



# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## To the Aboriginal Student Transition Handbook

This guide was created to support you and your students as they work through the Transitions Handbook. You may choose to work through the handbook together as a class, in which case, you may want to refer to this guide as you move your class from stepping stone to stepping stone. If you choose to have your students work through the handbook on their own time at their own pace, then you may find it handy to flip to the stepping stone that a given student is on to get some ideas, useful websites and activities that would be pertinent to the student at that point.

Hopefully you will find this guide helpful in whichever way you choose to use the handbook.

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## STEPPING STONE 1 – EXPLORING YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST

### Identifying Your Strengths

#### Suggested activities:

Journaling – ask your students to reflect over their lives to key moments where they did something they were particularly proud of, whether it was accomplishing something difficult, reaching a goal, or making a difference in someone else's life. Ask them to write down what qualities and characteristics they demonstrated. Once they have identified these qualities, have them write a journal entry indicating how they demonstrate these qualities on a regular basis, in everyday life and even in small ways.

### Connecting with your Post-secondary Counsellor/Advisor

#### Suggested activities:

Checklist – have a discussion with your class about Band funding and try to determine how familiar they are with band funding guidelines. Work together to develop a checklist and/or a list of questions to ask their Post-secondary Counsellor/Advisor about band funding. Students can then connect with their Post-secondary Counsellor/Advisor using the checklist developed and determine their band's funding policies.

Guest Speaker – invite a local Post-secondary Counsellor/Advisor (or more!) to come into the class to talk about band funding, guidelines, deadlines and required documents. Be sure that your students know that all bands are different, so they will need to speak directly to their Post Secondary Counsellor/Advisor from their own band to get the right information for them. \*Note that it would be best to have someone come in *before the end of January*, as deadlines for funding and for applying to post-secondary institutions start as early as February.

## STEPPING STONE 2 – CHOOSING YOUR PATH

### Choosing a Career Path

#### Suggested activities:

Group brainstorming – have students write their name on the top of a loose-leaf piece of paper. Then have them write out the following column titles:

- » Strengths I see in the person
- » Career/job that I think they would be great at.

Sitting in a circle, each student will then pass his/her paper to the person to left. Each student will fill out what he/she thinks would be the best answer for the student named on the top. Pass the paper around until the original paper returns back to the student. Have the students review, reflect, and share their thoughts on the different perspectives (this can be done orally or in a journal).

Register at <http://www.schoolfinder.com> and take the career survey. After students have their results, have students summarize their results with their career interests and indicate whether they feel the suggestions made were good fits or not, including why they feel this way.

## **Connecting with the Aboriginal Post-secondary Coordinators**

### **Suggested activities:**

Research – have students start researching the institutions that offer the programs that match their career goals – provide a list of the institutions, the program that is offered and the credential that they would have upon graduation from the program.

Using the link provided in the handbook, have students identify the Aboriginal Post-secondary Coordinator at the institutions that they identified. Have them connect with the people listed and ask questions to help them weigh their options (the list of questions in the handbook is a good start!).

## **Applying to a Post-secondary Institution**

### **Suggested activities:**

Checklist – have students start to gather information on applying to their institution(s) of choice. What documents are required? Do they have the required courses to get into their program of choice? Do they have any transferrable courses? Have them develop their own personal checklist that is specific to the institution(s) and/or program(s) that they are interested in.

Ask students to identify new terms that they are not familiar with and have a class discussion to clarify these. For example, possible unfamiliar terms might be pre-requisites, winter/fall/summer semesters, plagiarism, etc.

# **STEPPING STONE 3 – PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION FROM AN IAHLA INSTITUTE TO A PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION**

## **Taking the First Step – OFF the Reserve**

### **Suggested activities:**

Class discussion – touch on the following questions:

- » What things excite you about moving to a new city?
- » What things scare you about moving to a new city?
- » What are some success stories you heard about students from your community moving to a big city?
- » How does your family feel about you moving to the big city? What has been their experience?

Checklist – have students create their own checklist of what they will have to take care of before they leave the community to attend their Post-secondary institution of choice – have them include housing, work and community responsibilities (they can follow some of the suggestions in the handbook to get started).

## **Staying Connected to Community and Culture**

### **Suggested activities:**

Planning – have students create a visual or written plan on how they will stay connected to their community and culture while they are away at school. You can then discuss the plans one-on-one with the students or have them present their plan to the class or in small groups. Debrief with a class discussion.

List – have students write a list of activities, objects, people, etc. that keep them connected to their culture, community, and identity.

Art Activity – have students create a memory box/bag with art supplies that represent themselves and where they come from.

## **Finding a Mentor**

### **Suggested activities:**

Reflection – have students reflect on their program/career choices and identify some questions and/or concerns that they have about the program, the career, application procedures, moving away from the community, etc. – any question or concern that they have about the whole concept of this next step in their educational journey. Have them either write a few paragraphs expressing these questions/concerns or make a list of them.

Identifying mentors – have students identify a few people, both within and outside of their home community, who have some connection to their field of interest and who would be good mentors while they are away in school. If possible, encourage them to identify someone who is/will also be at the institution or in the community that they will be moving to. Encourage them to connect with these people and discuss their questions/concerns that they came up with in the previous activity.

## STEPPING STONE 4 – YOUR NEW HOME

### On-Campus Resources

#### Suggested activities:

List – have students list the resources that they currently access in their community. Have them research their institution(s) of choice and find services offered on campus that could parallel the services from their home community that they listed.

### Community Resources

#### Suggested activities:

Ranking – starting with the list developed in the previous activity, have students add activities that are currently important to them in their everyday lives. Then have them rank the resources/activities from most important to least important. For example:

- » Auntie taking care of my kids while I study after school from 3-5 (most important)
- » Drumming group
- » Going for walks with my friends
- » Sunday dinner (least important)

Have students identify similar resources in their new city/home. If some of the activities are resources are not available, have them develop a plan that would include new activities that would provide similar supports. For example: walks with friends could be substituted with joining a walking group on campus or the community centre. Have them develop a plan if there are activities that are most important but not available to them in the new city.

## STEPPING STONE 5 – PREPARING FOR CHANGE

### Culture Shock

#### Suggested activities:

Class discussion – ask students to share a time when they were the only Aboriginal person in the room. How did it feel and how did they deal with it?

Journaling – have students write about what this quote (taken from the handbook) means to them: “If you don’t know where you come from, you sure don’t know where you are going to go. The more you learn about our roots, the easier it will be for you to live in this world today, then you know where you are from, who you are.” –Elder

## Life and Study Skills

### Suggested activities:

Class discussion – focus on the following questions: What do you think will be the most challenging part of getting good grades at your new school? What activities do you do right now that keep you balanced?

Paper – have students identify the study skill(s) that they feel are their weakest and strongest from the handbook sections. Have them develop a strategy that will address these weaknesses using their strengths.

Group brainstorm – discuss as a class what assertiveness means. List characteristics of assertive behaviour. When is it beneficial to be assertive in a classroom, with a teacher, with friends, family, etc.?

## STEPPING STONE 6 – BUDGETING

### Creating a Budget

#### Suggested activities:

Class discussion – focus on the following question: What things do you have to budget for when you move to a new city and go to school?

Small group activity – split students into 4 groups. Assign each group one of these questions:

- » What are some ideas to save money?
- » What if I run out of money during the school year and can't pay rent?
- » How will working impact my studies?
- » How can I talk to my family about finances and budgeting?

Once students have discussed these questions in their groups, have them present their ideas to the class. If time permits, give additional time for further discussion on each question as a class.

Using the table in the appendix, have students research their projected income and expenditures while they are away at school. If the final row ends up being a negative number, have students brainstorm how they can either come up with more money OR readjust their expenditures so that they can stay within their budget.

### Getting Back Home

#### Suggested activities:

Class brainstorm – as a group, have students brainstorm ideas for how they can return home during their school breaks. Once a good list of ideas has been developed, have students create their own individual plan for returning home during their studies using the ideas that best suit their needs.

Journaling – have students reflect and write about how important returning home during their studies is to them. What are the challenges? What are the benefits?

## STEPPING STONE 7 – TRANSITION BACK TO COMMUNITY

### Staying Connected

#### Suggested activities:

Class discussion – focus on the following questions:

- » What do you think will change in your relationships with your friends, family, and community when you move to a new city for school?
- » What can you do to ensure that you still stay connected to your friends, family and community?

Planning – have students reflect on and develop a plan to support their family, friends, and community as they transition into their new community/school.

### Planning Your Return

#### Suggested activities:

Career Fair – this activity can be organized as a group.

Have students reflect on their career aspirations. As a group, develop a list of local organizations, businesses and other employers where students would like to work once they have completed their Post-secondary studies.

Divide the list up and have students research the contact information for each of the organizations, businesses and other employers.

As a group, develop a ‘script’ on how these organizations, businesses and other employers can be contacted to attend your career fair – be sure to incorporate a focus on opportunities for college and university graduates. Once the script is developed, have students connect with these employers using the script to invite them to the career fair.

As a group, come up with a list of questions students could ask these potential employers. Remember to focus on opportunities after graduation.

### **Things you may want to consider:**

- » Ask potential employers to present on the various types of careers they can offer based on the level of education attained
- » Allow time for 'interviews' – not those where students are being interviewed, but rather an opportunity for students to meet individually with potential employers to 'interview' them about particular opportunities using some of the questions developed in class (note: if the student's institution of choice offers a co-operative education program, this could be a great opportunity for students to plant the seeds for a co-op placement in the future!)
- » Invite a panel of community members with college or university credentials who are currently working in the community to come in to speak to the students – you may also want to brainstorm some questions for the panel in class and have each student 'assigned' to at least one question
- » Invite a co-operative education coordinator from a nearby institution to speak about their program – allow for two separate presentations; one for the employers attending and one for the students
- » Invite local employment agencies to come and present on interview skills, résumé writing, and job searches

# APPENDIX: BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

## BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
<b>INCOME</b>										
Work										
Parents										
Student Loan										
Scholarship										
Sponsorship										
Savings										
Other Income										
<b>INCOME TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>									
<b>FIXED EXPENSES</b>										
Tuition and Fees										
Books and Supplies										
Rent										
Food										
Hydro										
Car Payment										
Insurance										
Gas										
Bus Pass										
Day Care										
Lunch Programs										
OTHER										
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>									
<b>VARIABLE EXPENSES</b>										
Cable										
Telephone										
Cell Phone										
Internet										
Credit Card Payments										
OTHER										
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>									
<b>PERSONAL EXPENSES</b>										
Entertainment										
Hair Cuts										
Dining Out										
Gifts										
Other										
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>									
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>									
<b>NET INCOME (income-expenses)</b>	<b>0</b>									



*It is incredibly empowering to realize that you can achieve good grades and relate to what is being taught, and actually know that you are getting the necessary skills to make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal children and their families.*

— Current Student at Public Post-secondary Institute



Office of Indigenous Affairs  
University of Victoria



Indigenous Adult and Higher  
Learning Association

