Career and Mental Health Counseling: Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

Debra Osborn, Ph.D.
James P. Sampson, Jr., Ph.D.
Janet G. Lenz, Ph.D.
V. Casey Dozier, Ph.D.
Florida State University

With
Seth C. W. Hayden, Ph.D.
Wake Forest University

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Today’s Goals:

• Review theoretical foundation of our service delivery model
• Present practical tools and strategies for integrating career and mental health counseling
• Provide supervision and training model
• Share research findings on our service delivery model

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
FSU “Tech Center”

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

Career and Mental Health Issues are Inextricable in Many Cases

• Linda is depressed because she has not done well in high school...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.

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Theoretical Foundations: CIP Theory

Executive Processing Domain

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

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
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

CIP Readiness Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity (high)</th>
<th>Capability (low)</th>
<th>Capability (high)</th>
<th>Capability (low)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low readiness</td>
<td>Moderate readiness</td>
<td>Moderate readiness</td>
<td>High readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High degree of support needed</td>
<td>Moderate to low degree of support needed</td>
<td>No support needed</td>
<td>(Individual Case-Managed Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brief Staff-Assisted Services)</td>
<td>(Brief Staff-Assisted Services)</td>
<td>(Self-Help Mode)</td>
<td>(Brief Staff-Assisted Services)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing Readiness

• Direct behavioral observations
• Career decision state
• Low-cost, theory-based assessments
• Psychological mental health appraisals

Levels of Service Delivery

• Self-Help Services
• Brief Staff-Assisted Services
• Individual Case-Managed Services
Differentiated Service Delivery Model

Individual Enters

Brief Screening

Comprehensive Screening

Self or Staff Referral

Self-Help Services

Brief Staff-Assisted Services

Individual Case-Managed Services

Complete differentiated model of delivering career resources and services

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Practical Strategies
What is the CTI?

- Self-administered
- Objectively scored
- 48-Item measure of dysfunctional thoughts in career choice
Mental health constructs directly correlated with dysfunctional career thoughts

- Indecision
- Neuroticism
- Anxiety
- Angry hostility
- Depression
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Vulnerability

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Section 1

Identifying Your Total Amount of Negative Career Thoughts: The CTI Total Score

The CTI Total score tells you your total amount of negative career thinking. This score can suggest how much help you may need to make a good career decision.

Here is another way to think about negative career thoughts. Imagine these thoughts as stones piled up to make a wall, with a good career decision on the other side. If the wall is low, then little help is needed to remove the stones so you can walk forward to make a choice. Some people just step over a low wall. The wall is annoying and slows them down, but they don’t want to make the effort to remove the stones that make up the wall. If the wall is high, it can still be taken down. People just need more help to take the wall down so they can walk forward and choose. The higher your CTI Total score, the higher this wall and the more effort or help you may need to take it down.
CTI Workbook

Decision Making Checklist

1. Place a check mark (✓) next to each item with which you Strongly Agree or Agree on the CTI items. Focus your attention on sections with a higher number of checks. A human service professional can help you.

2. Add up the number of check marks for each group of CTI items. Focus your attention on sections with a higher number of checks. A human service professional can also help you apply what you are learning to a specific career choice.

Knowing About Myself

1. No field of study or occupation interests me.
2. Whenever I've become interested in something, important people in my life disapprove.
3. My interests are always changing.
4. Even though I've taken career tests, I still don't know what field of study or occupation I like.
5. I get upset when people ask me what I want to do with my life.
6. My achievements must surpass my mother's or father's or my brother's or sister's.

Total checks: 

Knowing About My Options

1. Almost all occupational information is slanted toward making the occupation look good.
2. There are few jobs that have real meaning.
3. Jobs change so fast it makes little sense to learn much about them.
4. My opinions about occupations change frequently.
5. I don't know how to find information about jobs in my field.

Total checks: 

Understanding Myself and My Options

1. I'll never understand myself well enough to make a good career choice.
2. I don't know why I can't find a field of study or occupation that seems interesting.
3. Finding an occupation is so complicated, I just can't get started.
4. The more I try to understand myself and find out about occupations, the more confused and discouraged.
5. I'll never understand enough about

An Exercise for Improving Your Career Thoughts

Old Career Thought | New Career Thought
--- | ---

11. I'm so frustrated with the process of choosing a field of study or occupation I just want to forget about it for now.
12. I don't know why I can't find a field of study or occupation that seems interesting.
21. Choosing an occupation is so complicated, I just can't get started.
22. The more I try to understand myself and find out about occupations, the more confused and discouraged I get.
36. I'll never understand enough about

Old Career Thought | New Career Thought
--- | ---

Total checks: 

Old Career Thought | New Career Thought
--- | ---

Realize

ACN 2015 Orlando, Florida
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
Types of Issues Revealed

• Cognitive distortion
• Disabling emotions
• Financial
• Family
• Education

• Interests
• Self doubt
• Employment
• Quality of life

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
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.*
Sample DSWs

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Individual Learning Plan

Goal(s) #1 Clarify interests and ascertain readiness for career counseling
#2 Explore options for a graduate degree
#3 Improve peer networking skills at work
#4 Increase social interactions among family members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Purpose/Outcome</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment</th>
<th>Goal #</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual career counseling to foster self exploration</td>
<td>Enhance knowledge of self and career options</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>1, 2, &amp; 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Career Thoughts Inventory</td>
<td>Ascertain potential dysfunctional career thoughts</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Self-Directed Search</td>
<td>Enhance self knowledge</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore potential graduate degree programs of interest</td>
<td>Enhance knowledge of options</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice interacting with other people at work and in neighborhood</td>
<td>Gain self-observation skills and experience in interactions with peers</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out referral to university counseling center for family counseling</td>
<td>Improve quality of family relationships related to career choice and support</td>
<td>One week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ned

Student/Client Date

*This activity may be conducted in a career center if counselor possesses appropriate skills and training.*
Mental Health Assessments

- Beck Depression Inventory
- Beck Hopelessness Inventory
- Clinical Interview
- MMPI
- Early Memories

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Training and Supervision
Training and Supervision

- FSU Career Center Service Delivery Model
- Career Advisors
- Training
- Supervision

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Factors to consider in combining career and mental health assistance

- Supervision and training
  - Professional identities
  - Ethics
  - DSM diagnoses
- Staff credentials
Research on Our Brief-Assisted Model

- **Who:** 128 drop-in volunteer clients
  - 60% female, age 17-39 years
  - 60% White, 17% Latino, 12% Black, 6% Asian, 6% Other
  - Nearly equally divided among educational status
What?

• What is the effect of a brief-assisted career counseling model on general outcomes?

• What are the attitudes of drop-in clients regarding the effectiveness of a brief-assisted career counseling model?

• What is the relationship between process characteristics and changes in outcome variables?
  – (pre and post test scores on knowledge, confidence, anxiety; post test feelings, thoughts about counseling interactions, etc.)

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
How

• Pre/Post Surveys

• Session Rating Scale
  – Duncan, Miller, Sparks, Calud, Reynolds, Brown, & Johnson, 2003
  – Cronbach’s alpha: .88; this study .94

• ANOVA and Correlations
ANOVA Pre/Post Test Results

Comparisons between Pretest and Posttest Scores on Brief Staff-Assisted Outcomes (n = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th></th>
<th>Percent of Change Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of next steps</td>
<td>8.40a</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>36.22**</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Confidence in next steps</td>
<td>3.77a</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>13.29**</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anxiety about concern</td>
<td>3.46b</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>9.20*</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01

**p < .001

a. 5-point scale, 5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree
b. 4-point scale, 1 = not at all anxious, 2 = A little anxious, 3 = Moderately anxious, 4 = Very anxious
c. Change score = (posttest-pretest)

Significant changes on each variable
Medium ES for knowledge & confidence
Small ES for anxiety
## Change Results (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive (posttest&gt;pretest)</th>
<th>Neutral (posttest=pretest)</th>
<th>Negative (posttest&lt;pretest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge (increased)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence (increased)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety (decreased)</td>
<td>32 (reduced anxiety)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11 (increased anxiety)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
# Process Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Session Rating Scale Total&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>37.74</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>40 - 6</td>
<td>84.8% 36 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Made progress on career concern&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>5 - 1</td>
<td>84.0% agree or strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Felt positive about accomplishment&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>5 - 2</td>
<td>92.8% agree or strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Career advisor assisted me with strategies&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>5 - 2</td>
<td>93.4% agree or strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Need for additional service&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>26.3% none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.2% brief walk-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6% individual counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> 4 items, 10-point scale, 10 = high, 1 = low

<sup>b</sup> 5-point scale, 5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree

<sup>c</sup> 3-point scale, 1 = none, 2 = brief walk-in, 3 = individual counseling
# Correlations

Among Process & Change Scores for Brief Staff-Assisted Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Made progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Felt positive</td>
<td>-.73*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Advisor interaction</td>
<td>-.74*</td>
<td>-.80*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Session Rating Scale Total</td>
<td>-.48*</td>
<td>-.52*</td>
<td>-.42*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Needs additional service</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Outcome</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Knowledge of next steps</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Confidence in next steps</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Anxiety about career concern</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01"
Summary & Implications

- Brief-assisted model works – for some
- Brief-assisted model rated positively – by most
- Context of high levels of training, supervision and physical resources
- Counselors using this approach may need to adjust to briefer sessions
- Attend to both cognitive and emotional considerations, especially initial anxiety

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Future Research

• What client or counselor characteristics may account for outcome differences? Possibly:
  – Types of career concerns
  – Client expectations
  – Counselor-client relationship
  – Type of intervention
  – Physical environment of session
  – Time demands

• Changes in anxiety unrelated to process variables – what did cause the change?
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
For More Information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter

ACA 2015 Orlando, Florida
Society of Vocational Psychology

2016 Biennial Conference

May 16-17, 2016
Florida State University | Tallahassee, Florida

Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice in Vocational Psychology

Online registration will open on May 20, 2015.
Visit svp2016.fsu.edu for conference updates.

Contact
Janet G. Lenz, Conference Chair
Phone: 850-644-9547 | Fax: 850-644-3273
Email: jlenz@fsu.edu