

Career Coaching Techniques: A Guide for Instructors

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Preface

Helping others navigate the multifaceted world of career development requires more than just a strategic mind; it demands empathy, resilience, and an in-depth understanding of the psychological and emotional landscapes that individuals traverse during career transitions. This book is designed to provide instructors who teach career coaching with the tools, insights, and frameworks needed to support their students in their journey toward fulfilling and sustainable careers as career professionals.

In my own career, I struggled early on to bring the skills, knowledge and applications of my work together. I was fortunate enough to learn from Dave Redekopp and Kris Magnussen. Their work helped me integrate everything I had learned into a coherent whole. Over the years, I have applied their work in my career practice with individuals. This has led to multiple innovations in their original work. I have also used their work to teach career development professionals. However, I reached the point where I needed to create material that integrated their original work with experience gleaned from decades of client practice, which is why I decided to write this book.

In Chapter 1, we delve into the story of Haven, whose unexpected career upheaval is a poignant example of the transformative power of empathetic and strategic career support. This chapter emphasizes the significance of storytelling, the application of micro-skills, and the adoption of a trauma-informed approach. Through these foundational elements, career professionals can better support individuals in navigating career challenges, fostering resilience, and achieving meaningful professional growth.

Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of developing an empathetic relationship with clients. Understanding the client's perspective on their current situation is crucial in helping them determine the changes they want to make. This chapter provides techniques for creating actionable plans that clients can commit to, ensuring they are equipped to bring about the desired changes they seek in their careers.

Chapter 3 explores the intricate process of career exploration and change. This chapter offers an overview of quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, emphasizing the importance of a multifaceted approach to career exploration. Through these processes, clients can gain deeper insights into their strengths, interests, and values, ultimately guiding individuals toward informed career decisions.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept of Self-Portraits in career exploration, offering a unique and holistic approach to understanding one's career aspirations and goals. By guiding clients through the creation of Self-Portraits, career professionals can help them articulate their career narratives and envision their future paths with greater clarity.

Chapter 5 addresses the complexities of preparing for a career journey. This chapter provides a structured approach to goal specification, emphasizing the importance of setting goals and breaking down long-term objectives into manageable steps. Practical learning experiences, such as internships and volunteer work, are highlighted as essential components of career development, enhancing both skills and confidence.

Finally, Chapter 6 tackles the often-daunting task of career decision-making. This chapter explores various decision-making theories and models, offering practical advice on helping clients make informed and personalized career choices. Understanding the principles of decision-making and recognizing the factors influencing career choices enable career coaches to guide their clients with greater confidence and clarity.

As you embark on this journey through the pages of this book, I hope you find the insights and strategies presented here both enlightening and empowering. Whether you are a seasoned career professional or new to the field, this book aims to equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to make a profound and positive impact on your clients' lives. To those who teach this course, I hope you find my experiences and approaches helpful in your classroom.



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Rob Straby
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The “Five Critical Career Counselling Processes” is a model developed by Kris Magnusson.

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About the Author



Since my teenage years, I've been fascinated and challenged by the world of work. I've always found my own jobs, experiencing the full spectrum of emotions—fear, anxiety, panic, and hope—while searching for work. Through these experiences, I've gained a deep understanding of how to help a person clarify their vision and bring it to life!

Rob Straby is passionate about helping individuals build careers that allow them to reach their full potential and realize their dreams. Since 1986, he has assisted over 3,500 people in clarifying their goals and navigating career paths that align with their personal and professional aspirations without sacrificing their personal lives.

Rob is a co-founder of the Career Development Professional program at Conestoga College. He has guided the program through its evolution from a traditional classroom delivery to Conestoga College's first fully online program serving students across Canada.

Drawing from his personal life, education, and professional experiences, Rob has designed and delivered cutting-edge educational courses, provided career development coaching and job search strategies for individuals and corporations, and led seminars on organizational change, team building, and process facilitation.

Outside of work, Rob is a lifelong outdoor enthusiast. He enjoys practicing Tai Chi Qigong, cross-country skiing, swimming, cycling, and gardening.

PART I

CHAPTER I: FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE CAREER CONVERSATIONS

Haven's Story: From Loss to Hope and a New Beginning



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After a new vice president joined the organization, the director of their department was fired, and Haven was next.

When I saw Haven, they had been let go. For five years, Haven worked hard to build new programs for their organization. The director was supportive, and all was well. But then the executive leadership changed, and Haven's projects became targets. First, their boss was let go, then Haven. Haven was devastated.

It felt like all was lost. Haven couldn't see a way forward. The pain was so deep. Obligations like the mortgage and the kids' college tuition weighed on Haven.

I was Haven's career coach and they shared with me their loss, their pain, and their fears. Little by little, Haven began to tell me stories about things that mattered. Projects they created, things that went well, and people they cared about. Listening to Haven's stories and probing for strengths and themes started to have an impact.

A transformation began as Haven clarified their identity and strengths. They were able to reclaim their professional identity, which transcended their job. They realized they were so much more than the lost position.

Haven had been staying away from groups and events. The thought of attending "networking events" left them cold and dry. But, empowered with original stories to tell, Haven began meeting with colleagues one by one. The focus was to build relationships and find a way through. What surprised Haven was how receptive people were. They were willing to meet and listen to Haven's stories. Each meeting built confidence; people were interested in what Haven had to say. It was inspiring. Contacts were shared, and introductions were made.

The process took time; there were ups and downs, and some meetings went well, and others didn't. Yet Haven persevered. There was magic in the stories. Haven kept meeting people, learning about needs and telling stories about how they could help. Potential opportunities began to arise.

Yes, we created a resume. Yes, Haven's LinkedIn profile was updated. Yes, they monitored "job boards." But this is not where the action happened.

Haven met with key people who then introduced them to people with the power to make hiring decisions. They met with more people and heard their problems. The decision-makers liked Haven's stories. In the same week, Haven had three employment offers. After extensive negotiations, a final choice was made.

Haven's story of recovering from a layoff is an example of the challenging transitions that an individual may go through. Multiple challenges will affect individuals along their career journeys. A mother with two children going through a separation suddenly finds she needs to gain an income to survive. An ex-offender trying to find their way. A freshly graduated college student seeking their first full-time job. We will encounter hundreds of scenarios in our work as career professionals.

To effectively help individuals grow their careers, career coaches must ensure that they have all the elements they need to nourish the growth of their clients.

Introduction

Through the poignant story of Haven, who faced unexpected career upheaval, this chapter illustrates the profound impact of empathetic and strategic career counselling. Readers will gain insights into the transformative power of storytelling, the importance of micro-skills in career counselling, and the need for a trauma-informed approach. By understanding these foundational elements, career professionals can better support individuals in navigating career challenges, fostering resilience, and achieving meaningful professional growth. This chapter provides practical tools and underscores the emotional and psychological aspects of career transitions, making it a valuable resource for enhancing your practice as a career coach and positively impacting your clients' lives.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Use metaphors and storytelling to apply career theory to practice
2. Describe how to use microskills in career counselling.
3. Define the terms trauma and trauma-informed communication.
4. Discuss how and why career development professionals should adopt a trauma-informed approach.
5. Outline and describe the five career-helping processes model.
6. Identify the six outcomes of an effective career conversation.

1.1: Applying Career Theory to Practice



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Career theories investigate the relationship between work and professional development. They provide a basis for identifying how people chart their career landscape. One of the most helpful ways to conceptualize career theories is to use metaphors.

Career Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech that we use to describe something in a way that is not literally true. You may have learned about metaphors when you studied literature. For instance, Nelson Mandela's autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom," uses the metaphor of a journey to represent his life and career.

Over the past few decades, several theorists developed different **career metaphors** to help us discuss career experiences. Career metaphors can be viewed as different perspectives through which we can view career progression. Metaphors shape our thinking about careers and influence how we perceive them. When used in career development exercises, personally meaningful metaphors can significantly impact how individuals engage with their careers.

The foundation for this work was established by Inkson and Amundson in 2002. Inkson refined this work in 2004, identifying nine key metaphors. These metaphors are explained in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 – A Summary of Career Metaphors

Career Metaphors and Their Meanings	Examples of Client Statements	Career Theorists
Inheritance: The predetermined outcomes passed onto us through our historical background and parents.	“People like me just can’t do that where I come from.” “There is a glass ceiling here; no women have been able to break through it.”	James G. Goodale, Mo Johnson, Donald Kirkpatrick, Jeylan T. Mortimer
Cycles: The stages that can be identified through which we pass in life.	“I’m graduating from school this spring and need to decide what’s next.” “My children are young and need more of my time. I don’t feel I can balance my work and family demands.”	Diana Bilimoria, Daniel Levinson, Deborah A. O’Neil, Donald Super
Action: The behaviours we engage in through which we seek to impose our will on the world.	“Once I make a career decision, I will stick to it.” “Getting a college education is necessary to get a good job.” “Somewhere out there is the right job for me.”	Douglas, T. Hall, John Krumboltz, Robert W. Lent
Fit: The extent to which there is a good match or not with the work we are doing.	“Somewhere out there is a job that fits like a glove.” “I feel like a round peg in a square hole.”	R.V. Dawis, John Holland, Frank Parsons
Journey: The way in which we understand our career as a movement through space.	“My career feels like I am on a roller coaster ride.” “I am unsure if I want to keep climbing the company ladder.”	John Arnold, Edgar Schein, Laurie Cohen
Roles: That which we act out through the theatre of our lives.	“I can’t keep managing the conflict between my work and family.” “Since I lost my job, I no longer have a clear sense of my identity.”	Donald Gibson, Hermina Ibarra, Donald Super
Relationships: That which arises from our interactions with others and through our social networks.	“It’s not what you know; it’s whom you know that counts.” “I need to find a mentor to get ahead.”	Sara Bosley, Don Cohen, Mark Granovetter
Resources: The view that individuals are inputs to serve the corporate purpose.	“I am wondering how to transfer my skills to a new industry.” “I want to extend my competencies and am looking for new assignments to improve my value to the organization.”	Michael, B. Arthur, Jan Francis-Smythe, Sandra Hasse, Catherine Steele
Stories: The narratives about our lives. What we tell ourselves and other people.	“I wanted to work in the sports industry; I always loved sports. Then I went into...” “After the company closed, I did not know what to do next...”	Laurie Cohen, Audrey Collin, Hermina Ibarra, Mary Mallon, Richard, A. Young

Source: Based on Inkson K. (2004). Images of career: Nine key metaphors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 65. 96-111. 10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00053-8.

Storytelling

Understanding these career metaphors and their related theories will help career coaches develop relationships with their clients and understand their career challenges. However, what every career metaphor has in common is that it involves storytelling. Consider the examples of career metaphors in practice, and you may recognize that they are all story elements.

Storytelling is central to human endeavour (Polkinghorne, 1988). When clients talk about their careers, we hear a story about themselves and their world. So, no matter what metaphor we use, careers can be understood as a story or series of stories. As a career development professional, I have heard thousands of stories. This book is filled with career stories, like Haven's story in this chapter. These stories provide a central means of understanding clients and the tools, techniques and processes presented in the following chapters.

Watch this TED talk on how the best career path isn't always a straight line to see how career progressions typically happen in the real world.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=42#oembed-1>

Source: TED. (2021, June 11). *The best career path isn't always a straight line.* | Sarah Ellis and Helen Tupper [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/1ALfKWG2nmw?si=zT8Rq4ZFmzajlYpF>

1.2: Incorporating Career Counselling Microskills into Client Practice



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Career practitioners often ask what advanced techniques they should learn. I usually recommend working on core counselling skills. Haven's journey from layoff to a new beginning was facilitated through a counselling approach that began with deep listening. The process did not involve "fancy" techniques but was grounded in a core set of counselling skills that allowed Haven to be heard and helped them sort out their career. Understanding and improving your use of these counselling microskills is vital to career practice.

Microskills are the basic building blocks of counselling; they are the specific techniques and interventions we use to interact with clients and help them achieve their goals. Allen Ivey originally developed the model in his counsellor education programs (Ivey, 1971). Developing a mastery of microskills is essential for conducting effective client interviews.

Table 1.2 highlights seven basic microskills and provides examples of statements that represent how career coaches use these skills in career coaching sessions.

Table 1.2: Basic microskills with examples

Microskills and Their Meanings	Examples of How Microskills are Used in Career Coaching
Attending behaviour: Verbal or non-verbal statements/gestures that encourage the client to continue talking.	Culturally appropriate eye contact, head nodding, and physical mirroring.
Open questions: A question that invites the client to respond with additional information. Open question stems include the following: What, When, Where, and How.	“What happened before your boss reprimanded you in the meeting?”
Closed questions: A question that the client can answer with a yes/no or a specific statement. Closed question stems include the following: Who, Is, Are, Have, Can, and Did.	“Did your employer give you advance notice that your team was being let go?”
Scaling questions: Ask clients to rate something on a numerical scale.	“On a scale from zero to ten, with zero representing no hope and ten representing an abundance of hope, how much hope do you have right now that you will find a new job?”
Reflecting feelings: A brief statement connecting the client’s emotions to content from the session.	“It sounds like you’re feeling really frustrated about your job.”
Paraphrasing: A statement that condenses session content but less than a summary. It may include content, affect, and meaning.	“So far in our conversation, it sounds like you’re feeling stuck in your job and unsure how to move forward.”
Summarizing: A statement that reiterates more content than paraphrasing. Typically used at transition/ending points in the counselling session. A summary may include content, affect, and meaning.	“During our session today, we talked about your relationship with your boss, and the challenges you face in being heard.”

Source: Based on Ivey, A., Ivey, M. & Zalaquett, C. (2018). *Intentional interviewing and counselling* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning Custom Publishing.

Watch this video on the microskills related to attending, paraphrasing and summarizing to get a sense of how to use these essential skills with your clients.



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Source: Kelly Allison. (2021, April 15). *Attending, Paraphrasing and Summarizing*. [Video]. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/JGMGXtfAX7U?si=-INWd4WNqFqM_Qep

1.3: What Is Trauma?



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Trauma is generally defined as “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (SAMHSA, 2019). Many people experience different types of trauma in their lives. Some people get help to deal with this trauma, but many do not. Therefore, career development professionals must begin all their communications with an understanding that anyone may have experienced trauma at some time in their lives and be prepared to support survivors of trauma. This approach is called **trauma-informed communications**.

Individuals who have experienced trauma may have little space for learning. They may have a constant state of tension and arousal, which makes it difficult for them to concentrate, pay attention, retain, and recall new information. A traumatized client may also feel like danger lurks around the corner constantly. This behaviour is challenging in a career development setting when trying to develop a relationship with a client. Trauma survivors tend to protect themselves from reliving the traumatic experience, so discussing their history or even current situation may be difficult. Trauma can also affect a client’s decisions or their ability to trust others, including career development professionals.

Understanding Trauma

Different types of trauma may include the following:

- **Acute trauma** is caused by a singular incident, such as a natural disaster, accident, or acts of violence.
- **Chronic trauma** is repeated and prolonged, resulting from situations such as domestic violence or abuse.
- **Complex trauma** is varied and encompasses multiple traumatic events, often of an interpersonal nature, such as abuse or profound neglect, which often occur with caregivers.
- **Historical trauma**, also called **multigenerational trauma**, can be experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group, often related to significant events that oppressed a group of people, such as residential schools, the Holocaust, forced migration, or violent colonization (City of San Diego, n.d.).

A person can experience one, some, or all these traumatic stresses during their lifetime. Multiple studies show that severe or ongoing exposure to highly stressful or threatening events can impact a client's ability to function in a socially acceptable way (Haskell & Randell, 2019; King, 2021; National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], 2017). Therefore, career development professionals should adopt a trauma-informed approach to their practice.

1.4: Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach



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What Is a Trauma-Informed Approach

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSHA, 2019) in the United States explains that a **trauma-informed approach** accomplishes the following:

- Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.
- Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved.
- Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
- Seeks to resist re-traumatization actively.

Why Is Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach Essential?

As a career development professional, you will work in various settings and encounter very diverse populations. A trauma-informed approach is critical to promoting lifelong well-being for anyone who has had adverse childhood

and adult experiences. Adopting a trauma-informed approach (TIA) means that the career development professional (CDP) understands how adverse life experiences can impact a client's well-being and potentially influence their career decision-making. It is not always clear whether a client has experienced past trauma; however, if a professional develops an awareness of trauma, it can prevent retraumatizing the client. Re-traumatization can occur when a client must explain their story over and over to multiple service workers (SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014).

The CDP can help to avoid re-traumatizing the client by using their different microskills to assess the situation and respond. The CDP should recognize that responses to trauma can include avoiding things that are reminders of previous traumatic experiences, and increased sensitivity to these reminders, people, and the environment. For example, if a client is uncomfortable in a setting, you could move them to another area. Many parts of the setting can cause a client to re-experience an event. Smells, sights, sounds or touches can be a **trigger**. For instance a client may cringe when exposed to a particular noise. It is essential to take a survivor's trauma responses seriously (e.g., they may be jumpy or anxious, have a hard time sleeping, or may need to avoid a neighbourhood that has too many reminders of past experiences). This can be demonstrated by communicating respectfully and using appropriate language to build healthy, trusting and professional relationships. (OASH, 2021).

CDPs can provide non-judgmental, warm, empathic, and genuine interactions at all times while maintaining healthy professional boundaries (National Child Trauma Stress Network (NCTSN), 2020).

There may also be an opportunity for the CDP to provide information for the clients about trauma and its effects. When possible, offer flexibility and choices as to how a survivor can interact with programs and staff.

Understanding Symptoms as Adaptations

When we adopt a trauma-informed approach, we understand that a survivor's behaviour reflects **adaptations** to a world that has not always been safe. We must also understand that multiple variables such as brain chemistry, genetics, and life experience, as well as the person's access to resources, affect how the world looks to them, what feels safe, what they think may happen, and how they ask for and use services (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health, 2011). It's also important for clients to understand that if they have a mental illness, they do not have to hide it, and they do not have to disclose it to get the help they are seeking.

Of course, this does not mean that the career development professional will not have reactions if a person's behaviour is troublesome, disrespectful, or dangerous. It does mean that the way the career development professional communicates their reactions should not shame or embarrass the client. Saying, "We want everyone to be safe and comfortable here. You have been shouting for a while, and that worries some of us," is better than saying, "You cannot keep making all that noise; you need to sit down and please be quiet." (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health, 2011). Both statements let the client know that people are reacting to their behaviour, but the first statement is respectful and acknowledges that the survivor is doing the best they can (Haskell & Randall, 2019).

Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Communication

One of the main goals of the **helping interview** is to achieve and maintain a trusting relationship with the client.

Career development professionals can model positive, non-judgmental communication to support healing for those in need and promote well-being for everyone. The CDP should listen empathically and utilize the microskills reviewed earlier in this chapter. Other best practices include the following:

- **Communicate respectfully:** The tone of voice can significantly impact how people receive and react to messages.
- **Be respectful of others' life experiences:** Recognize that someone's mental health issues, substance abuse or

physical health concerns may be rooted in “what has happened to them” and not because “something is wrong with them.”

- **Build healthy relationships:** When interacting with others, treat people with dignity and respect.
- **Be an active listener:** Engage with the speaker by showing interest, maintaining eye contact, and providing feedback.
- **Focus on behaviours and not the person:** Address specific actions or patterns rather than attributing them to someone’s character.
- **Use appropriate body language:** Adopt physical expressions that align with the spoken message in a given context.

Creating a Safe Environment for All Clients

An emotionally safe setting may seem challenging to achieve because it is hard to measure. The CDP should understand **emotional safety**. Emotional safety means that one feels accepted; it is the sense that one is safe from emotional attack or harm. Most trauma survivors have probably felt emotionally unsafe or had their sense of “being all right” taken away by others. Many survivors share that the ongoing and unrelenting attacks on their sense of well-being are more painful than a beating (King, 2009). Clients should always feel welcome in your practice setting (Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, 2012).

Many survivors may experience diverse feelings and worries that make it difficult to make decisions, follow plans, and tend to responsibilities for their personal and career needs. Thus, career development professionals can give clients greater control, such as booking appointment times that work best for the client’s schedule. The career development professional can also engage the client in thinking and planning how to gain better control over their situation. This can mean providing or offering a caring and calming presence, helping with tasks that appear to be overwhelming, such as completing paperwork or online scheduling of appointments or directions.

When possible, the career development professional can provide a relaxing place. When providing a calm environment, the message sent to the client is that one cares about their privacy and is interested in attentively listening to how the client feels and their physical and emotional status. A soothing space may be a quiet corner of a room or a comfortable chair, low lights, a flexible door that can be closed or kept open, or a source of quiet music. Alternatively, it could be a room with plants or flowers, videos of beautiful scenery, a source of upbeat music, and space for writing. Different things will be soothing at different times and to different types of clients and department settings.

Once again, the career development professional can provide information about trauma. Learning about trauma triggers can help clients understand and manage their feelings and increase their sense of control.

The career development professional needs to provide clear information and avoid surprises. They may be concerned about what the professionals will do with their information. Providing clear and accurate information about policies, procedures, rules, plans, and activities helps support emotional safety (Schladale, 2013).

The career development professional may be able to help trauma survivors feel comforted and in control. Each survivor has a pattern of needs related to emotional safety. For example, one survivor may find it reassuring to have clear directions or information from staff who speak with authority and expertise. For someone else, withdrawing from external stresses to explore their thoughts and feelings will be the jump start they need to plan for their future. An essential aspect of helping survivors feel comforted and in control is ensuring that survivors know they can ask for what they need. (OASH, 2021; National Child Trauma Stress Network (NCTSN), 2008).

Trauma-Informed Communication Strategies

What can the CDP do? They can create open, non-threatening communication by using focused eye contact and

engaging body language. The CDP can ask open-ended questions to answer the who, what, when, where, and how questions about the topics discussed. When the client speaks, avoid interruptions and judgments and do not try to fix things. Also, remember to focus on behaviours and not the person. (National Child Trauma Stress Network [NCTSN], 2008; National Child Trauma Stress Network [NCTSN], 2020; Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2004). Table 1.3 summarizes some key points of trauma-informed communication.

Table 1.3. Trauma-Informed Communication: Dos and Don'ts

Dos	Don'ts
Speak with a normal, controlled voice and invoke a sense of calm	Shout or lose control of your emotions.
Express kindness, patience and acceptance. Remain present with the client.	Use your phone or tune out.
Use engaging eye contact and positive body language.	Interrupt, judge, or try to fix things.
Ask open-ended questions that answer the who, what, when, where and how of topics being discussed.	Use confrontational body language, such as putting hands on your hips, your arms, getting too close to others or backing them into a corner. This can cause already stressful situations to escalate.
Respect personal space	Use physical touching.

When using trauma-informed communication, the CDP should be aware of the following things:

- Trauma can happen to anyone.
- The response to trauma is very individual.
- Consider that all clients have life experience or history and may have differing triggers.
- Assess each client and modify your communication to the client's needs.
- Create a safe environment for all clients.

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1.5: The Five Career-Helping Processes



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How can you structure a conversation with clients to guide them through a career change? How do you start this session?

This section outlines a holistic approach to getting started with a client and guiding them through a career change. Kris Magnuson (1992, 1995) developed this method, which includes five career-helping processes:

1. Initiation
2. Exploration
3. Decision-making
4. Preparation
5. Implementation

1. Initiation

Initiation is the process of meeting with the client and finding a shared space in which to proceed with the career development process. It involves creating an empathic relationship with your client. Initiation refers to what takes place

in your very first meeting with your client. It also refers to what happens in the first moments you meet that same individual in future sessions. The key to understanding effectiveness in helping conversations is to create a rapport with the individual. There must be a strong relationship, a working alliance. By creating this relationship, you can then engage in an effective process. A vital component of this initiation process is ensuring that the client understands the benefits of the process and how it will help them move forward.

2. Exploration

Exploration takes the process of initiation deeper, providing greater insight. It is the process of exploring strengths, talents, interests, values, or beliefs. It allows a creative process where we help individuals explore their world and the opportunities available. From here, the individual can explore potential career opportunities available to them in the world.

3. Decision-Making

Decision-making is a vital part of the overall process. This is because decision-making is core to the overall process. The whole process is in essence a decision-making process. The CDP is facilitating an approach to help clients discern who they are and what opportunities are available. Gathering or organizing the information, we're establishing criteria for setting goals. We're implementing action plans. Everything we do in our encounter with the client involves a career decision-making process.

4. Preparation

Preparation is a process that allows individuals to prepare themselves to be ready to build the skills they need to move forward with their choices. Examples of preparation could be work search skills, such as developing a resume or LinkedIn profile. It could involve interview preparation skills. It may also include things like accessing transportation or childcare in preparation for work.

5. Implementation

Implementation is where we take all the outcomes of the process and act on them. The key is setting up a support system to help individuals advance their careers. Identify supports they have in their community network that will allow them to move forward. This is also a transition place where the individual may end their relationship with the CDP while they embed the career development process within their communities.

Intentionality

In conclusion, each of these processes is necessary to help facilitate a career transition. These processes are not linear

sequences. They are more about the intentionality of your work. When I worked with Haven, we cycled back and forth through these processes. Overall, this approach will help the CDP to focus their conversation with their clients and enhance their career opportunities.

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1.6: Outcomes of Effective Career Conversations



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Our work as career development professionals can have a transformative impact on the lives of our clients. Effective career development interventions can free individuals from challenging circumstances in life.

There are six critical outcomes of an effective career intervention. The first is to help the individual identify their strengths. Understanding one's skills, knowledge, and values is a vital foundation that enables one to navigate the world of work. The individual must also become aware of their challenges and how they can leverage their strengths to overcome them. Next, the individual needs to identify one or more goals that support their career. This may involve goals for other life roles (e.g., parenting) that support their career goals.

Once goals are in place, the individual must develop a clear strategic plan and a way of meeting their goals—it is essential to have action steps that they can take to move forward. These need to include steps they can take immediately to move forward.

The individual's ability to be self-sufficient in the career development process should also be enhanced. Ideally, they have developed effective career management skills as a part of the career coaching process.

Finally, the most effective outcome is to have a renewed sense of hope. When they have hope about their life and what they can do, they will feel empowered to engage in an effective change process. The role of hope has been identified in career research as an essential ingredient in the outcomes of effective career intervention (Amundsen et al., 2016).

Six Outcomes of Effective Career Conversations

After an effective career conversation, an individual will have met the following goals:

1. Identified their strengths.
2. Gained an awareness of their challenges and how to leverage strengths to overcome them.
3. Identified one or more career-supporting goals.
4. Developed a strategic plan or action steps to meet their goals.
5. Enhanced their ability and skills to manage and develop their career.
6. Renewed their sense of hope and feelings of empowerment.

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

1.1: Applying Career Theory to Practice

- Career metaphors are different perspectives through which career progression can be viewed. Metaphors shape our thinking about careers and influence how we perceive them. Inkson identified the following nine key career metaphors: (1) Inheritance (2) Cycles (3) Action (4) Fit (5) Journey (6) Roles (7) Relationships (8) Resources (9) Stories. Clients can use career metaphors to tell their stories. Career professionals can use metaphors and storytelling to apply career theory to practice.

1.2: Incorporating Career Counselling Microskills into Client Practice

- Career counselling microskills are specific techniques used by career professionals to interact with clients and help them achieve their goals. Seven microskills commonly used by career professionals are (1) attending behaviour (2) open questions (3) closed questions (4) scaling questions (5) reflecting feelings (6) paraphrasing, and (7) summarizing.

1.3: What Is Trauma?

- Trauma is defined as an event or series of events that are physically or emotionally harmful, having long-lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning and well-being. Career development professionals should acknowledge that anyone may have experienced trauma and adopt a trauma-informed approach in their communications to support survivors effectively.
- Trauma can be categorized into acute, chronic, complex, and historical, each having distinct characteristics and impacts. Individuals who have experienced trauma may struggle with concentration, trust, and learning, making it essential for career development professionals to understand these challenges and approach clients with sensitivity and support.

1.4: Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach

- A Trauma-Informed Approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and integrates knowledge into policies, procedures, and practices to support recovery and prevent re-traumatization. It understands and identifies signs of trauma in clients and others involved, promoting a supportive environment.
- Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach is essential for promoting lifelong well-being and supporting clients who have experienced trauma by preventing re-traumatization and fostering healthy, trusting relationships. Career development professionals can provide empathetic, non-judgmental support, adapting environments and interactions to avoid triggering traumatic responses.

1.5: The Five Career-Helping Processes

- Kris Magnuson's holistic approach to guiding clients through career changes involves five key processes: Initiation, Exploration, Decision-making, Preparation, and Implementation, each focusing on building relationships, exploring opportunities, making informed decisions, preparing necessary skills, and acting on plans with community support.
- The approach emphasizes the importance of intentionality, highlighting that these processes are not linear but rather cyclical, allowing for flexibility and revisiting each stage as needed to effectively facilitate career transitions.

1.6: Outcomes of Effective Career Conversations

- Effective career development interventions help individuals identify their strengths, become aware of their challenges, set career-supporting goals, develop strategic plans, enhance career management skills, and renew their sense of hope and empowerment.
- The transformative impact of career conversations enables clients to navigate their careers better by understanding their skills and challenges, setting actionable goals, and fostering self-sufficiency and hope for positive change.

Reflection Questions

1. How can storytelling and career metaphors be utilized to help clients articulate their career experiences and goals? *TIP:* Consider how different metaphors resonate with various client experiences and how they can aid in career exploration and development.
2. What are some core microskills that you believe are most crucial in career counselling, and how can you improve your use of these skills in your practice? *TIP:* Reflect on your own counselling style and identify areas where enhancing specific microskills could benefit your interactions with clients.
3. Why is it important for career development professionals to adopt a trauma-informed approach, and how can this perspective influence your practice? *TIP:* Think about how understanding trauma and its effects can change the way you engage with clients who have experienced traumatic events.
4. How can the five career-helping processes (initiation, exploration, decision-making, preparation, and implementation) be applied in your current client work? *TIP:* Analyze how each process can be integrated into your client interactions to create a more structured and supportive career development experience.
5. What are the six critical outcomes of effective career conversations, and how can you measure and achieve these outcomes with your clients? *TIP:* Reflect on your current methods for assessing client progress and consider strategies for ensuring that each of these outcomes is met during your career counselling sessions.

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PART II

CHAPTER 2: INITIATION — BUILDING THE WORKING ALLIANCE

Lana's Story: From Despair and Uncertainty to Optimism



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In my career coaching practice, I have had the privilege of guiding many people. Lana was a young mother who came to me feeling despondent. She had a good job but felt that the work and the environment weren't conducive to her well-being. She was unsure of what she wanted to do next.

Eight years in project management, and I felt like I was nowhere. The firm I worked for turned out to be a toxic workplace. I was feeling harmed there. I needed to get out. I spoke with my friend, and they said to call this career guide at the agency downtown, that they could help. I trusted my friend's recommendation.

I phoned the agency to start. It sounded like it was worth an initial meeting. I felt a little bit nervous, and although I had worked with counsellors before, I was unsure what this would involve. The guide said that it wouldn't involve testing and that we would sit down and talk about my work and needs. That sounded like a good start to me.

I came out of the first meeting with this career guide, and a few things came to mind. It felt safe. So that was important—you know—I felt comfortable there. I felt heard, that the guide listened to what I had to say. So that was

helpful because I wasn't sure. I've talked about my work problems with others, and they were too quick to give an opinion. I have often felt that others did not want to hear what I had to say. Getting all the issues that I'm really worried about off my chest was good. I felt like, okay, I have support, and I would go back and see this person again.

One of the things that came up was that the career guide asked about things I did well and things I had done well in the past. At first, it was hard to think of stuff because I was so overwhelmed. After some nudging, I remembered a few stories. The guide shared back the things they heard about my strengths. It was helpful to hear that I had a creative streak.

One of the challenges was that I had to do some homework. I was unsure at first. I said I'm busy with the job, I'm busy with my daughter, and I've got lots of things going on over the next few days. We talked about the challenges and my desire for change. Somehow, I found the energy to fit the homework in.

The main thing I found was that I had some hope for the future. And I'm like, okay, I can get out of this environment, and I will be something else out there. I didn't know what, but I believed it was possible. That was a different feeling for me; I felt listened to and had a sense of hope. I was ready to take the next step, whatever that may be.

Introduction

In this chapter, we will learn about the initiation phase of the career coaching process, which involves developing an empathic relationship with the client. We will also learn the importance of understanding the client's perspective on their current situation. We will study techniques to help clients determine what changes they want to make. We will discuss how to create an action plan that clients can commit to, which will help them bring about the desired changes.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Outline the key elements needed to build empathic relationships with clients.
2. Discuss the importance of determining a client's perceived present.
3. Describe how career development professionals can elicit client history, strengths, and needs.
4. Describe how career development professionals can clarify client aspirations, goals, and challenges.
5. Outline how to develop and implement a plan of action.
6. Describe different techniques for engaging client agreement.

2.1: Building Empathic Relationships with Clients



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The initiation process is, in essence, a helping interview set within the context of a career intervention process. In a helping interview, the focus is on the client's wants and on providing assistance.

Lana's story highlights the most critical need when we meet a client for the first time. We need to connect and build an **empathic relationship**. We must appreciate that Lana wasn't keen to come in and meet with a career professional at an agency. There was hesitation. She was unsure what the benefit would be. Hence, the most important thing for us to do when we meet with a new client is to create a safe and trusting environment. We must build a vessel that allows the client to feel safe and heard. All our efforts and energy need to be directed toward this primary goal of creating a safe, trusting, welcoming space for clients to come into and be fully present and share what is happening within their lives.

In reviewing Lana's story, you'll recognize that these outcomes were achieved and that being heard was unique for her. What typically happens when people struggle with careers and start sharing with friends, coworkers, and family is that everyone around them gives an opinion. It is rare in our society for a person to be thoroughly listened to. The most common feedback I have received throughout decades of career conversations is that people appreciate being heard. To be listened to, sadly, is a rare experience.

Ensuring healthy boundaries is an essential platform from which to move forward. This is a part of building a relationship. Lana and I defined the boundaries of the relationship. We also discussed confidentiality. However, the primary focus of the initial meeting is to ask questions and hear what the individual says.

Creating a Safe Environment

Creating a safe and trusting environment is crucial before starting the storytelling or listening process. Here are several strategies to achieve this:

1. **Establish clear boundaries and expectations:** Begin by explaining the purpose of the meeting and what the client can expect. Clarify the boundaries of confidentiality and the extent to which the information shared will be used.
2. **Demonstrate empathy and understanding:** Show genuine concern for the client's feelings and experiences. Use empathetic language and body language to convey understanding and support.
3. **Create a comfortable physical space:** Ensure the meeting space is private, quiet, and free from distractions. Arrange seating to promote a sense of equality and openness.
4. **Be non-judgmental and open-minded:** Approach the conversation without preconceived notions or judgments. Be open to the client's perspective and experiences.
5. **Encourage openness and honesty:** Let the client know that they can speak freely and that their honesty is valued. Reassure them that there are no right or wrong answers.
6. **Provide reassurance and support:** Offer verbal and non-verbal reassurance that the client is in a safe space. Acknowledge their courage in seeking help and sharing their story.

Active Listening

Active listening involves more than just hearing the words spoken by the client. It requires deep engagement with the speaker's message and an understanding of their emotions and perspectives. Key components of active listening include:

1. **Full attention:** Give the client your undivided attention. Avoid distractions and focus entirely on what they are saying.
2. **Reflective listening:** Paraphrase or summarize the client's words to show understanding and confirm accuracy. This can involve statements like, "What I hear you saying is..."
3. **Empathic responses:** Respond empathetically to demonstrate that you understand and share the client's feelings. Use phrases like, "It sounds like you're feeling..."
4. **Non-verbal cues:** Use appropriate body language, such as nodding, maintaining eye contact, and leaning forward, to show that you are engaged and interested.
5. **Clarifying questions:** Ask open-ended questions to encourage clients to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings. Avoid interrupting or interjecting your own opinions.
6. **Silence:** Allow for pauses and silences in the conversation. This gives the client time to think and reflect, showing that you are patient and willing to listen.

Build an Empathic Relationship

Building an empathic relationship involves several key steps, which can be based on the microskills model expounded by Ivey (1971). These steps include:

1. **Attending behaviour:** Demonstrate that you are fully present with the client through appropriate eye contact, body language, and verbal following. This behaviour sets the foundation for a trusting relationship.
2. **Open and closed questions:** Use a combination of open and closed questions to explore the client's issues. Open

questions encourage detailed responses, while closed questions can help clarify specific points.

3. **Paraphrasing:** Regularly paraphrase the client's statements to show understanding and ensure you have accurately captured their message. This helps build trust and rapport.
4. **Reflection of feeling:** Reflect on the client's emotions to show empathy and to help them explore their feelings more deeply. This can be done by saying, "You seem really frustrated by this situation."
5. **Summarizing:** Periodically summarize the main points of the conversation to reinforce understanding and to provide a sense of closure to different parts of the discussion.
6. **Encouraging and validating:** Offer verbal encouragement and validation to the client. Acknowledge their efforts and the difficulties that they face. This helps to build a supportive and empathic relationship.

By integrating these steps and principles, you can create a safe and trusting environment, practice active listening, and build a strong empathic relationship with your clients, facilitating more effective and meaningful career interventions.

Watch this insightful video on empathy versus sympathy to get an understanding of the difference between these two concepts.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=71#oembed-1>

Source: RSA. (2013, December 10). *Brené Brown on Empathy*. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369Jw?si=AGnxZZ2RG79j_hl8

2.2: Determining the Client's Perceived Present



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Career professionals must first ask, “Why has the client come to see me?” Understanding the client’s perceived present or current reality is a prerequisite for engaging in an effective helping process where the guide makes the client feel comfortable and helps them express their reason for being there. The client comes in with a presenting issue. For example, Lana’s reason for seeking help and her motivation for the change was to get out of harm’s way. She felt that she was experiencing harm in that environment. When we reflect on Lana’s situation, we see the answer to this first question, which is that there was trauma in the workplace.

Lana was the lone female in an all-male workplace. Our conversation made it clear there were no overt, direct attacks on her, but there were always subtle gender **microaggressions** like cruel jokes, careless comments, and insults that made her feel like her workplace did not value her and her work. These issues impacted her ability to do her job, feel safe to voice her suggestions and contribute meaningfully to the workplace. Hence, it was essential to help her remove herself from that environment. Further conversation also clarified that she was no longer sure if she wanted to be managing engineering projects. After eight years in the field, she no longer enjoyed the work.

It is important to note that Lana’s primary motivator was removing herself from a traumatic workplace. That is why she sought career counselling. However, through the initiation process, she identified that she wasn’t even sure she wanted to manage large engineering projects anymore. Before she came into our meeting, that issue wasn’t even on her mind.

Remember that when an individual comes in to meet with a career development professional, there may be multiple issues affecting them and their career. Our goal is to ensure that we first understand the complete current reality that they are facing. In Lana's case, there were two types of changes possible:

- First was the need to move to a different workplace.
- Second was the need to consider the kind of work she wanted to do.

Clarifying the issues faced by your client will help you appreciate the changes that may be necessary for their client's career development.

Identifying the Type of Change

In the initial discussion with your client, the answer to the question "Why are they here?" will help identify the type of change needed. In Lana's story, she needed change because of a workplace that was harmful to her psychological well-being, and she maybe wanted to change the type of work she did. As a CDP, you must listen to the client's story – their answer to the question, "Why are you here?" – to focus on the type of change needed.

As a client shares about the type of change they seek, you can use the microskills of reflecting feelings and paraphrasing to ensure you hear what is going on and that they feel listened to.

Here are examples of client statements that begin to answer the question: "Why has the client come to see me?"

- "I don't know what to do when I finish school."
- "I've been a plumber for the past ten years, and I enjoy the work. However, I was injured in an accident and can't do that anymore. So now I need to find something else."
- "I'm a single parent with three kids to support and a mortgage. I need a new car. I've got to find a job that pays \$55,000 a year."
- "I've worked for a small start-up software company over the past two years. Things haven't gone well; the market is changing. The venture capitalist has removed their funding and laid off all the staff. I don't know what I'm going to do next."
- "I've stayed home to look after our children for ten years. They are both in school, and I'm ready to return to work."
- "Last week, I took my car in for an oil change. I chatted with the firm's owner, who is offering franchises. I thought, Gee, maybe I would like to do that. I want to check out what's involved in starting a business."
- "I want to get into project management, but I'm having trouble finding a job in that area."
- "The Social Services department told me I would get cut off if I didn't come down and see you. Can you sign this paper to say I was here?"
- "The company I'm working in has a clear glass ceiling. I'm frustrated because no women are working above my level. I want to find a way to get ahead in another company."

These statements help the CDP to understand the client's present situation. Once the "current reality" becomes obvious, the CDP can help the client figure out the best path ahead for them.

CDP Toolkit: An Online Tool for Initiation

Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) has an extensive website for individuals and career

development professionals. The Career InSite section of the provincial government site includes many helpful exercises. One of these exercises is called “Where Do I Start?” Using this interactive checklist can help individuals clarify what areas of career development they may need to work on.

Try the **Where Do I Start?** exercise on the ALIS site. [opens in new window]

Using Question Sets

Rather than thinking of questions as you go, developing question sets to work from is helpful. As you ask questions, you can expand or move on to other issues that come up. Your job is to help your client talk out their career history so that you can examine the patterns and themes together. Work through your questions in a relaxed manner, and feel free to explore other related issues that may come up.

Some sample questions that can reveal a client's history, strengths, and needs are as follows:

Education

- Let's start with your education. What did you concentrate on in school?
- How do you feel now about having chosen those areas? Why did you choose those areas?

First Job Role

- What was your first job after your formal education?
- (If they *did not* start working) What was your first major life event after your education?
- What were you looking for in your first job or life event? Why did you make that choice?

Early Goals

- What were your ambitions or long-range goals when you started your career?
- How did the first job work out in terms of your dreams?

Next Job Role or Major Life Event

- What was your first significant change in job, employing organization, or life?
- How did this come about?
- Who initiated the change?
- What were the reasons for the change?
- How did you feel about the change? How did it relate to your goals?

Next Job Role or Career Change

- Review what you consider significant changes in the role, organization, career, or life. List each change and explore the reasons as well as the consequences.
- How did this come about?
- Who initiated the change?
- What were the reasons for the change?
- How did you feel about the change?
- How did it relate to your goals?

Long-Range Goals

- Have your ambitions or long-range goals changed since you started your career? When? Why?
- How would you now describe your long-range goals?

Looking Forward

- As you look ahead in your career, what are the things you are especially looking forward to?
- Why are you looking forward to these things?
- What do you think your next role will be?
- After that, what do you think your next role will be?

Describing Their Work

- How would you describe your work to others?
- What are you good at?
- What do you most want out of your career?
- What values do you mainly try to uphold in your career?
- Do you have any other comments about yourself that you would like to make at this point?

Finish by asking: “Do you have any other comments about yourself that you would like to make at this point?”

Identifying Patterns and Themes

As the client shares their story by responding to your questions, pay attention to the patterns and themes that emerge. Here are a few patterns and themes that often emerge in client histories.

Career Orientation

As your client describes their history, listen for a particular emphasis on specific interests. Are they pursuing a career where they’re constantly trying to find ways to serve and help others? Is their career driven by creating, designing, or building new things? Is there an entrepreneurial orientation? Are they seeking to develop their careers along the leadership path? Are they driven to deepen their skill set? Is there a drive for increased competency in a specialization?

Active vs. Passive

When the individual describes the changes within their career, listen for how they occur. To what extent is the individual initiating the change? Alternatively, are their changes primarily initiated by others? For example, people may wait until they are invited into new roles. Others may choose to act sooner and create their own opportunities.

Individual vs. Collective

One of the essential cultural components of a career focuses on the extent to which the person is centred around an

individualistic culture versus a **collectivistic culture**. Are their decisions primarily made by themselves, irrespective of family and others? Alternatively, is the family an important part of decision-making?

Focus vs. Exploration

What is the nature of their career path? Is there something specific that the individual is moving toward? Does the person appear to be in an exploratory phase? Are they moving around through multiple roles? Experimenting to see what fits?

As stated earlier, we can use our microskills of reflecting and paraphrasing to ensure we hear what is going on and that the client feels listened to.

Reflecting Strengths

When clients share their stories, listen for opportunities to probe more deeply. Even a client who is experiencing many challenges in their life and work will have moments when they feel joy in an activity and a sense of pride in the work that they are doing. It does not matter whether these moments were part of a paid position, a volunteering activity, a hobby, or a parenting experience. Everyone has strengths that show up in different life roles. As clients describe various aspects of their journey, I listen attentively to those special moments.

First-Hand Experience

In my first meeting with Lana, several highlights emerged through our conversation. She started to discuss her work around creating a Christmas card for the company. I said: “When you described that, your face lit up, and you began to smile. Can you tell me more about it?” She then told me a story about an interesting aspect of her work. Here is what she said.

“This was an idea I had when I took over the position. The company had created Christmas cards in the past with tacky software, which did not seem professional to me. On the other hand, we did have a family culture, and I had seen some commercial cards that used the concept. So, I suggested creating a company Christmas card based on our children’s drawings.

Over the years, we have tried variations, and I have learned what works best. Art drawn by children is always superior. I have also decided to use a theme for each year and write a message that ties the theme into the tradition of why we do the card in the first place. Customers comment that they look forward to receiving our cards and that they collect them and use them as decorations. In a time when the corporate Christmas card is being replaced by emails. Ours just keeps getting better.”

When we read Lana’s story about the corporate Christmas card, we hear several key strengths emerge:

- Creativity and design
- Engaging the company culture
- Promoting an idea and getting buy-in

I try to ensure that all of my clients leave their first session with an awareness of at least some of their strengths. In my experience, this increases their motivation to engage in the career change process. Through listening, we can identify a client's strengths and reflect them back to the client. As clients experience hearing their skills shared back with them, excitement and possibilities emerge. They gain an immediate boost to their self-esteem. They also learn how having an effective career conversation can benefit them.

2.4: Clarifying Client Aspirations, Goals, and Challenges



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Thus far, in our work, we've talked about the present situation, and we've also talked about the past. The next step is to consider the future. At this point, it's helpful to gain insight into how much future orientation the client has.

- Do they have a vision for a preferred future?
- Have they considered what their career might be?
- Have they thought about where they might go next?
- What options, alternatives, or possibilities are they considering?

This is an appropriate time to ask questions that elicit insights into the vision or long-term goal. My favourite question is: "In the best of all worlds, what do you want to get out of your life?" This could also be phrased as "In the best of all worlds, what do you want to get out of your career?" Any version of this question can be helpful in identifying client aspirations and goals.

By encouraging clients to envision a future tense, you can help to clarify their true aspirations, goals, and challenges. What is it that they want? Take time to query the future to discern what potential avenues they've been considering. This also helps to determine if clients know how to envision their own future.

Understanding whether or not they have a vision and the degree to which they have a vision helps to discern what kind of work you will need to do with a client. Some individuals lack vision, and we must work on assisting them in developing an image of a preferred future. Others know exactly what they want but are unsure how to get there. Hence, in those cases, we work on researching and clarifying the goal and then developing a series of action steps to move forward. The key here is that we must first fully explore their thoughts to clarify their aspirations and goals.

This approach generates insights into what the client wants. It also helps to identify the potential barriers the client is facing. It's normal for clients to generate a lot of "buts" or **reality statements**, which express the beliefs or obstacles that prevent clients from achieving their aspirations. It is best not to confront or challenge them immediately when engaging in career conversations. Instead, keep clients focused on their future vision.

For example, if a client says: "Oh well, I would love to if only I had the money," you can say, "Thanks for sharing; I'm going to make a note of that. But for now, let's keep going and assume you do have the money."

We must record perceived challenges the client shares and address them as part of the process. It's important not to be distracted by talking about those issues. Acknowledge whatever they are and then, go back to eliciting a future state. What are their hopes? What are their aspirations? Do they have long-term goals?

When reality checks come up, an important consideration is not to confront those issues. The role of the career coach is to help the client figure out a process to discern if their vision is possible. It is not our job to say, "Oh, that's not realistic," or "That is very practical." The client should develop a career resourcefulness skill set that allows them to test ideas for viability. To be clear, it is not our role to inform them of the viability of an idea; instead, it is our role to help them to discern if something is viable and how to get there if it is.

In the next section, we will discuss how the career coach can help the client figure out a process to discern if their vision is possible.

2.5: Proposing the Plan of Action



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Once a career development professional has established a client's current situation, elicited some of their history, and clarified their aspirations and challenges, they are ready to negotiate an **action plan**.

Our clients may not be clear about the process we're embarking upon to help them make a change. We must present a clear and concrete series of action steps to help them achieve their goal.

The first step is to identify the options they have already considered or that have come up in conversation. Identifying the types of actions they've already explored to make a change is essential. Consider all the things they've wanted to do. From there, ask permission to suggest some alternatives. This will generate a list of ideas from the client and the CDP to put on the table and consider going forward.

After discussing the alternatives and possible courses of action, agree on a specific plan. This will lead to a clarification of what steps are needed to move forward to reach their goal. Throughout this process, check in to ensure that the client understands the stages and is motivated to embark on this change process. Although we work together, the client will do most of the work to affect this career change. We need to ensure that they have sufficient motivation to conduct this change.

In Lana's story, it became clear through our conversation that she needed to change the type of work she was doing and the organization she was doing it within. It was also clear that she wasn't sure what that new type of work would be or where she might find it.

Here are the steps we used to develop an action plan for Lana and how the actions associated with each step helped Lana to stay focused on her goal of affecting a career change.

Step 1: Identify actions and attempts to make changes and ask permission to suggest alternatives.

Action: We visited the stories of things Lana had done in her life that she felt good about and identified her skills and abilities.

Step 2. Generate a combined list of ideas for change.

Action: Helped Lana conduct interviews with individuals to identify areas where her strengths would be best utilized.

Step 3. Discuss the ideas and develop a plan of action.

Action: Developed marketing materials to help Lana market and present herself to others, including a resumé and LinkedIn profile.

Conducted an in-person strategic networking campaign to lead Lana through a series of trusted referrals to attain a new role.

Step 4: Check in with your client to ensure motivation and buy-in to the selected plan of action.

Action: During our discussions, Lana shared that she had been working with a counsellor to deal with her trauma issues. I asked if she would continue this work while we worked on her career change. She committed to doing so. I offered to meet with her and the counsellor if she felt that would be helpful.

Maintained weekly contact throughout this process to ensure that Lana felt confident moving forward and could discuss any key ideas or access new skills that she needed to continue the momentum.

When I checked in with Lana, it was clear that she was highly motivated to engage in this process. One of the things that helped ensure I felt confident in her ability to do this was the stories she shared in our session. Lana shared multiple experiences where she had to make complex changes to care for herself or her children. Her effectiveness at managing change in other life roles gave us both encouragement and confidence that she could accomplish this career change.

2.6: Engaging Client Agreement



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The final step of the career conversation is to engage in client agreement. When closing off a meeting with a client, it is crucial to summarize the key things you've done in the session. You must identify the core areas you've discussed and the types of content or feelings that have emerged during your time together. Begin by reinforcing the strengths you heard them share. Then, clarify the steps to move forward and make an effective change. And finally, ask again: "Are you good to go with this?"

There are several ways I like to check in to ensure that the individual is motivated to move forward. One of my favourite approaches is asking the client: "How will your life be different if our work together is successful?" The client will be able to identify the key things they changed in their life, which typically leads to them smiling, sitting upright, looking engaged and feeling optimistic about the career change process.

Another way to check in with the clients is to ask them a scaling question, where clients are asked to rate their capabilities and feelings.

Here are some steps to help you learn how to use scaling questions:

Question: How motivated are you to make this change on a scale of 1 to 10, one being not at all and 10 being 100%?

The client's response will be a number. In my experience, this number usually comes out somewhere between 6 and 9.

Follow up the client's response with the next question:

Question: Why didn't you score it lower?

This prompt leads to an interesting dynamic in which the client can explain why they can do what they think they need to do. In other words, it helps the CDP to understand the degree to which they are motivated and committed to moving forward and making an effective career change. Scaling questions originate in qualitative research and solution-focused counselling (Strong, Pyle & Sutherland, 2009).

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

2.1 Building Empathic Relationships

- The initiation process starts with establishing an empathic, trusting, and safe relationship. A place where the client can honestly share about their career.

2.2 Determining the Perceived Present

- A strong working relationship lets clients share the issues they perceive as impacting their careers, which allows the CDP to interpret the types of change they are experiencing.

2.3 Eliciting History, Strengths and Needs

- Once the present challenges are shared, it is time to engage in a reflective process to help the client and the CDP learn about the significant events from their early school years leading up to the present. Eliciting a person's career history provides rich insights into patterns and themes. This process allows the CDP to gain insights into client strengths. These, in turn, become empowering moments for clients as they develop an awareness of their capabilities and the power of the career processes that they are engaged in with the CDP.

2.4 Clarifying Aspirations, Goals and Challenges

- With the relationship established and a survey of their career history and strengths completed, the CDP can learn about their client's hopes, aspirations, and challenges.

2.5 Proposing a Plan of Action

- It is helpful to understand that the CDP's role is process-oriented. The CDP's work is intended to help others become more effective in directing their career. This leads to developing an action plan, a series of steps designed to resolve the career challenges.

2.6 Engaging Client Agreement

- Engaging client agreement is vital to ensure the client has the motivation to take the next steps toward implementing the action plan.

Action Learning Log Practice and Reflections



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=88#h5p-1>

References and Further Readings

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PART III

CHAPTER 3: CAREER EXPLORATION AND CHANGE: PROCESS, TECHNIQUES AND APPLICATIONS

Jordan's Story: Making Sense of School



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Jordan's life was at a pivotal crossroads. A sixteen-year-old with a penchant for art, Jordan faced the dissonance of declining academic performance, slipping from a stellar student to one barely maintaining average grades. This shift marked a low in Jordan's high school journey, challenging their once-unshakable enthusiasm for education.

The issue at hand was not merely academic but existential; Jordan grappled with finding the relevance of educational pursuits in the context of their artistic aspirations. It was a classic case of a creative spirit feeling confined by the traditional structures of schooling.

Jordan's mother, recognizing the underlying tension, referred them to a career development professional. The intervention was timely, offering Jordan a structured forum to articulate and explore their values, interests, and goals. The sessions were revelatory, serving as a mirror reflecting Jordan's innate passion for creativity. This was something Jordan had struggled to see clearly amidst their academic slumps.

The process played a crucial role in illuminating Jordan's deep-seated love for artistic expression. It was a transformative experience that reoriented Jordan's perspective on education. Gradually, Jordan began to perceive schooling as a vehicle to further their creative talents, especially in English and the arts.

Acting upon the insights gained from the process, Jordan sought mentorship in poetry from the English teacher. This initiative marked a significant turnaround in Jordan's educational experience. The mentorship was not only instructional but inspirational, empowering Jordan to refine their poetic skills.

As the academic year progressed, Jordan's grades made an impressive recovery, returning to their previous standard of excellence. This resurgence was not confined to the report card but was reflected in Jordan's contributions to class, where their poetry resonated with peers and teachers alike, earning Jordan newfound respect and recognition.

Upon completing high school, Jordan transitioned smoothly into a post-secondary creative arts program, a testament to their restored confidence and clarity in pursuing their passion. Jordan's educational choices became aligned with their desire to effect change through artistic mediums, particularly in addressing social issues.

Jordan emerged from uncertainty and into a place of purpose, leveraging education to fuel their creative ambitions. Jordan's dreams were no longer intangible but were actively being realized through their academic and artistic endeavours.

In retrospect, Jordan's story is an eloquent narrative about the power of self-discovery and the importance of aligning one's education with one's career desires. It underscores the significance of mentorship and the positive impact of career support in navigating the complexities of academic and career planning.

Jordan's experience serves as a reminder that academic struggles need not define one's potential. With introspection, guidance, and a proactive stance, it is possible to transform educational challenges into stepping stones for personal and professional development. Jordan's journey exemplifies how embracing one's individuality and leveraging one's educational journey can create a fulfilling trajectory that harmonizes one's passion with purpose.

Introduction

Chapter 3 introduces the intricate processes, techniques, and applications involved in career exploration and change. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the career exploration process, highlighting the essential components of career assessment. By introducing quantitative and qualitative assessment methodologies, the chapter seeks to equip readers with the tools to apply the logical levels framework effectively in facilitating career changes.

Jordan's story serves as a poignant case study, illustrating the transformative power of career guidance and mentorship in realigning one's educational and career trajectories with personal passions and strengths. Through Jordan's journey, the chapter underscores the importance of aligning education with career aspirations and the significant role of self-discovery and professional support in navigating academic and career planning challenges.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain the process of career exploration.
2. Identify the components of career assessment.
3. Summarize the types of quantitative assessment instruments.
4. Summarize the types of qualitative assessment processes.
5. Apply the concept, language, and hierarchy of the logical levels' framework to a career change.

3.1: The Process of Exploration



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The process of exploration is part of the process where career coaches guide clients through the exploration of who they are and what career opportunities they might pursue. When a student says that they saw a career guidance professional or career development professional, one often wonders what kind of test did they make them do? Regardless of the approach, most theorists in the field of career development would agree that exploration is a core part of the overall career change process, which involves creating a transition and facilitating decision-making.

The history of career exploration stems from the work of Frank Parsons in 1909, who considered three aspects of the process of career decision-making:

1. Know yourself
2. Know the demands and opportunities of the workplace
3. True reasoning

Knowing oneself and the demands and opportunities that exist in the workplace are central functions of the career exploration process.

In previous chapters, we looked at the process of initiation. This involved establishing a relationship with the client, identifying what the person is seeking to meet their needs, and agreeing on a plan to work together to resolve those needs.

Once those core issues were reviewed and the client and professional both agreed that there was a need to proceed, the counselling sessions would typically move to the next stage, i.e., the exploration process.

3.2: The Components of Career Assessment



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Donald Super (1985) proposed a model for career assessment. He believed that what counsellors do in the beginning is a preview. He suggested that the next step was to go into a depth view.

The Preview Phase

In Donald Super's theory, "preview" refers to the initial exploration and exposure to various career options during childhood and adolescence. It involves learning about different occupations, interests, and skills.

During the preview stage, individuals gather information about potential career paths. They might explore hobbies, participate in extracurricular activities, or engage in discussions with family members, teachers, and peers. This early exposure helps shape their understanding of different vocations and contributes to their self-concept and aspirations.

According to Super, a positive preview experience can lead to informed career decisions later in life. It allows individuals to develop preferences and identify areas of interest.

The preview phase is parallel to the initiation phase. Dr. Kris Magnussen (1992) explains that the initiation phase focuses on establishing a relationship with the client and identifying their needs. It involves creating a mutual

understanding between the counsellor and the client about what they seek and hope to achieve through the counselling process.

During initiation, the counsellor works to build rapport, gain trust, and clarify the client's goals and expectations. This stage sets the foundation for the entire counselling process by ensuring that both the client and the counsellor are on the same page.

After the preview stage, Super suggested that the next step was to go into a depth view. For Super, the "depth view" represents a deeper understanding of a specific career or occupation. It occurs during adolescence and early adulthood.

The Depth View Phase

As individuals move beyond the preview stage, they focus on specific career paths. They explore their chosen field in greater detail, considering factors such as job requirements, educational qualifications, and lifestyle implications. The depth view involves researching specific occupations, gaining practical experience, and developing a more realistic perspective.

Developing an in-depth view helps individuals make informed decisions about their career trajectory. It allows them to assess whether a particular occupation aligns with their abilities, values, and long-term goals.

The depth view includes an exploration of career values, career change readiness, skills assessment, and interest clarification. When we as career professionals move the process from initiation or preview to exploration or depth view, it helps us understand what we are trying to accomplish.

The difference between initiation and exploration lies in the intention of the strategy. In initiation, we think about the client's needs and their importance to the client. Exploration, on the other hand, is much more about what types of things a client can do to meet those needs. In our opening story, when the career coach first met with Jordan, they identified the challenge of school and Jordan's lack of motivation. During the exploration process, Jordan explored their artistic interests and skills in depth, leading to a renewed desire to pursue their natural strengths as part of their educational journey.

To address the process of exploration, we then need to embark on an assessment strategy. There are typically two approaches to addressing this exploration and assessment process. The approaches are quantitative assessment, which tends to be formal like personality tests, and an arguably more robust qualitative assessment, which is an informal approach where an in-depth career conversation with clients gathers more information than a test.

Regardless of whether we approach assessment from a quantitative or qualitative standpoint, the goal remains the same: to inform the client about who they are as a person and what aspects of who they are as a person would be beneficial in helping them understand themselves in relationship to the world of work. The most common areas we seek to assess are skills, interests, values, beliefs, and possibly character or personality traits. The idea is to help the client understand these aspects of self and then identify opportunities within the world of work to which these aspects of self can be matched.

Remember that this assessment process does not tell us who the client will be, rather, it identifies who they are in the moment. In other words, it's a snapshot in time. In the next sections, we will take some time to review the differences between the quantitative and qualitative assessment processes.

3.3: Quantitative Assessment Approaches

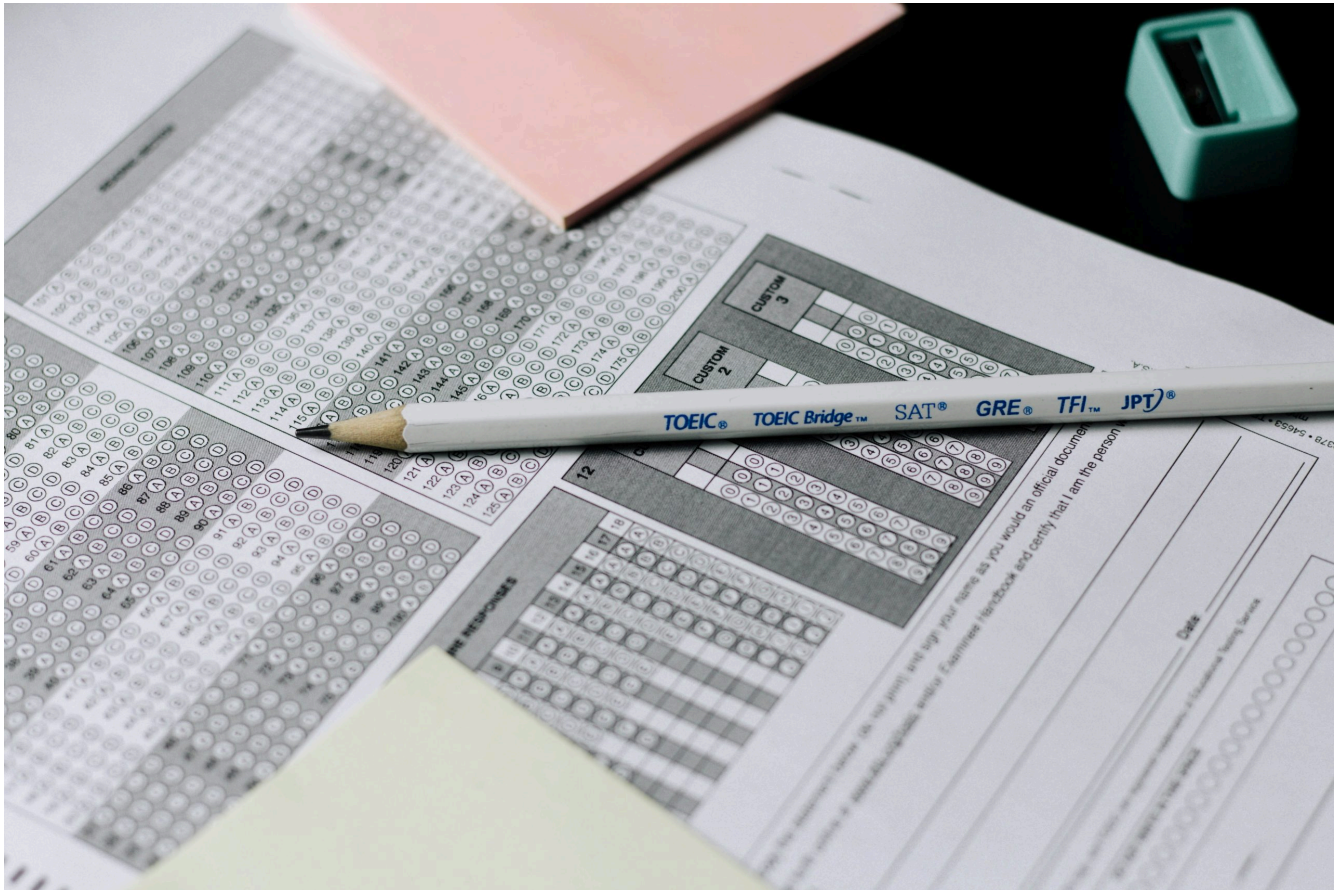


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Quantitative assessment is used here to refer to standardized approaches to career assessment. These typically refer to interest or aptitude assessments. Most have been developed using some rigorous approach to test construction; they employ the standardization of administrative processes and have been subjected to various validity and reliability assessments.

Interest measures are mostly used to determine the client's interests by asking a client about their preferences or presenting them with a scenario-based question. Examples of interest measures include approaches such as the Self-Directed Search, the Career Occupational Preference System, and the Strong Interest Inventory.

Aptitude assessments are used to ascertain the client's abilities and match their strengths to certain careers. Approaches to aptitude assessment include the General Aptitude Test Battery, the Differential Aptitude Tests, and the Career Ability Placement Survey.

Measures of values are used to determine the client's essential values and match their beliefs with suitable careers. Value assessments include approaches such as the Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey and the Career Values Scale.

Some of the more popular quantitative exploration strategies include personality or type and temperament scales. These tests are used to determine the client's personality and temperament and recommend career choices based on the results. Examples include the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, the DISC profile, and Personality Dimensions.

Career tests, often used in educational and career counselling settings, aim to help individuals identify occupations and educational paths that match their interests. However, a body of research critiques these tests' effectiveness, reliability, and validity. Key weaknesses include their oversimplification of career decision-making, cultural bias, reliance on self-reported data, and the dynamic nature of the workforce, which these tests may not fully capture.

First-hand Experience

Early in my career, I had experiences with clients that caused me to step back and consider the validity of the quantitative assessment process. Two issues occurred that gave me concern. First, I had multiple clients coming in who had already completed a series of career tests and were still struggling with what they needed to do. In other words, no formal assessment had helped them clarify their decision-making.

The second issue that came up frequently was that I would encounter people who had used formal quantitative career assessments but did not understand the context of the test and, hence, were not clear about the results. In most cases the individuals had taken a formal test but did not understand what it meant and misinterpreted the meaning of the results. I found myself having to guide them through a reinterpretation of the material to help them make sense of it. I found that it could take significant time to turn around a person's misconception about the results of the formal assessment.

One of the things I notice more than anything else with clients is that formal or quantitative assessments often seem to have what I would call a placebo effect. Clients would take a formal test and, at the end of it, identify a particular aspect of that test that would help them to confirm a bias they had about what they should do. In other words, rather than providing an open source of consideration, the test reconfirmed preference bias.

Preference bias is like wearing glasses that only let you see what you already believe. It happens when we pay more attention to information that supports our ideas and ignore anything that disagrees with our perceptions. For example, if your client thinks that being a chef is the best job ever, they might notice all the cool cooking shows, delicious recipes, and successful chefs but ignore stories about chefs working long hours or struggling to find jobs.

I have often heard individuals say things like, "I know I'm the right person for this career because when you look at this test, it says I'm 'outgoing'; therefore, I should be a 'salesperson.'"

Significant challenges regarding using **quantitative assessments** are identified in career research literature. The most significant issue is whether they help a person predict fit in a future career choice. This is impacted by the challenge of how difficult it is to measure "fit" and the fact that the workplace is dynamic and changing.

One of the most widely used and most researched quantitative approaches has questionable connections between its measurements and what people in actual jobs are like. In the late fifties John Holland, an American psychologist introduced the concept that there were six categories of personality, and each category was drawn to a particular career environment. However, Magnusson, K., & Stewin, L. (1990) found weak correlations between a person's Holland Code and those who worked in occupations. It turns out that human interests are much more complex than many career theorists and researchers thought.

The article “Do Ornithologists Flock Together? Examining the Homogeneity of Interests in Occupations” (Nye, C.D., Perlus, J.G. and Rounds J., 2018) explored the concept of homogeneity of interest within occupations, challenging the foundational assumption that individuals in the same occupation share similar interest profiles. It investigated this by examining Strong Interest Inventory data and a quantitative review of congruence indices, revealing significant heterogeneity of interests across various occupations. This finding suggests a continuum of interest homogeneity exists, prompting a reevaluation of the assumption that occupations comprise individuals with homogeneous interests. The study underscored the importance of reconsidering the role of interest homogeneity in career planning and employee selection, highlighting the complexity of person-environment fit in vocational and organizational research.

These concerns suggest that we must be very careful about quantitative approaches into the assessment and exploration process as career professionals. Let’s look at the qualitative assessment approaches in the next section.

3.4: Qualitative Assessment Approaches



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The qualitative or informal assessment process is a process by which the career professional asks questions, observes, and then asks more questions to assist a client to uncover their potential career pathways.

Qualitative assessment involves informal forms of assessment that allow for flexibility and interaction between the client and the counsellor. These assessments consider the whole person, integrating personal, social, and contextual factors.

Over the years, there has been a shift away from formal, quantitative assessments in favour of a more client-centred or qualitative assessment process. The client-centred approach in career counselling involves placing the client at the heart of the process. Clients actively participate in their own career exploration and decision-making. The counsellor acts as a facilitator, supporting the client's self-discovery.

There are several reasons for this shift.

The qualitative career assessment process tends to be much more flexible. Kris Magnussen (1992) identified some benefits of informal or qualitative assessment processes, including:

- There is less likelihood of subjecting clients to gender, culture, or socioeconomic bias.
- The process is highly individualized, allowing the counsellor to customize their work to fit the client's needs at that moment.
- The client is actively engaged in the process. It is highly participatory, which allows them to own the outcomes.

- The process allows the client and counsellor to explore in a creative manner that enhances both the focus and the enjoyment of the process.
- Finally, it's a much more flexible approach, and it's easy to move back and forth through the different processes, such as initiation and exploration.

McMahon and Watson (2015) provide an excellent summary of the benefit of this approach when they state, “Qualitative career assessment stimulates storytelling, and in doing so, facilitates learning about oneself through self-reflection and enhanced self-awareness.”

Types of Qualitative Assessment Processes

Interview Strategies

The interview process is the primary career counselling technique. The techniques for interviewing used in career exploration are very similar to the generic interviewing techniques associated with a personal counselling process.

Critical skills all counsellors need to know include using open-ended and closed questions, encouraging, paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, and summarizing. The skillful use of these processes and techniques can guide the client through an exploration of their interest, values, and experiences to enable effective career exploration.

An effective model for structuring an interview is the “Five Stage Counselling Session” (Ivey A.E., Ivey, M.B., Zalaquett, C.P., 2023). The stages provide a useful structure for guiding a client:

1. Empathic Relationship: Initiating the session with the client. Engaging in rapport building and structuring the interview.
2. Story and Strengths: Gathering information, drawing out stories, issues, concerns and or challenges.
3. Goals: Mutual goal setting; what does the client want to have to happen?
4. Restory: A working process to explore alternatives and confront incongruities and conflict. The client can rewrite their story to include strengths.
5. Action: Generalizing and action on new stories to move forward.

These five stages can form the foundation of the process of exploration. They can also provide a framework for integrating all other qualitative assessment approaches.

Watch this video on the Alignment of Micro-skills and the 5-Stage Interview Process to get a good understanding of how to use this method.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=110#oembed-1>

Source: KVCC Teaching & Learning Centre. (2017, July 31). Microskills and 5 Stages Alignment – Counselling. [Video] YouTube. <https://youtu.be/GvJi6Y265P8?si=SfA3KQhHJhqmO5As>

Significant Experiences

The process of “Significant Experiences” (Bolles, 2020) in career exploration is a reflective exercise that helps individuals understand their interests, skills, values, and motivations by examining the experiences in their lives that have been most meaningful to them. This process can be particularly useful for clients who are uncertain about their career path or looking to make a career change. Here’s an outline of how such a process may unfold.

1. Identification of Experiences

- Reflect on past experiences: Clients are encouraged to think about their past experiences across various aspects of their lives, including education, work, volunteer activities, hobbies, and personal challenges.
- List significant experiences: From this reflection, clients identify experiences that they found particularly engaging, satisfying, or challenging. These are moments that felt significant in some way, whether they were positive or negative.

2. Analysis of Experiences

- Examine each experience: For each identified experience, clients delve into why it was significant, what they enjoyed or found challenging, the skills they used or developed, and the values or interests it reflected.
- Identify common themes: By analyzing multiple experiences, clients can begin to see patterns or themes in the types of activities, environments, or roles that consistently bring them satisfaction or fulfillment.

3. Connection to Careers

- Research career options: Using the insights gained from their significant experiences, clients can explore careers that align with the themes, skills, and values they’ve identified. This might involve researching industries, roles, and job descriptions that match their interests.
- Reflect and adjust: Throughout the process, clients are encouraged to continuously reflect on their experiences and the satisfaction they derive from their career-related activities. This ongoing reflection allows adjustments to be made to their goals or plans.

The “Significant Experiences” process is iterative and may be revisited multiple times throughout an individual’s career. It is a powerful tool for self-discovery and making informed career decisions that lead to fulfilling professional lives.

Read this story and answer these questions about values.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=110#h5p-2>

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Read this story and answer these questions about skills.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=110#h5p-3>

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Creating Self Portraits

“Creating Self-Portraits” is a career development process designed by Redekopp, Day, Magnusson, and Durnford (1993) to facilitate self-assessment and career exploration without relying on traditional testing methods. This approach stems from the recognition that conventional career tests often limit individuals by assigning them labels (e.g., personality types) that hinder further self-exploration and pigeonhole them into specific occupational roles without considering the full spectrum of their interests, values, and potential for growth.

The process adopts a developmental approach to career assistance, encouraging individuals to engage in a comprehensive self-examination process. This process involves exploring four key aspects of the self:

- Meaning (values, beliefs, interests, and barriers)
- Outcomes (visions for the future, including personal, work-related, and educational goals)
- Activities (preferred, past, and needed activities toward achieving one’s dream)
- Tools/Techniques (skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personal characteristics used in past activities)

The method utilizes a semi-structured interview format, which can be conducted individually or in groups, typically over one to three sessions. Responses are organized into four columns on a large sheet of paper, facilitating a holistic view of the individual’s self-concepts and aspirations.

The primary goal of the process is to empower individuals to understand themselves in a way that promotes ongoing self-discovery, accommodates change over time, and avoids restrictive labels or classifications. Doing so aims to help individuals make life and work choices that are meaningful and aligned with their personal values and dreams. Client feedback suggests that the process of creating Self-Portraits is enjoyable, reduces the pressure of making the “right” career decision, and enhances self-understanding and adaptability.

“Creating Self-Portraits” represents a novel approach to career development that emphasizes self-exploration and the dynamic nature of personal and occupational growth. By moving away from traditional testing and classification methods, it seeks to enable individuals to chart a career path that is truly reflective of their unique interests, values, and aspirations, thereby fostering a more fulfilling and adaptable approach to career planning and development.

Vocational Card Sorts

Vocational card sorts are a valuable resource in the career counsellor’s toolkit. They have been used since the early 1960s to help individuals explore various aspects of themselves. They are an interactive career counselling tool designed to aid individuals in exploring their career interests, values, and skills. This hands-on method facilitates self-discovery by allowing clients to sort through cards, each representing different aspects of careers and work life, such as specific occupations, work values, and skills. The process is structured to encourage reflection and discussion, helping clients articulate their preferences and align them with potential career paths.

The process begins with an introduction to the Vocational Card Sorts, where the counsellor explains the purpose and methodology of the tool. Clients are then presented with a set of cards to sort according to their interests or values, ranging from “highly interested” to “not interested” or “very important” to “not important.” This sorting phase is crucial as it prompts clients to consider what they value in a career, identify their skills, and explore what work environments or roles they find appealing.

Following the sorting activity, clients have a discussion with the counsellor to delve deeper into their selections. This conversation is key to uncovering deeper insights into the client’s career preferences, addressing misconceptions, and identifying knowledge gaps about certain careers. The counsellor’s role is to facilitate reflection, helping the client to understand why they favour certain options and how these preferences align with potential career opportunities.

Based on the outcomes of the sorting and discussion phases, the counsellor assists the client in narrowing down career options that best match their identified interests, values, and skills. This may involve further steps such as conducting research, engaging in informational interviews, or exploring educational pathways for the preferred careers.

Vocational Card Sorts (Osborn et al., 2015) offer several benefits, including promoting self-discovery, providing an engaging and tactile method for career exploration, and allowing customization to meet individual client needs. They serve as a foundational step in the career decision-making process, helping individuals to move from broad interests to specific, actionable career paths. Through this structured approach, clients gain clarity on their career-related preferences and how these align with available or desired career opportunities, ultimately facilitating informed and meaningful career choices.

Watch this vocational card sorts video and fill out the action learning log.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=110#oembed-2>

Source: Open Learning at Conestoga College. (2024, September 3). Career Card Sort Activity. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/NRWh4FamnVo?si=5DpZKcP81hfuoPmw>

Action learning log:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=110#h5p-4>

Download a PDF with printable vocational cards. Use them in class to create your own card sort activity.

3.5: The Logical Levels Model



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The Logical Levels model, often attributed to anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) and further developed by Robert Dilts (1990), is a framework for understanding how different levels of processes within individuals and systems interact and influence one another. It's used in coaching and personal development and is especially helpful for understanding career transitions.

The model proposes that learning and change can be categorized into a hierarchy of logical levels. Each level is progressively more influential on one's behaviour and identity, with changes at the higher levels having a broader impact on the lower levels. The levels are as follows:

1. **Environment:** This level is about the external conditions where a person's behaviour takes place. It includes the physical space, the people around the person, the time of day, etc.
2. **Behaviour:** The specific actions and reactions that are observable within the environment.
3. **Capabilities:** These are the skills and strategies a person must perform. It includes abilities, knowledge, and experience.
4. **Beliefs and Values:** The personal belief systems and values that provide the framework for making decisions and justify behaviours and capabilities.
5. **Identity:** A person's sense of self. It's about how individuals perceive themselves and what they identify with.
6. **Spirituality or Purpose:** Some interpretations include this level, which pertains to the broader system, purpose, or

connection to something greater than oneself.

Exhibit 3.1 depicts the various hierarchies of logical levels.

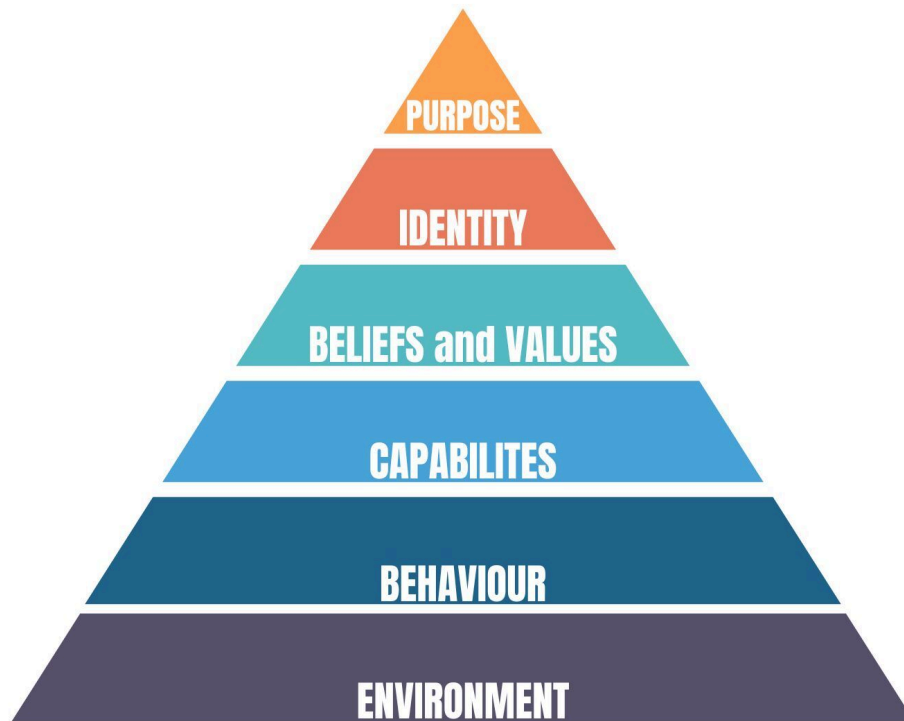


Exhibit 3.1: The Hierarchies of the Logical Levels Model.

At the base of the Logical Levels model, the Environment level represents the physical and social backdrop where one's professional life unfolds. Moving up, the Behaviour level refers to the specific actions and roles one engages in at work. The Capabilities level encompasses the skills and knowledge necessary to perform effectively in a chosen career. The Beliefs and Values level reflects the inner convictions and principles that motivate and justify professional choices. The Identity level pertains to one's professional self-image and role within a career. Finally, the top level, sometimes referred to as Spirituality or Purpose, transcends the individual to consider broader questions of meaning and connection to a larger mission or calling. Changes at higher levels, such as beliefs or identity, can cascade down to inform and transform aspects at the lower levels, like behaviour and environment, making this model a powerful tool for navigating and facilitating career transitions.

Watch this video on the Logical Levels to get a better understanding of this model.





One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=114#oembed-1>

Source:

Helen Oakwater. (2018, May 29) Robert Dilts explains NLP Logical Levels of learning & change. [Video] YouTube. https://youtu.be/hrK9_ZPo790

Practical Application of the Logical Levels Model

For example, if a student wants to improve their study habits (Behaviour), they might first change their study environment by finding a quiet place without distractions (Environment). To enhance their capabilities, they might learn new study techniques or time management skills (Capabilities). This could lead to a change in their beliefs about their ability to study effectively (Beliefs and Values), which ultimately might affect how they see themselves as a student (Identity). If this change is aligned with a larger purpose, such as contributing to the well-being of their community or advancing in their career (Spirituality or Purpose), it reinforces the changes at the lower levels.

An essential aspect of this model is that a change at a higher level will affect all levels below it, but not necessarily the other way around. Therefore, interventions aimed at higher levels are often considered more powerful.

First-hand Experience

Here's an example of how someone might navigate a career change using the Logical Levels model:

1. **Environment:** Kiran works in a corporate office setting but feels uninspired. Kiran decides to make a career change to something more aligned with their values.
2. **Behaviour:** In their current job, Kiran's behaviours include routine tasks that they no longer find fulfilling. Kiran has started to explore different industries and jobs that could suit their interest.
3. **Capabilities:** Kiran realizes that to shift careers, they need new skills. Kiran begins to take courses on digital marketing, recognizing this is a key capability needed for the new career they are interested in.
4. **Beliefs and Values:** Kiran must address the belief that they're only suited for the corporate world. As Kiran gains new skills, their belief shifts to "I am adaptable and can succeed in different fields." This is bolstered by Kiran's core values of growth and learning.

5. Identity: As Kiran acquires new skills and beliefs, they start to see themselves not just as a corporate employee but as a creative professional. They identify themselves as someone who can thrive in a dynamic, creative career.
6. Spirituality or Purpose: Kiran's decision to change careers is also driven by their desire to do meaningful work that contributes positively to society. Kiran feels that their purpose is not just to earn a living but to make a difference through their work.

As Kiran moves through these levels, the changes at each level reinforce and support the changes at the other levels. For instance, Kiran's new identity as a creative professional might lead them to behave more confidently in their new role, seek environments that nurture their new career, and further develop their capabilities, all of which are aligned with their core values and a sense of purpose.

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

3.1 Exploration

- The process of career exploration is multifaceted and crucial for effective decision-making. Frank Parsons, a pioneer in the field, emphasized three aspects of career decision-making: knowing oneself, understanding workplace demands, and applying sound reasoning.

3.2 The Components of Career Assessment

- Donald Super's model introduced the concept of moving from a preview (initiation) to a depth view (exploration).

3.3 Quantitative Assessment Approaches

- Quantitative assessment approaches involve standardized tests measuring interests, aptitudes, and values. However, these tests have limitations, including oversimplification, cultural bias, and an inability to capture the dynamic nature of careers.

3.4 Qualitative Assessment Approaches

- Qualitative assessment approaches, on the other hand, offer flexibility and individualization. They stimulate storytelling, enhance self-awareness, and allow clients to explore creatively. Examples of qualitative assessment methods include interviews, significant experiences analysis, and creating self-portraits. The latter focuses on holistic self-examination, considering meaning, outcomes, activities, and tools/techniques. Vocational card sorts are also valuable tools, allowing clients to explore career interests, values, and skills interactively.
- While quantitative assessments have their place, qualitative approaches provide more helpful results, empower clients, and promote ongoing self-discovery. Career professionals must carefully consider the assessment process to guide clients effectively in their career exploration journey.

3.5 The Logical Levels Model

- The Logical Levels model offers a structured approach to understanding the complexities of career change by considering the impact of multiple interconnected layers.

Reflection Questions

These questions are designed to encourage deeper thinking and analysis of the themes and events described in the text.

1. How did Jordan's academic performance change during their high school years, and what factors contributed to this change?
2. How can the process of career exploration and change be applied to help other students who face similar struggles as Jordan?
3. How does knowing oneself contribute to career decision-making?
4. Why is understanding the demands and opportunities of the workplace important in career exploration?
5. How can a career coach help a client during the exploration stage?

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PART IV

CHAPTER 4: EXPLORATION — CREATING SELF-PORTRAITS

Phoenix's Story: Rising From the Ashes



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Phoenix was a 32-year-old manager at a public service agency. Phoenix lost their job after the sudden closure of the agency due to the unexpected end of government funding. A deep sense of loss and uncertainty followed the initial shock of the announcement. Having led a passionate team and dedicated years to serving the community, Phoenix was now on an emotional rollercoaster, grappling with disappointment and anxiety about the future. The abrupt end to meaningful work and the disruption of professional relationships left a void, triggering concerns about career prospects and financial stability.

Amidst this turmoil, Phoenix also felt a flicker of hope and determination at the thought of leveraging their skills and experience in new opportunities despite the overwhelming challenges ahead. Phoenix was debating whether to return to college to take a graphic design program or to find work at a small advertising firm. Phoenix was supported by a career transition professional who helped them to face the challenges of losing their role and identifying the best pathway forward.

Over the course of five sessions, the career professional guided Phoenix through the process of creating a self-portrait. This process enabled Phoenix to gain confidence and provided clarity about their next steps.

We will produce a self-portrait for Phoenix as we go through the steps of creating a Self-Portrait described in this chapter. By the end of the chapter, you will see a full portrait emerge (**see Table 4.7**) that summarizes the work that was done over the course of the five sessions.

At the end of the process, Phoenix entered a graphic arts program at a community college. Phoenix stated that the process of creating a Self-Portrait helped them to understand what they wanted and realize how important it was to complete a post-secondary education program that would teach them the foundations of a new profession before entering a business setting.

Introduction

This chapter is based on the author's personal experiences as a career counsellor who has guided clients through the process of creating a Self-Portrait. In this chapter, we will learn about this career development method and also understand how we can help our clients go through the steps of creating a self-portrait. We will explore how the Self-Portrait can be used to analyze strengths and identify gaps to create a career action plan. Finally, we will learn how to implement this method in a group setting.

The chapter has also been informed by the work of colleagues and the thoughts and perspectives of clients who have gone through this process.

Learning Objectives

After engaging with this chapter, you should be able to

1. Describe the role of Self-Portraits in career exploration.
2. Understand the steps involved in creating a Self-Portrait.
3. Explain how to use a Self-Portrait as a tool to guide clients during the career exploration process.
4. Demonstrate the development of a Self-Portrait in a group setting.

Attribution: "Life-Role Analysis" and "Creating Self-Portraits" are methods originally developed by Kris Magnusson, now at Simon Fraser University, and Dave E. Redekopp, currently with the Life-Role Development Group Ltd.

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4.1: What is a Self-Portrait?



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As discussed in the previous chapter, the creation of a **Self-Portrait** is a career development process designed by Redekopp, Day, Magnusson, and Durnford (1993) to facilitate self-assessment and career exploration without relying on traditional testing methods.

The process adopts a developmental approach to career assistance, encouraging individuals to engage in a comprehensive self-examination process.

Creating Self-Portraits is a method to help people recognize how they are changing and growing. It helps them answer the following questions:

- Who are they now?
- What skills do they have?
- What do they know?
- In what direction are they headed?
- What's important to them?

With a clear picture of where they started, people can track their development and see progression — not once, but continually.

Creating Self-Portraits provides facilitators with a method for identifying and organizing components of their clients' work, hobbies, and lives without suggesting occupational alternatives or classifying clients into types.

Components of a Self-Portrait

This process involves exploring four key aspects of the self:

- **meaningfulness** (values, interests, beliefs, and barriers)
- **outcomes** or goals for work and life
- **activities** that the individual has engaged in or wants to engage in
- **skills** that the individual has or needs to carry out desired activities

As these components are identified and organized, a detailed profile of the client called a Self-Portrait emerges.

Characteristics of a Self-Portrait

- The Self-Portrait can be used to make decisions, whether work-related or not.
- The Self-Portrait evolves over time, allowing clients to add, subtract, and reorganize information to best capture their changing selves.
- The Self-Portrait moves clients away from preoccupations with job titles and encourages them instead to focus on what they want to do in work and life.

This opens the door to allow facilitators to help their clients develop **career paths** rather than select an occupational destination. In a rapidly changing world, people need the ability to set multiple goals, develop multiple pathways to those goals, and make use of chance opportunities as they arise. Occupations thus become steppingstones rather than destinations. Creating Self-Portraits helps with this by enabling clients to understand themselves in open, fluid and flexible ways.

The Self-Portrait is an excellent tool, though not a career development panacea. Remember that:

- A Self-Portrait is simply a tool — one of many that can be combined with good career facilitation skills and methods.
- The client is always more important than a method or tool. If creating Self-Portraits does not seem to help a client, do something else. Or, if the format (i.e., columns of information) of the Self-Portrait doesn't seem to be useful for a client, change the format (e.g., create circles or visual collages).

Depending on your work with people, you may or may not have time to develop Self-Portraits with your clients. However, if you are feeling pressed for time, it might be helpful to remember that Self-Portraits can be created at various levels of detail. A Self-Portrait can be useful even if it remains general, so remember to adapt the tool to meet your client's needs.

4.2: Steps in Creating a Self-Portrait



Credit: Photo by Antoni Shkraba from Pexels, used under the Pexels License.

Developing a client Self-Portrait, sometimes called profiling the client, involves five main steps:

1. Set the stage by doing some preliminary work to prepare the client for the Self-Portrait.
2. Explore meaningfulness issues and help outcomes to emerge.
3. Determine which specific activities the client wants to undertake to reach outcomes.
4. Choose the skills the client needs to undertake these activities successfully.
5. Polish the Self-Portrait to ensure that it appears in a form that is appropriate for the client.

Setting the Stage for the Development of a Self-Portrait

After you and the client have developed a rapport, begin by discussing the Self-Portrait. Describe the Self-Portrait, how it is created, and how it can be used. Showing the client an example is often helpful. When the client seems comfortable with the idea, obtain a blank Self-Portrait Sheet and sit beside the client as you go through the steps of filling out the

sheet. (Sitting beside rather than across from the client allows the client to more actively engage in the process and feel greater ownership of the Self-Portrait.)

Meaningfulness and Outcomes

The first column of the Self-Portrait is labelled **Meaningfulness**, and the second column is labelled **Outcomes**. You'll be completing these simultaneously with the client. Before we go into the steps involved in filling in these columns, we'll first outline what information you're looking for.

What Is Meaningfulness?

Under **Meaningfulness**, you'll identify four categories of information with the client: values, beliefs, interests, and barriers.

Values are those things that are fundamentally important to the person; they form the foundation of individual actions. Some examples of values include:

- Autonomy: Valuing the freedom to make independent decisions, work with minimal supervision, and enjoy the authority to manage tasks and projects.
- Responsibility: Taking ownership of one's work, being accountable, and delivering on commitments.
- Integrity: Upholding honesty, ethics, and moral principles in all professional interactions.
- Independence: Appreciating the ability to work autonomously and make decisions without excessive oversight.
- Teamwork: Valuing collaboration, communication, and cooperation with colleagues to achieve common goals.
- Learning and Growth: Prioritizing continuous learning, skill development, and personal growth.
- Recognition: Appreciating acknowledgment and praise for contributions and achievements.
- Work-Life Balance: Striving for equilibrium between work responsibilities and personal life.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Supporting workplaces that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Values cannot be right or wrong; they exist. They are unique to each person and reflect what's most important to an individual.

Beliefs are ideas or worldviews that guide a person's actions. Some examples of beliefs include:

- belief in God
- belief that people are inherently good
- belief that money brings happiness

Beliefs can also be clichés that people live by, for instance a stitch in time saves nine; the early bird gets the worm, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink, are but a few examples.

Interests are things that the person enjoys or simply gets a kick out of. Interests often overlap with values, but they need not. For example, someone who values children highly may not necessarily want to work with children. Some examples of interests include:

- interacting with people
- using your hands
- solving problems
- playing with kids

- organizing information
- being creative
- leading a team

Being able to fulfill these three elements (living according to your values, beliefs, and interests) provides meaning to a person's life.

Barriers to meaningfulness are things that get in the way of fulfilling values, beliefs, and interests. Some examples of barriers to meaningfulness include:

- lack of finances
- location
- lack of education
- needs of dependents

What Are Outcomes?

Outcomes are things an individual wants to achieve or accomplish in life. These are what the person wants to get from successful career planning. Outcomes can be classified in terms of three categories: personal, work-related, and educational. Some examples of personal outcomes include:

- children
- home ownership
- successful marriage
- travel experiences

Personal outcomes can be anything an individual wants to get out of life.

Work-related outcomes refer to anything that individuals want to achieve in their work. Some examples of work-related outcomes include:

- moderate income
- variety
- new developments in a field
- contributing to the community

Work-related outcomes are often more individual-specific than personal outcomes. An outcome for an artist, for example, may be *renowned pieces of art*, whereas an outcome for an educator may be *children who can adapt to a changing world*.

Educational outcomes usually are tied to work-related outcomes. That is because they often exist for the sole purpose of ensuring that work-related outcomes are achieved. For example, the educational outcome of studying photography may be desired only because of a specific work-related outcome, such as becoming a world-class photojournalist.

How Are Meaningfulness Issues and Outcomes Determined?

So, now that you know *what* you're trying to identify, let's look at the *how*. Meaningfulness issues and outcomes often

overlap considerably. Desired outcomes usually are driven by an individual’s values, beliefs, and interests. To determine these components, the facilitator asks the client a simple question:

“In the best of all worlds, what do you want to get out of your life and career?”

The facilitator’s job, then, is:

- listening to the answer to this very general question
- isolating meaningfulness issues and outcomes—zeroing in on the values, beliefs, interests and outcomes that you hear in the answer
- recording your findings on the Self-Portrait.

Let’s revisit the process with Phoenix. Review Table 4.1 to see the initial Self-Portrait to understand what types of information have been gathered so far.

Table 4.1: Self-Portrait with Initial Information

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES
WORK VALUES: Artistic creativity. BELIEFS: INTERESTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoyment of art.• Writing newsletters.• Helping people. BARRIERS/DISLIKES: Problems dealing with employment insurance.	PERSONAL: To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable. WORK-RELATED: To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. EDUCATIONAL: Considering college for graphic design programs.	PREFERRED: PAST: NEEDED:

Notice that the career coach who is facilitating the session has coded or categorized the information the client provided. There are information gaps: no beliefs have been identified. Given this initial information, the counsellor can ask specific questions to obtain more information.

First-hand Experience

By encouraging the client to dream, you’ll access rich information about what really motivates and drives your client. There’s no one right way to do this. All kinds of strategies can work to help clients let go of their inhibitions and dreams. For example, you might say:

“You mentioned “being realistic.” I don’t think we need to “be realistic” now. Finish telling me what you want out of your life, remembering that it’s okay to dream about any life you desire.”

Or

“Let’s say you’re 70 years old and that you’ve lived your life exactly as you wanted to. Everything has gone your way. I’m 85 now, and I bump into you again. I ask you to tell me about your life. What would you say?”

The point of the above queries is to give permission for the client to dream and generate a personal vision.

See how this response has changed the Self-Portrait in Table 4.2: Self-Portrait with partially completed meaningfulness and outcomes.

Table 4.2: Self-Portrait with Partially Completed Meaningfulness and Outcomes

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
WORK VALUES: Artistic creativity. BELIEFS: INTERESTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of art. • Writing newsletters. • Helping people. BARRIERS/DISLIKES: Problems dealing with employment insurance.	PERSONAL: To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable. WORK-RELATED: To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., conserving the environment. EDUCATIONAL: Considering college for graphic design programs.	PREFERRED: PAST: NEEDED:	

This additional question leads to more information. And, more importantly, the client is beginning to truly dream. Now, it’s time for the facilitator to ask more specific questions to fill in the remaining information gaps. The facilitator will ask questions about each category within *Meaningfulness* and *Outcomes*. For example:

- **Values:** What’s so important about these outcomes you’ve mentioned? What’s important to you? What gets you out of bed in the morning and wanting to face a new day?
- **Beliefs:** What clichés do you live by? What sayings do you repeat to yourself?
- **Interests:** What’s fun for you? What do you enjoy or get a kick out of?
- **Personal Outcomes:** What do you want to get out of life? What do you want to achieve?
- **Work-Related Outcomes:** What do you want to get out of work? What do you want to achieve?
- **Educational Outcomes:** What educational accomplishments would you like to achieve?

These questions can be asked in any order. The only objective is to flesh out the first two columns of the Self-Portrait. There are no strict rules or order that you must follow when doing this.

The client’s responses to these final questions for clarification result in the revised Self-Portrait in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Self-Portrait with Meaningfulness and Outcomes

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>WORK VALUES:</p> <p>Artistic creativity. Exercising competence in my work. Flexibility and independence, owning my own schedule. Work with others and value “team” approaches to working together. Care for and involvement in the community.</p> <p>BELIEFS:</p> <p>To respect the dignity of each person. I believe that it is time for women to change the world and be leaders on a new frontier.</p> <p>INTERESTS:</p> <p>Enjoyment of art. Writing newsletters, articles and press releases. Helping people. Prefer environments where I can control interruptions and focus on my tasks.</p> <p>BARRIERS/DISLIKES:</p> <p>Dislike Sales, the competitive aspect, quota expectations and the potentially aggressive side of Sales. Speaking in front of large groups in a lecture or theatre setting. Problems dealing with employment insurance.</p>	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <p>To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED:</p> <p>To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., environmental conservation, women's rights.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL:</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>1-year Architectural Technology Program at College High school accounting course Basic counselling strategies Desktop publishing, and graphic design</p> <p>FUTURE:</p> <p>Considering college for graphic design programs.</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>NEEDED:</p>	

If you've been able to work with your client to complete the first two columns, you'll see that the Self-Portrait is beginning to take shape. Now, you're ready to explore “Activities.” But what happens if you get stuck and your client simply cannot articulate outcomes or issues of meaningfulness? As indicated earlier, one option is to move straight to the Activities or Skills sections. Doing this often stimulates thoughts about outcomes and meaning.

Another option is to ask your client to describe outcomes that they achieved in the past and include these in the Self-Portrait. Successes don't have to be momentous — seek out anything that the client felt good about, felt proud of or enjoyed. For example, formerly incarcerated clients often simply want to stay out of jail, so they have difficulty identifying other outcomes. In the past, however, these clients might have articulated outcomes such as successful relationships, wealth (even if illegally obtained, this is still an outcome), and prestige. Beginning with these outcomes builds self-esteem and jump-starts the process of thinking about other outcomes.

If your client struggles with verbal articulation of ideas, move to a visual format. For example, provide a stack of magazines and have the client create a collage of pictures that represent outcomes and/or meanings. You can also have your clients search the internet for images that appeal to them.

What are Activities?

The third column of the Self-Portrait sheet is labelled **Activities**. Activities are tasks, moves or processes that the client has undertaken in the past, wants to undertake in the future, or needs to undertake to achieve their outcomes. These are the roads that clients travel to arrive at their outcomes. Some examples of activities include the following:

- develop rapport with customers
- install brake shoes and pads
- assess clients
- frame walls
- play the guitar

Activities combine skills, attitudes, and knowledge into useful sets of procedures. Activities are thus *more* than simply listing skills, attitudes, or knowledge; they provide *purpose* and *direction* to the client's skills, attitudes, and knowledge. It is important for clients to identify activities because these show clients (and potential employers) how they can reach specific outcomes; hence, they are a demonstration of ability and competence.

How Are Activities Determined?

Activities are usually identified after outcomes and meaningfulness issues have been determined or at any time during the Self-Portrait process.

1. Start with past activities, that is, activities the client has previously engaged in.
2. Move to identify preferred activities — ones that the client wants to undertake to reach desired outcomes.
3. Move to needed activities — ones that the client must undertake to achieve desired outcomes. Needed activities may or may not be the same as preferred activities. Different methods of identifying activities can be used depending on what types of activities are being sought.

Identifying Past Activities

Ask the client to identify things done in the past, including hobbies, sports, leisure activities, work experiences, or volunteer experiences.

For example, a young client with no previous work experience responded with the following: “Well, I don’t know if this is helpful, but I used to really be into cycling, and I’ve fixed a lot of bikes. Do you want me to list some things I can do with bicycles? [Facilitator nods]. Well, I can repair tires, replace chains, install sprockets and derailleurs, replace bearings, and straighten wheels.”

Most clients are not quite as direct as this young person, but this extract gets the point across.

Our client, Phoenix, has identified helpful content for the *Past Activities* column in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Self-Portrait with Information About Past Activities

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
WORK VALUES: Artistic creativity. Exercising competence in my work. Flexibility and independence, owning my own schedule. Work with others and value “team” approaches to working together. Care for and involvement in the community. BELIEFS: To respect the dignity of each person. I believe that it is time for women to change the world and be leaders on a new frontier. INTERESTS: Enjoyment of art. Writing newsletters, articles and press releases. Helping people. Prefer environments where I can control the interruptions and focus on my tasks. BARRIERS/DISLIKES: Dislike sales, the competitive aspect, quota expectations and the potentially aggressive side of Sales. Speaking in front of large groups in a lecture or theatre setting. Problems dealing with employment insurance.	PERSONAL: To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable. WORK-RELATED: To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., environmental conservation, women’s rights. EDUCATIONAL: PAST: 1-year Architectural Technology Program at College High school accounting course Basic counselling strategies Desktop publishing, and graphic design FUTURE: Considering college for graphic design programs.	PREFERRED: PAST: Winning high school team sports playoffs. Completing sketches for family and friends. Promoting a concert, which resulted in a community group repaying debt. Acting as a team leader during the Summer Tech program. NEEDED:	

It’s important to identify as many activities in as many spheres of life as possible. Later, this will help show clients that their transferable skills — activities they’ve completed in other aspects of their lives — can apply to their work life. With individuals with a significant amount of work experience, you can focus more on previous work-related activities. In all cases, however, it is always safest to identify as many activities as possible.

Identifying Preferred Activities

After identifying as many past activities as the client can remember, identify preferred ones. This helps to determine how the client *wants* to achieve desired outcomes. In many cases, preferred and past activities will overlap, particularly in those cases where clients are engaged in meaningful roles and simply want a minor change. For example, one of a client’s past activities could be facilitating groups of people. They may also want to do this in the future; therefore, it would be listed as a preferred activity.

In cases where clients want a minor change, the Self-Portrait technique works equally well to create a career action plan or a roadmap of where clients want to be in their careers.

The counsellor can help clients identify preferred activities by asking: “In the best of all worlds, what would you like to be doing on a day-by-day basis? How would you ideally like to reach your goals?”

The client may respond with something like: “I’m not sure I know enough about the video or film industry to know what I’d like to be doing. I guess I’m really interested in the special effects used in shows. Like, you know, I’d love to design miniature sets with robotic characters like monsters and space aliens or building sets where whole cities are on fire, and it’s all done in miniature.”

The client would explain a great deal more than this, but this provides an idea of the types of preferred activities a client may identify:

- create special effects (miniaturized)
- design miniature sets
- design robotic characters

Now, the client is becoming much more specific about a desirable role. Continue this discussion and further delineate the client's preferred activities. What if, however, the client stops here and does not know which activities would be preferable? Or, what if the client cannot identify any preferable activities? In this case, further exploration is needed to help the client have a clearer idea of where they want to be and what's needed to get there. To do this, move the Self-Portrait process to the next step: identifying needed activities.

This section focuses on what the client has to do in order to better identify preferred activities. If the client can create a comprehensive list of preferred activities, the next step is to sequence these activities in order of preference. Continuing with the previous example, the interviewed person may prefer to work with miniature robots more than with miniature sets. Identify this in the Self-Portrait by listing preferred activities in the appropriate sequence.

Our client, Phoenix, has identified helpful content for the *Preferred Activities* column in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Self-Portrait with Information About Preferred Activities

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>WORK VALUES:</p> <p>Artistic creativity. Exercising competence in my work. Flexibility and independence, owning my own schedule. Work with others and value “team” approaches to working together. Care for and involvement in the community.</p> <p>BELIEFS: To respect the dignity of each person. I believe that it is time for women to change the world and be leaders on a new frontier.</p> <p>INTERESTS: Enjoyment of art. Writing newsletters, articles and press releases. Helping people. Prefer environments where I can control the interruptions and focus on my tasks.</p> <p>BARRIERS/DISLIKES: Dislike sales, the competitive aspect, quota expectations and the potentially aggressive side of Sales. Speaking in front of large groups in a lecture or theatre setting. Problems dealing with employment insurance.</p>	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <p>To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED: To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., environmental conservation, women's rights.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL: PAST: 1-year Architectural Technology Program at College High school accounting course Basic counselling strategies, Desktop publishing, and graphic design</p> <p>FUTURE: Considering college for graphic design programs.</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>Working in a team setting. Doing design work—problem-solving, aesthetic design, marketing, and promotion, helping the client to reach their target population. Working with clients and meeting a variety of people. Connecting and networking in the community. “Making it happen,” helping to get the product developed, seeing the finished product, knowing the impact. Doing all of this at a pace that feels balanced. (I want a balanced social, family and work life.)</p> <p>PAST: Winning high school team sports playoffs. Completing sketches for family and friends. Promoting a concert, which resulted in a community group repaying debt. Acting as a team leader during the Summer Tech program.</p> <p>NEEDED:</p>	

Identifying Needed Activities

Move to identifying needed activities after the client has identified as many preferred activities as possible (or if the client gets stuck at preferred activities). The list of needed activities will specify what the client should do to continue the process of managing their career development. Common examples of needed activities include:

- develop network
- job shadow
- conduct library research
- interview experts

By engaging in these activities, the client will be better able to continue identifying preferred activities, clarifying outcomes, and, more precisely, specifying values and interests. In this context the Self-Portrait becomes more of an instructional tool than a clarification or assessment tool because the client may not yet know what the needed activities are. In this case, it's your role to help the client identify ways to gather further information or insights.

Our client, Phoenix, has identified significant content for the *Needed Activities* section in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Self-Portrait with Information About Needed Activities

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>WORK VALUES:</p> <p>Artistic creativity. Exercising competence in my work. Flexibility and independence, owning my own schedule. Work with others and value “team” approaches to working together. Care for and involvement in the community.</p> <p>BELIEFS:</p> <p>To respect the dignity of each person. I believe that it is time for women to change the world and be leaders on a new frontier.</p> <p>INTERESTS:</p> <p>Enjoyment of art. Writing newsletters, articles and press releases. Helping people. Prefer environments where I can control the interruptions and focus on my tasks.</p> <p>BARRIERS/DISLIKES:</p> <p>Dislike sales, the competitive aspect, quota expectations and the potentially aggressive side of a role in sales. Speaking in front of large groups in a lecture or theatre setting. Problems dealing with employment insurance.</p>	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <p>To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED:</p> <p>To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., environmental conservation, women’s rights.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL:</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>1-year Architectural Technology Program at College High school accounting course Basic counselling strategies Desktop publishing, and graphic design</p> <p>FUTURE:</p> <p>Considering college for graphic design programs.</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>Working in a team setting. Doing design work—problem-solving, aesthetic design, marketing, and promotion, helping the client to reach their target population. Working with clients and meeting a variety of people. Connecting and networking in the community. “Making it happen,” helping to get the product developed, seeing the finished product, knowing the impact. Doing all of this at a pace that feels balanced. (I want a balanced social, family and work life.)</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>Winning high school team sports playoffs. Completing sketches for family and friends. Promoting a concert, which resulted in a community group repaying debt. Acting as a team leader during the Summer Tech program.</p> <p>NEEDED:</p> <p>To prepare a polished portfolio for application to colleges and for future employment interviews. To develop a personal contact list. To conduct information interviews in the graphic design field and develop future employment contacts.</p>	

What are Skills?

Having identified the client's outcomes, meaningfulness issues, and activities, the Self-Portrait process moves to identifying **skills**.

Skills are competencies, knowledge and attitudes that enable clients to effectively carry out their activities. Whereas activities are usually goal-directed and specific, skills can often apply to various activities and help to achieve a variety of goals. In other words, skills are generally far more transferable than activities.

How are Skills Determined?

In many ways, identifying skills is the simplest part of completing a self-portrait. Although it's not difficult, the Skills column of the Self-Portrait is often the longest column and can take some time to complete.

To identify tools and techniques, select one of the client's *past activities* and ask:

- What sorts of competencies did you need to undertake this activity?
- What kind of knowledge did you need to undertake this activity?
- What attitudes did you need to undertake this activity?

Repeat this process for each and every past activity listed on the Self-Portrait. For example, consider asking the client who has repaired bicycle tires the above questions.

The client's response may be something like the following: "To repair a bicycle tire, I guess I needed some basic skills like using combination wrenches and screwdrivers, and I suppose I used some techniques for removing and replacing tires. On the knowledge side, I had to simply know about different types of tires, tubes, and wheels. As for attitudes, all I can think of is that you really have to be careful or thorough to repair tires well."

Pulling out the skills from this narrative, the counsellor would write the following list:

- use combination wrenches
- use screwdrivers
- use tire removal and reinstallation techniques
- understand bicycle tire, tube, and wheel types
- exercise care, thoroughness

Following this procedure for each past activity, you will generate a long list of tools and techniques. After all the past activities have been explored for underlying tools and techniques, move along with your client to preferred and needed activities for the following:

- Skills from past activities that are **transferable** to preferred and needed activities: What skills, knowledge and attitudes could help the client to achieve the preferred or needed activities?
- Skills that will be needed to carry out preferred and needed activities: What *additional* skills, knowledge and attitudes could help the client to achieve the preferred or needed activities?

In the first case, each tool and technique that is transferable to preferred and needed activities can simply be highlighted with an asterisk or by underlining. In the second case, the client may need to explore further to determine the necessary tools and techniques. For example, the client interested in creating miniature robots will need to talk to people who do this and find out what additional skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need to undertake this activity.

Highlight the skills the client will need but does not currently possess. Use a different marking system here than the

one used for transferable tools and techniques. For example, if you've underlined transferable tools and techniques, use a highlighter pen or a different colour of ink to distinguish needed tools and techniques.

Notice the esteem-building power of identifying skills in this way. In a very short period, the career coach can help the client to identify a host of abilities. Almost invariably, completing this portion of the Self-Portrait increases the client's confidence, even when the client has had no work experience or has had socially unacceptable experiences (e.g., theft). Every activity that the client has undertaken requires skills, attitudes and knowledge. For example, consider a client whose only successful activity has been *break and enter*. To break and enter successfully, the client needs the following tools and techniques:

- organizational skills
- planning skills
- rapport-building skills (to garner the support of a confederate)
- observation skills
- trust-testing skills (to ensure the confederate is trustworthy)
- knowledge of security systems

Even though breaking and entering is not a socially acceptable activity, it requires a variety of skills that can be transferred to many activities that are socially acceptable. Notice, too, that the career coach can make no judgment of the client at any time in the Self-Portrait process. The client can freely report any activities without fear of judgment, recrimination, or external control.

Our client, Phoenix, has identified content for the *Skills* column in the completed self-portrait in Table 4.7:

Table 4.7: Completed Self-Portrait with Information About Past Skills

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>WORK VALUES:</p> <p>Artistic creativity. Exercising competence in my work. Flexibility and independence, owning my own schedule. Work with others and value “team” approaches to working together. Care for and involvement in the community.</p> <p>BELIEFS:</p> <p>To respect the dignity of each person. I believe that it is time for women to change the world and be leaders on a new frontier.</p> <p>INTERESTS:</p> <p>Enjoyment of art. Writing newsletters, articles and press releases. Helping people. Prefer environments where I can control the interruptions and focus on my tasks.</p> <p>BARRIERS/DISLIKES:</p> <p>Dislike sales, the competitive aspect, quota expectations and the potentially aggressive side of a role in sales. Speaking in front of large groups in a lecture or theatre setting. Problems dealing with employment insurance.</p>	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <p>To live in a small town, have a family and be financially stable.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED:</p> <p>To work in an established business, learn the ropes, and then develop my own business. To be self-employed in a graphic or creative design field. Using my communications and creative design abilities in areas that will make a difference in the world, e.g., environmental conservation, women's rights.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL:</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>1-year Architectural Technology Program at College High school accounting course Basic counselling strategies; Desktop publishing, and graphic design</p> <p>FUTURE:</p> <p>Considering college for graphic design programs.</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>Working in a team setting. Doing design work—problem-solving, aesthetic design, marketing, and promotion, helping the client to reach their target population. Working with clients and meeting a variety of people. Connecting and networking in the community. “Making it happen,” helping to get the product developed, seeing the finished product, knowing the impact. Doing all of this at a pace that feels balanced. (I want a balanced social, family and work life.)</p> <p>PAST:</p> <p>Winning high school team sports playoffs. Completing sketches for family and friends. Promoting a concert, which resulted in a community group repaying debt. Acting as a team leader during the Summer Tech program.</p> <p>NEEDED:</p> <p>To prepare a polished portfolio for application to colleges and for future employment interviews. To develop a personal contact list. To conduct information interviews in the graphic design field and develop future employment contacts.</p>	<p>Organizational:</p> <p>Well-organized and responsible individual with excellent work ethics and attitude. Gives full commitment and energy to a project and follows through to completion. Patient individual who is flexible and knows when to compromise. Dedicated to learning throughout life using self-directed learning. Have developed many abilities through mentoring.</p> <p>Design / Written Communication:</p> <p>Create internal vision of final product and the set about to produce the results. Experienced in creative design (e.g., flyers) and events promotion. Polished written communication skills. Creative flair and use of words—wordsmithing</p> <p>Interpersonal:</p> <p>Communication, networking and negotiation skills. Maintained positive team relations with staff, volunteers and Board of Directors.</p>

Polishing the Self-Portrait

The finished Self-Portrait can take any form that works for your client. Make the Self-Portrait as large or as small as the client desires. Use whatever format fits — experiment with different shapes and colours. Remember that the portrait is always a work in progress. The point is not to obtain an exhaustive description of the client; rather, it is to gather sufficient information to mobilize the client. It's a snapshot of now, and hopefully, the client will leave with the ability to embellish the Self-Portrait as desired over time.

The Self-Portrait can be considered complete when the client has sufficient information to make the next few career development moves. Always, however, encourage the client to revisit and re-examine the Self-Portrait after taking action steps. When exploration activities, training, education, volunteer experience, or work experience have been completed, encourage the client to review the portrait to see if he or she wants to add or change anything based on the new experiences.

When the client is ready to make some moves, help the client organize the information in the Self-Portrait in a way that makes sense for the client. Have the client do this to increase a personal sense of control over the Self-Portrait. Organizing the Self-Portrait entails making it readable, categorizing groups of items, and prioritizing items within each column. The goal is to make the Self-Portrait as meaningful as possible for the client, not the facilitator! Cleaning it up may entail changing the format completely (e.g., some clients reorganize the information into concentric circles). Whatever works for the client is the best way to go. The Self-Portrait process comes to an end once this stage is completed.

4.3: Ways to Use the Self-Portrait



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This section looks at ways to use the Self-Portrait technique in the next steps with your client.

Reviewing the Self-Portrait for Assets

Having developed a Self-Portrait, the next step is to review the Self-Portrait as a portfolio of assets. Many clients are not particularly aware of the many assets they possess in terms of skill, knowledge, attitudes, and experience. They often take these for granted and don't see their potential value in their careers. Simply reviewing the Self-Portrait with the client can be a valuable esteem-building exercise.

Review the Self-Portrait to reinforce the connections between the client's activities and the knowledge and skills they possess.

- First, look at each past activity to help the client understand the various tasks that they can undertake.
- Review the skills and knowledge required to carry out each activity.
- Help your client look for activities that address values and interests to ensure that the client spots activities that may have enduring meaning.

- Have the client rank values and interests in order of importance. This is an essential step toward establishing values and interests that are sources of both long-term and short-term meaningfulness.
- Review the client's goals and help the client rank these, distinguishing between long-term goals and short-term goals. The long-term goals will be identified in the Outcomes section of the portrait, as well as in the Preferred and Needed components of the Activities section. While the client works toward both sets of goals, it's important to help the client address immediate needs.

Keep in mind that the responsibility for continually modifying and updating the Self-Portrait must be transferred fully from you to the client. Keeping this in mind, review the rationale used to complete each part of the Self-Portrait with your client so that they can update the profile.

When working with people, one of the critical features of reviewing the Self-Portrait is the process of evaluating skill and knowledge levels. Clients may be prone to underestimating or overestimating their skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Further, it may be difficult for you to directly assess many of the client's alleged competencies. Consequently, clients need their own evaluation strategies and they need to learn how to accurately assess themselves. You can take the following steps to help clients develop these skills:

- Have clients identify specific examples where they have used their skills effectively. (For example, you can play the role of an employer asking your client to provide an example of their using a skill well.)
- Ask clients to talk with or observe people they know who have the same skills and compare them with their own.
- Ask clients questions about the limits of their skills (For example: How much? How fast? Under what conditions?)

While none of these will guarantee an accurate assessment of competence, undertaking the above steps will help clients further clarify their skill and knowledge assets.

Reviewing the Self-Portrait for Gaps

The next step in reviewing the Self-Portrait with the client is to analyze activity, skill, or knowledge gaps. At this stage, the review process moves from “what is” to “what needs to be.” This helps the client begin to develop a sense of what to do next. To help the client identify gaps, do the following:

- Highlight the preferred activities that the client is not yet capable of performing. In the case of the client who wants to create miniature robots, begin by highlighting the skills and knowledge that the client needs, e.g., creating miniature robots requires knowledge of electronic circuitry. Knowledge of electronic circuitry would, therefore, be added to the Self-Portrait as a needed item under Skills.
- Continue this process with all the client's preferred activities.
- Create homework assignments for your client to gather this information. For example, the client who wants to create miniature robots may need to research this activity either by reading about it or by talking to individuals who do this work.

Once the individual's skill and knowledge gaps have been identified, it is time to begin action planning to find ways toward filling the gap.

Using the Self-Portrait for Action Planning

Most clients will have both immediate (contextual) needs and enduring needs, each one affecting the other. It is

important to address immediate needs first to help mobilize the client and reinforce commitment to the career-building process. However, immediate needs should be put in the context of the bigger picture, keeping the enduring needs in mind at all times.

Enduring needs are guiding elements in action planning. It is important to clarify them at the start of the action planning process and review them throughout the process. Enduring needs are those needs that will always be important to the client. For example, security may be identified as an enduring need by a client. It may take on different forms and vary in priority, but it will always be critical for this particular client. Security, challenge, honesty, freedom, continual growth, hard work, and a happy family life are all examples of enduring needs.

4.4: Using the Self-Portrait in a Group Setting



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When one-on-one sessions with clients aren't possible, it is also feasible to develop the Self-Portrait in a group setting. While the portrait, serves as a storehouse of information, it also provides an excellent structure for group activities. In other words, each column in the Self-Portrait can provide the basis for career-building activities, facilitating the participants' development of their own individual portraits.

For example, the *Meaningfulness* column can be used as the basis for several group activities or group sessions. Spend time discussing such things as values, interests, beliefs, and barriers, and their relevance to personal understanding and career building. To facilitate exploration and understanding of personal values, you could use activities and ideas, such as:

- Value card sorts
- Value checklists
- A collage containing the material things, people, events, and symbols, that individuals find meaningful

Each of the categories within the column can have as few or as many activities as time allows, keeping in mind the group's needs. Interests, beliefs, and values can be explored in many creative ways. As the activities are implemented and personal information is gathered, the portrait can be developed by the client, either alone or with guidance from a facilitator. The same holds true for all the columns. **Visioning exercises** can be used to help individuals look at goals.

In addition to group activities, the facilitator can coach and prompt individuals as they add information to the portrait. Individuals may need some help organizing and storing information. At the end of a value activity, you may want to lead the individuals to think about their findings in relation to the Self-Portrait by saying, “Now that you’ve looked at some of the things you find meaningful in life, and listed some of these values, try to think about which ones are most important to you. Which values do you think are more work-related? Are any very strong for you? Take out your Self-Portrait sheets and add the values to the *Meaningfulness* column.”

Another way to develop the Self-Portrait in a group is to lead participants through a series of group interviews. You can structure these interviews in the same way as you would individual interviews. Similar questioning techniques can be used to help individuals identify and organize the necessary information.

In this way, group members will already have some insight into themselves and an understanding of the various categories. If the group is particularly capable, you could distribute interview questions to the clients for each of the categories listed in the columns and then ask them to interview each other in pairs. Each partner asks questions and jots down information pertaining to the other.

Demonstrating the process in front of the group ahead of time would be helpful.

The Self-Portrait format may need to be tailored or altered to better meet the needs of the group, as well as to include all the information you may want to compile for each individual. This may mean expanding a section, delving more thoroughly into some areas, stating some things more specifically or focusing on areas of particular significance. For example, you may want to include a column or category in the *Activities* section where specific school and coursework credits are listed. Modify the Self-Portrait to meet your and your client’s needs.

Developing the Self-Portrait in groups can be very useful and effective. Often, participants benefit from group interaction and from sharing their portraits with others. Don’t be afraid to use your creativity to adapt the Self-Portrait to meet the needs of the group.

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

What is a Self-Portrait?

- The Self-Portrait is a flexible tool for navigating career transitions that provides clients with the confidence and clarity needed to pursue new career prospects, highlighting the importance of understanding one's skills, interests, and goals.

Steps in Creating a Self-Portrait

- The Self-Portrait method allows clients to organize their experiences and aspirations without being confined to specific job titles, enabling a broader and more dynamic approach to career planning.
- This tool allows clients to create a comprehensive profile that evolves with them by focusing on meaningfulness, outcomes, activities, and skills, fostering continual self-discovery and development.
- Facilitators must remember that the Self-Portrait is a tool, not a solution, that can help clients articulate their unique narratives and aspirations.

Ways to Use the Self-Portrait

- Analyze the Self-Portrait with your clients to identify assets and gaps in skill and knowledge.
- Once assets and gaps are identified, use the Self-Portrait with your clients to build an action plan to fulfill both immediate and enduring needs.

Using the Self-Portrait in a Group Setting

- The Self-Portrait should be tailored to meet the client's needs through individual or group settings and should always prioritize the client's perspective and goals.
- In a group setting participants benefit from group interaction and from sharing their portraits with others.

Practice and Reflection Questions

Creating Self-Portraits—Practice

To help you learn the process of Creating Self Portraits, you are to work with a student learning partner to practice the method. This requires self-reflection and authenticity to be effective. Remember to prepare in advance to act as both client and counsellor.

Please download the blank Self-Portrait sheet to complete this activity. Review the following guidelines before you begin the process of creating a Self-Portrait with your learning partner.

Learning Partner Practice Guidelines

Counsellor Goals

- Develop rapport
- Ask the essential questions
- Ensure you understand what the person is saying
- Record the information in the client's words
- Focus on the client

Client Goals

- Be yourself; this is a “real play,” not a “role play.”
- Allow yourself to experience the process for you fully!

Reflection Question

When you have completed the process of creating a Self-portrait with your learning partner, write an analysis stating the thoughts and feelings that you experienced using the process both as a client and a counsellor. (A minimum of 200 words is required for this answer.)

- What did you like/dislike about it?
- What did you learn about yourself from this process?
- What would you like to develop in yourself to increase your effectiveness?

- How would you modify this method?

Appendix 4A: Guidelines for Creating Self-Portraits and Examples of Self-Portraits



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The appendix provides a summary of the steps to follow when working with a client. It ends with examples of two Self-Portraits for clients from dissimilar backgrounds with different values and aspirations.

Guidelines for Creating a Self-Portrait

The General Steps to Creating a Self-Portrait

- Prepare the client for the Self-Portrait by doing some preliminary work, e.g., develop your relationship with them, clarify your roles, set guidelines, and explain the process.
- Facilitate the emergence of outcomes and explore meaningfulness.
- Draw out specific activities that the client wants to undertake to reach each outcome.

- Identify the skills and knowledge (tools and techniques) the client needs to undertake the above activities successfully.
- Format and organize the Self-Portrait to ensure that it appears in a form suitable for the client.

Determine Meaningfulness and Outcomes

Start with the first question. If difficulties arise, go on to one of the following question variations. If resistance or stress occurs, go on to another section altogether, returning to this section later in the process. Here are some prompts that you can use to help the client determine meaningfulness and outcomes:

- In the best of all worlds, what do you want to get out of your life?
- Let's say you're 70 years old and have lived your life exactly as you wanted. Everything has gone your way. I'm 85 now, and I bump into you again. I ask you to tell me about your life. What would you say?
- Just sit back and relax for a moment... as you feel yourself beginning to relax, I want you to start thinking about doing something you enjoy. Just for this moment, remove any barriers or restrictions, and say to yourself, "If I could be doing anything, anywhere, what would it be?" I'll give you some time to get that picture in your mind... now, describe to me what you are doing.

If any of the sections in the columns under meaningfulness or outcomes are not complete, or if there are difficulties answering any sections, you can use the following questions:

- Values: Why are your outcomes so important to you? For example, why is "nursing so important?"
- Beliefs: What sorts of beliefs are leading you toward your goals?
- Interests: You mentioned several things you enjoy doing. Are there any that you really get a kick out of?
- Barriers: Is anything preventing you from reaching the outcomes you told me about?
- Work-Related Outcomes: I know you don't know exactly what you want to in the "health sector, but do you have any ideas regarding how you would like to be involved?
- Educational: We'll talk more about this later, but do you have any educational or training goals?

If you have time, it is helpful to elicit the values for all relevant life roles and have the individual prioritize them as soon as they are elicited.

Determine Activities (Preferred, Past, and Needed)

Preferred: "In the best of all worlds, what would you like to be doing on a day-to-day basis? How would you ideally like to reach your goals?"

Past: Review accomplishments and other enjoyable activities. It's easier to begin with accomplishments that an individual feels particularly proud about.

Needed: Review career development needs (e.g., research, resume development, etc.).

Determine Skills and Knowledge

Review activities and ask:

- What sorts of skills did you need to undertake this activity?
- What kinds of knowledge did you need to undertake this activity?
- What attitudes did you need to undertake this activity?

Prioritize the Portrait

- Review and prioritize meaning, outcomes, activities and skills sections.

Examples of Completed Self-Portraits

Example: A Self-Portrait Created Within a Short Duration

Arden was a single parent who was laid off without notice. They had recently moved to a new community and urgently needed to find full-time employment. This portrait was completed during the first meeting. Arden was referred to a Job Finding Club. They found a full-time sales role by the end of the three-week club.

Table 4A.1: Example of a Self-Portrait Created Within a Short Duration

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>VALUES:</p> <p>My children are #1 in my life. I value the home environment and the “good” life. I prefer to have autonomy and independence in my work.</p> <p>BELIEFS:</p> <p>Children come first in my life. I believe in myself and have a strong self-image and am self-confident.</p> <p>INTERESTS:</p> <p>To travel and sightsee. Expanding my horizons. Reading, growing and learning. Spending time with my children.</p> <p>BARRIERS:</p> <p>The challenge of contacting many people. Knowing the right people. Financial constraints.</p>	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <p>To have a stable home that I own, preferably a ranch style house. To send my children to college. To live comfortably and be able to afford to buy the things I like. To own two horses.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED:</p> <p>My childhood dream was modelling and acting. I love fashion and clothes designing. Work that involves some form of glamour and attention is attractive to me. I have considered going into business for myself. My aim is to balance my time between working outside and working within the house.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL:</p> <p>I have my high school diploma. I prefer to learn by reading and doing, rather than by sitting in a classroom.</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>I enjoy applying make-up, hairstyling, and doing facials and manicures. Designing clothes, sewing from templates, sketching women’s fashions and making costumes for children. I am a picky and fussy clothes buyer and enjoy the process of shopping and meeting people. I have a friendly manner with others. I enjoy both machine operations and people.</p> <p>NEEDED:</p> <p>To get out and network with people in my new community. To get support to find a good job.</p>	<p>I have good self-management skills and can work independently where I have autonomy.</p> <p>I have a commitment to others. I am a self-initiator and a self-starter. I am very mechanically inclined and can do most home repairs. I enjoy working with people. I like to have my independence.</p>

Example: A Self-Portrait of a Mid-Career Professional

Quinn was a 40-year-old professional nurse and nurse educator. Due to an amalgamation, their role was terminated, and they were laid off. Quinn actively participated in a career transition process, and their portrait is an example of the

level of detail that can be gathered through this approach. You will see a pattern of teaching throughout the profile. Quinn ultimately decided to become a secondary school teacher.

Table 4A.2: Example of a Self-Portrait of a Mid-Career Professional

MEANING	OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS
<p>VALUES:</p> <p>Financial security and tenure. Service and dedication. Autonomy and independence — having my own niche. Quality of care and service. Additional: Family relations. Egalitarianism and humanitarianism. A non-judgemental approach that demonstrates concern for the person as a human being.</p> <p>BELIEFS: Belief in egalitarianism and that the 'rules' apply to each person, I don't like the "squeaky wheel gets the grease" attitude. I don't like to take risks. Change is only relevant if it leads to an increase in quality of service. I have a strong career orientation.</p> <p>INTERESTS: Teaching and training others. Variety in the workplace. Get a big bang out of groups like choir, historical play, teams of nurses and in general the camaraderie of others. Prefer to do academic work individually. A sarcastic sense of humour. I love art.</p> <p>BARRIERS: Sometimes I let what others say and think influence me and stop me from doing what I really want; I am not a risk taker.</p>	<p>GENERAL OUTCOMES:</p> <p>My outcomes are intertwined between work and personal self, I do not separate these out. As a general outcome I would like to think that I would make some sort of impact on the community — environment, e.g. "Quinn created X". This would be accomplished more by what I modelled than anything else. It relates to How I am and Who I am as a person.</p> <p>PERSONAL: To develop an intimate and personal relationship with options for the development of my own family. To be secure enough so that in retirement all I have to do is paint, sew, visit and drive around.</p> <p>WORK-RELATED: That others will say upon my retirement: "Yes, Quinn was a really great teacher!" I like to see tangible success outcomes from my work. Receiving positive feedback from patients and students, e.g. thank you notes. Completing a project and getting all the details in place.</p> <p>EDUCATIONAL: PAST: Master of Science in Nursing Bachelor of Science in Nursing PLANNED: Bachelor of Education</p>	<p>PREFERRED:</p> <p>Associated with some group — anchor. I have my own role or niche. To work hard at a challenging position (but not 18 hours per day) and have time for my personal interests and hobbies. Working with a mix of ages (womb to tomb). Helping others through health and teaching. Doing something that makes the people who participate better (readers, writers, able to take their own blood pressure, etc.). Creating my own daily agenda rather than having it imposed.</p> <p>PAST: Taught students at the RNA school. Educated patients in the hospital. Developed many new curriculum changes. Produced choir productions for 8 years. Narrated historical play at church. Many good sewing and craft projects. Organized 5-year class reunion. Acted as tutorial assistant with good feedback. Narrated infant bath video that is still in use.</p> <p>NEEDED: Extensive research into roles that involve both teaching and health through a process of informational interviewing.</p>	<p>SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS: I am responsible, conscientious, and thorough as exemplified by my willingness to work overtime for my employer. I am a creative person with an artistic flair and yet very organized in my approach.</p> <p>TRANSFERABLE SKILLS: I have proven <i>teaching</i> skills gained during 8 years of teaching at a reputable school through many curriculum changes and yielding good results. I am an empathetic <i>listener</i> and <i>perceptive</i> with regards to people's needs and feelings; this has been born out in my work with patients, students and parents. I am <i>creative</i> and enjoy visual and performing arts such as my experiences in public speaking. I can <i>write, plan, organize</i> and <i>articulate</i> ideas as demonstrated in my proposals, curriculum, and public speaking activities.</p> <p>TECHNICAL SKILLS: <i>People:</i> Counselling students, teaching, supervising clinical practise, leading change, motivating others, modelling behaviour, co-operating with agency and staff. <i>Data:</i> Record keeping, scheduling, balancing budgets. <i>Performing Arts Sector:</i> Piano, voice, video and film projector. <i>Healthcare Sector:</i> Health equipment (needles, syringes), ostomy equipment. <i>Ideas:</i> Problem solving —alternative solutions, devising new curriculum.</p>

PART V

CHAPTER 5: THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION

River's Story: Turning Dreams into Reality



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River had always harboured a lifelong love of the outdoors. Growing up, they spent countless hours exploring forests, fishing in tranquil streams, and dreaming of a future deeply connected to nature. However, life had not always been easy for them.

Referred to an employment agency by the Social Services department, River was a single 24-year-old receiving general welfare assistance. Their life had been a series of ups and downs, marked by periods of reliance on welfare for the past two years. During this uncertain time, River participated in a series of employment counselling sessions, each lasting an hour. These sessions were a turning point for River, as they represented the first time someone genuinely asked them what River wanted to do with their life. Previously, River had always been told to “just get a job” without anyone considering their passions or dreams.

A key motivating factor emerged through these sessions: River’s dream of running a northern outfitting lodge. This vision ignited a spark within River, fueling their desire to pursue a career aligned with their love for the outdoors. River envisioned a future where they could be self-employed, running their own business. River dreamed of owning a large business enterprise that offered one-stop shopping for outdoor enthusiasts. Their enterprise would include fishing, fishing ponds, motels, and outfitting gear and supplies.

However, River knew that there was much to learn to turn this dream into reality. River needed to understand the intricacies of running a business, so they began by researching who provided outdoor services in the region. River

recognized the importance of developing a mentor relationship with an expert and set out to find one. River also took the initiative to interview local fishermen to understand their needs and preferences.

To build job-seeking skills, River attended a Job Find Club. This step proved to be invaluable. Through the club, River secured work with an outfitting company, gaining firsthand experience in the field they were passionate about. Moreover, River found an outdoor guide who became a mentor, meeting with them every Saturday. This mentorship provided River with practical knowledge and guidance, further solidifying the path toward achieving their dream.

Motivated by their goal, River accomplished many milestones. River's dedication and hard work transformed their life, setting them on a path to eventually realizing their vision of owning a successful outfitting lodge. Through persistence, learning, and the support of mentors, River was well on their way to turning a passion for the outdoors into a thriving business.

Introduction

Embarking on a career journey is a multifaceted endeavour that goes beyond merely identifying one's aspirations. While understanding what one wants to achieve is crucial, the path to reaching those goals can be complex and challenging. Over the years, through my career counselling sessions, I've found that individuals frequently grapple with the question, "How do I get from here to there?" This query underscores the need for a structured approach to career development.

This chapter is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide for anyone looking to transform their long-term career visions into practical, actionable plans. At the heart of this process is the concept of goal specification. It's not enough to have a broad idea of where you want to go; you need to articulate your goals with precision. This means setting clear, specific objectives that can guide your efforts and provide a roadmap for your journey.

One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the SMART goal framework. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. By writing goals that meet these criteria, you ensure that your aspirations are not just dreams but tangible targets you can work toward.

Breaking down long-term goals into short-term, manageable steps is another critical strategy. This approach allows you to make steady progress and avoid feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of your ambitions. Each small step brings you closer to your ultimate objective, making the journey more manageable and less daunting.

Additionally, practical learning experiences play a vital role in career development. Engaging in internships, volunteer work, or part-time jobs related to your field of interest can provide invaluable insights and skills directly applicable to your career goals. These experiences enhance your resume and build confidence and competence in your chosen field.

Finally, navigating career transitions requires a set of diverse skills. Adaptability, resilience, and continuous learning are essential as you move from one phase of your career to another. Developing these transition skills ensures you can handle changes and challenges gracefully and emerge stronger on the other side.

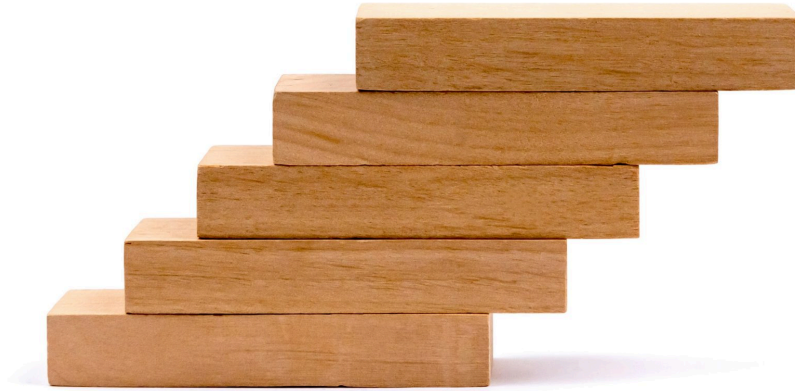
Transforming long-term career visions into actionable plans involves a combination of clear goal specification, practical learning experiences, and the development of transition skills. By following the steps outlined in this chapter, career counsellors can help clients chart a course from where they are to where they want to be with confidence and clarity.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. Understand the five steps in Magnusson's process of preparation.
2. Describe the process of formulating clear goal statements and action plans.

5.1: The Five Steps in the Process of Preparation



Credit: Photo by Volodymyr Hryshchenko from Unsplash, used under the Unsplash License.

In the opening story, we read about River, a 24-year-old with a deep love for the outdoors whose life was marked by periods of welfare dependency. River began attending employment counselling sessions, which became a turning point in their life. These sessions helped River identify their passion for running a northern outfitting lodge, igniting a desire to turn this dream into reality.

To achieve their goal, River embarked on a comprehensive learning process. They researched local outdoor service providers, developed mentor relationships, interviewed local fishermen, and attended a Job Find Club. River secured work with an outfitting company through these efforts and gained valuable experience. River's dedication and hard work, supported by mentors, set them on a path toward owning a successful outfitting lodge.

Embarking on a career journey requires more than just identifying aspirations. It involves a structured approach to career development, transforming long-term visions into practical plans. This chapter serves as a guide, emphasizing the importance of goal specification, practical learning experiences, and developing transition skills.

Magnusson (1992) identified five elements in the process of preparation:

1. Goal specification
2. Identification of the action steps needed to reach goals
3. Contingency planning to deal with challenges
4. Seeking commitment to goal attainment
5. Developing career access skills

Goal Specification

In the process of Exploration, the career coach worked with clients to identify a vision (dream), long-term goals, and

needed activities. During the career coach's preparatory work with clients, it's important to review the client's long-term goals. These long-term goals then need to be divided into short-term goals with a series of action steps that enable goal attainment.

Short-term goals are concerned with the immediate actions that will be taken to reach a longer-term goal. If a client has a longer-term goal, e.g., to become a Marine Engine Mechanic, a short-term goal could be to complete a pre-employment college program and seek employment in the marine engine trades. If the person wants to open their own business, the short-term goal may include enrolling in an entrepreneurship program and exploring business opportunities. The development of short-term goals is essential to help the client understand how the goal or immediate action fits into their longer-term goal. This helps to build commitment to take action to move forward.

Identification of the Action Steps Needed to Reach Goals

In the process of exploration, career coaches work with clients to identify "Needed Activities." These are the critical actions that need to take place before the career transition can occur. These needed activities can be turned into short-term goals. Each goal will have action steps that can be implemented. Examples of needed activities that can be developed into goal statements are:

- Conduct informational interviews in fields like public relations, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social work.
- Explore work roles in youth care and identify the required educational pathways.
- Join Toastmasters to improve public speaking skills.
- Register for training subsidies and search for part-time banking/bookkeeping jobs.
- Research and develop a _____ business.

Contingency Planning to Deal With Challenges

There may be obstacles that block the way to goal achievement. An important consideration is to think about goals that one has already achieved in their life. Was there a time in your life when a task or goal appeared unreachable, but you achieved it? What personal resources or capabilities have you developed or relied upon to attain your goals?

Physical, conditional, or psychological obstacles can block goals. These obstacles must be overcome to reach the goal. Each type of obstacle can be a real barrier to goal achievement. It makes no difference whether the barrier is tangible or psychological. It is still real. It is therefore important to:

- Identify the obstacle that prevents the achievement of the goal.
- Plan a way to overcome the obstacle.

Physical Obstacles

Physical obstacles typically create access problems. For example, you may need to create a quiet space in your home to study. The course you need to take could be offered in another city and involve commuting to access it.

To overcome these barriers, you will need to look creatively at what you can do to remove them. In the example

about studying, it could involve changing the physical layout of your home. It may also involve something larger, such as considering distance education courses or virtual classes.

Conditional Obstacles

Conditional obstacles may involve issues where current conditions exist that can impede your progress toward your goal. For example, you may have visitors coming to your home or renovations being made that will affect your use of space. You may need to consider alternatives such as studying at the public library or other similar spaces.

Psychological Obstacles

Psychological obstacles are those that exist within one's mind. They can be self-confidence issues that block advancement toward the goal. One must believe that the goal can be achieved. If there is doubt about the possibility of achieving the goal, a psychological barrier is created.

Psychological obstacles are no less intimidating than the more tangible barriers. They are sometimes more difficult to overcome because they create misconceptions.

Seeking Commitment for Goal Attainment

One part of the goal-setting and action-planning process is to seek commitment from clients. Typically, at this stage of the process, ensuring commitment is not difficult as the client has been responsible for developing the plan based on things that are important to them. They're typically excited to move forward and implement the plan.

Sometimes, individuals have difficulty believing they can implement the plan; they may have a negative self-concept or have been victimized by challenging barriers for so long that they may not be confident that a change is possible. This type of resistance is generally expressed as "that would be great, but..." However, in my experience, most individuals who have been exposed to a complete career exploration process are so excited by the potential of their plan that they are willing to take risks and try new things.

The process of guiding the individual through their career exploration typically generates helpful outcomes. The first is that the client has increased self-confidence and confidence in their ability to make changes and go after new goals. There is the perception that they have more capability, care more about themselves, believe more in themselves, and see their environment as one in which they can affect change.

Although the client may be very committed to developing and implementing the plan, it's also helpful to formalize that commitment period. This can be done by simply writing a contract and identifying the key goals and action plan. A signature from both the client and the career coach can help to make sure that there is commitment and that there is support to go forward.

Developing Career Access Skills

To realize goals and develop an effective action plan, the client must develop the necessary skills for implementation.

These are called **career access skills** because they open the doors to the client's future. When career transitions fail, it's because clients do not have the necessary transition skills to make the change.

There are two types of assessment needed at this point. The first is which skills are needed to affect the transition being planned. The second is an assessment of the client's current level of functioning with respect to those skills. Typically, at this point, the coach has been able to assess these needs from the process of initiation and exploration.

The types of skills that will be needed to reflect the change will vary from client to client. Examples of common transition skills are job search skills, job maintenance skills, academic skills, financial planning skills, social interaction and personal skills, and social adjustment skills.

Job Search Skills

Job search skills are perhaps the most common form of career access skill required by clients. Once an individual has identified the role they seek, what is the best way to gain access to that role? The typical job search access skills that individuals need to learn include networking, identification of accomplishments statements, creation of resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles, and how to conduct oneself during employment interviews. These skills are critical for clients to make an effective transition.

Job Maintenance Skills

Clients who have limited or no work experience or may be unfamiliar with the attitudes and behaviours required to maintain employment may require extra support to ensure that they can succeed in their new jobs. People are rarely dismissed from their jobs for their lack of technical skills. The primary reason for a person to be dismissed is the lack of the interpersonal skills required by the job. Examples of these critical skills are communicating with coworkers, following instructions, receiving feedback or criticism, punctuality, and demonstrating initiative.

Academic/Study Skills

The pursuit of further education is a common goal in individual career plans. Developing the skills to ensure success in an academic environment may be necessary. To succeed in education, clients may need to develop skills in time management, study techniques, and balancing competing priorities. Developing these skills before entering an educational program eases the transition.

Financial Planning Skills

An integral component of any career transition plan is the financial planning period. Individuals must learn how to tie resources together and work within budget constraints. Financial planning skills will support clients on their career transition path.

Social Interaction and Personal Skills

There is an essential core of social and personal skills that an individual must possess to be successful in their careers. Individuals entering the workforce may need to develop basic hygiene skills or develop their interpersonal communication skills. Additional personal skills involve the ability to cope with anger, learning to be more assertive, learning to manage stress and anxiety, or overcoming substance abuse. Career coaches need to ensure that the current transition plan for the client addresses these issues before or during the transition.

Social Adjustment Skills

Career transitions may involve adapting to new environments. Individuals may move to take on a new job, or they may move to enter into a post-secondary educational program. These transitions involve adaptation skills. Clients need to learn how to adapt and thrive in new environments. On-boarding systems need to be provided by employers and educational organizations to facilitate successful entry into the job and the workplace. Advance planning can assist clients in ensuring this transition takes place more easily.

It is important to note that the types of needs identified here are not necessarily ones that the career coach would focus on while working with the client. The career coach may not possess the expertise to handle some of these areas. Therefore, they should be making a referral to an external source. This is the point in the career coaching process where the coach's awareness of community resources is key. Referrals to supporting organizations and professionals can be an important component of a true transition plan.

5.2: Establishing Clear Goals and Action Plans



Credit: Photo by Glenn Carstens-Peters from Unsplash, used under the Unsplash License.

Setting and achieving career goals is a fundamental aspect of professional development. Writing out goals serves as a crucial first step in this process. When individuals articulate their goals clearly, it provides a tangible target to strive for, helping to focus efforts and resources effectively. Written goals act as a roadmap, offering direction and clarity, making it easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Furthermore, creating action plans is essential for translating these written goals into reality. Action plans break down long-term objectives into manageable steps, outlining specific tasks and timelines to achieve each goal. This approach clarifies the path forward and helps identify potential challenges and resources needed along the way. By mapping out the steps, individuals can systematically work toward their career aspirations, ensuring that each milestone achieved brings them closer to their ultimate objectives.

Writing Goal Statements

Writing a well-defined goal is the foundation for goal achievement. Using the “SMART” method ensures all the essential elements of well-defined goals are included in each goal statement. The SMART goal statement is:

- **S:** Specific
- **M:** Measurable and Meaningful
- **A:** Action-oriented and Achievable
- **R:** Realistic and Responsible
- **T:** Timed and Toward What You Want

Let us take a closer look at the necessary components of a SMART goal.

Specific

A specific goal is a detailed, particular or focused goal. A goal is specific when everyone knows exactly what will be achieved and accomplished. A simple goal is easier to understand and involves spelling out the details of the goal in simple terms.

For example, “Get better grades in my course” is simple but vague. “Study my course assignments for one hour each weekday” is more specific and simpler.

Imagine your goal as specifically as you can. Ask: Who, where, what, when, how... specifically!

Measurable and Meaningful

Measurable goals are quantifiable and provide the evidence to show you that you have achieved your goal. A measurable goal provides a means of comparison that indicates when the goal is reached.

For example, words like “better” or “faster” are not quantifiable. “Improve my course grades by 10%” provides a clear measure for a goal.

Goals need to be meaningful to you! How does having the goal fit with who you are and who you want to become? Is the goal in alignment with your values? Ask yourself: “Is this goal an expression of who I really want to be?”

For example, achieving 80% in your course may provide you with a sense of pride and value in the things you are learning.

Action-oriented and Achievable

Action-oriented goals indicate an activity or performance. You are doing something that produces results. Action verbs describe the type of activity that you are performing. Examples of action verbs are listed in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Examples of Action Verbs.

Verb (A–E)	Verb (F–O)	Verb (P–Z)
Activate	Forecast	Purchase
Add	Formulate	Provide
Answer	Gain	Produce
Appraise	Implement	Prioritize
Authorize	Improve	Plan
Change	Increase	Quantify
Correct	Invest	Qualify
Create	Investigate	Research
Classify	Learn	Review
Complete	Leverage	Revise
Determine	Make	Restrict
Document	Monitor	Reduce
Develop	Match	Select
Define	Negotiate	Secure
Expand	Organize	Support
Evaluate	Obtain	Transform
Establish	Operate	Volunteer

Achievable goals are self-maintained; the achievement of the goal is up to you alone. Many aspects of life are dependent upon other aspects. Your goal should speak to things that you have control over.

If it is part of a larger team's goal strategies, then the other members of your team need to have goals that support the overall strategy. However, you need to be able to execute your goal. It is essential that you can say, "I can do it!" Ask yourself: "What will I do to reach this goal?"

Realistic and Responsible

Realistic goals are practical and possible. Realistic goals are a balance between what is hard and what is easy to achieve. They require a "stretch" that reaches beyond what is easily achieved and establishes a more challenging goal. That little bit extra in performance makes people progress and improve. "Stretching" creates the necessary balance between the effort required to achieve the goal and the probability of success.

For example, do you have the learning resources to increase your grade by 10%? You may require access to tutoring or additional resources. What will be required for you to reach this goal?

Responsible goals ask us to check the consequences of achieving our goals relative to our lives and relationships. This is best accomplished by setting goals in *all areas of your life* at the same time! Consider your overall life goals and your long-term career and personal goals. Be sure to consider what you want to achieve regarding work, learning, family, relationships, health, etc.

For example, your learning goal to improve your course grade by 10% needs to be in harmony with your work, family and health values and goals. Otherwise, your goals in one or more of these areas may need to be sacrificed in order for you to achieve your learning goal.

Ask yourself: “Who (what) else does this goal affect?”

Timed and Toward What You Want

Timed goals mean that they are scheduled. There is a finite duration to your effort, a deadline. People generally put off doing things if no deadline is set because human nature always finds something else to do along the way.

For example, “by the end of June” is more specific than “toward the end of June.” However, the most precise statement is on June 30.

“Toward what you want” is the final consideration in designing a goal. The human psyche will pursue internal mental images, whether negative or positive. You will have more energy and motivation if you move toward something you want rather than away from something you don’t. Write down what you want. Ask: “What would I rather have? What do I want?”

An Example of a SMART Goal

For example, if your personal desire is: “I would like to learn a foreign language so that I can travel to different parts of the world and experience new cultures.” A possible goal statement would be:

“Learn the French language with sufficient fluency so that I can carry on a complete conversation with a French teacher by June 30 at a cost of no more than \$200.”

Writing a SMART goal is a very important part of the client’s goal achievement as it lays the foundation for goal development and implementation.

Learn how to set SMART goals by watching this video.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=157#oembed-1>

Source: MindToolsVideos. (2018, June 18). *How to set SMART goals*. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/OXA6gfzFA24?si=tvlo_7c1E64ts96U

Identification of the Action Steps Needed to Reach Goals

The final task of the goal-setting process is to create an action plan. The plan details the activities and actions necessary to accomplish the goal. An action plan organizes your thoughts into steps that you can take to move forward. The purpose of the action plan is to provide order and organization to the details required to reach each goal. The action planning worksheets shown here are designed to help you create a road map for goal accomplishment. Employment coaches often help clients fill out action planning worksheets that give them insights into the immediate steps needed to achieve their goals.

Examples of Goal Setting and Action Planning Worksheets

River was asked to fill out a goal-setting worksheet during the employment counselling sessions. This exercise was eye-opening for River. Writing down their goal provided River with a tangible target. The next step was to break the goal into smaller, manageable tasks using the action-planning worksheets. With the help of their employment coach, River identified specific steps they needed to take to achieve their dream. River listed tasks such as learning more about running a business, researching local outfitting services, developing a mentor relationship with an expert, interviewing fishermen to understand their needs, and acquiring skills in business management.

By mapping out these steps, River could see a clear path forward. The worksheets helped River to prioritize their actions and set realistic timelines for each task. The goal-setting and action-planning worksheets kept River focused and motivated throughout this journey. Each completed task brought River one step closer to their dream. The process also helped them identify potential challenges and find solutions proactively. River's story is a testament to the power of clear goal-setting and detailed action planning in achieving one's aspirations. Let's assume that River has identified the following SMART goal:

SMART Goal Statement: I will have had 25 face-to-face career network meetings by July 1.

Tables 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 map out the tasks that River must accomplish to attain their SMART goal.

*Major Task #1: Develop a personal **brand statement** and **proof stories** (stories demonstrating the client's capabilities and strengths by highlighting their accomplishments).*

Table 5.2: First Task—Steps and Timelines to Achieve SMART Goals.

Step	Description	Estimated Time	Completion Date	Outcome
1. Write stories	Identify significant events and write seven stories.	1 hr	Apr 5	Done
2. Assess skills and create five core skill group	Share stories, identify skills, and group skills into five groups. Name the skill groups.	2 hrs	Apr 10	Done
3. Develop two stories for each skill group	Follow proof format, write and practice two accomplishment or proof stories for each area.	2 hrs	Apr 15	In progress
4. Create a personal brand statement	Use stories to create a short brand statement that serves as a quick introduction to your skills. Practice in the mirror.	1 hr	Apr 20	In progress

Major Task #2: Update Resume and LinkedIn profile

Table 5.3: Second Task—Steps and Timelines to Achieve SMART Goals.

Step	Description	Estimated Time	Completion Date	Outcome
1. Prepare background info	Gather all dates for employment and education, edit accomplishment statements from stories.	2 hrs	May 1	
2. Write a draft resume	Choose an approach, write a draft for review, get feedback and rewrite.	4 hrs	May 3	
3. Update your LinkedIn profile.	Transfer resume info to LinkedIn. Invite the people I know to become contacts.	3 hrs	May 7	

Major Task #3: Organize information for my contacts, set dates, and meet people!

Table 5.4: Third Task—Steps and Timelines to Achieve SMART Goals.

Step	Description	Estimated Time	Completion Date
1. Pick a system	Review Google, Outlook and phone contacts. Pick an app to organize them all.	2 hrs	May 9
2. Choose contacts	Review contacts, write notes on how I know them, choose 15 people to start with, build new contacts from meetings.	3 hrs	May 11
3. Write contacts	Write a script, e-mail contacts and ask for a meeting. Records dates, times and locations.	2+ hrs	June 1
4. Meet contacts	Prepare questions, ask for leads, meet.	2 hrs	June 1
5. Follow-up	Write thank you notes.	1 hr	June 30

For outcomes, River must specify if they have been completed, cancelled, or brought forward. They must also indicate if the outcomes are in progress.

Download the Goal Setting and Action Planning Sheet and use it with your students.

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

5.1: The Five Steps in the Career Preparation Process

1. Goal Specification:
 - Articulate clear objectives using the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
 - Break down long-term goals into short-term, manageable steps.
2. Identification of Action Steps:
 - Define critical actions needed for career transitions.
 - Develop short-term goals and action plans to achieve them.
3. Contingency Planning:
 - Identify and make a plan to overcome physical, conditional, and psychological obstacles.
4. Seeking Commitment:
 - Ensure commitment by formalizing plans and securing client buy-in.
5. Developing Career Access Skills:
 - Assess and develop necessary skills for implementing goals, such as job search, job maintenance, academic, financial planning, social interaction, and social adjustment skills.

5.2 Establishing Goals and Action Plans:

- Clear goal statements are crucial for goal achievement. The SMART method ensures goals are specific, measurable, meaningful, action-oriented, achievable, realistic, responsible, and timed. Developing detailed action plans helps organize the steps needed to reach each goal, providing a roadmap for career success.

Learning Activity and Reflection

Meet with a learning partner from your class. Guide each other in the setting of a goal and action plan. Identify a career development need and write a SMART Goal for this need. Use the goal-setting and action planning worksheet to create a detailed action plan to meet the goal.

References

Magnusson, K. (1992). *Career counselling techniques*. Life Role Development Group.

PART VI

CHAPTER 6: DECISION MAKING

Robin's Story: An Emerging Path



Credit: Photo by Tatiana Syrikova from Pexels, used under the Pexels License.

Robin stared at the bedroom ceiling, their mind swirling with possibilities. At 17, Robin stood at the crossroads of the future, unsure of which direction to take. Post-secondary school applications loomed, and everyone kept asking, “What do you want to do?” Robin felt lost and frustrated!

The truth was, Robin didn’t know. They only had vague ideas. They enjoyed writing but also loved working with animals. Sometimes, Robin dreamed of travelling the world as a journalist. Other times, they imagined themselves as a veterinarian.

As the weeks passed, Robin found themselves paying attention to things that resonated. They’d clip articles about wildlife conservation and save links to travel blogs. When the English teacher praised their essay, it felt significant. When Robin volunteered at the local animal shelter, they took mental notes of how the staff interacted with the animals.

One day, Robin’s friend Maya suggested that they attend a career fair at the community center. Robin agreed, hoping it might provide some clarity.

At the fair, Robin gravitated toward booths that aligned with their interests. They collected brochures about journalism programs and veterinary schools but also gravitated to a booth about environmental science.

“Have you ever considered combining your interests?” the representative asked, noticing Robin’s collection of materials.

Robin blinked, a new understanding forming in their mind. “You mean, like... writing about animals and nature?”

The representative nodded, explaining various career paths that blended environmental science, journalism, and animal welfare. As Robin listened, they felt a spark of excitement. This new information fit perfectly with their existing interests, creating a clearer picture of a potential future.

Over the next few months, Robin's career decision began to emerge. They researched programs in environmental journalism, joined the school newspaper, and started a blog about local wildlife. Each new experience and piece of information Robin gathered confirmed their growing interest in this field.

When it came time to fill out applications, Robin gravitated toward schools with strong environmental science and journalism programs. Robin's personal essay flowed easily, weaving together their passion for writing, animals, and nature conservation.

As they hit 'submit' on the final application, Robin realized their decision hadn't been a single moment of clarity but a gradual process of discovery. Robin's vague ideas had slowly sharpened into a clear vision, guided by the information and experiences they'd collected along the way.

Robin knew their path might still evolve, but they felt confident in the direction they were heading. Robin's decision had emerged naturally, a result of exploring interests, gathering information, and allowing their understanding of themselves and their potential career to develop over time.

As they closed the laptop, Robin smiled. The ceiling they'd stared at months ago, full of uncertainty, now seemed like a canvas of possibility. Their future was taking shape, one small decision at a time.

Introduction

Navigating career choices can be daunting, filled with twists and turns. This chapter offers strategies to help individuals make informed decisions about their future careers.

Career decision-making often starts with uncertainty and exploration. As shared in the opening story, Robin's journey illustrates this well. At 17, they faced a crossroads with no clear direction. Through experiences and self-reflection, Robin discovered a passion for environmental journalism, combining their interests in writing, animals, and nature. Robin's story underscores the importance of exploring various interests and being open to new opportunities.

In this chapter, we will learn about the different decision-making theories that provide frameworks for understanding and improving this process.

Scott and Bruce's Decision-Making Styles Theory identifies five styles: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. Each style has its strengths and weaknesses. Understanding your clients' styles can empower you to help your clients adapt and make better decisions.

Tiedeman and O'Hara's theory for career decision-making views career development as a dynamic, lifelong process. It divides the process into two phases: anticipation and implementation. This perspective encourages the client to view each decision as a step in their broader career and life development, integrating new information and experiences as we progress.

Magnussen's Emergent Decision-Making Model highlights how career decisions develop gradually and stresses the importance of the initial meaning system that individuals use to interpret new information. This model also emphasizes the need for creativity in the career planning process.

This chapter will delve into these theories and models, providing practical advice on applying them to real-world situations. The aim is to help clients make informed, personalized career choices that align with their passions, values, and aspirations.

Understanding decision-making principles and recognizing the factors influencing career choices helps the career coach guide clients' decisions more confidently and clearly.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. Explain the five styles in Scott and Bruce's Decision-Making Styles Theory.
2. Understand the two phases of Tiedeman and O'Hara's theory for career decision-making.
3. Describe Magnussen's Emergent Decision-Making Model.
4. Identify other practical considerations in the decision-making process.

6.1: Decision-Making Styles Theory



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Scott and Bruce's Decision-Making Styles Theory says people use different styles when making decisions. Each style has its strengths and weaknesses. Understanding your clients' styles can help them adapt and make better decisions.

According to this theory, there are five main styles: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Here are the main characteristics of each style:

1. **Rational Style:**

- Uses logic and structure.
- Gathers detailed information and carefully evaluates options.
- Makes decisions based on thorough analysis, often using lists and facts.

2. **Intuitive Style:**

- Relies on gut feelings and instincts.
- Makes quick decisions based on a general sense of the situation.
- Trusts intuition and may find it hard to explain their choices.

3. **Dependent Style:**

- Seeks advice and guidance from others.
- Lacks confidence in their own judgment.
- Consults with others before making decisions.

4. **Avoidant Style:**

- Postpones or avoids making decisions.
- Procrastinates and delays important choices.
- May shift decision-making responsibility to others.

5. **Spontaneous Style:**

- Makes quick, impulsive decisions.
- Acts on immediate thoughts or feelings.
- Values speed over careful consideration.

In our opening story, we see that Robin used a rational style to make their decision. They explored the different career options that allowed them to combine their diverse interests before settling on the schools and programs they wanted to apply to.

People often use different styles depending on the situation. The pressure of time, the relative importance of the decision, and personal preferences influence the style used. Understanding these styles is helpful in career development. Individuals can adapt their decision-making style to suit different situations.

Whether one leans toward a rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous style, understanding one's predispositions can help one adapt their approach to different situations. This awareness allows one to leverage their strengths and address potential weaknesses, ultimately leading to more informed and confident decisions.

Scott and Bruce's theory highlights that no single style is best for all situations. The effectiveness of a style depends on the situation, the nature of the decision, and individual skills and experiences. By understanding and using different styles, people can improve their decision-making.

6.2: Tiedeman and O'Hara's Differentiation and Integration Model



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Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963) and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) attempted to describe the stages involved in the career decision-making process. They developed a theory for career decision-making, viewing career development as a continuous process of making distinctions and bringing them together. Their model suggests that career decision-making happens in two main phases: anticipation and implementation. The career decision-making process can be viewed as one of **differentiation** (separating experiences) and **integration** (structuring experiences into a whole).

The main characteristics of the two phases are as follows:

Anticipation Phase:

1. Exploration: The person investigates various career options and gathers information about possible paths.
2. Crystallization: As they gather more information, preferences start to form, and options become clearer.
3. Choice: The person picks a specific career direction or option.
4. Clarification: The chosen option is further examined and refined.

Implementation Phase:

1. Induction: The person enters the chosen field and starts to learn the basics.
2. Reformation: With experience, the person might seek to change parts of their role or environment.
3. Integration: The person fully assimilates into their career and workplace.

We met Robin while they were in the anticipation phase. They explored different career options. Gradually, these options crystallized into preferences, which allowed Robin to choose a career path and examine it closely to obtain further clarity. Once they had selected their course of study, Robin was ready to embark on the implementation phase of the career decision-making process.

Tiedeman and O'Hara believed that career development is deeply connected to overall life development. Their theory's key idea is that differentiation (identifying various career aspects such as values and skills) and integration (combining these elements into a holistic understanding of self and career) are natural and normal career decision-making processes.

The model emphasizes that career decision-making is ongoing throughout life. As people get new information and experiences and face challenges, they might go through the anticipation and implementation phases multiple times.

The decision-making process in this model is seen as both rational and intuitive. While people gather and analyze information logically, they also rely on personal insights, feelings, and values to guide their choices.

A crucial part of the theory is the view of individuals as active agents in their career development. Rather than seeing career choice as determined by external factors, this model empowers people to shape their career paths through ongoing decision-making and adjustment.

The theory also considers the impact of external factors like societal expectations, economic conditions, and technological changes on career decisions. However, it suggests that individuals can navigate these influences through conscious decision-making processes.

In practice, this theory suggests that career professionals should help individuals develop decision-making skills, self-awareness, and the ability to integrate different life aspects into their career choices. It encourages a holistic approach to career development, considering both personal and professional factors.

First-hand Experience

In my work with clients, I have found that the process of creating self-portraits perfectly aligns with this decision-making model. Through our meetings, we can differentiate the client's needs in what Tiedeman and O'Hara call the anticipation phase. While creating the self-portrait, we identify values, beliefs, interests, visions, goals, activities, skills, knowledge, etc. This is in essence the process of differentiation that clients naturally gravitate toward in the anticipation phase.

Then, as they start going out and doing research into the world of work, they begin a process of integration, which allows them to move all this information into a coherent and holistic framework that helps them to understand who they are and what career path makes the most sense for them.

Overall, Tiedeman and O'Hara's theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding career development as a dynamic, lifelong process of differentiation and integration closely tied to an individual's overall personal growth and cognitive development.

6.3: Magnussen's Emergent Decision-Making Model



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In my years of career practice with individuals, I have found that the decision-making process happens gradually over time. As the client learns more about themselves and the opportunities in the world of work, their decision emerges slowly. In Tiedeman's and O'Hara's terms, the client's decision followed once crystallization occurred.

Magnussen (1992) talks about “emergent decisions,” which is the process where people make sense of their career choices over time. This decision-making happens whether someone uses logical thinking or goes with their gut feeling. At first, a person's career decision is just a vague idea, something hard to define. We'll call this vague idea a “**template**.” As people get new information, they compare it to this template and see if it helps clarify their career picture. If the information doesn't help, they either ignore it or save it for later because it doesn't fit what they have in mind.

When people start thinking about careers, some might have a few of these templates and gather new information for each one. Others might focus on just one template, ignoring other options. As they explore, people pick and choose information that fits their idea of what they want. This growing picture feels right to them, and it's hard to change once they have it set.

We met Robin when they were uncertain about their career choices. They had several options in their mind. Through a process of exploration, Robin found a way to integrate these options, and a unique career path crystallized and emerged for them.

Magnussen maintains that the idea of emergent decisions has important implications for a career intervention.

First, if clients interpret new information using a specific framework, it's crucial to understand what they find meaningful at the start of the career guidance process. This meaning system is their framework. By being mindful of this system, clients can better navigate the influx of information and experiences, refining their career path as they go. By the same token, by focusing on this system, career professionals can better assist clients in making sense of their options and identifying meaningful career paths. Career professionals also need to ensure that the career planning process itself is meaningful. This way, they can help clients find more options and make sense of new information.

The second key point is that the most effort should be put in at the beginning of the process, focusing on the client's meaning system. This requires creativity from the career professional. They need to identify the client's meaning system and find ways to respond to it. Using storytelling and self-portraits can help discover these meaning systems. Focusing on their meaning system with challenging clients, like inmates or homeless youth, helps start the career discovery process. Once engaged, clients usually adapt their strategies to meet their needs and social expectations. For mainstream clients, this process is easier but still effective.

Third, the process should be seen as a flexible sequence of steps. Initiation, exploration, and other aspects may happen simultaneously, varying in intensity and focus. It's common to shift focus between them, such as moving from initiation to setting goals.

Lastly, it's important to distinguish between undecided and indecisive clients. Undecided clients may just need more information and support with decision-making. Indecisive clients, however, struggle to make decisions no matter how much information they have and often need formal counselling or therapy. In these cases, referring them to a mental health professional is best.

6.4: Practical Considerations in the Decision-making Process



Credit: Photo by Julia Volk from Pexels, used under the Pexels License.

Career decision-making is a journey, not a destination. Throughout this chapter, we've explored various frameworks and theories illuminating this process's complex and dynamic nature. By understanding these concepts, you can guide individuals in navigating their career paths and making decisions that align with their passions, values, and goals.

One of the key takeaways from this chapter is the importance of self-awareness in career decision-making. Robin's story at the beginning highlighted how paying attention to your interests and experiences can lead to greater clarity. Their gradual realization of a passion for environmental journalism underscores that career decisions often emerge over time, influenced by personal insights and external opportunities.

As you reflect on the theories and models discussed in this chapter, consider how they apply to your own career journey and that of your clients. Recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to career decision-making. Instead, use these frameworks as tools to help clients understand their unique preferences, strengths, and aspirations. By doing so, they can make more intentional and informed decisions that align with their long-term goals.

It is also important to acknowledge that various external factors, such as societal expectations, economic conditions, and technological advancements, influence career decision-making. While these factors can present challenges, they

also offer opportunities for growth and adaptation. By staying informed and proactive, clients can navigate these influences and make realistic and fulfilling decisions.

Remember that a career path is a journey; each decision is a step toward building a fulfilling and successful future.

Encourage those you serve to embrace the process, stay open to new experiences, and trust that their unique combination of skills, interests, and values will guide them toward the right career path.

Watch Dave Redekopp's insightful video on career decision-making to get a sense of how everyday decisions impact our career choices.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=180#oembed-1>

Source: TEDx Talks. (2015, November 5). Every Decision is a Career Decision [Dave Redekopp] TEDxWestVancouverED [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/T8NLqDlhwig?si=udAh0ng-yTuZn8gP>

Chapter Review

Key Concepts

Scott and Bruce's Decision-Making Styles Theory

- Scott and Bruce's Decision-Making Styles Theory provided a valuable framework for recognizing the different ways by which individuals approach decisions. Whether one leans towards a rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous style, understanding one's natural tendencies can help one adapt their approach to different situations. This awareness allows one to leverage their strengths and address potential weaknesses, ultimately leading to more informed and confident decisions.

Tiedeman and O'Hara's Differentiation and Integration Model

- Tiedeman and O'Hara's Differentiation and Integration Model further emphasized the dynamic and continuous nature of career development. By breaking down the process into anticipation and implementation phases, their model illustrates how career decisions are not isolated events but part of an ongoing journey. The anticipation phase involves exploring options, crystallizing preferences, making choices, and clarifying them. The implementation phase includes entering the field, reforming one's role, and integrating into the career. This theory emphasizes that career decisions are ongoing and evolve with new information and experiences.

Magnussen's Emergent Decision-Making Model

- Magnussen's Emergent Decision-Making Model added another layer of understanding by focusing on how career decisions develop gradually. The concept of emergent decisions highlights the importance of the initial meaning system you use to interpret new information. By being mindful of this system, clients can better navigate the influx of information and experiences, refining their career path as they go. This model also underscores the need for creativity and flexibility in career planning, ensuring you remain open to new possibilities and adjustments.

Practical Considerations

- Career decision-making is a multifaceted process that requires self-awareness, flexibility, and continuous learning. Understanding the different theories and models lets you approach career decisions more confidently and clearly.

Reflection Activities: Decision-Making Style Assessment

1. This activity aims to understand your natural decision-making style by reflecting on past decisions that you've made. The decisions can be both big and small (e.g., choosing a school project topic or selecting extracurricular activities).

Instructions:

- For each decision, identify which of Scott and Bruce's five decision-making styles you used: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous.
- Analyze the outcomes of these decisions. Were you satisfied with them? Why or why not?
- Consider how your decision-making style might impact your career choices.
- Write a short reflection on which decision-making style(s) you tend to use and how you can leverage or improve them in your career planning.

2. Creating Self-Portraits as a Decision-Making Model

Identify a peer or volunteer client. Guide them through the process of creating a self-portrait. As you are going through this process, observe how Tiedeman and O'Hara's model applies to the process you are guiding them through.

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- Tiedeman, D. V., & O'Hara, R. P. (1963). *Career development: Choice and adjustment*. College Entrance Examination Board.

Appendix: Resources for Users

This appendix includes links to student aids and resources. While chapter-specific resources have been included in the relevant chapters, they are also provided here so students can access them easily.

Chapter-specific resources:

Section 3.3: Printable cards for the vocational card sort activity.

Section 4.2: A blank sheet to be used to develop the Self-Portrait with clients.

Section 5.2: A blank sheet to be used for goal-setting activities with clients.

General resources:

Dialogue cards with meanings and correct pronunciation. Students can use these resources for revision.

Values:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=188#h5p-5>

Transferable skills:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careercoaching/?p=188#h5p-6>

Glossary

action

The behaviours we engage in through which we seek to impose our will on the world.

action plan

A clear and concrete series of action steps to help clients achieve their goal.

activities

The tasks, moves or processes that the client has undertaken in the past, wants to undertake in the future, or needs to undertake to achieve their outcomes.

acute trauma

A trauma caused by a singular incident, such as a natural disaster, accident, or acts of violence.

adaptations

The act of changing to fit in.

anticipation phase

The phase of Tiedeman and O'Hara's Differentiation and Integration Model where clients are exploring, crystallizing, choosing and clarifying their career options.

aptitude assessments

A quantitative assessment used to ascertain a client's abilities and match their strengths to specific careers.

attending behaviour

Verbal statements and non-verbal gestures that encourage the client to continue talking.

avoidant style

A style of career decision-making that is marked by procrastination and attempts to shift decision-making responsibility to others.

barriers

The things that get in the way of fulfilling values, beliefs, and interests.

beliefs

Ideas or worldviews that guide a person's actions.

brand statement

A statement that serves as a quick introduction to a client's capabilities and style of approach.

career access skills

Skills that clients need to transition to new careers.

career metaphors

Figures of speech that provide different perspectives through which to view career progression.

career paths

The ability to set multiple goals and develop multiple pathways to those goals.

chronic trauma

A trauma that is repeated and prolonged, resulting from situations such as domestic violence or abuse.

closed questions

Questions that the client can answer with a yes/no or a specific statement.

collectivistic culture

Societies that prioritize the group over the individual.

complex trauma

A trauma that encompasses multiple events, often of an interpersonal nature.

conditional obstacles

Current conditions that can impede a client's progress toward their goal.

cycles

The identifiable stages through which we pass in life.

decision-making

One of Kris Magnuson's career helping processes, it helps clients discern who they are and what opportunities are available to them.

dependent style

A style of career decision-making that relies on advice and guidance from others.

differentiation

The process of distinguishing experiences and values from one another as clients explore career options and settle into their chosen careers.

emotional safety

A feeling that your innermost thoughts, feelings and experiences are, and will be, honoured.

empathic relationship

An interpersonal connection characterized by a deep understanding and shared emotional resonance between individuals.

enduring needs

Guiding elements in action planning that reflect a person's long-term wants.

exploration

One of Kris Magnuson's career helping processes. Exploration takes the process of initiation deeper, providing greater insight.

fit

The extent to which there is a good match or not with the work we are doing.

helping interview

An interview with a person seeking help and the people providing that help.

historical trauma

A trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group, often related to significant events that oppressed a group of people.

implementation phase

The phase of Tiedeman and O'Hara's Differentiation and Integration Model where clients are learning the basics of their chosen field, reforming part of themselves and assimilating into the workplace and career.

individualistic culture

Societies that prioritize the individual over the group.

inheritance

The predetermined outcomes passed onto us through our historical background and parents.

initiation

One of Kris Magnuson's career helping processes. It is the process of meeting with the client and finding a shared space in which to proceed with the career development process.

integration

The process of bringing together expertise and experiences as clients explore career options and settle into their chosen careers.

interest measures

A quantitative assessment used to determine the client's interests by presenting them with scenario-based questions.

interests

The things that a person enjoys.

intuitive style

A style of career decision-making that relies on gut feelings and instincts based on a general sense of the situation.

journey

The way in which we understand our career as a movement through time and space.

meaningfulness

The first column of the Self-Portrait that identifies the client's values, beliefs, interests, and barriers.

measures of values

A quantitative assessment used to determine the client's values and match them to suitable careers.

microaggressions

Deliberate or inadvertent verbal, behavioural, or environmental insults directed toward people belonging to different ethnicities, genders, or faiths.

microskills

The specific techniques and interventions that are used to interact with clients and help them achieve their goals.

multigenerational trauma

Trauma experienced by one generation that continues to have an effect on the generations that follow.

open questions

Questions that invite the client to respond with additional information.

outcomes

The things an individual wants to achieve or accomplish in life.

paraphrasing

A statement that condenses session content. Typically less than a summary, although it may include relevant content, affect, and meaning.

physical obstacles

Barriers that typically create physical access problems.

preparation

One of Kris Magnuson's career helping processes, it allows individuals to prepare themselves to be ready to build the skills they need to move forward with their choices.

proof stories

Stories demonstrating the client's capabilities and strengths by highlighting their accomplishments.

psychological obstacles

Barriers that exist within one's mind.

qualitative assessment

A process where the career professional asks questions and observes to assist clients in uncovering their potential career pathways.

quantitative assessments

The use of standardized tests to assess things such as career interests or aptitudes.

rational style

A style of career decision-making that is logical and structured and based on analysis of facts and data.

reality statements

Perceived obstacles that prevent clients from achieving their aspirations

reflecting feelings

A brief statement connecting the client's emotions to content from the session.

relationships

Interpersonal connections that arise from our interactions with others and through our social networks.

resources

The view that individuals are inputs to serve the corporate purpose.

roles

That which we act out through the theatre of our lives.

scaling questions

Questions that ask clients to rate something on a numerical scale.

self-portrait

A career development process that facilitates self-assessment and career exploration by encouraging individuals to engage in a comprehensive self-examination process.

skills

Competencies, knowledge and attitudes that enable clients to effectively carry out their activities.

spontaneous style

A style of career decision-making that is marked by quick, impulsive decisions.

stories

The narratives about our lives. What we tell ourselves and other people.

storytelling

The act of sharing narratives about ourselves with other people.

summarizing

A statement that reiterates more content than paraphrasing. Typically used at transition/ending points in the counselling session.

template

In Magnussen's Theory of Emergent Decision, the ideas that a person has about what they want.

transferable

Skills learned in the past that can be applied to new activities in the future.

trauma

An event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

trauma-informed approach

A framework for understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma in individuals.

trauma-informed communications

The belief that career development professionals must begin all their communications with an understanding that anyone may have experienced trauma at some time in their lives and be prepared to support survivors of trauma.

trigger

Something that causes a strong emotional response, often without warning.

values

The things that are fundamentally important to a person and form the foundation of individual actions.

visioning exercises

Processes for helping a client identify something they want in their future.