

Providing Career and Mental Assistance to a Diverse Population: Using Theory to Inform Practice

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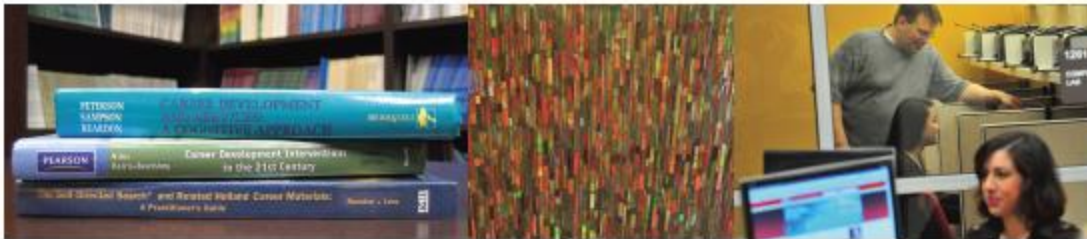


FSU “Tech Center”

Focus on the connection between career and mental health issues in the context of theory, research, and practice

The Center *for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development* at THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Serving career development practitioners, researchers, students, policy makers, and system developers since 1986.



Career, Work, and Mental Health

- Individuals seeking career counseling often present a complex array of issues ...
- Difficult for counselors to separate career satisfaction and development from other mental health issues...

Zunker, V. (2008). *Career, work, and mental health*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



Career and Mental Health Issues are Inextricable in Many Cases

- Linda is depressed because she has not done well in high school and she has been very discouraged about her options after she graduates. Is this a career problem or a depression problem?
- Alberto is worried about getting into medical school. He is not sleeping well at night and has become upset because his family and girlfriend are putting pressure on him. Is this a career problem or a relationship problem?
- Fred returns home after work each day with high stress; he suffers verbal abuse from a punitive supervisor, is experiencing anxiety attacks, and high blood pressure. Is this a career, mental health, or medical problem?

(Adapted from Krumboltz, 1993)



FSU Career Center Mission

- Provide comprehensive career services
- **Train career service practitioners**
- Conduct life/career development research
- Disseminate information about life/career services and issues to the university community, the nation, and the world.



Organizational factors to consider in combining career and mental health assistance: The institution

- Institutional culture, policies, & procedures
- Administrative structure
- Space
- Records
- Tools & resources



Factors to consider in combining career and mental health assistance:

Staffing, training, & supervision

- Professional identity
- Staff credentials
- Supervision & training
- Liability
- Specializations



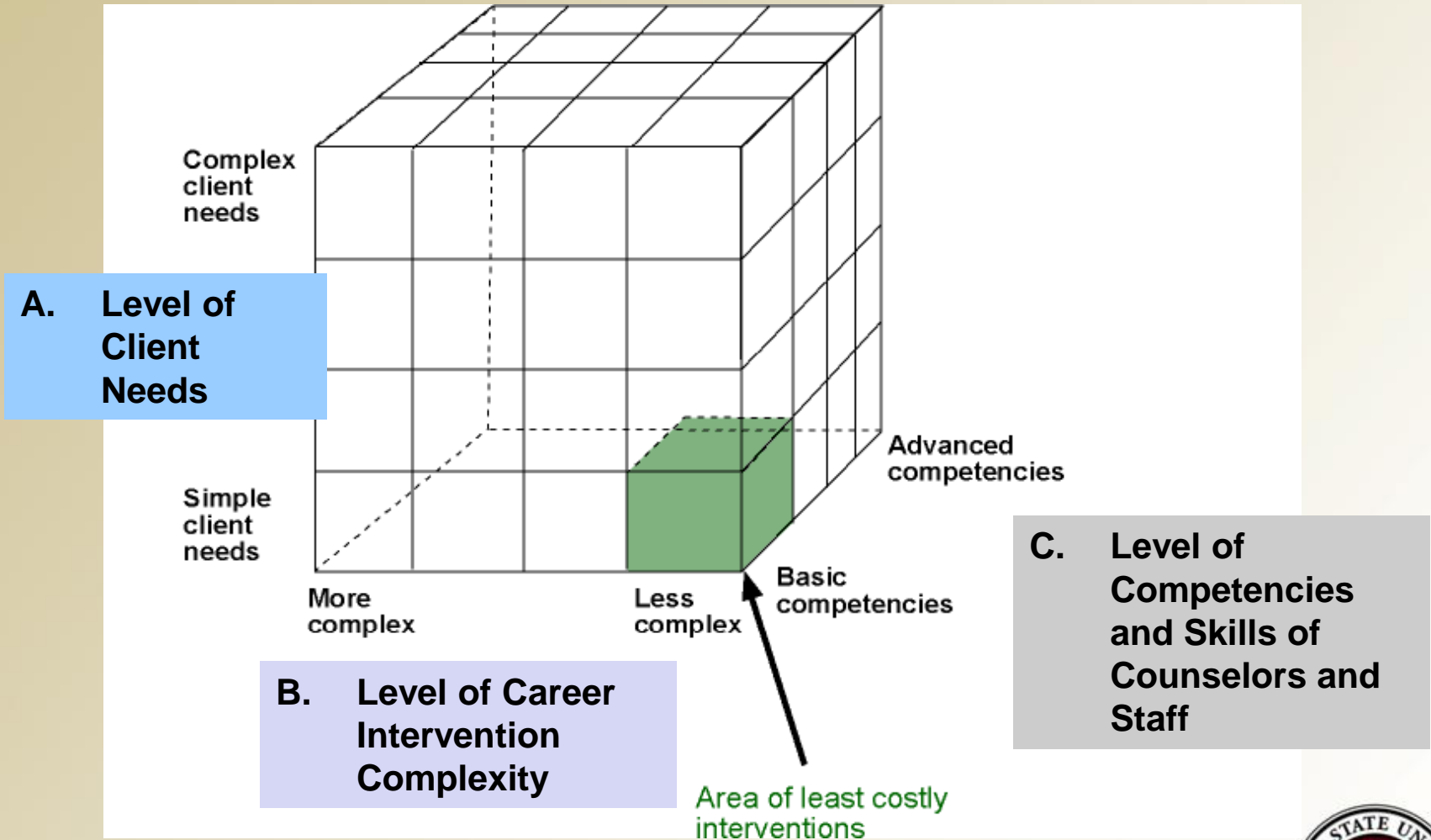
Staff



- PhDs on site for training & supervision
- Access to students enrolled in counseling, counseling psychology, career counseling programs
- Training materials



Synthesis of three career services dimensions: client needs, intervention complexity, staff competencies



Source: Sampson, J. P., Jr., Reardon, R. C., Peterson, G. W., & Lenz, J. G. (2004). *Career counseling and services: A cognitive information processing approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.



Case Example: FSU Career Center

Key elements:

- mission
- theory base
- staff credentials & expertise
- existence of accredited counseling programs at Master's & PhD level
- nature of training provided to paraprofessionals



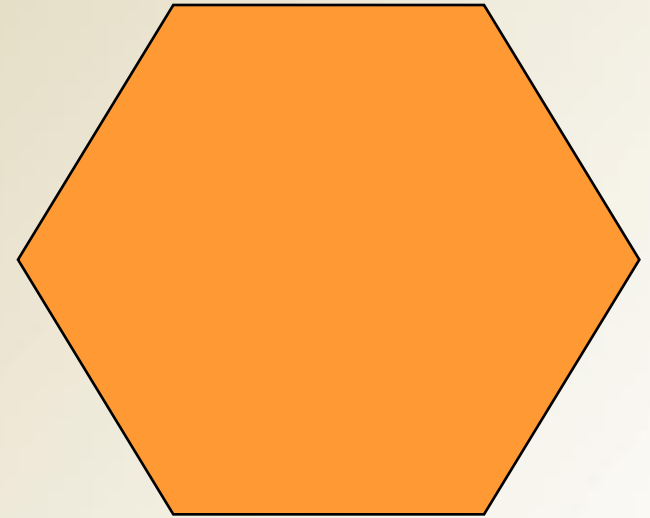
Career theory connected to practice

- Holland's RIASEC theory and secondary constructs
- Use of cognitive information processing (CIP) theory
- Connection to other counseling theories (e.g., Beck)

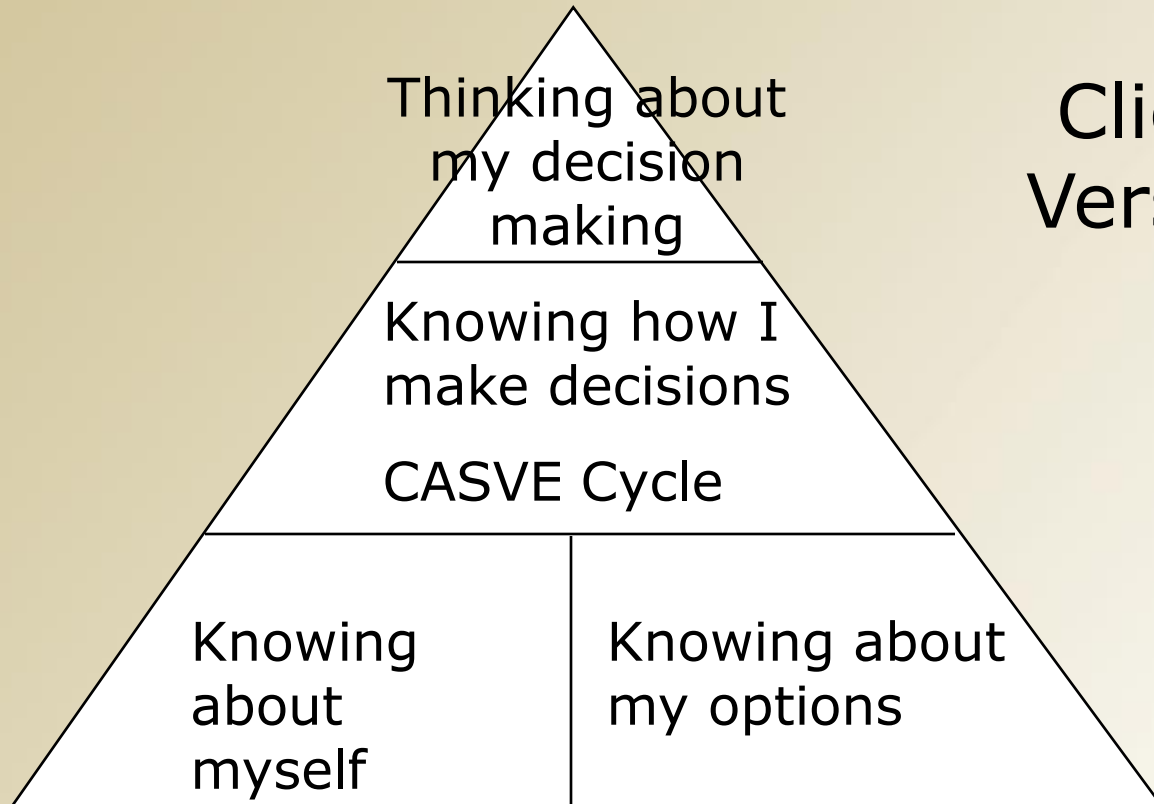


Holland's RIASEC Theory

- Impact of personality characteristics on life/career issues
- Connection of secondary constructs (e.g., congruence, differentiation, profile elevation, vocational identity) to mental health factors



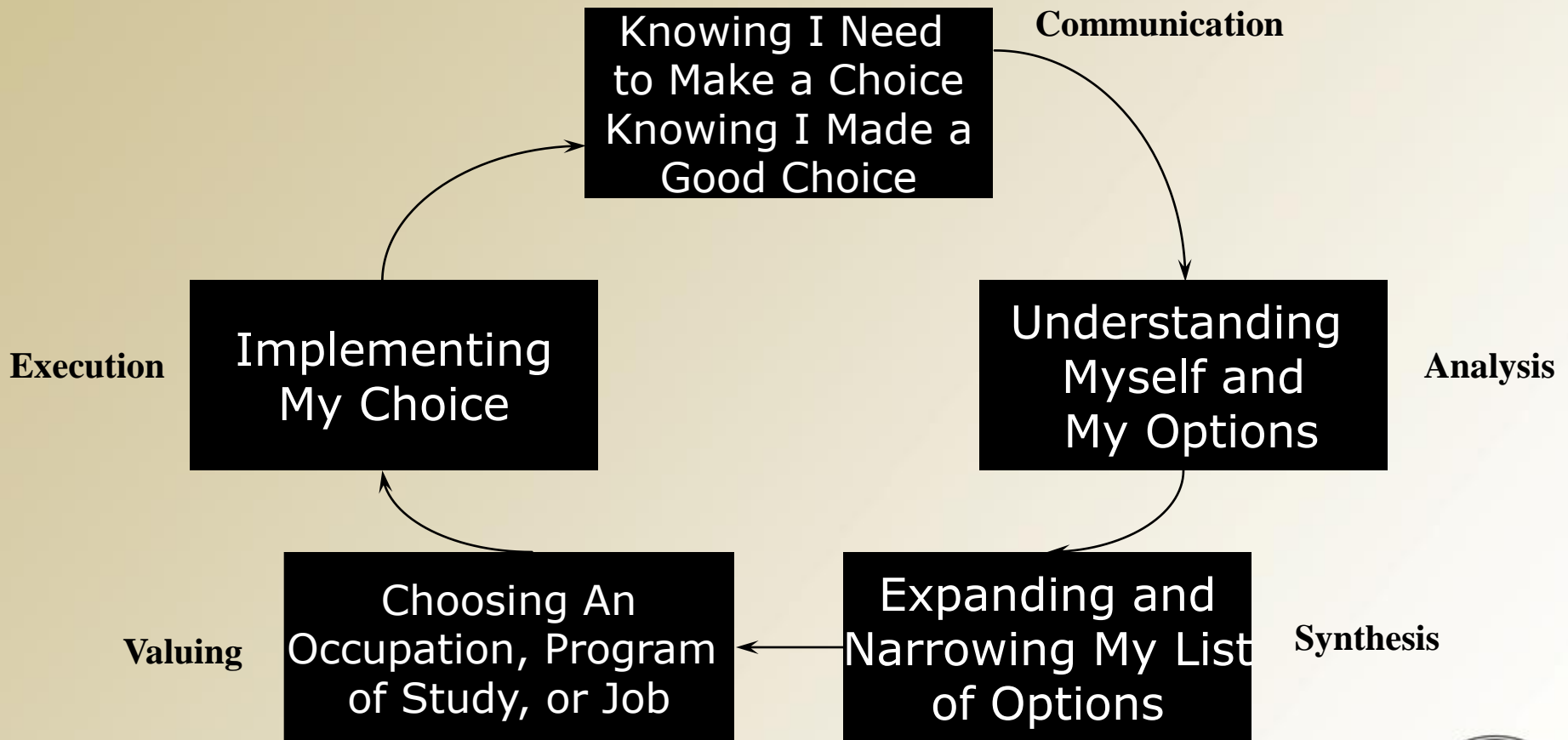
CIP Pyramid Domains



Client
Version



CASVE Cycle



Executive Processing Domain

- Metacognitions—Thinking about decision making
 - Self-talk
 - Self-awareness
 - Control and monitoring



Assessment of Readiness

- Two Issues:
 - Capability
 - Complexity



Readiness

The **capability** of an individual to make appropriate career choices taking into account the **complexity** of family, social, economic, and organizational factors that influence career development

Readiness also includes possessing adequate language skills and literacy skills for communication and learning

Source: Sampson, J. P., Jr., Reardon, R. C., Peterson, G. W., & Lenz, J. G. (2004). *Career counseling and services: A cognitive information processing approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.



Capability

- The cognitive and affective capacity to engage in effective career choice behaviors
- How are my career choices influenced by the way I think and feel?



Factors inhibiting capability

- **Disabling emotions**
- **Dysfunctional career thoughts**
- **Goal instability**
- **Tension or urgency to make a decision**
- **Self concept as a decision maker**



Complexity

- Contextual factors, originating in the family, society, the economy, or employing organizations, that make it more (or less) difficult to make career choices
- How does the world around me influence my career choices?



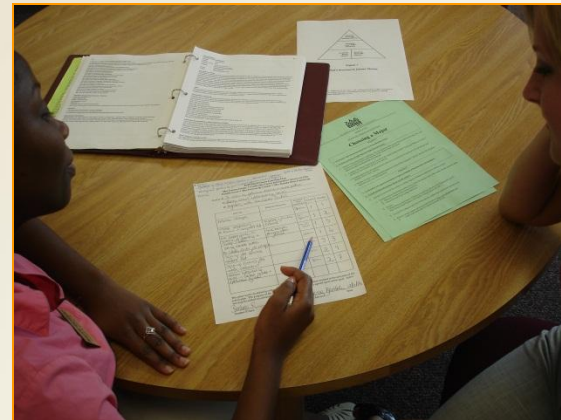
Factors contributing to complexity

- **Personal conflict**
- **Number of personal, social, occupational issues**
- **Financial**
- **Family**
- **Relationships**
- **Quality of life**

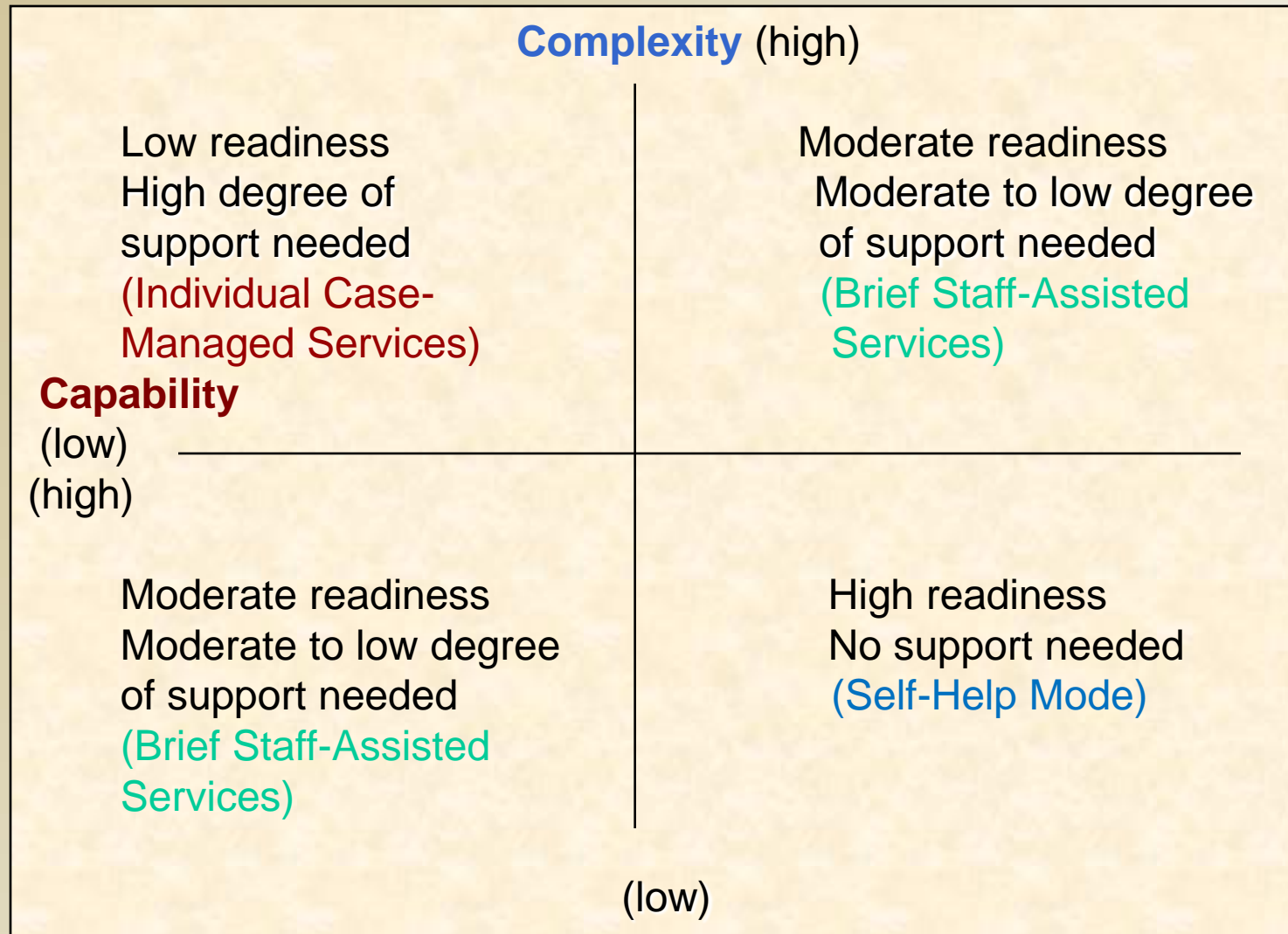


Levels of Service Delivery

- Self-Help Services
- Brief Staff-Assisted Services
- Individual Case-Managed Services



CIP Readiness Model



Levels of Readiness Assessment

Direct behavioral observations

Career decision state

Low-cost, theory-based assessments

Psychological mental health appraisals

Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Bullock-Yowell, E. (2012, June).) *Assessing and enhancing readiness for career decision making: Findings and implications from recent research.*
Presentation at the National Career Development Association Global Conference, Atlanta, GA.



Intake

- Behavioral Observations:
- “no options interest me”
- “my teacher, parents, partner told me to come here”
- Irregular speech patterns—
slow/fast/broken
- Not making sense, confusion



Career Decision State

- Possible assessment tools:
 - Occupational Alternatives Q. (OAQ)
 - Career Tension Scale (CTS)
 - Goal Instability Scale (GIS)



Occupational Alternatives Questionnaire (OAQ)

- Measures career decision state:
 - degree of certainty pertaining to a career choice
 - satisfaction with current choice
 - assesses clarity of occupational aspirations
 - content indicates level of maturity and level of occupational knowledge

Occupational Alternatives Questionnaire (OAQ)

1. List all the occupations you are considering right now.

2. Which occupation is your first choice? (If undecided, write "undecided.")

3. How well satisfied are you with your first choice? _____
(Write one of the numbers below in the space to the right.)

1. Well satisfied with choice
2. Satisfied, but have a few doubts
3. Not sure
4. Dissatisfied and intend to remain
5. Very dissatisfied and intend to change
6. Undecided about my future career



OAQ

Scoring the OAQ:

- 1 1st choice, no alternatives
- 2 alternatives and a 1st choice
- 3 alternatives, no 1st choice
- 4 neither alternatives, nor 1st choice

Note: this is an ordinal scale



Correlates of OAQ

- Decision-Making Confusion (DMC) $r = .33$
- Commitment Anxiety (CA) $r = .25$
- CTI Total $r = .22$
- Beck Depression $r = .19$
- No choice = moderate depression

Walker & Peterson (in press) *Journal of Career Assessment*



Career Tension Scale (CTS)

- A measure of career stress or urgency to make a decision

Career Tension Scale

Write in a number from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) for the items below:

1. Decisions about my career tend to directly affect my health..... _____
2. Decisions about my career create a great deal of tension..... _____
3. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of having to make career decisions..... _____
4. If I did not worry about my career, my health would probably improve..... _____
5. Problems associated with my career decisions have kept me awake at night..... _____
6. I have felt nervous before attending classes that made me think about my career..... _____
7. I often think about my career even when I am doing other things..... _____

Reed, C. (2006). The relationships among neuroticism, dysfunctional career thoughts, and coping strategies.



Correlates of CTS

- NEO Neuroticism $r = .44$
- DMC $r = .37$
- CA $r = .28$
- EC $r = .36$
- OAQ $r = -.04$

Bullock-Yowell, et al. (2011). Relationships among career and life stress, negative career thoughts, and career decision state: A cognitive information processing perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59, 302-314.



Goal Instability Scale (GIS; Robbins & Patton, 1985)

- Measures lack of focus, low drive and energy, confusion about self

GIS SCALE

Directions:

Following are a number of statements that reflect various ways in which we can describe ourselves. After reading each statement, one at a time, circle a number along the scale which ranges from 1, Strongly Agree, to 6, Strongly Disagree. There are no right or wrong answers so please just make your best judgment. Simply try to rate the extent to which you agree with each statement. Do not spend too much time with any one statement. Circle the number which best fits for each statement and do not leave any unanswered.

Please Circle A Number For Each Statement:

Strongly Agree 1	Moderately Agree 2	Slightly Agree 3	Slightly Disagree 4	Moderately Disagree 5	Strongly Disagree 6
				<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6
				1 2	3 4 5 6

Bertoch, S. et al. (submitted). Goal instability in relation to career thoughts, decision state, and performance in a career course. *Journal of Career Development*.



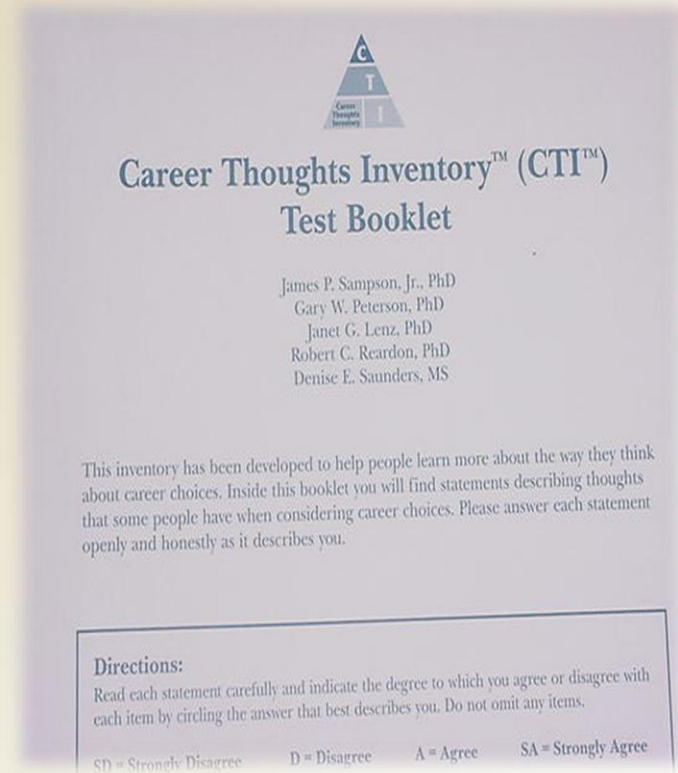
Career Theory-Based Assessments

- Examples:
 - Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; capability)
 - Decision Space Worksheet (DSW; complexity)
 - Self-Directed Search (SDS; capability)
 - Secondary constructs as window into mental health issues (e.g., low differentiation)



What is the CTI?

- Self-administered
- Objectively scored
- 48-Item measure of dysfunctional thoughts in career choice



Theoretical Basis of the CTI

- ❑ Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory
- ❑ Beck's Cognitive Theory



The CTI in Needs Assessment

- Identifying the specific nature of negative thoughts
- Three CTI Construct Scales
 - Decision-making Confusion (DMC)
 - Commitment Anxiety (CA)
 - External Conflict (EC)
- Specific career interventions can be related to specific construct scores



Mental health constructs directly correlated with dysfunctional career thoughts

indecision

neuroticism

anxiety

angry hostility

depression

hopelessness

impulsivity

vulnerability

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Assessing the personal and social context

- Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)
- A measure of complexity

Peterson, G. W., Leasure, K. K., Carr, D. L. & Lenz, J. G. (2010). The Decision Space Worksheet: An assessment of context in career decision making. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 25, 87-100.



Decision Space Worksheet

- Page 1: list elements
- Page 2: draw circles within a given circle in proportion to the importance of an element



Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)

Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)

Name _____ Date _____

Decision you are making _____

Please list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that bear on the decision you are making.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

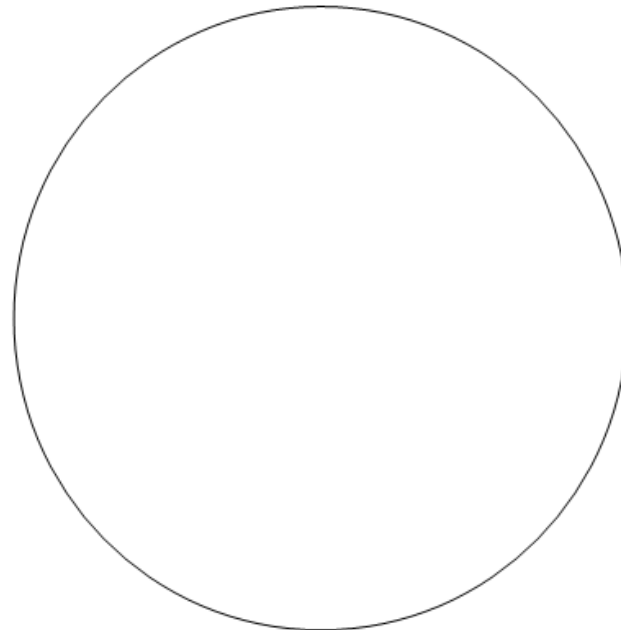
9. _____

10. _____

The Decision Space

Directions:

- The large circle below represents the total decision space.
- Within the large circle, draw smaller circles that represent the magnitude or the relative importance of each item listed on the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW).



Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling & Career Development, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL. Please do not reproduce without permission.



Purpose of the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)

- Cognitive mapping task
- Helps clients reveal thoughts, feelings, persons, circumstances associated with career decision
- Helps clients prioritize importance of contextual influences
- Can be used with middle school through college level students and adults



Typical Issues Revealed

- Cognitive distortion
- Disabling emotions
- Financial
- Family
- Education
- Interests
- Self doubt
- Employment
- Quality of life



Correlates of DSW

- Beck Depression Inventory .21
- CTI CA .19
- CTI EC -.18

- DSW is basically unrelated to measures of capability

Solomon, J. L. (2011). *The Decision Space Worksheet, the Career Thoughts Inventory, and the Beck Depression Inventory-II as measures of mental health in the career decision-making process*. The Florida State University. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*.



Assessments for Psychological/ Mental Health Appraisal

- Examples:
 - Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
 - Useful as a mental health screener
 - Item 9 concerns suicide ideation
 - Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)
 - Useful as a mental health screener, especially for depressed individuals or those at risk for suicide
 - Example item: “My future seems dark to me.”



Assessments for Psychological/ Mental Health Appraisal (continued)

- MMPI-2 in Career Counseling
 - Assesses personal and social adjustment
 - Measures clinical syndromes that may interfere with or block effective decision making
 - Used following screening measures such as CTI, DSW, and interview



The Case of George

- 37 year old Cuban-American with a high school degree
- Sought assistance in finding a new job that would have more meaning
- Formerly employed in the construction industry
- Experienced dysfunctional family situation
- Lack of social support
- Previous counseling for depression



George's CTI

- Total Score T=78
- Decision-Making Confusion (DMC) T=80
- External Conflict (EC) T=74
- Commitment Anxiety (CA) T=77



George's DSW

Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)

Name George Date 8/2/12

Decision you are making what field to pursue in the future

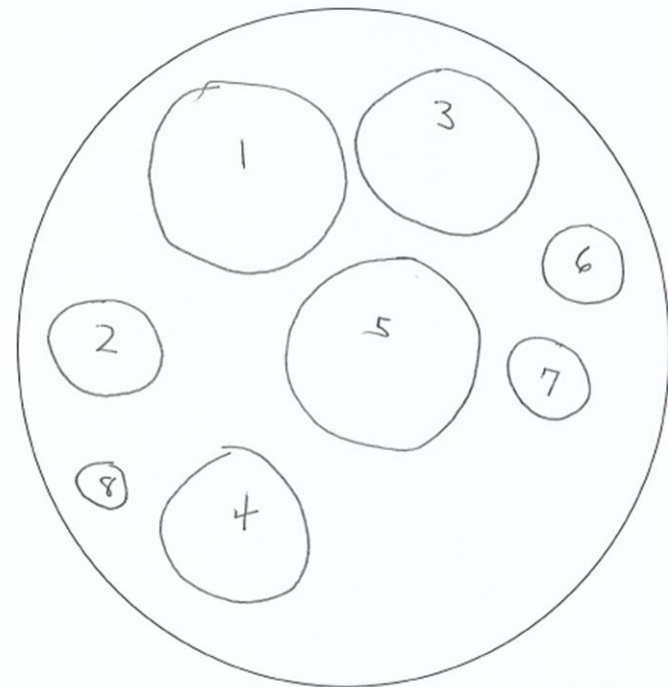
Please list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that bear on the decision you are making.

- interests - not sure what else to consider
- availability of jobs
- relevant skills
- fear of networking
- anxiety about the future
- ability to succeed
- lack of income
- feeling isolated
-
-

The Decision Space

Directions:

- The large circle below represents the total decision space.
- Within the large circle, draw smaller circles that represent the magnitude or the relative importance of each item listed on the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW).



George's ILP

Individual Career Learning Plan

- Goal(s):
1. to identify alternative job options
 2. Learn techniques for positive social interactions
 3. Develop more positive thinking regarding my future

Activity	Purpose/ Outcome	Time Needed	Goal #	Priority
indiv. career counseling	enhance knowledge of career situations, future goals	ongoing	1, 2 + 3	1
Complete CTI	explore how thinking is impacting current career choice	15 min	3	2
Complete Dec Space worksheet	examine factors affecting my decision	30-40 min	2 + 3	3
Take the Self Directed Search	expand my thinking about alternatives	45 min	1	4
Practice interacting w/ people in social situations	Gain confidence in social interactions	ongoing	2	6
Use CTI workbook	examine negative thinking + work on reframeing	ongoing	3	5
Conduct info interview in 2 fields of interest	Gather information + practice networking	1 hr.	1	7

This plan can be modified by either party based upon new information learned in the activities of the action plan. The purpose of the plan is to work toward a mutually agreed upon career goal. Activities may be added or subtracted as needed.

George 8/2/12
Student/Client Date

Sam Hilly 8/2/12
Career Advisor Date



George's Counseling Outcomes

- Identified areas of concern beyond the presenting career decision
- Formulated counseling goals and activities that integrated career and mental health issues
- Improved his quality of life related to career goals and social relationships



Summary

- Clear support in the literature for integrating these areas
- Important to consider organizational and programmatic issues
- Implementation requires attention to staff resources, internal & external factors
- Theoretical perspectives used in the setting may guide decisions about addressing career and mental health issues
- Assessment tools influence extent to which these factors might be considered and addressed in the counseling process



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Instructor teaching a career development or planning course.
Practitioner delivering career services or creating career resources.
Researcher or program evaluator examining the delivery of career resources and services.
Policy maker or senior administrator interested in the cost-effectiveness of career services.
Developer of computer applications used in the delivery of career resources and services.

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February 2012
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