Assessing & Enhancing Readiness for Career Decision Making: Implications from Recent Research

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The FSU Career Center
The phenomenon of readiness and implications for practice
Definition of Readiness

• Readiness is the **capability** of an individual to make informed and careful 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Individual Case-Managed Services)</td>
<td>(Brief Staff-Assisted Services)</td>
<td>(Self-Help Mode)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Service Delivery Levels

• Self-Help Services

• Brief Staff-Assisted Services

• Individual Case-Managed Services
Self-Help Services

• Guided by the user
• Served in library-like or remote setting
• **High** decision-making readiness
• Little or no assistance needed
Brief Staff-Assisted Services

• Guided by a practitioner
• Served in library-like, classroom, or group setting
• Moderate decision making readiness
• Minimal assistance needed
Individual Case-Managed Services

- Guided by a practitioner
- Served in an individual office, classroom, or group setting
- **Low** decision-making readiness
- Substantial assistance needed
CIP Pyramid Domains

Thinking about my decision making

Knowing how I make decisions

CASVE Cycle

Knowing about myself

Knowing about my options

Client Version
CASVE Cycle - Client Version

Knowing I Need to Make a Choice
Knowing I Made a Good Choice

Implementing My Choice

Choosing An Occupation, Program of Study, or Job

Understanding Myself and My Options

Expanding and Narrowing My List of Options
Assessment of Readiness

• Two Issues:

• Capability

• Complexity
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
The CASVE cycle in Readiness

• Communication
  --getting in touch

• Analysis
  --self-knowledge exploration & acquisition
  --occupational knowledge
### Readiness Assessment Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimulus</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clear</td>
<td>clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDI</td>
<td>Decision Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Worksheet (DSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTI</td>
<td>Structured interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Tension Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Instability Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directed Search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguous</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Alter. Question (OAQ)</td>
<td>Autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguous</td>
<td>Unstructured interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levels of Readiness Assessment

I. Direct behavioral observations
II. Career decision state
III. Low-cost, theory-based assessments
IV. Psychological mental health appraisals
Level I: Intake

• Behavioral Observations:

• “no options interest me”

• “my teacher, parents, significant other sent me here”

• Irregular speech patterns—slow/fast/broken

• Not making sense, confusion
Level II: Career Decision State

- Occupational Alternatives Q. (OAQ)
- Career Tension Scale (CTS)
- Goal Instability Scale (GIS)
Occupational Alternatives Questionnaire (OAQ)

- Measures the 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

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:
• Commitment anxiety (CA)
• Decision-making confusion (DMC)
• Depression
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)
Career Tension Scale

- A measure of career stress or urgency to make a decision
- 7 items, 7 point Likert-type scale
- Summated rating scale
- Chronbach alpha = .82

Correlates of CTS

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

Bullock-Yowell, Peterson, Reardon, Leierer, & Reed (2011)
Effects of Career Tension on Career Decision State

- Career & Life Stress
  - NEO-D
  - CTS
  - Career & Life Stress
  - Negative Thoughts
    - EC
    - CA
    - DMC
    - Career Decision State
      - OAQ
      - Satisf.

Bullock-Yowell, et al. (2011)
Goal Instability Scale (GIS)

- Measures lack of focus, low drive and energy, confusion about self
- 10 items
- 6-point Likert-type scale
- Cronbach alpha = .81, .87

Robbins & Patton (1985)
Correlates of GIS

- DMC = .64
- CA = .51
- EC = .44
- OAQ = .08
- Dissatisfaction = .23
- CTS = .37

Bertoch (2010)
Level III: Career Theory-Based Assessments (Low Cost)

- Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; capability)
- Self-Directed Search (SDS; capability)
- Decision Space Worksheet (DSW; complexity)
What is the CTI?

- Self-administered
- Objectively scored
- 48-item measure of dysfunctional thoughts in career choice
- 10-15 minutes
Purpose of the CTI

• Identify individual negative thoughts that impair, impede, or block information processing in career decision making (item level)

• Locate blocks in CASVE cycle (construct scales)

• Measure general state of indecision or confusion (total score)
Available Norms of the CTI

• 11th and 12th grade high school students
• College students
• Adults
CTI Theoretical Basis

• Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Theory, items and scales

• Beck’s Cognitive Theory, reframe dysfunctional thoughts
The CTI in Needs Assessment

• Identifying the specific nature of negative thoughts

• Three CTI Construct Scales
  - Decision-making Confusion (DMC)
  - External Conflict (EC)
  - Commitment Anxiety (CA)

• Specific career interventions can be related to specific construct scores
Decision-Making Confusion (DMC)

• Inability to initiate or sustain the decision making due to
  – disabling emotions
  – a lack of understanding about decision making

  “I get so overwhelmed, I can’t get started.”
External Conflict (EC)

- Inability to balance self-perceptions with input from significant others
- Difficulty in assuming responsibility for decision making
- “A significant person in my life disagrees with my current choice.”
Commitment Anxiety (CA)

• Inability to commit to a specific career choice, accompanied by decision making anxiety

• “I am afraid I am overlooking something.”
Where’s the block?

• DMC → CAS
  - forming options

• EC → Valuing
  - who’s in charge of the decision

• CA → Execution
  - converting thoughts into action
## Correlates of CTI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DMC</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>EC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a NEO depression</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a NEO anxiety</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a BDI depression</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b BHS hopelessness</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a CTI Professional Manual
- b Dieringer (2012)
Assessing the personal and social context

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Doubt (Y/N)</th>
<th>BDI</th>
<th>CTI CA</th>
<th>CTI EC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- DSW is basically unrelated to measures of capability

Solomon (2012)
### SDS as Self Efficacy Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDS</th>
<th>Skills Confidence Inv. (SCI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>.58 - .78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDS competency</td>
<td>.50 - .75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDS self-estimate</td>
<td>.46 - .72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCI adds little to variance to SDS summary scores, especially I, A, S

Bullock-Yowell, Peterson, Wright, Reardon, & Mohn (2012)
Level IV: Assessments
Psychological/Mental Health Appraisal

• Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
• Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)
• MMPI-2
Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

- 21 items
- 4-point Guttman scale according to level of severity & symptoms
- Cronbach alpha .91
- Item 9 concerns suicide ideation
- Useful as a mental health screener
Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)

- 20 true-false items
- Items scored as 1 or 0
- Example item: “My future seems dark to me.”
- 6-week test-retest reliability .66
- Useful as a mental health screener, especially for depressed individuals or those at risk for suicide
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
Key MMPI-2 Scales

- K (Correction)
- Depression (D)
- Psychopathic deviate (Pd)
- Psychasthenia (Pt)
- Schizophrenia (Sc)
- Hypomania (Ma)
- Social introversion (Si)
Interventions to enhance readiness

- Individual career counseling
- Classroom instruction
Individual Career Counseling: Sequence

Bullock-Yowell, Katz, Reardon, & Peterson (in press)
Negative Thoughts: CTI Workbook

- Cognitive Reframing (Beck, 1976)
  - Identify (I)
  - Challenge (C)
  - Alter (A)
  - Act (A)

Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders (1996)
Self-Efficacy as a Career Problem Solver

• Bandura (1977), Lent (2005)
• Chunking the task into small goals
• Cooperative planning in developing an ILP
• Reinforce accomplishments of goals
• Initially target self and environmental exploration

Bullock-Yowell, Katz, Peterson, Reardon, & Mohn (in press)
Classroom Instruction

• Video
• Workbook
• Oral occupational research report
Classroom Instruction

Video to enhance information-seeking behavior (ISB)
- video modeling & reinforcing of desired behavior
- effects: strategies, time on task, variety of references

McHugh, Lenz, Reardon, & Peterson (2012)
Thrift, Ulloa-Heath, Reardon, & Peterson (2012)
Selected References


Selected References


Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Emily Bullock-Yowell, University of Southern Mississippi, for her work on this presentation and related publications.
For More Information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter