



# CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN GROUP CAREER COACHING

# Critical Pedagogy in Group Career Coaching



What is critical pedagogy and why needed in career guidance?

Collective career coaching approach

Critique of critical pedagogy

Case studies

# What is critical pedagogy?

Breaking term down –

**Critical** – from critical theory world view.

Perhaps aware of constructivist worldview with focus on construction of **knowledge** through building up of learning and experiences through lifespan/ **multiple realities**.

**Critical theory focuses** instead on how **knowledge** is **acquired and accepted**.

Examines and critiques **assumptions, power dominations, injustice and oppression**.

Focuses gaining clear picture (or **awakening**) before looking to **change** status quo (Thompson, 2017).



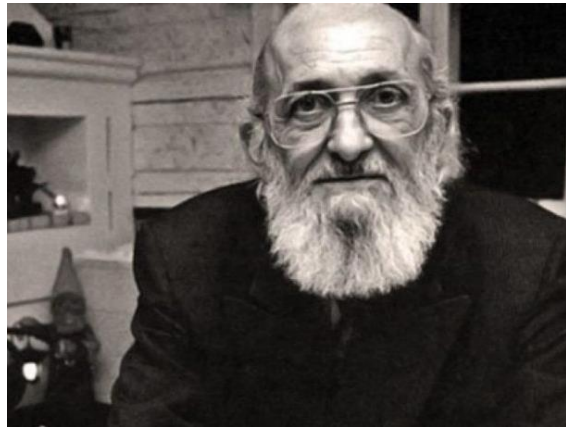
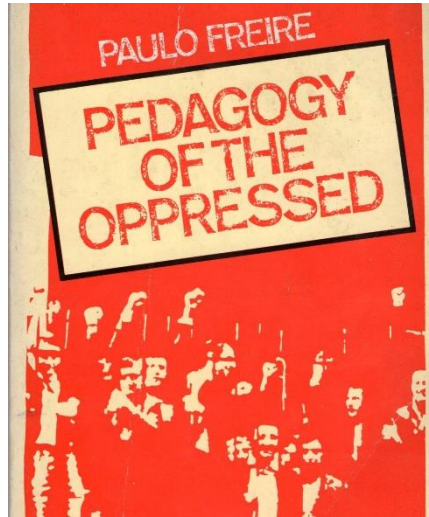
# What is critical pedagogy?

Breaking term down –



**Pedagogy** – method and practice of teaching and learning. Involves application of theory and practice.

Peda – teaching and learning of children (andragogy for adults) but term commonly used for both.



Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970)

Rejected “banking model” i.e. learning “deposited” and learners are “empty vessels” with “containers” to be filled with knowledge.

Leads to ‘communities’ or groups of learners stuck in ongoing cycles of learning without chance to question or challenge validity.

Freire - learning should offer opportunities to examine and name barriers/ injustices (awakening of critical consciousness) then engage in change.

Learners passively accept validity and relevance of knowledge/ learning with little opportunity to question.

Perpetuates inequalities and social injustices and reduces chances for change/ emancipation.

Co-operative practitioner-student model - “collective dialogue, reflection and action.



## Why needed in field of career development?

People's life, learning and work chances are not equal and are affected by wider cultural and community influences and power struggles.

“Draw on diverse theoretical traditions and stimulate new forms of practice” (Hooley and Sultana, 2016, p2).

### Critical pedagogy

One theoretical perspective (Da Silva, Paiva and Robeiro; 2016, Olle, 2018; Sultana, 2014; Blustein, McWhirter and Perry, 2005).

### New forms of practice

Challenge focus on 1-1 practice - relies on personal agency of clients to take action and does not easily address inequality, barriers and oppression which different groups face (Hooley and Sultana, 2016).

### New forms of practice

Working in groups one approach? Not new but perhaps under utilized, under researched and under valued?

# Group Guidance/ Coaching

'Blurs boundary between 1-1 and group workshops', Law (1996).

Build up in-depth interpersonal relationships.

Offers chance for peer support.

Learners co-facilitate and learn from each other.

Ideas and input from other learners.

Learners can feel they are not alone and face same issues.

Learners able to take joint actions

But..  
Some learners might feel inhibited in a group.

But ...  
Less chance for personalised guidance.  
Should compliment rather replace 1-1 practice.

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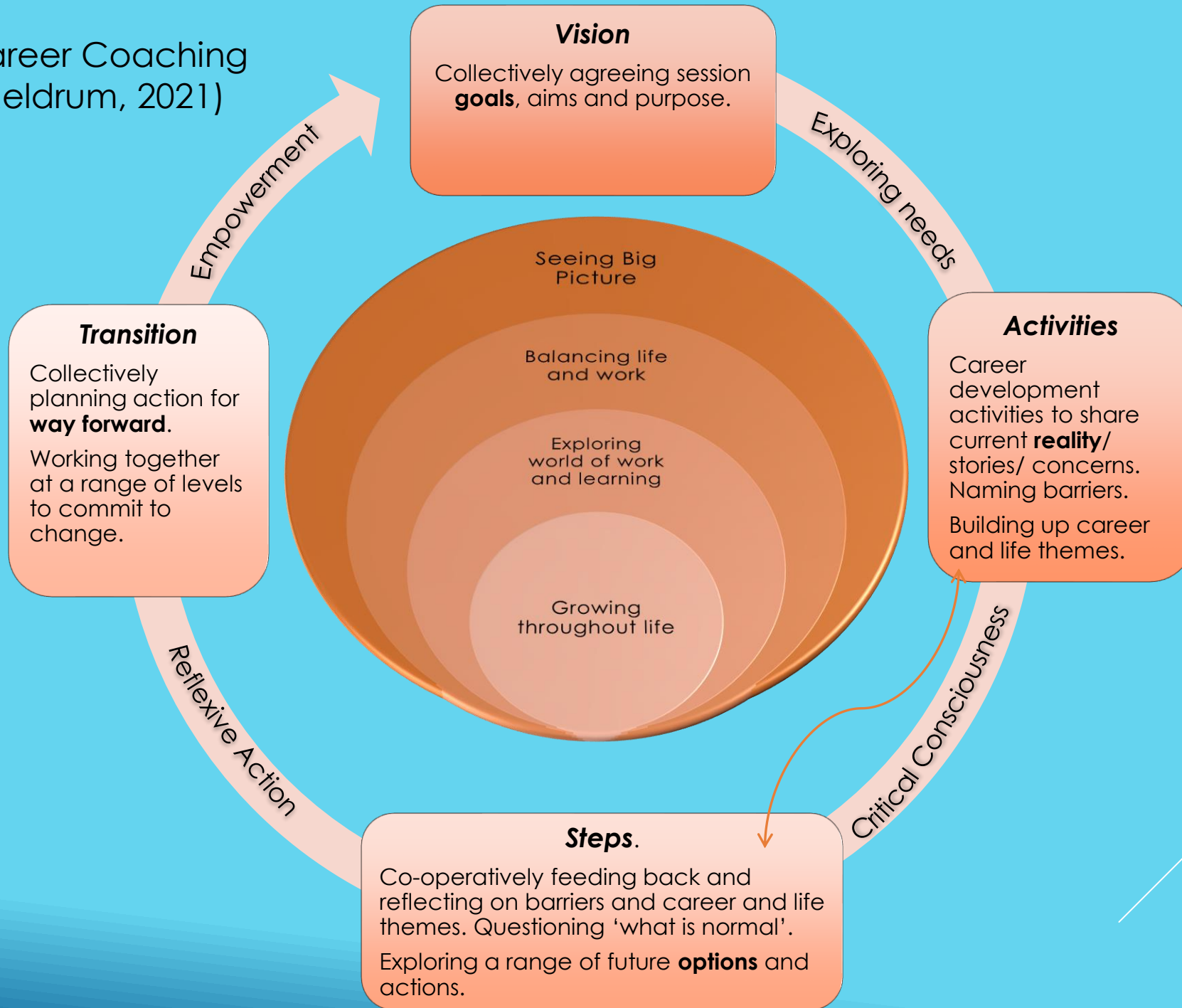
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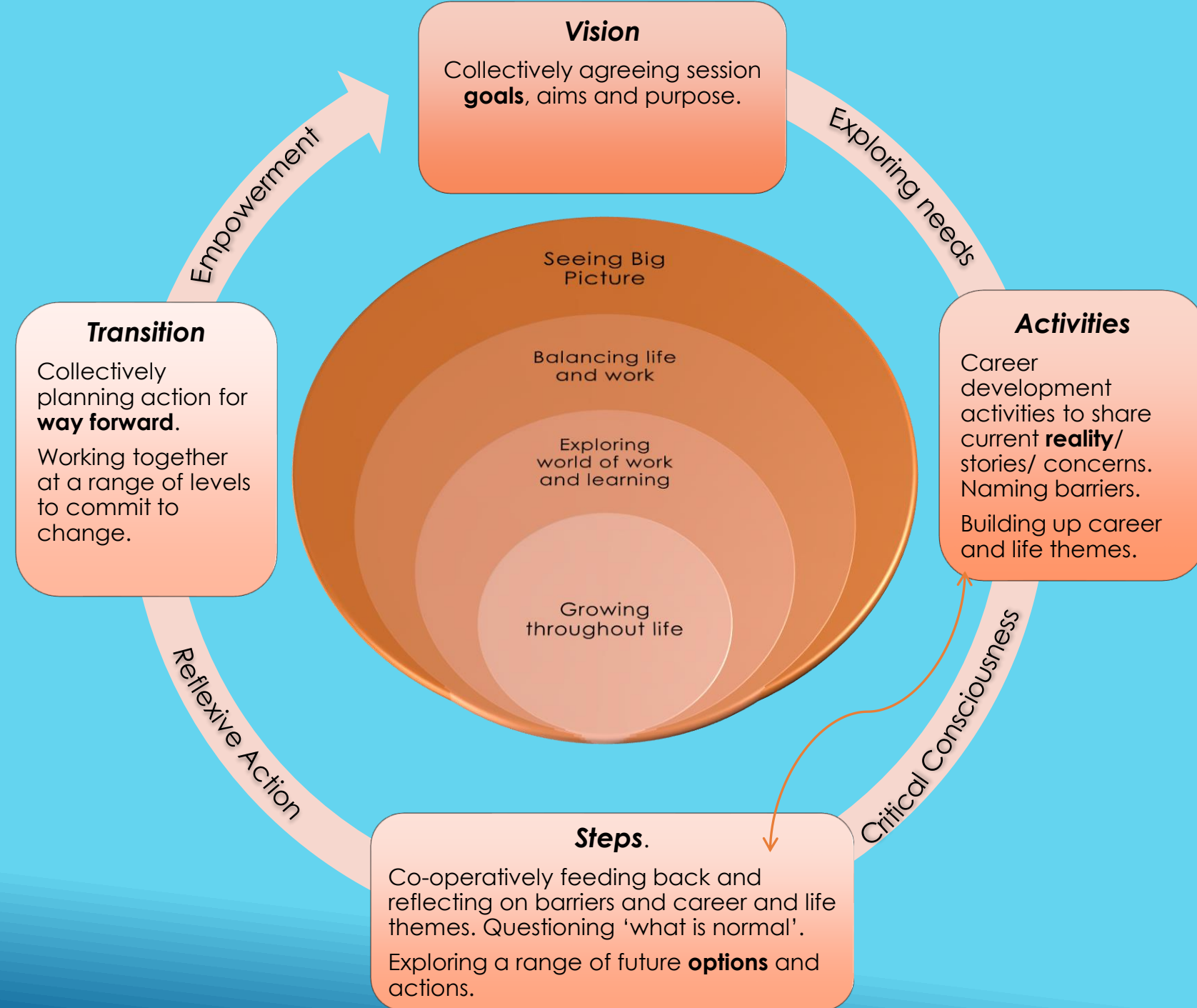


# Collective Career Coaching Approach (Meldrum, 2021)



# Structure

- Four stage cycle – vision, activities steps and transition.
- Incorporates GROW model.
- Similar to 1-1 structure - goal setting, sharing stories and building interpersonal relationships, exploring options and action planning.
- Use in conjunction with session plan and resources- (negotiable) session aims, written activities, action planning and evaluation.
- Moves back and forward between activities and steps, depending on length of session and number of activities.



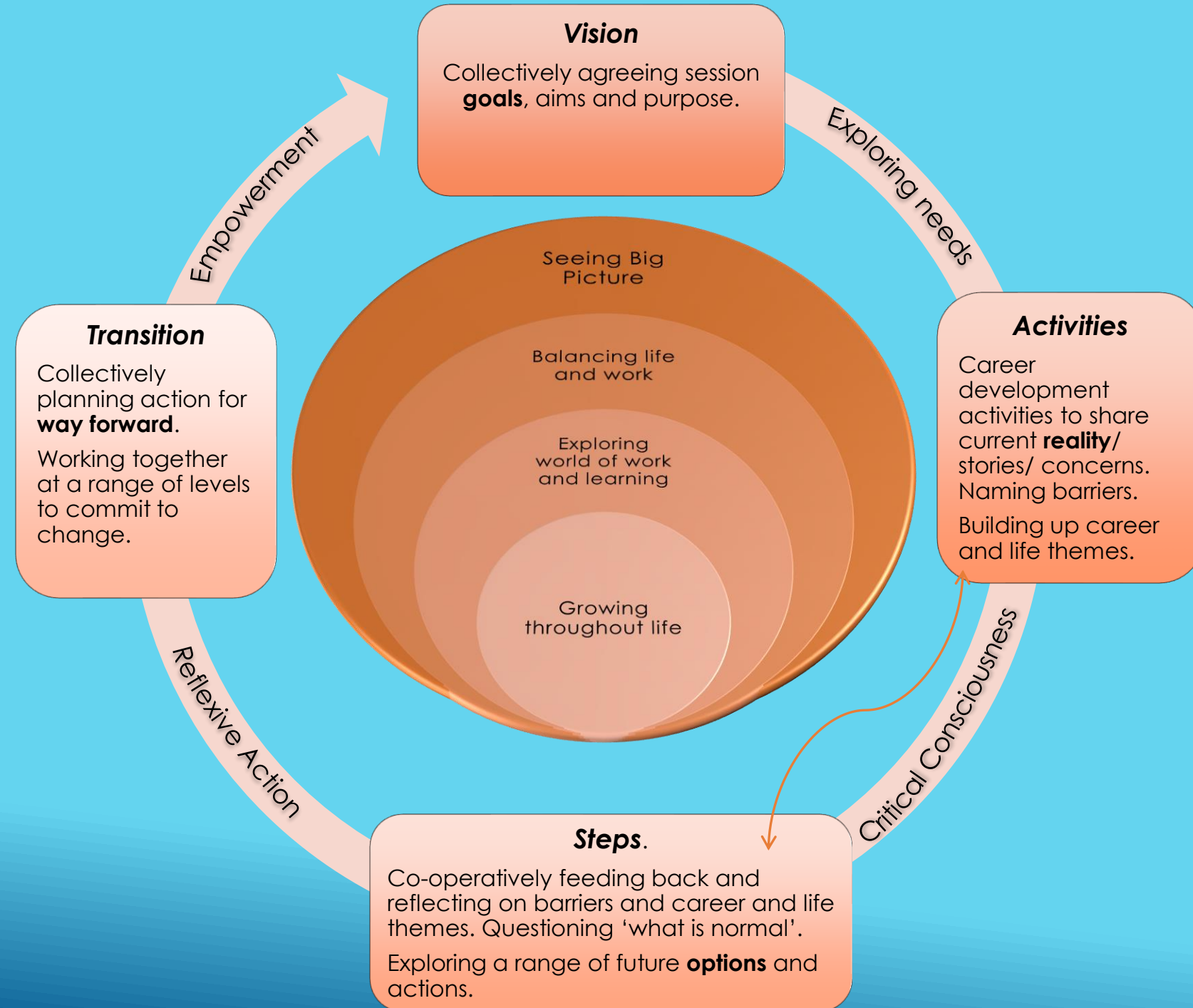
# Critical Pedagogy

Weaves in collective dialogue, reflection and action to four stage structure -

- 1 – Exploring needs
- 2- Critical consciousness
- 3 – Reflective action
- 4- Empowerment

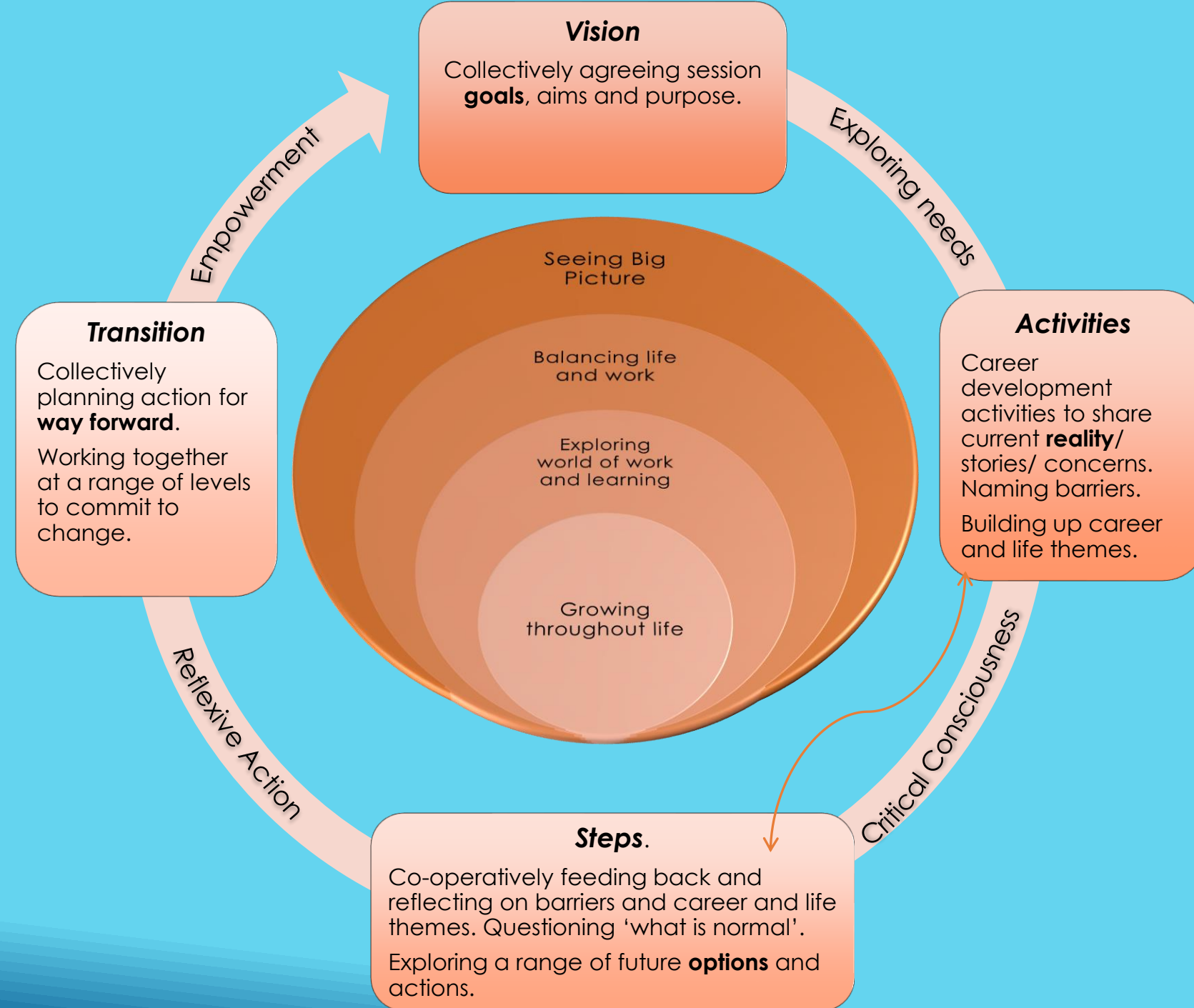
Incorporates 'five signposts' of embedding emancipatory principles into practice-

- building critical consciousness;
- naming oppression/ barriers;
- questioning what is 'right' / normal;
- working with both individuals and groups;
- and working at a range of levels (Hooley, Sultana, and Thomsen, 2021; 2018).



# Career Learning Model

- Away from constructivist CMS with focus on individual responsibility for career, fitting into existing structures e.g. gig economy, zero hours contracts, adaptation of skills, 'fitting' to roles etc.
- This model (adapted from CDI Framework, 2021) places more focus on the **place/ balance work has in life**.
- More on seeing the **big picture**, which can explore socio-economic and structural factors limiting choice.
- New SDS career development model?



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## Critique of critical pedagogy

- What potential pitfalls or barriers could you come across when using critical pedagogy?
- How could you overcome?

# Case Study One



- You work as a Careers Adviser in a secondary school. Many of your senior students have part time jobs in retail and hospitality sectors and complain about poor working conditions, pay and unequal work (such as zero hours contracts). You would like to deliver a group work session to discuss 'fair work'.
- What different types of activities could you use to highlight fair work (e.g. questionnaires, videos, role play exercises)?
- What content could you use to raise critical consciousness levels?
- What collective action would you propose that group could moves towards?

# Case Study Two



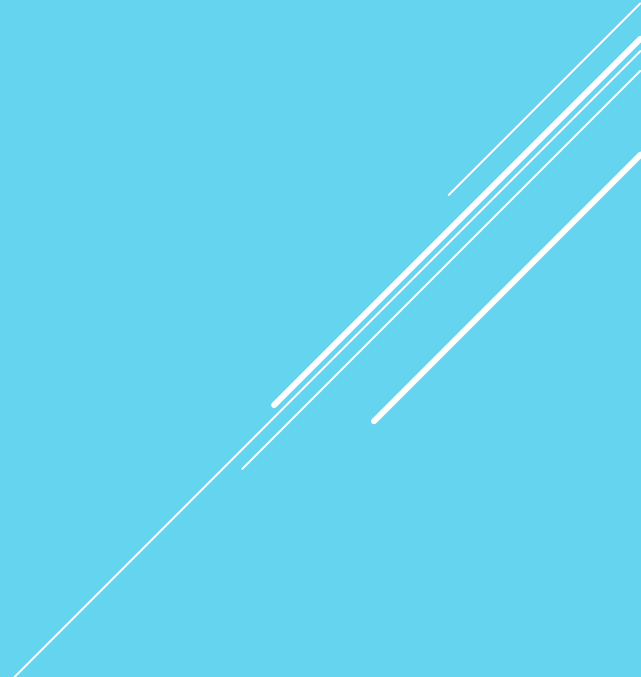
You work as a Careers Consultant at Edinburgh Napier University. Many students you have spoken to are concerned that they are 'wasting their time' at university as they will not be able to find or move into a 'graduate' level role. Many of the students have told you that they feel graduate work is 'not for them' and out with their reach as they are the first in their family to go to university. Some feel that they have been discriminated against for not 'looking or sounding right' at interviews. You want to run a group work session to address these issues.

- What different types of activities would you use to highlight graduate and professional roles (e.g. questionnaires, videos, role play exercises)
- What content would you like to see in your activities to develop critical consciousness?
- What collective action would you propose that the group moves towards?





**Questions?**



# References

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