Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

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Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- Presentation Outline
  - Systems Theory
  - Overview of the STF
  - Application of the STF
    - Qualitative Career Assessment
    - Career Counselling

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Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- Systems theory
  - General systems theory: organisms viewed as a whole of interacting parts rather than as parts in isolation from other parts
  - "single parts and processes cannot provide a complete picture of the vital phenomena" (Von Bertalanffy, 1934, p. 64)
  - A system is a "complex of elements standing in interaction" (Von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 33)
  - "the systems approach is in a position to take the most useful concepts of each theory of career development and apply them to the understanding of career behavior" (Osipow, 1983, p. 320)

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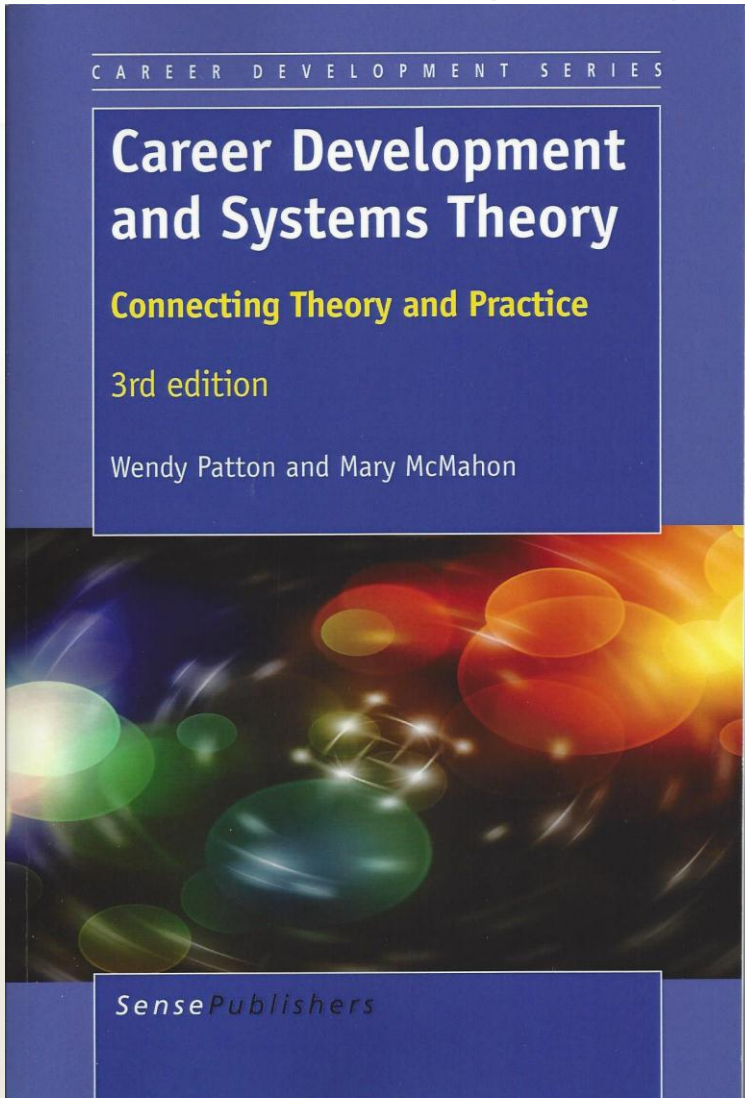
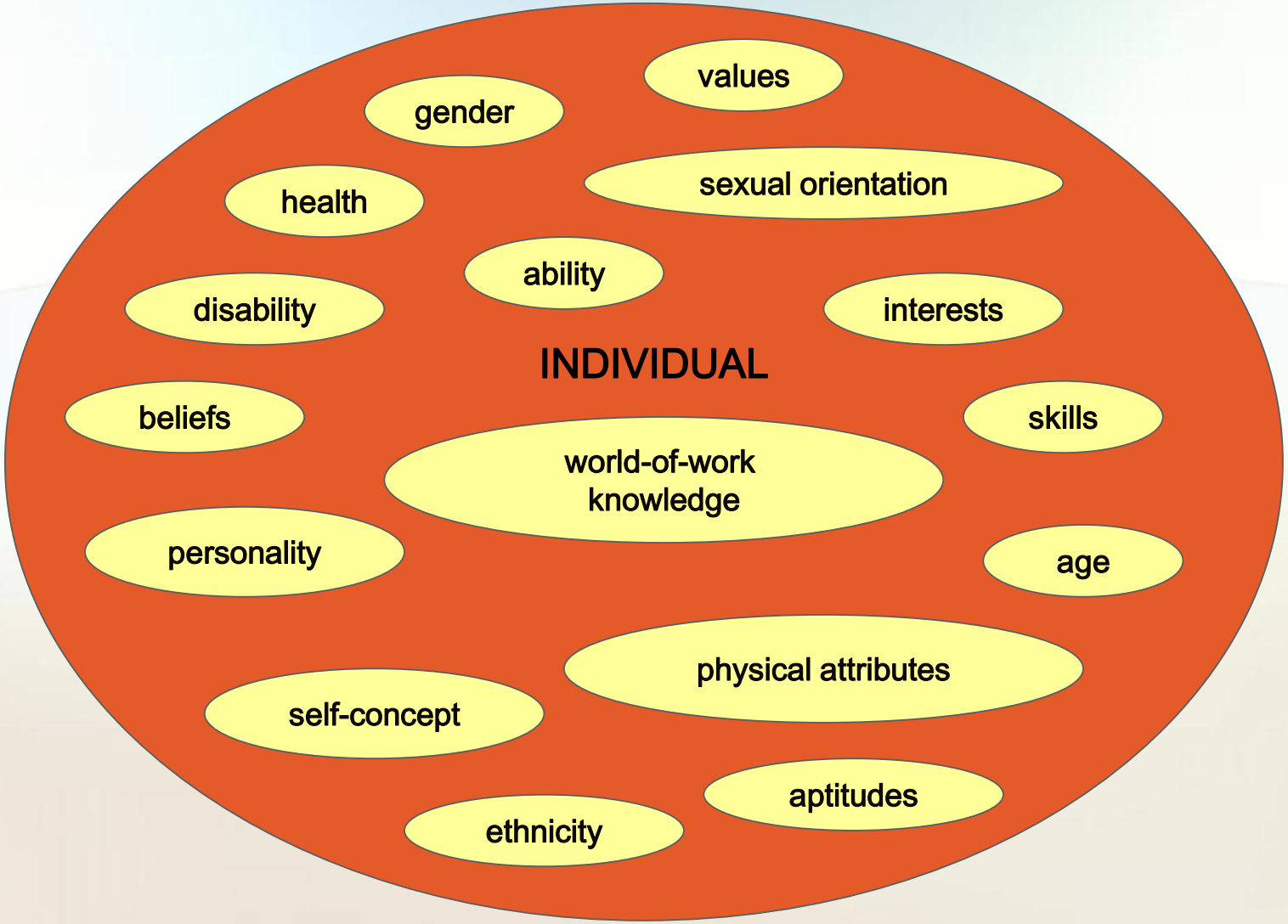
- Systems Theory Framework
  - STF published as metatheoretical framework in 1995 (McMahon & Patton, 1995)
  - STF subsequently published as a textbook (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006, 2014)
  - STF recognises the contribution of all theories
  - Systemic thinking assumes an “individual in context” perspective (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2014, p. 30)





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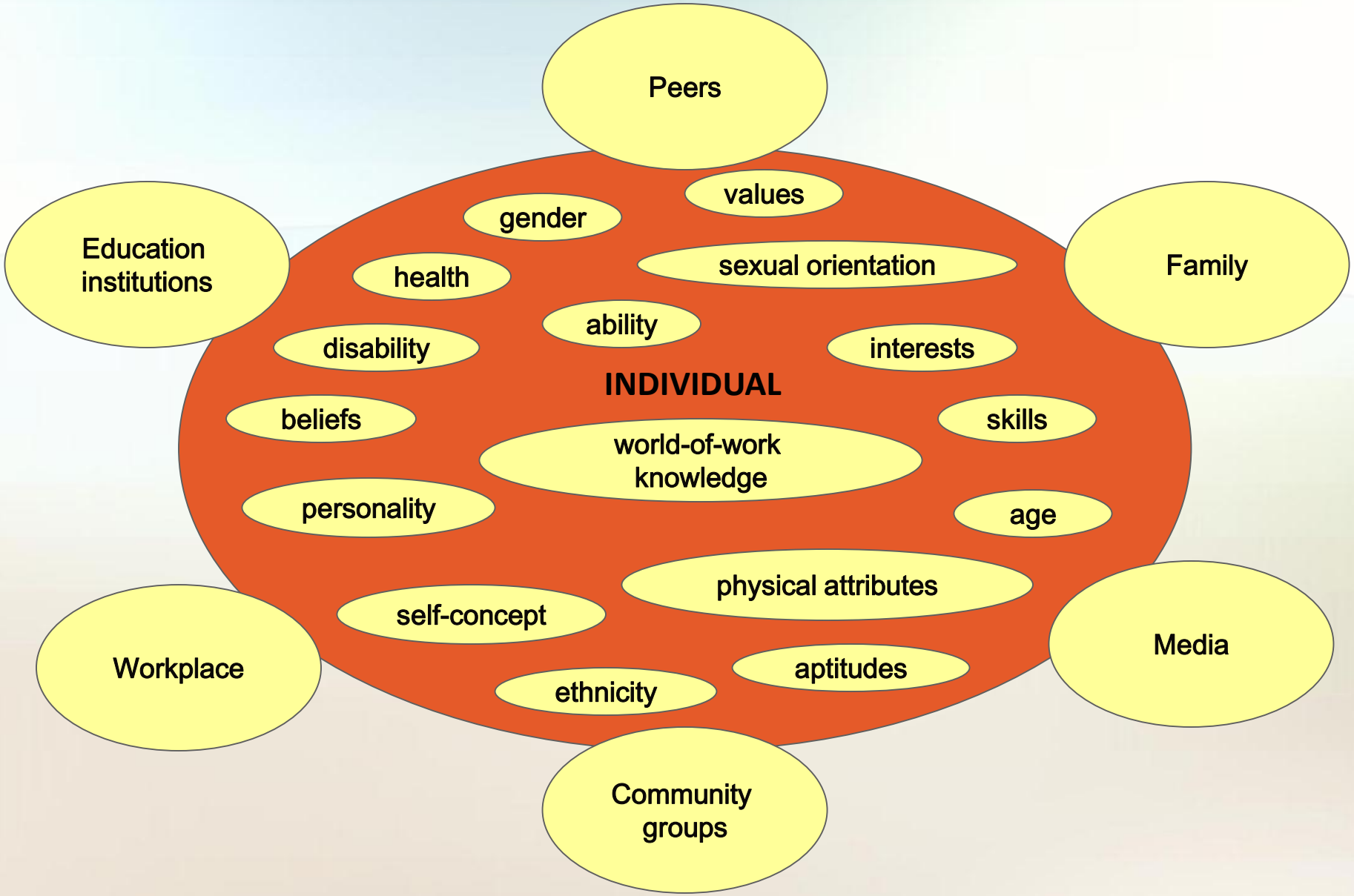

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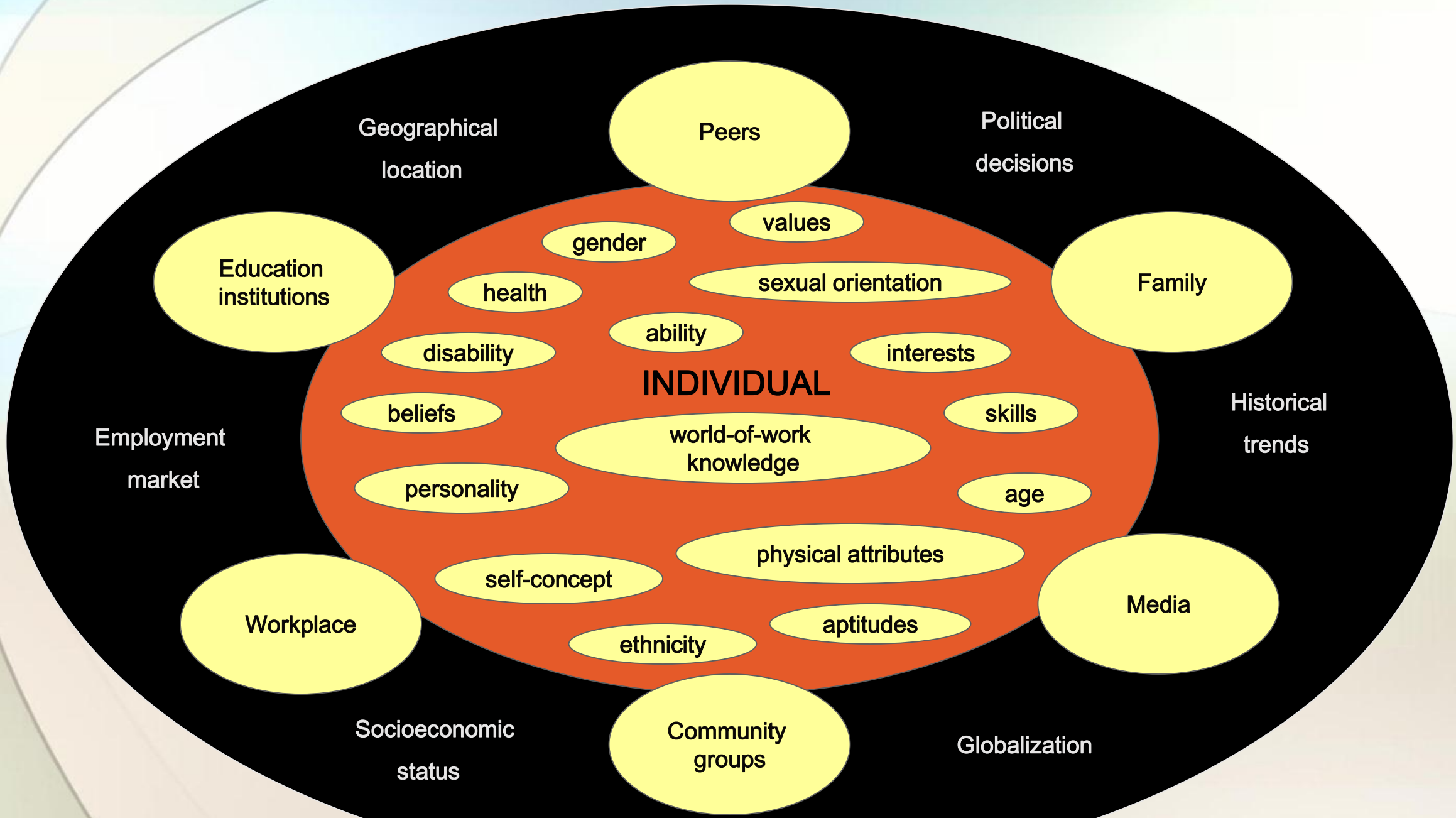

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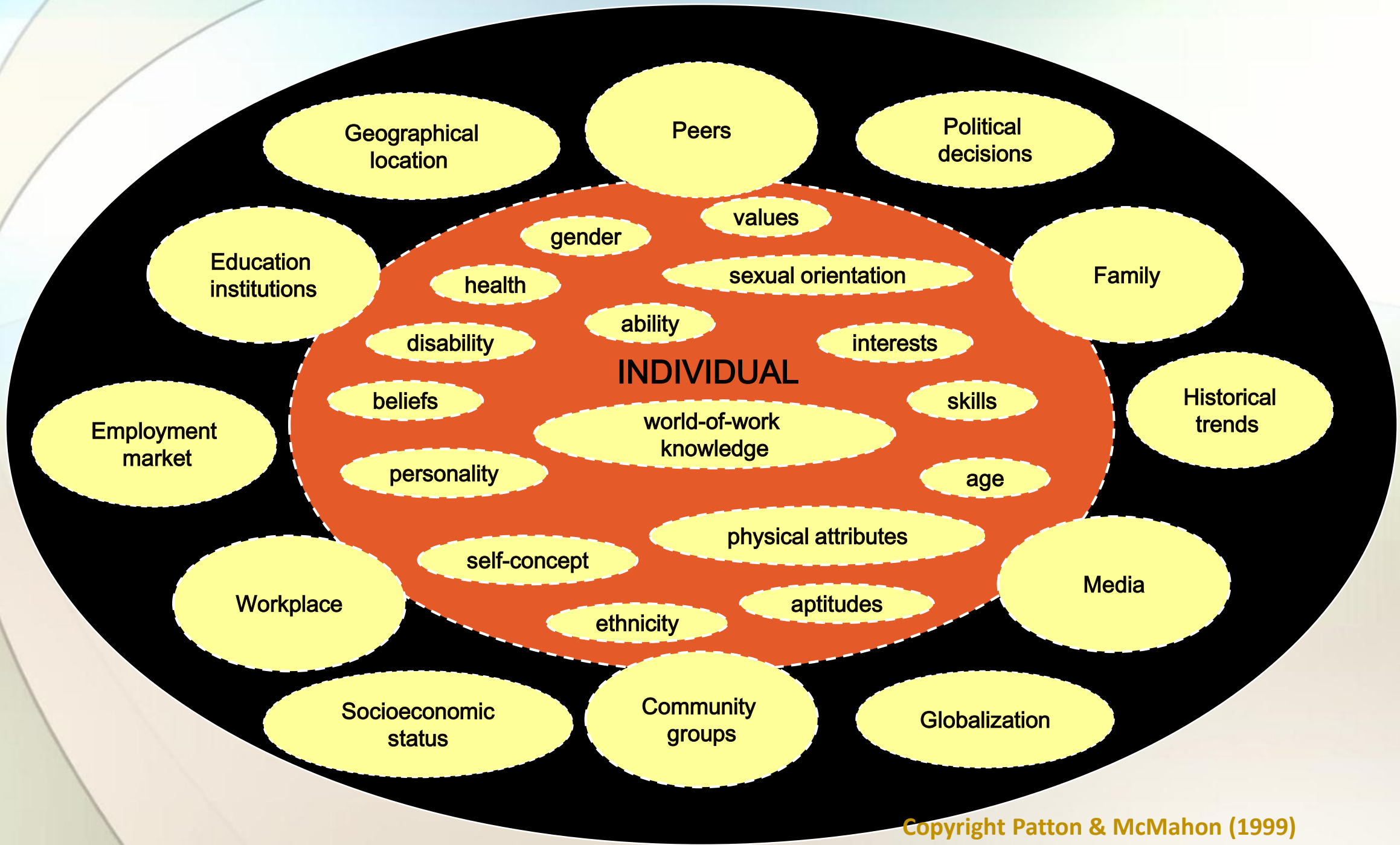

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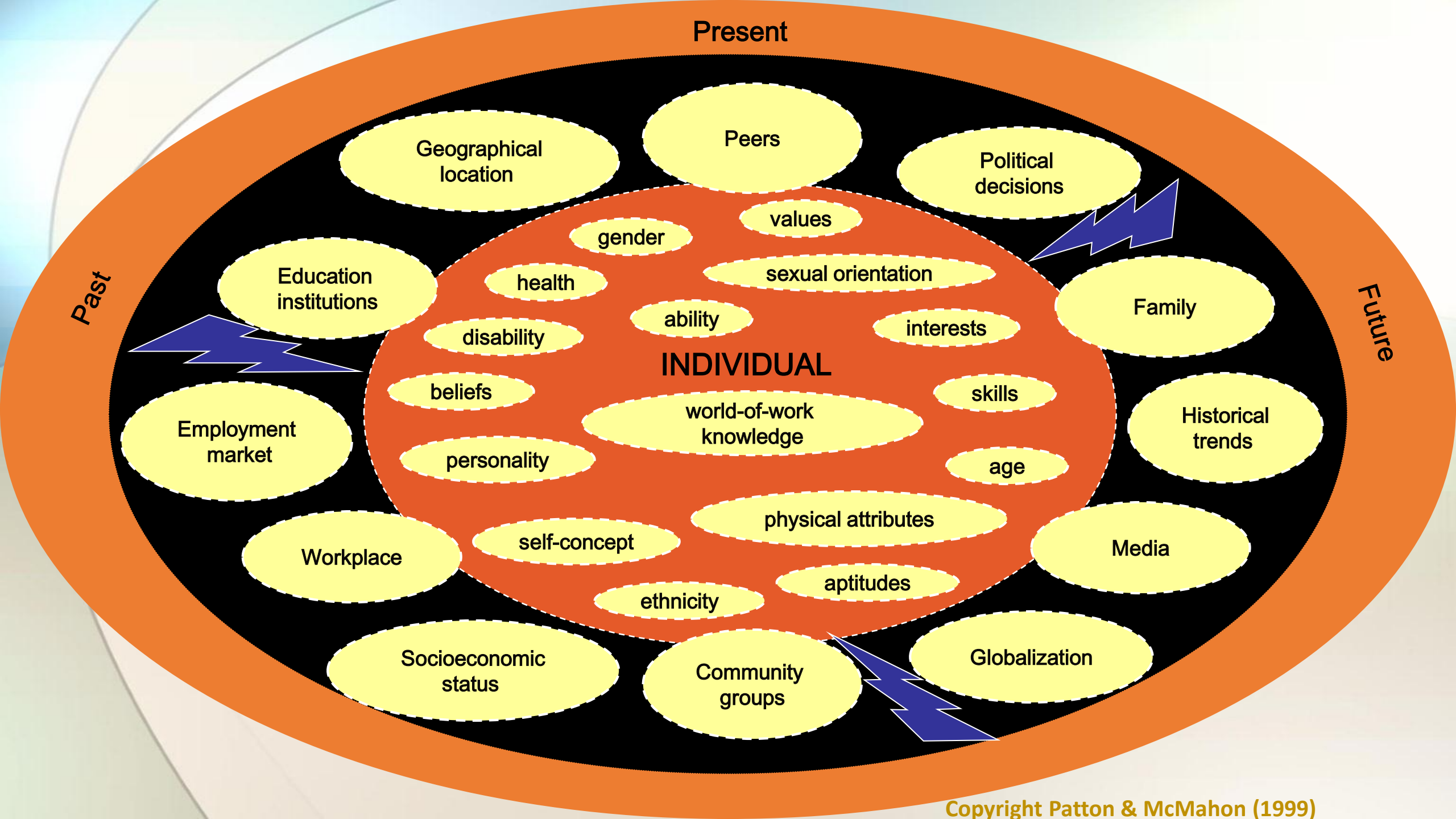

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Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- Connecting Theory and Practice
  - the STF is readily applied in practice (career assessment and career counselling)
  - “conceptual and practical map for career counsellors”

(McMahon & Patton, 2006, p. 94)

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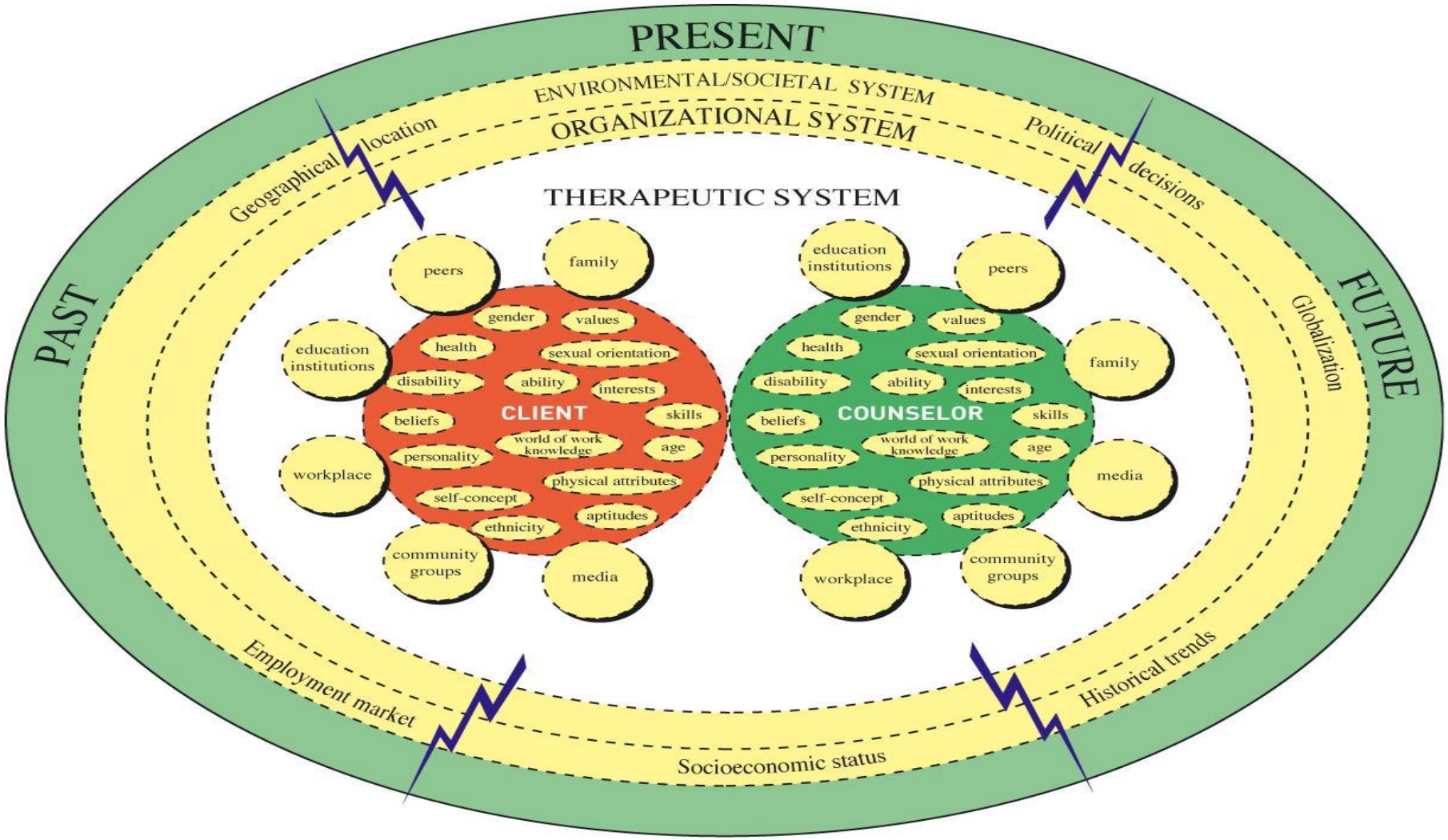

Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- STF Application to Career Assessment
  - Qualitative approaches to career assessment
    - My System of Career Influences (MSCI Adolescent)

      (McMahon, Patton &Watson, 2005, in press)
    - My System of Career Influences (MSCI Adult)

      (McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2013)
    - Career Systems Interview (CSI)

      (McIlveen, 2003; McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock, & Hjertum, 2003)
    - My Career Chapter (MCC)

      (McIlveen, 2006)

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Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

STF	MSCI
Content Influences	
Individual system	Thinking about who I am
Social system	Thinking about the people around me
Environmental-societal system	Thinking about society and the environment
Past, present, future	Thinking about my past, present and future
Process Influences	
Recursiveness, change over time, chance	Representing my system of career influences
	My System of Career Influences - 1
	Reflecting on my system of career influences
	My action plan
	My system of career influences - 2

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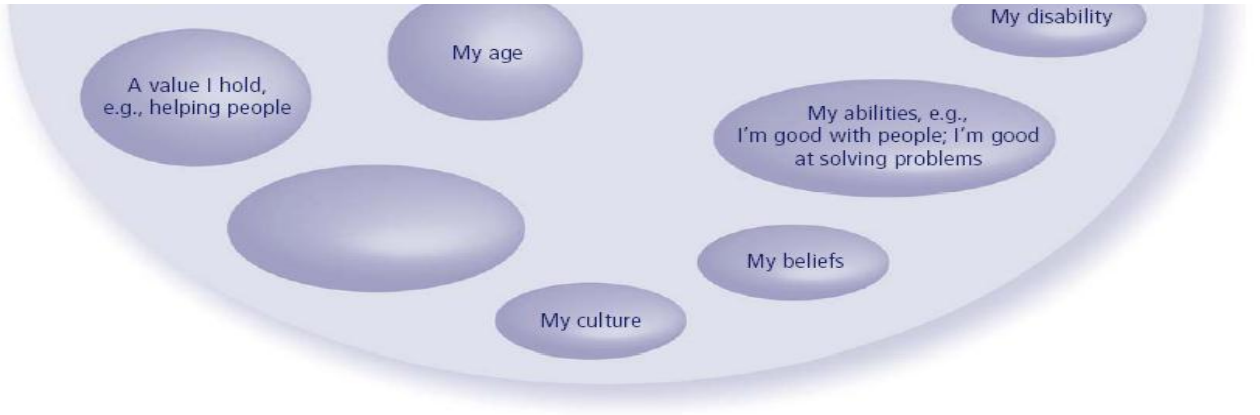
Thinking about who I am

When people are making career decisions there are usually many influences that make them unique. For example, you may have an outgoing personality, or a special ability such as being good at mathematics. It may be important to you to earn a lot of money or to help people.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read the examples carefully and take time to think about yourself.

1. **Tick the influences that may apply to your next career decision.**
2. **Write on the diagram any other influences you can think of that are not listed.**
3. **Mark with an asterisk (*) those that you think are really important or a big influence on you.**



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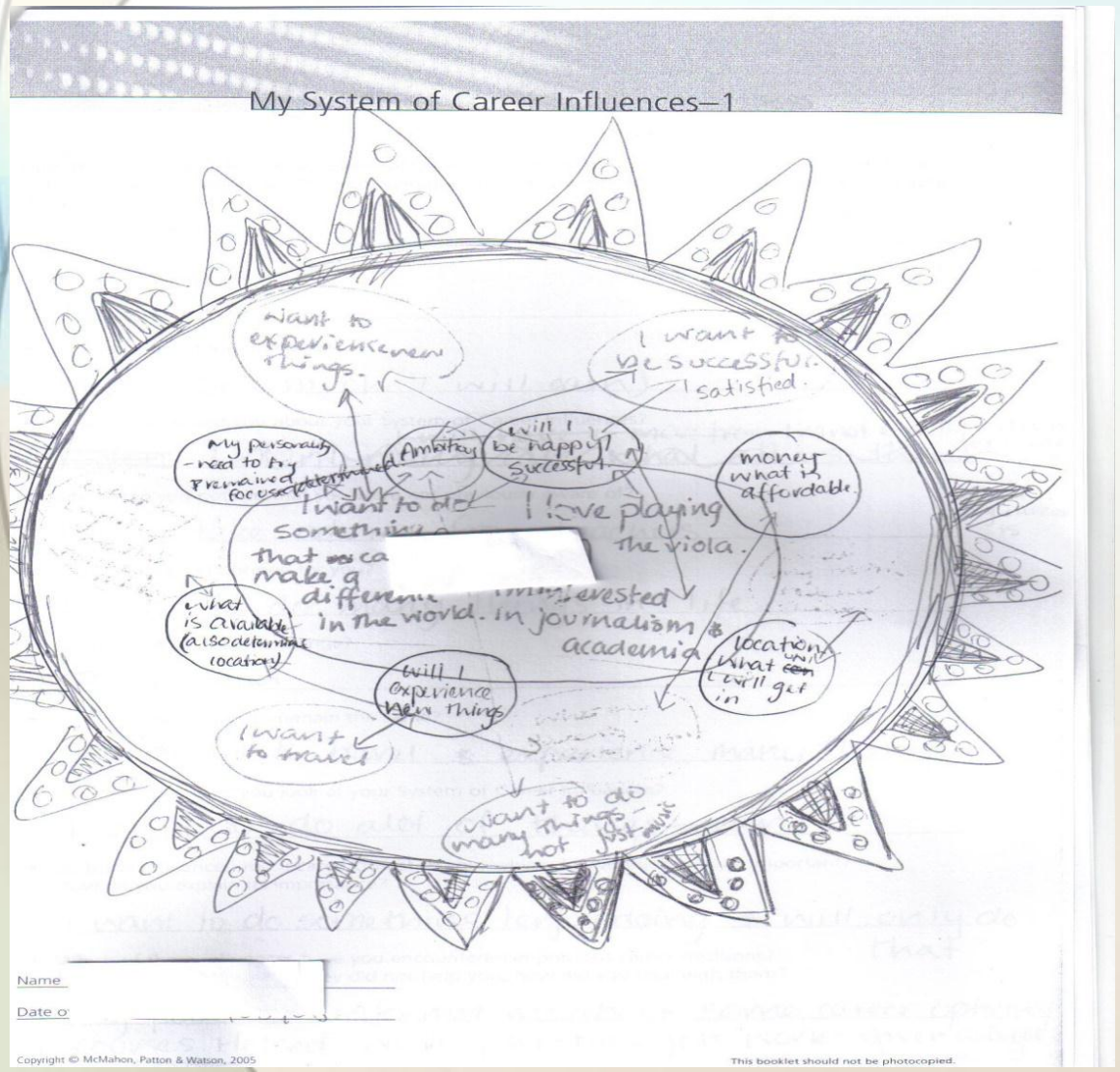

- Kate (Year 11)
- clients "relate the details and reality of their own maps through the telling of their career stories (McMahon & Patton, 2006, p. 97)
- MSCI (Adolescent) effective with
  - disadvantaged South African students (McMahon, Watson, Foxcroft, & Dullabh, 2008)
  - middle class South African adolescents (Kuit, 2005)
  - parental and adolescent perceptions of career influences on adolescent career development (Collett, 2011; Stolarysck, 2016)
  - Chinese college students in Hong Kong (Yim, Wong, & Yuen, 2015)
  - Swiss adolescents (Schindler & Schreiber, 2015)
- MSCI (Adult) effective with professionals and blue collar workers

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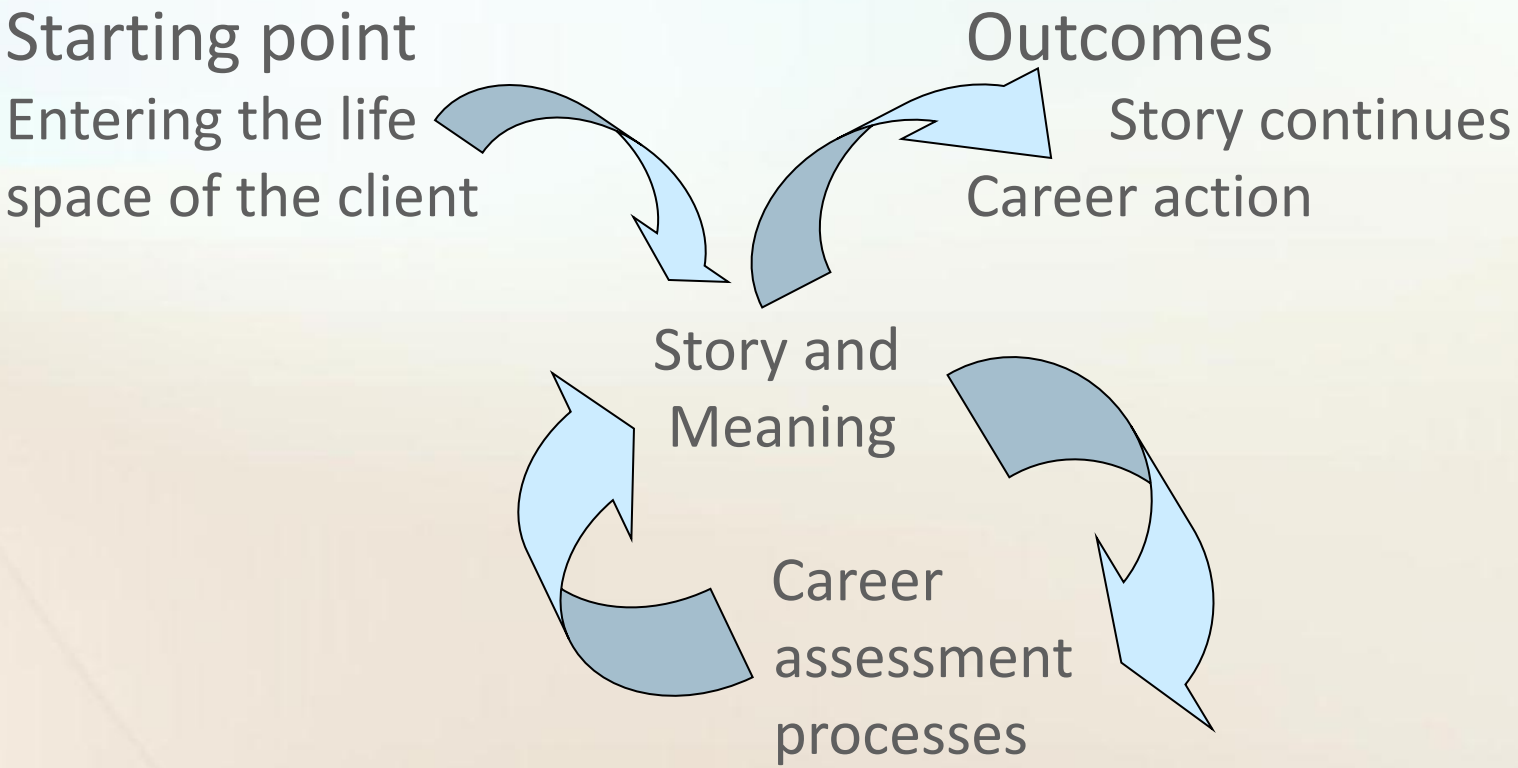
STF Application to Career Assessment



(from McMahon & Patton, 2006, p. 170)

Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- STF Application to Career Counselling
  - "working with storytellers" (McMahon, 2006, p. 16)
  - Story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon, 2007, 2009; McMahon & Watson, 2010, 2012, 2013)
  - Practice constructs (McMahon, 2005)
    - Reflection
    - Connectedness
    - Meaning Making
    - Learning
    - Agency

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- The Story Telling Approach encourages individuals to
  - engage in a reflective process *(reflection)* …
  - tell their stories in relation to the systems of influence within which they live *(connectedness)*,
  - begin to understand how identified influences have impacted on their story *(meaning making)*,
  - identify themes and patterns evident within and across stories *(learning)*, …
  - play a more active role in constructing their future identities and career stories *(agency)*

(McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2015, p. 151)

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Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (STF)

- STF Application to Career Counselling and Career Assessment
  - Practical and user friendly
  - Flexible way to treat each client uniquely
  - Accommodates a range of approaches to theory and assessment
  - Context resonant
    - systemic thinking
    - accommodates cultural diversity
    - applies to a range of cultural groups and settings (see Patton & McMahon, 1997; Patton, McMahon, & Watson, 2006, McMahon, Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012a, b)
    - utility in career counseling and qualitative career assessment in a range of international settings (e.g., Australia, Hong Kong, Italy, South Africa, Switzerland)
    - defines culture inclusively
    - incorporates personal culture of career counsellors
    - examines multiple systems of influence
    - interventions are possible at multiple levels

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Thank you

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