</li> <li>• Summary of actions and learning</li> <li>• Strategies for sustainability</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reviewing mind map Vision Collages</b></p>
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## The Facilitation Process

### Contracting

Block (1981) suggests that a contact with a client is a social contract and is developed to enable the consultant or facilitator to have equal power with the client. It forms an explicit agreement about expectations of one another of the respective parties and develops detail about how they are going to work together.

The facilitator needs to develop an informal contract and way of working with the participants. The concept of action learning and Career Circles™ needs to be explained. Each new Career Circle™ will begin with a contracting element which will be described in detail here.

### Preliminary Contracting Overview

A structured contracting session to start off the first meeting would include:

- Your personal introduction as facilitator.
  - Engaging Career Circle members introducing themselves to one another.
- a) An introduction concerning Youth 2 Work project , Career Circles™ , how they work, why this methodology has been chosen.
  - b) An introduction to the theme: women & business
  - c) Establish the meeting process; give a model for how each meeting will work.
  - d) Communicate expectations about evaluation and commitment
  - e) Communicate needs regarding administration procedures: initial agreement signing, attendance register, evaluation materials.
  - f) Elicit any expectations the group members have of you as facilitator.
  - g) Exchange any expectations you have of them in terms of contribution or behaviour or the way meetings run.
  - h) Develop ground rules.
  - i) Introduction to the method and ways of working, trying out the method.

### **a) Your personal introduction**

This will probably include:

- Your name.
- Personal history, how you got to where you are in life.
- Fields you have worked in, career trajectory.
- Professional qualifications if relevant, credibility to be able to facilitate.
- How you like to work, anything in particular that you value e.g. openness, honesty, sharing.
- Explain your role- process expert rather than technical expert.
- Finally give the mentee pack to all members. Ensure all attending have signed the attendance sheet and mentoring agreements have been signed.

### **b) Engaging Career Circle™ members introducing themselves to one another**

This need only be brief at this initial stage. It can help to give people a framework to contain their introduction and a set time e.g. two minutes per person.

Write headings on flipchart paper and ask them to summarise their introduction by asking the following:

- Name.
- Background (only what they are comfortable sharing – perhaps interests).
- Career development idea e.g. are they wanting to enter employment or education.
- Three key challenges you face when thinking about future jobs/career at the moment.
- What you want to get out of attending the Career Circles™.

It is also useful to check any prior exposure of participants to action learning or coaching and mentoring, and to introduce the concept of developing self awareness and self-diagnosis as an important part of being involved in Career Circles™.

### **c) An introduction concerning Career Circles™**

Explain how Career Circles™ work; that they provide a facilitated space where individuals can complete tools, share discussions and have a dedicated time slot each to present their issues, problems and opportunities. Through questioning, the group members help them to gain more insight into their situation; the aim is to help them find ways forward in taking purposeful action.

The method works because it places the learner to the centre of the situation; it works in real time on live issues of importance to the individual. It integrates any theoretical learning with real experience; it's about action and implementation.

The benefits of this Action Learning approach are:

- It enables you to generate more insight into the situation you are facing, perhaps helping you to generate more options and solutions.
- It tests assumptions on which your plans are built.
- It enables you to reality check plans, ideas and solutions; are they appropriate, comprehensive

and appropriate to your context?

- By bringing more brain power to look at issues, you have more opportunity to spot issues which you haven't already thought of; it can help expose blind spots. Your colleagues may help you look at potential consequences or outcomes; they may help you generate more innovative and creative ideas or find new ways to approach situations.
- It offers a way of constructively challenging your ideas, in order to help you develop them to maximise your chance of success

#### **d) Establish the meeting process; give a model for how each meeting will work.**

The general process of what happens in a Career Circle™ is as follows:

Each Career Circle™ has a trained facilitator who helps shape the sessions. You meet for 3-4 hours. Each person has allocated time to use to explore an issue they are facing or complete tools as guided by the facilitator. The facilitator will help participants develop action plans and goals to go forward and test out new ideas or implement solutions. Participants then bring issues back to the Career Circle™ next time it meets. Career Circle™ colleagues can help hold individuals to account, give them confidence to push themselves out of their comfort zone. After each time period they will report back to the Career Circle to review their achievements, difficulties and success. Learning is about being resilient in the face of difficulty. Participants may not achieve everything that they set out to achieve, however they will be encouraged to review difficulties and learn from them and find ways forward or new paths for action.

You may wish to refer them to the diagram of the action learning model or draw one of your own on a flip chart.

#### **e) Communicate expectations about evaluation.**

It is a requirement of participating in the Youth 2 Work programme that Career Circle™ members agree to take part in evaluation. There are many materials provided to enable this to happen in the mentee pack (evaluation section).

At the end of all Career Circles™ evaluation forms are required. It is helpful if you can get them completed at the end. The response rate is not as good if you allow people to take the form home. Allow ten minutes at the end of the session for them to be completed.

#### **f) Communicate needs regarding administration procedures: initial contract signing, attendance register, evaluation materials.**

At meeting 1 there is a requirement for the following administration for the programme:

- Provide each participant with 2 Career Circle™ agreements (in 'Introduction' section of mentee pack). Ask them to read them and sign and date both. The participant retains one for their records. One copy is kept by the facilitator.

- At the start of each meeting participants are asked to sign in on the attendance register. This is an important record for the administrators and provides evidence to funders that the event has taken place. Please retain it and return originals to Inova with your summary report. If possible please also record the session and take photos if participants agree to this. The summary report of the Career Circle™ once completed should be sent to Inova.

**g) Elicit any expectations the group members have of you as facilitator.**

This will vary according to your facilitation style and experience, but you might check the following:

- What level of challenge are people comfortable with?
- What experience do they have of self regulating in a group and therefore how much do they expect you to intervene?
- What would be a useful role for you regarding time keeping, enabling time to be shared?
- Do they require group or individual feedback from what you observe of behaviour in the group?
- Do individuals have any particular requirements or sensitivities?

**h) Exchange any expectations you have of them in terms of contribution or behaviour or the way meetings run.**

It is worth reiterating your expectations about confidentiality.

- What do you expect about openness and honesty?
- What level of awareness do you expect people to aspire to?
- What are your expectations about people being responsible for what they find useful and unhelpful in the group and asking for help?
- Attendance; explain any expectations you have regarding attendance, informing of non attendance, timekeeping, communicating with you or others if there are problems, getting messages to one another in emergencies.
- Explain your expectations about doing work between meetings whether that is logging progress, reflecting, preparing for next sessions.

**i) Develop ground rules.**

Developing ground rules with each new Career Circle™ is a crucial way of ensuring that the group starts off working in a way that fits with the methodology. Potential issues to discuss as part of developing ground rules could include:

- Confidentiality and respecting others' intellectual property
- Attendance and commitment
- Use of time
- Questioning and levels of challenge
- Giving feedback
- Respect
- Communication style
- Different types of 'helping' in the group- what people would prefer. What helps? What hinders?

You may have different approaches to developing ground rules. Feel free to use your own ideas. We will outline two examples of methods used to develop ground rules.

## ***Developing Ground Rules***

### **Method 1**



***Write up a list of bullet points/questions on the flip chart headed ground rules:***

- Confidentiality and respecting others' intellectual property/ideas
- Attendance and commitment
- Use of time
- Questioning and levels of challenge
- Giving feedback
- Respect
- Communication style
- What helps?
- What hinders?

Invite a brief discussion around each theme and invite people to articulate their thoughts around topics. Write up any additional items, checking all the time that everyone feels able to sign up to what has been agreed. Probe to check that issues resonate with all participants. Pick up on any body language or discomfort that might suggest there is covert disagreement. Summarise the consent. This flipchart can then be taken by the facilitator to the following sessions.

### **Method 2**

***Write up the following question on a flip chart headed Ground Rules:***

What are we prepared to do to help us work together?

Invite a brief discussion around the above question. Invite people to share their thoughts around topics. Identify themes and agreement. Write up notes, checking all the time that everyone feels able to sign up to what has been agreed. Probe to check that issues resonate with all. Summarise the consent. Check your list in the guidance to see all angles have been covered. Introduce new ideas if anything has been missed.

**A Career Circle's™ agreed ground rules might look something like this:**

#### **GROUND RULES EXAMPLE**

- We are prepared for any questions and value being challenged and pushed.
- Be open and honest with one another, face the reality, what's happening now, don't gloss over problems.
- Be open if we are not comfortable with level of challenge.
- We will take individual ownership and take action in between sessions.
- We will be open to new ideas, criticisms, and will articulate what is working and not working.
- We will develop trust to combine and offer creative ideas to one another.
- Respect one another's ideas and don't take them, seek permission if developing ideas- partnerships are possible.
- Protect reputations and promote one another.
- Be ourselves, be authentic.
- If not able to attend because of illness we will phone our Mentor and get a message through to the facilitator/ group as early as possible.
- A special request from Sue: she is not very assertive and would like to be invited to articulate her thoughts more. If she is not being assertive she welcomes feedback.

At the end of session one, type up the flip chart rules agreed and e-mail them around to each member of the group and keep a copy for the final summary report of your Career Circle™. Print off a copy and keep

it in your file to refer to. You may need to re-contract around ground rules if issues arise during the work. Check if people are happy with giving one another consent to e-mail one another and share e-mail addresses with one another. This is not usually a problem at all. You can also disseminate other ways of keeping in touch in between meetings in the email e.g. using the Net:work zone.

### **j) Introduction to the method and ways of working, trying out the method.**

In your first session you need to give people experience of trying out the method and draw attention to:

- The role of the presenter and conventions- e.g. asking for input
- The focus on questioning rather than advice giving; an exercise or examples may be needed to communicate how to question and how to avoid advice giving.

During your first session you will need to outline not only the general process of working but the behavioural elements of your role and the roles of participants.

Explain that the Career Circles™ and way of working is learner led and therefore presenter led. The 'presenter' is the person speaking explaining their issues in their time slot. The presenter is encouraged to state what they need and to regulate contributions from others if too directive or unhelpful.

If input is required the presenter is expected to initiate it, asking for input from others when required. Ensure that people understand your definition of 'advice giving', in its unhelpful sense of directing the presenter towards a particular way of thinking or course of action. . Look for sentences starting with:

'Have you thought about....?'

'Have you tried...?'

'You could try.....'

Also explain how statements may be focused on a questioner's experience when the focus should be on the presenter.

'When I managed the restaurant we used to....'

'When I worked as a Manager in London I always found ...'

Give examples of how advice can take the presenter's time and be detrimental to personal learning, bypassing an opportunity for the presenter to learn and explore for themselves. Explore unhelpful comments such as:

'If I were in your situation I'd.....'

However also give an example of when advice, if asked for, might be constructive.

### **Example**

A presenter might ask for advice about contacts.

'I'm looking for a recruitment agent in my local area. Does anyone know one to recommend?'

This may be appropriate; it may help them to save time finding a new agent. However also offer caveats.

Each individual would need to take responsibility and check out the credibility of people personally by asking for proof of qualifications and testimonials. They would be expected to make a judgment for themselves concerning competence; the Career Circle™ is not a substitute for professional advice. Sometimes learning from others' experience can provide a useful shortcut. You might wish to explain about your role in offering support and challenge and how it is boundaried within the specific meetings.

## Detailed Overview of Career Circles™ Process



### DETAILS ON MEETING PROCESS

Your first meeting is dominated by more preliminary contracting, however subsequent meetings generally follow a similar process.

#### CHECK IN

#### DESCRIBE CURRENT ISSUE(S)

#### ISSUE EXPLORATION

#### DEVELOP SOLUTIONS OPTIONS ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

#### SUMMARISE ACTION AND LEARNING

**CURRENT SITUATION NOW PERSONAL EMOTION/MOTIVATION LEVEL**

**THE PROBLEM CHALLENGE OPPORTUNITY IS AIRED**

**PARTICIPANTS QUESTION TO HELP EXPLORE THE ISSUE/COMPLETE TOOLS & EXERCISES**

**FACILITATOR AND PARTICIPANTS HELP INDIVIDUAL DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS, ACTIONS**

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTER SUMMARISES NEXT STEPS THEY WILL TAKE/ ACTION AND WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED FROM THE PROCESS**

Here is more detail about the process within each stage of work:

### Check in.

This is the introduction when you find out how people are, what they have been working on, what challenges they have been facing, what progress they have made, their review of any changes. It helps to structure a format.

You might wish to write the following on the flip chart to help structure the individual presentations.

- How are you feeling?
- What's been happening?
- What actions did you take?
- What progress have you made?

### Describe current issue(s)

At this point the individuals have separate time slots for airing issues. Allocate equal time for each person leaving enough time for a summary and evaluation at the end. Establish a turn-taking order. Then in this section the 'presenter' talks about the issue they wish to discuss at the moment. The 'presenter' (the person airing the issue) gives enough information to give the Career Circle™ members an understanding about what they are facing.

Materials which can be used for this include the sheet '*My problem or issue I want to talk about is...*'. (under Evaluation in the mentee pack). Individual thinking time can be given prior to starting this stage.

Then the Career Circle™ members question the presenter. At the early stage questions are probably information questions to provide enough understanding to grasp the context. It can be time consuming to do 2 rounds, 1 for a check in, the second to air the issue, so decide if it's best to combine the check in with the airing of the issue. This will depend on numbers, time available, and talkativeness of the members and complexity of issues. If this is your approach add other questions on the flip chart to structure the format. You are enabling the presenter to articulate and describe their issue at this stage.

- What's your priority/challenge now?
- What do you need help with today?

It can sometimes be difficult for participants to prioritise which issue is requiring work. Some questions that may help include:

- What's the issue?
- What makes it an issue now?
- Who owns this issue/problem?
- How important is it on a 1-10 scale?
- How much energy do you have for a solution on a 1-10 scale?
- Are you concerned with a number of issues, if so what does it make sense to tackle first?

Some problems are so complex that sequential goals are needed to get to a solution; therefore be flexible, and keep them on track. Also be aware when a participant is flitting from one issue to another that it might be symptomatic of other issues which may need tackling, confidence, poor self organisation, fear of failure, or procrastination in avoidance of committing to one decision.

You will use your judgment as a facilitator when to probe usefully to maximise learning. There can be value in exploring why actions have worked and why things don't work at the check in stage too.

### **Issue exploration**

By now the participants should have a grasp of the situation and be able to question to probe and explore. Questions are used to create more options, to elucidate, to probe more deeply, to ask discovery questions which might lead to insights or new ways of seeing things or more alternatives for action.

Judge whether or not you need to offer some input on how to question here, particularly in the early stages. It may be necessary to explore closed and open questions, hypothetical questions, discovery questions and leading questions. Discovery questions help uncover the hidden assumptions and limiting beliefs that may be preventing the individual from taking useful action. As part of issue exploration, a series of tools/resources are available in the mentee pack for the facilitator to choose to work with in order to support participants. Suggestions for tools to use in each session are provided under 'Outline of Session Content'. A description of each tool is provided under 'Working through the Mentee Pack'.

### **Develop solutions, options, alternatives for action**

Following questioning, discussion or completion of tools, the process then moves onto resolving issues. Issues may only be resolved slightly; sometimes opportunities may have been explored so there may be further actions identified rather than solutions. This stage is characterised by people moving from 'not knowing' to 'knowing what to do next'.

### **Summarise action and learning**

At this stage ask the individual members to summarise their actions and verbally commit to goals or actions. The Goal and Task Worksheet is the key tool to help participants make sure they have concrete goals recorded after the first session which they would like to focus on during the Career Circles™ programme.

In session 1 you may also need to pay some attention to SMART goal setting which will help them undertake credible actions which can be measured (using the Goal Setting Worksheet in Tools).

## Goal setting tips



If you write your goals down you have more chance of achieving them. Visualising goals also helps to make them come alive. Before participants start to write down the goals they would like to focus on throughout the Career Circles™ programme, ask participants to think about the following questions:

- What time do you have available?
- What's your energy and appetite for achieving this goal?
- What level of knowledge does it require?
- Will you need any new knowledge?
- How are you going to achieve that?
- Can you estimate the effort required in relation to the value of the likely outcome= valence?
- Is it a very large goal that needs to be split into sub goals?
- What's the timescale?
- Are there any quick wins?
- Do you need to gain support to achieve your goals? Who from- friends and family? How will you do this? Can you organise goals into a framework- Short term, Medium term, and Long term?
- Do you know other people who have achieved goals like this- can you learn from them and model your behaviour on their success?
- Are you able to write your goals using the **SMART** format?

<b>Specific S</b>	Defines exactly what is your focus.
<b>Measurable M</b>	Is capable of being measured and has a clear outcome described.
<b>Attainable/ agreed A</b>	Is achievable.
<b>Realistic R</b>	Expresses a goal which is achievable but which may have some element of stretch and challenge.
<b>Timed/time specific T</b>	Specifies an end date or a date by which the objective will be achieved.

## Working through the Mentee Pack

The Mentee Pack contains five sections:

- Introduction (containing summary of Youth 2 Work and Mentoring Agreement)
- Contacts (local and national websites for job search/training search support)
- Tools (Several tools to support self-reflection and personal development)
- Resources (Several resources to support the tools)
- Evaluation (Session evaluation, self evaluation)

All exercises and tools will be demonstrated during the Training the Trainers workshop for Youth 2 Work Career Circle™ facilitators. In addition, the mentee pack exercises contain instructions for participants on how to complete each tool. These can be useful as a reminder for facilitators. We will provide an overview of all of the tools provided here (covered in depth at the face to face training the trainers session) for facilitators to use as an aide-memoire.

### Exercise 1: Seeing Yourself Differently



**Seeing Yourself Differently... Step 1. Ask participants what do they see when they look at the picture?** An old lady or a young lady?

Most people look at the picture and can see one thing first- the old or young lady. If participants can't see both, ask someone else to take a look and see what they can see. Ask another group member who can see both to explain how. Discuss the following questions with the group: How did they feel if someone else saw something different to you and you couldn't see it? Maybe they felt frustrated, annoyed, stupid, curious, amused? Can they see both now? Could they go back to only seeing one?

The meaning of this exercise is that we often get 'stuck' seeing ourselves or our lives in certain ways. Ask participants to try and look at hobbies and interests and see if any of them could be turned into a business. Encourage participants to look at themselves differently- as someone would who didn't know them very well. What skills/passions would they see?

### Exercise 2: Thinking Differently

- III This exercise aims to encourage participants to understand how easy it is to get stuck in certain thought patterns or problem solving behaviours rather than thinking more creatively and applying new ways of solving problems each time a problem comes along.
- IX Write out the three images on the left on a flipchart. Ask participants what the first image is- most people will eventually say 'a 3 in Roman Numerals'. Ask participants what the second image and third image is. Then ask them how they could turn the second image into a 4, and how they could turn it into a 10. Then ask how they could turn the third image into a 6. Most people will try adding a I by the right hand side of the upper V of the X. Then write the solution – write the two letter SI next to the X to make SIX. Discuss the importance of challenging how you have been thinking about a problem previously – truly 'thinking outside the box'.
- X

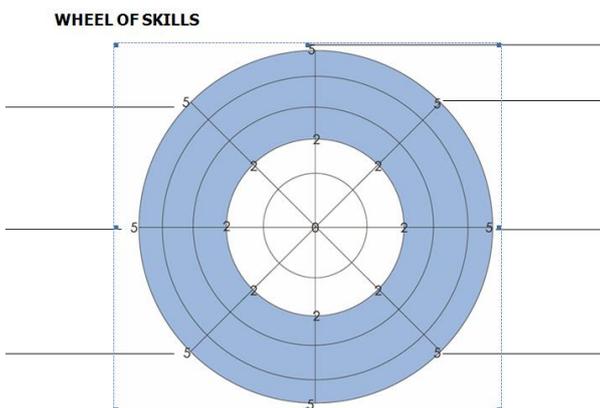
### Exercise 3: Mind Map and Ideas Generation

Participants will draw a mind map based on the ideas they have about what they feel they are good at/enjoy in order to identify strengths and interests which could link to jobs/careers.

Drawing a mind map is a good way to express their thoughts and feelings as well as practical concerns about looking for a job/developing their career. Here are some tips to give to participants. An example mind map is in the mentee pack. Make sure learners have a large blank piece of paper, coloured pens and any other resources to make the mind map as visually interesting to them as possible.

- Use key words, or wherever possible images.
- Start from the centre of the page and work out.
- Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.
- Create sub-centres for sub-themes.
- Put key words on lines. This reinforces structure of notes.
- Print rather than write in script. It makes them more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case.
- Use colour to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out.
- Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind.
- Use pictures or images.
- Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.
- Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
- Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map.

### Exercise 4: Wheel of Skills



The aim of this exercise is to help participants to understand what skills are useful in a job/career they are interested in and to think about how they would rate themselves on their confidence level in this skill currently. Participants add new skills to the general list of business skills and then choose the 8 skills they think are most important and write each skill on each of the lines by the side of the wheel. For each skill, ask participants to rate how confident they feel in this skill from a scale of 0-5 where 0 is not confident at all and 5 is extremely confident. Then ask participants to join up the Xs on the wheel.

A general group discussion following the exercise helps participants to see ways they could increase confidence in their skills where necessary or to see what skills they have confidence in currently to use these to their best effect.

### Exercise 5: Resilience at Work Questionnaire

Participants can complete the questionnaire in order to gain insight into the different areas involved in resilience at work and where they need to focus development on.

### **Exercise 6: Goal Setting Worksheet**

Participants can be led through the information on setting goals (under Resources 7) before choosing 3 goals to work on throughout the Career Circles™ programme. Remind participants of the SMART methodology when setting goals and make sure they're clear of the breakdown of tasks in order to achieve each goal.

### **Exercise 7: Using Metaphors**

Encourage participants to analyse how they see themselves now by using images as metaphors to represent their feelings and compare this with how they would like to see themselves (in terms of a career) in the future. Use this exercise as an opportunity to discuss the power of positive thoughts and images in keeping motivated and enthusiastic about the future possibilities for their career.

### **Exercise 8: Recipe for Success and Evidence**

Engage participants in a discussion about what they think are the key ingredients for being successful in a job/career. Following the discussion, encourage participants to complete the evidence table by listing each ingredient and writing down evidence that shows they have this ingredient and if it is missing, what they could do to bring in this ingredient.

### **Exercise 9: My Fantasy Job**

Ask participants to visualise their ideal business and try and see as much detail as possible- not thinking of any constraints or difficulties in reality. Ask them to write down the vision using words, pictures, quotes, cut outs from magazines etc. A general group discussion follows regarding reflections on the exercise and how it can be useful to visualise what you want to get out of a job/career in order to help you connect with your end goals.

### **Exercise 10: Reflecting on Personal and Career Values**

Encourage participants to engage in a discussion about where and how our values are formed. Participants should complete the 2 questionnaires exploring personal and career values and rate their top values and have a discussion about these and how they link to a potential job opportunity.

### **Exercise 11: Motivators**

Encourage participants to engage in a discussion about what motivates them in general and to start thinking about what would motivate them in a job. Look at internal and external motivators and encourage participants to complete the table thinking about their own personal drivers and motivators.

### **Exercise 12: Finding Flow**

After explaining the theory ask participants to engage in a discussion about their anxiety and boredom and the impact this has with regard to procrastination? Ask them to think about strategies to move into flow? Ask them to provide you with examples of times when they have been in flow and how they could look for job opportunities that could provide them with flow experiences.

### Exercise 13: What's Weighing you Down?



Ask participants to put 6 things they want out of their next job/potential career on a separate post-it- one thing per post it note. This exercise is best started by the facilitator working with one participant to provide an example. With a picture of a hot air balloon on a flipchart, the facilitator pins the 6 post-it notes at the bottom of the balloon. The facilitator says “all the things you want out of running a business are weights weighing down the hot air balloon. It’s got a hole in it and in order to keep flying high, we need to start losing some of the weights. Which weight are you going to let go of first?”

The participant chooses one post-it to ‘throw away’ first and then continues with the balloon moving higher on the paper until there is only one post-it left. The facilitator then shows the ‘priority list’ to the participant and asks them to reflect on how they would feel if they were able to get all these things from a job/career and also to reflect on the key priority – the final post-it left on the balloon. Participants can then form pairs and do the exercise together with a partner. Facilitators can choose to do this with up to 10 things per post-it if they want to increase the knowledge of learners about their prioritisation in terms of potential jobs/careers.

### Exercise 14: Example Interview Questions

Participants work in pairs to try out the example interview questions and think of possible answers. The group shares in discussion regarding past interview questions they have been asked and how to come up with answers that reflect their strengths.

## Resources

There are eleven resources in the pack for learners which aim to provide additional information and support to learners. As the facilitator it is your decision how much you guide learners through the resources section or whether you ask learners to read and reflect on certain resources for homework tasks in between face to face Circle sessions. Brief information about each resource is provided below.

### Resources

1. Keeping a Learning Log (Information on how to keep a reflective learning log so that learners can track their progress throughout the Career Circles™)
2. About Mind Maps (Information on how to draw up a Mind Map and an example for learners)
3. Tips for Increasing Confidence (Top tips on how to increase confidence and self-belief for learners)
4. Get Inspired! (Quotes to inspire learners with space for learners to add their own quotes)
5. Resilience at Work (Information on what it means to develop resilience at work and the different things learners can be aware of in this area)
6. Look at Yourself Differently (Information to go with Tool 1)
7. Setting Goals (Information on how to set goals and the SMART technique to go with Tool 6)
8. Writing Application Forms: KSAs (Tips on how to write application forms and prepare for job interviews using your Knowledge, Skills and Aptitudes)
9. Voice Control Techniques (Information to help learners control their voice for interviews to give the best impression)
10. Relaxation Exercises (Exercises to help learners learn some basic relaxation methods to use before interviews)
11. Useful Links (Useful links regarding finding jobs or training opportunities)

## Ending Sessions

Finally ascertain what people have learned in the session. What have they learned about themselves; and about their problem or issue? Have they learned anything from others? What were the most useful questions? What impact did they have? This helps participants to have time to reflect on the outcomes of the session prior to completing the evaluation forms. Evaluation forms should be completed at the end of each session.

### Closing meeting 1

- Ask people to summarise their actions and comment on any learning for the session.
- Explain any arrangements for encouraging group members to hold one another to account. You may decide to ask people to allocate a 'chasing buddy' to their left around the table. This person chases them up, asks about progress and generally checks informally on their success in between meetings. This can also help to build relationships more strongly within the group.
- Ensure everyone has the date of the next meeting diarised and has venue information.
- Confirm any action you will take e.g. e mailing the ground rules agreed.
- Close the session by asking people to complete the relevant evaluation form.

### Closing the final meeting

- Ask people to summarise their actions and comment on any learning for the session.
- Close the session by asking people to complete the relevant evaluation form and a final outcomes form.
- Ask participants to score themselves on the soft skills form and analyse their changes since the first session. As part of your summary report you should include graphs illustrating the pre- and post Youth 2 Work Circles™ scores from the soft skills audit.
- Confirm any arrangements for continuance or informal networking outside of the group.
- Discuss sustainability plans for the group e.g. can they continue to meet at your premises or at a local cafe.

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**For more information on Career Circles™ please visit [www.inovacircles.org.uk](http://www.inovacircles.org.uk)**

**For more information about Youth 2 Work please visit <Insert web address>**

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