Activity Description:

**Purpose of Activity:**
The Circles activity engages clients (students) in a process of identifying what they consider to be the most important dimensions of their own identities. Stereotypes are examined as participants share stories about when they were proud to be part of a particular group and when it was especially hurtful to be associated with a particular group.

**Objectives:** Students will...

- examine share stories about when they were proud to be part of a particular group.
- examine when it was especially hurtful to be associated with a particular group.

**Activity (what to do):**
Ask participants to pair up with somebody they do not know very well. Invite them to introduce themselves to each other, then follow these steps:

1. Ask students to write their names in the center circle. They should then fill in each satellite circle with a dimension of their identity they consider to be among the most important in defining themselves. Give them several examples of dimensions that might fit into the satellite circles: female, athlete, Jewish, brother, educator, Asian American, middle class, and so on.
2. In their pairs, have students share two stories with each other. First, they should share stories about when they felt especially proud to be associated with one of the identifiers they selected. Next, they should share a story about a time it was particularly painful to be associated with one of the identity dimensions they chose.
3. The third step will be for students to share a stereotype they have heard about one dimension of their identity that fails to describe them accurately. Ask them to complete the sentence at the bottom of the handout by filling in the blanks: "I am (a/an) ____________ but I am NOT (a/an) _____________." Provide your own example, such as "I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical right Republican." Instructions for steps 1, 2, and 3 should be given at once. Allow 8-10 minutes for participants to complete all three steps, but remind them with 2 minutes remaining that they must fill in the stereotype sentence.
4. Probe the group for reactions to each other's stories. Ask whether anyone heard a story she or he would like to share with the group. (Make sure the person who originally told the story has granted permission to share it with the entire group.)
5. Advise students that the next step will involve individuals standing up and reading their stereotype statements. You can simply go around the room or have people randomly stand up and read their statements. Make sure that students are respectful and listening actively for this step, as individuals are making themselves vulnerable by participating. Start by reading your own statement. This part of the activity can be extremely powerful if you introduce it energetically. It may take a few moments to start the flow of sharing, so allow for silent moments.
6. Several questions can be used to process this activity:
   1. How do the dimensions of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions other people use to make judgments about you?
   2. Did anybody hear somebody challenge a stereotype that you once bought into? If so, what?
   3. How did it feel to be able to stand up and challenge your stereotype?
   4. (There is usually some laughter when somebody shares common stereotype such as "I may be Arab, but I am not a terrorist" or "I may be a teacher, but I do have a social life.") I heard several moments of laughter. What was that about?

Where do stereotypes come from? How are they connected to the kinds of socialiation that make us complicit with oppressive conditions?

Facilitator Notes:

The key to this activity is the process of examining one's own identity and the stereotypes associated with that identity, then having one's own stereotypes challenged through others' stories and stereotype challenges. Encourage students to think about the stereotypes they apply to people and to make a conscious effort to think more deeply about them, eventually eliminating them.

As with most activities, it can be especially effective if you participate while you facilitate. If you are willing to share your own experiences, students are more likely to feel open to share their own.

It is crucial, especially for the final part of the activity when students are sharing their stereotypes, to allow for silences. People will be hesitant to share initially, but once the ball starts rolling, the activity carries a lot of energy. Allow time at the end for participants to talk more about whatever stereotype they shared.

After everyone has shared their stereotype challenge, announce that anyone who would like to share another one can do so. Model by sharing another one about yourself.

Duration/Length:

This activity requires 20-30 minutes.

Tools/Materials Needed:

Distribute copies of the Circles handout.
Pencil

Partnerships Recommended:

CDF
Classroom Teacher, Counselor, or other educational professional
Special Ed paras

Developmental Level (e.g. Preschool, Elementary, Middle, College, etc.):

Adaptable for Elementary, Middle School, High School, and College.
Suggestions for Scaling (ideas for use with students of other ages):

- Number of and type of questions asked.
- Length of time.
- For lower grade levels provide actual graphic organizers.
- For lower grade levels provide more guided practice and direction.
- When done within semester of school year.
- Advancing skill over time (activity that transcend entire school year allowing for increased complexity).
- Have students keep this activity handy to remind them of their visualized goal and make modifications as things change.

Standards Covered (NCDA Guidelines, WY C/VE Standards, ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors):

**K-5:**
- Standard 1 Career Development and Readiness.
  - CV5.1.4: Students complete task within an allotted time by acquiring, storing, organizing, and using materials and space efficiently.
- Standard 2 Communication and Collaboration.
  - CV5.2.2 Students share new concepts learned through peer teaching and presenting to a group.
- Standard 3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.
  - CV5.3.4 Students seek help from appropriate people (staff, students, parents, etc.) and appropriate resources.
- Standard 4 Technical Literacy.
  - CV5.4.1 Students use a variety of methods including oral, written, graphic, pictorial, and/or multimedia in order to create and share a product.

**6-8:**
- Standard 1 Career Development and Readiness.
  - CV8.1.1 Career aware students explore several career pathways including but not limited to outlook, salary, needed training, duties, and lifestyle.
  - CV8.1.3 Career aware students prepare a self improvement plan including secondary and postsecondary programs to gain desired knowledge and experience toward possible career opportunities.
- Standard 2 Communication and Collaboration.
  - CV8.2.1 Career aware students effectively communicate using a variety of appropriate methods.
- Standard 3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.
  - CV8.3.4 Career aware students plan, manage and complete projects in a timely and effective manner.
- Standard 4 Technical Literacy.
  - CV8.4.4 Career aware students integrate and translate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and in words.

**9-12:**
- Standard 1 Career Development and Readiness.
  - CV12.1.1 College and career ready students evaluate current knowledge and interests in order to set career goals.
  - CV12.1.3 College and career ready students prepare an educational and career plan to enable them to gain desired knowledge and experience.
  - CV12.1.4 College and career ready students demonstrate employability skills that enable them to be responsible and contributing citizens and employment.
Standard 2 Communication and Collaboration.
CV12. 2.1 College and career ready students communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason.

Standard 3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.
CV12. 3.4 College and career ready students demonstrate creativity and innovation while considering the environmental, social, and economic impact of decisions.

References/Developed By:
- Adapted from Ed Exchange
- Adapted from FOCUS (36 10 Minute Lesson Plans) By Phil Boyte, Micah Jacobson, & Ron Jones
- Facilitating Career Development Third Edition by Barbara H. Suddarth & David M. Reile
- Designing and Implementing Career Services by National Career Development Association
- 2014 Wyoming Career & Vocational Education Content Performance Standards by Wyoming State Board of Education

Circles of My Multicultural Self
This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the relationships between our desires to self-define our identities and the social constructions that label us regardless of how we define ourselves.

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.

1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors you used above.

2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.

3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) __________________ but I am NOT (a/an)______________________.

**Example:**
(If one of my identifiers was "Christian," and I thought a stereotype was that all Christians are radical right Republicans, my sentence would be:
I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical rightwing Republican.)