

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

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The FSU Career Center



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The phenomenon of
readiness and
implications for
practice

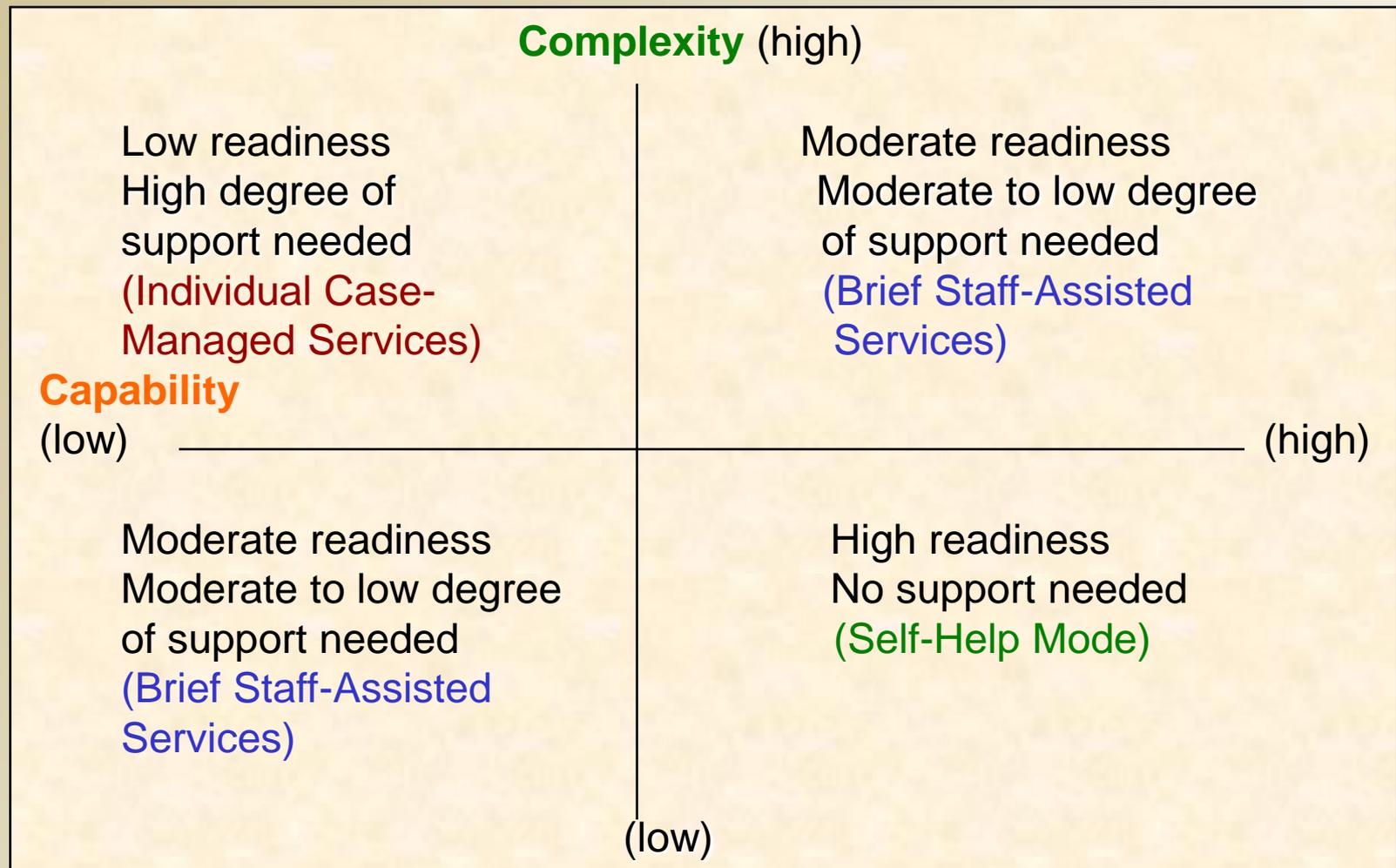


Definition of Readiness

- 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



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

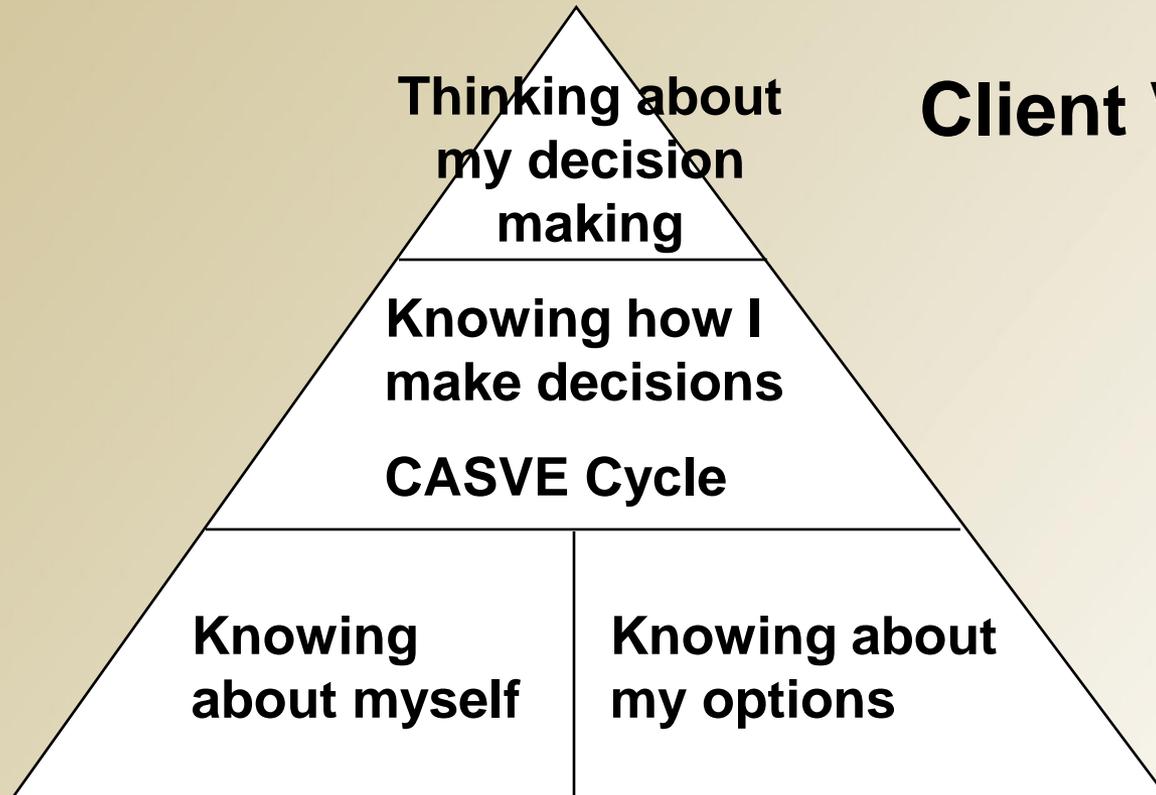


Individual Case-Managed Services

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



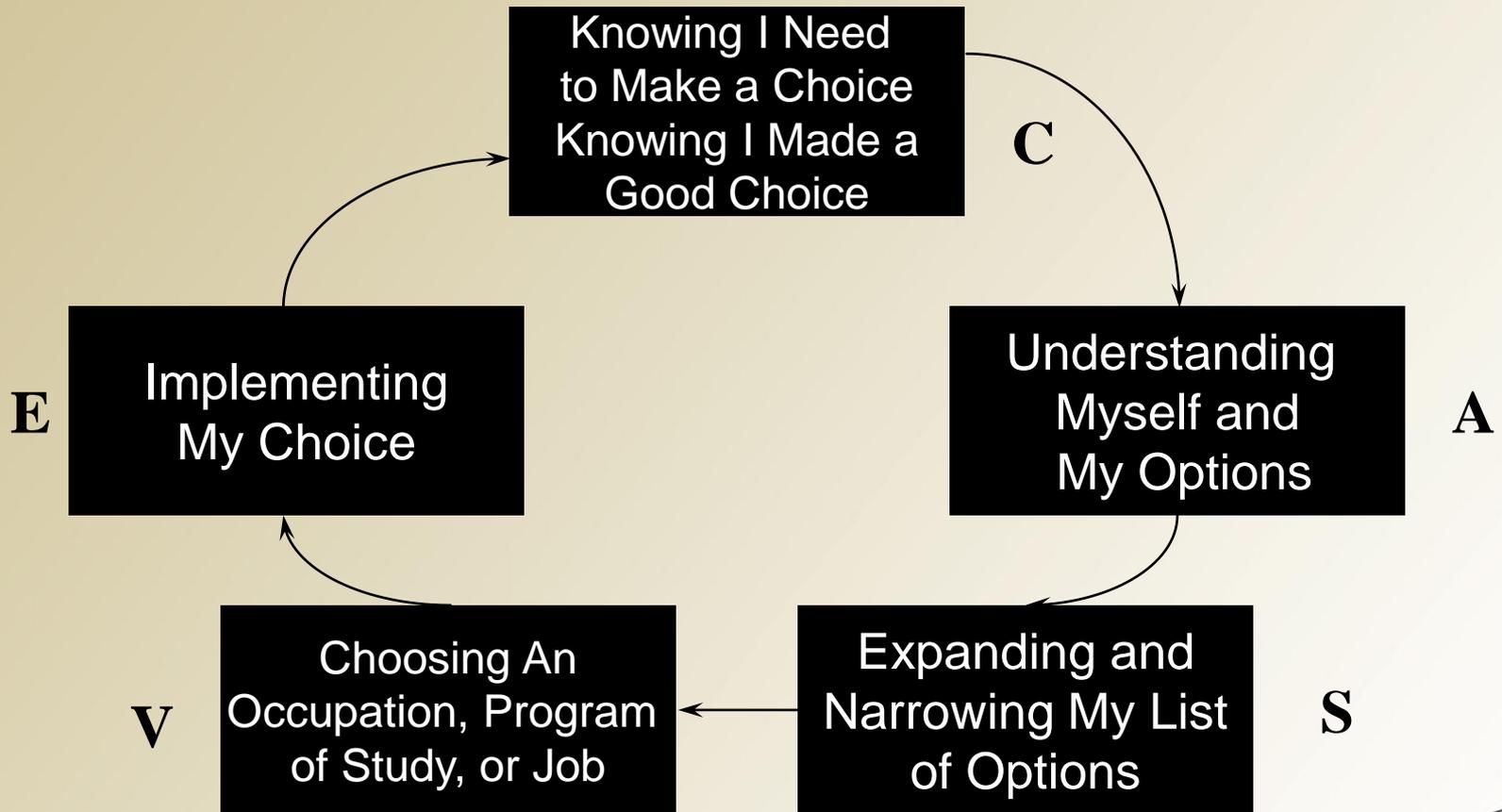
CIP Pyramid Domains



Client Version



CASVE Cycle - Client Version



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

		Response	
		clear	ambiguous
Stimulus	clear	BDI CSS CTI Career Tension Scale Goal Instability Scale Self-Directed Search	Decision Space Worksheet (DSW) Structured interview
	ambiguous	Occupational Alter. Question (OAQ)	Autobiography Unstructured interview

Peterson, G. W., Sampson, J. P., & Reardon, R. C. (1991). *Career development and services: A cognitive approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.



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

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:

- 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

Reed, C. (2006)

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....._____



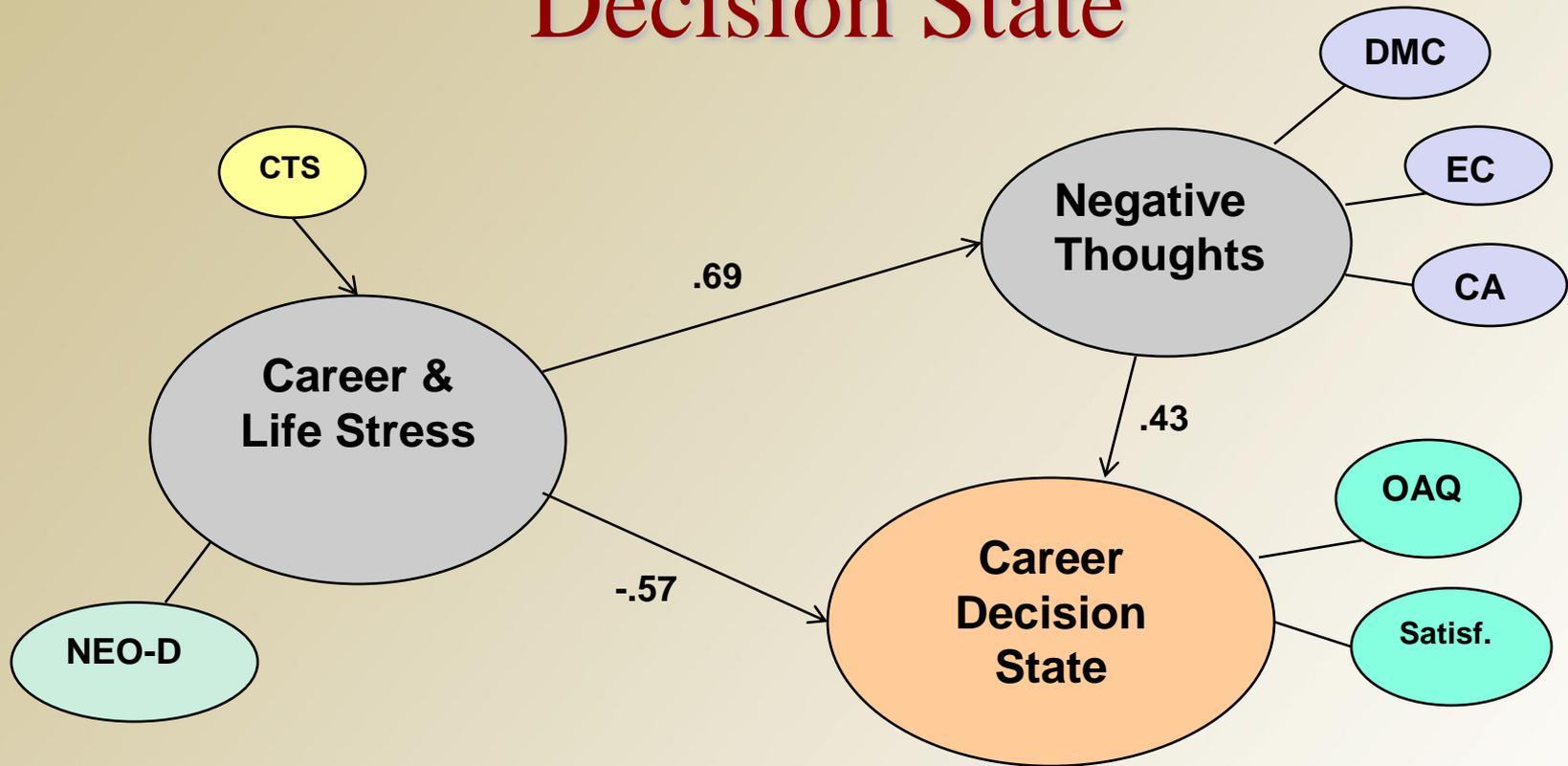
Correlates of CTS

- 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



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

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.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

Robbins & Patton (1985)



Correlates of GIS

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

Bertoch (2010)



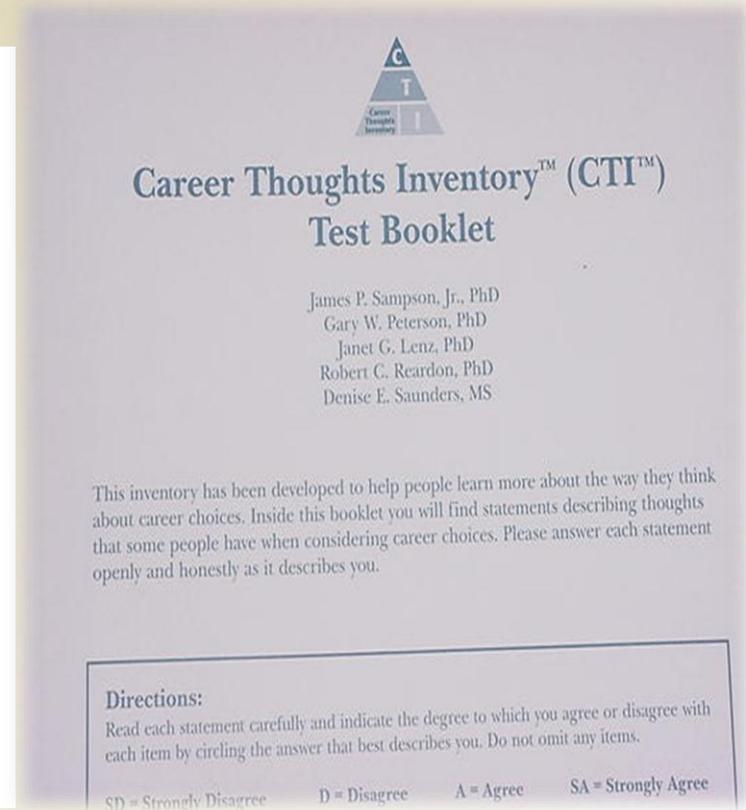
Level III: Career Theory-Based Assessments (Low Cost)

- 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

	DMC	CA	EC
a NEO depression	.36	.37	.37
a NEO anxiety	.46	.53	.53
a BDI depression	.51	.40	.39
b BHS hopelessness	.49	.37	.27

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)

Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)

Name _____ Date _____

Decision you are making _____

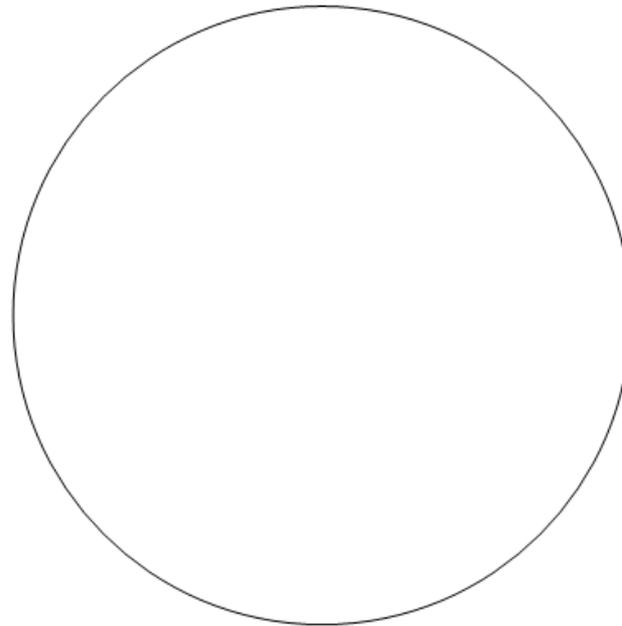
Please list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that bear on the decision you are making.

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

Decision Space Worksheet

Name NED _____ Date _____

The career decision you are considering CAREER / POSTGRAD STUDIES

The **Problem Space** can be thought of as the mental and emotional environment in which an individual approaches a problem or task. Below, please list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that bear on the career decision you are considering.

1. INTERESTS
2. FEAR OF BOREDOM / TENDENCY TO GET BORED EASILY
3. FAMILY
4. AVAILABILITY OF JOBS
5. JOB LOCATIONS
6. BOREDOM AT PRESENT JOB
7. FEAR OF NETWORKING
8. ETHICS
9. ANXIETY / UNCERTAINTY
10. _____



Correlates of DSW

	<u>Self Doubt (Y/N)</u>
• BDI	.21
• CTI CA	.19
• CTI EC	-.18
• DSW is basically unrelated to measures of capability	

Solomon (2012)



SDS as Self Efficacy Measure

- | <u>SDS</u> | <u>Skills Confidence Inv. (SCI)</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Summary | .58 - .78 |
| • SDS competency | .50 - .75 |
| • SDS self-estimate | .46 - .72 |
- 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



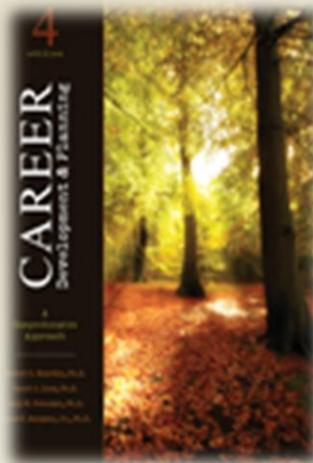
Key MMPI-2 Scales

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

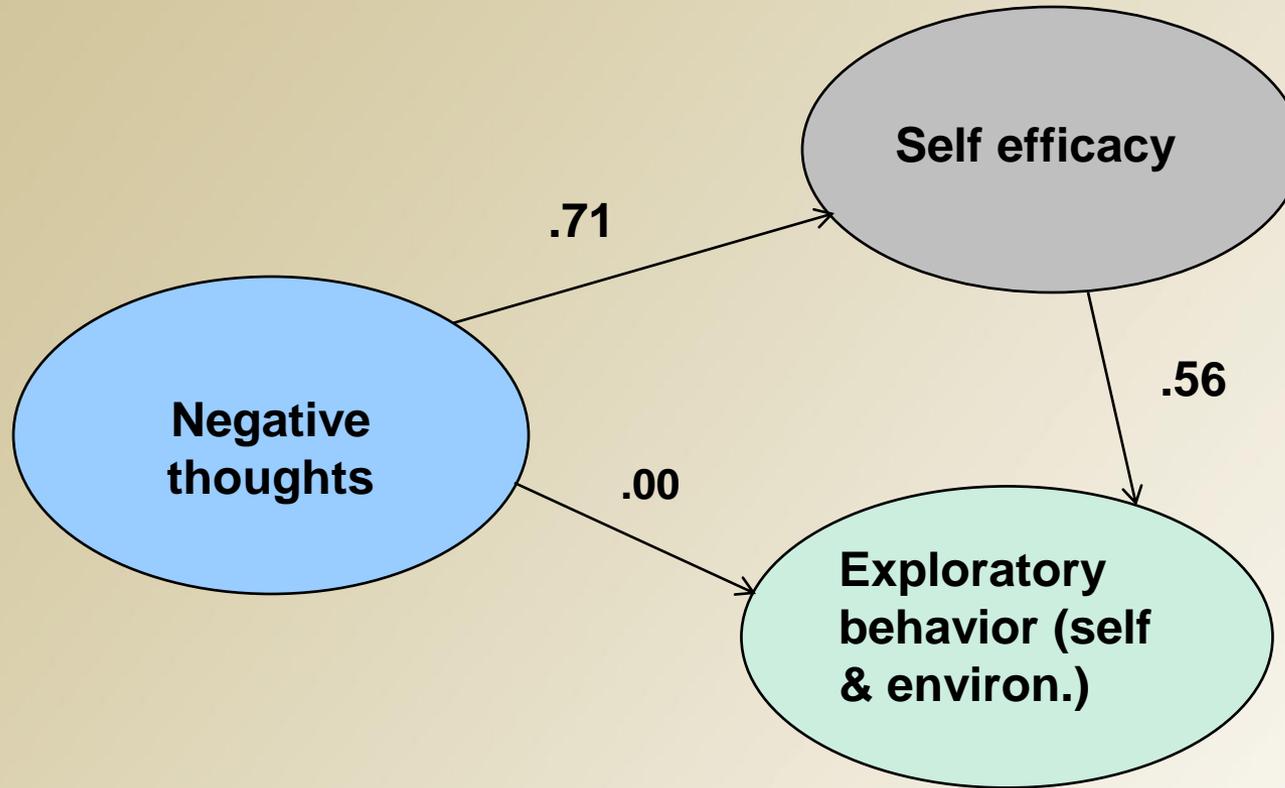


Interventions to enhance readiness

- 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

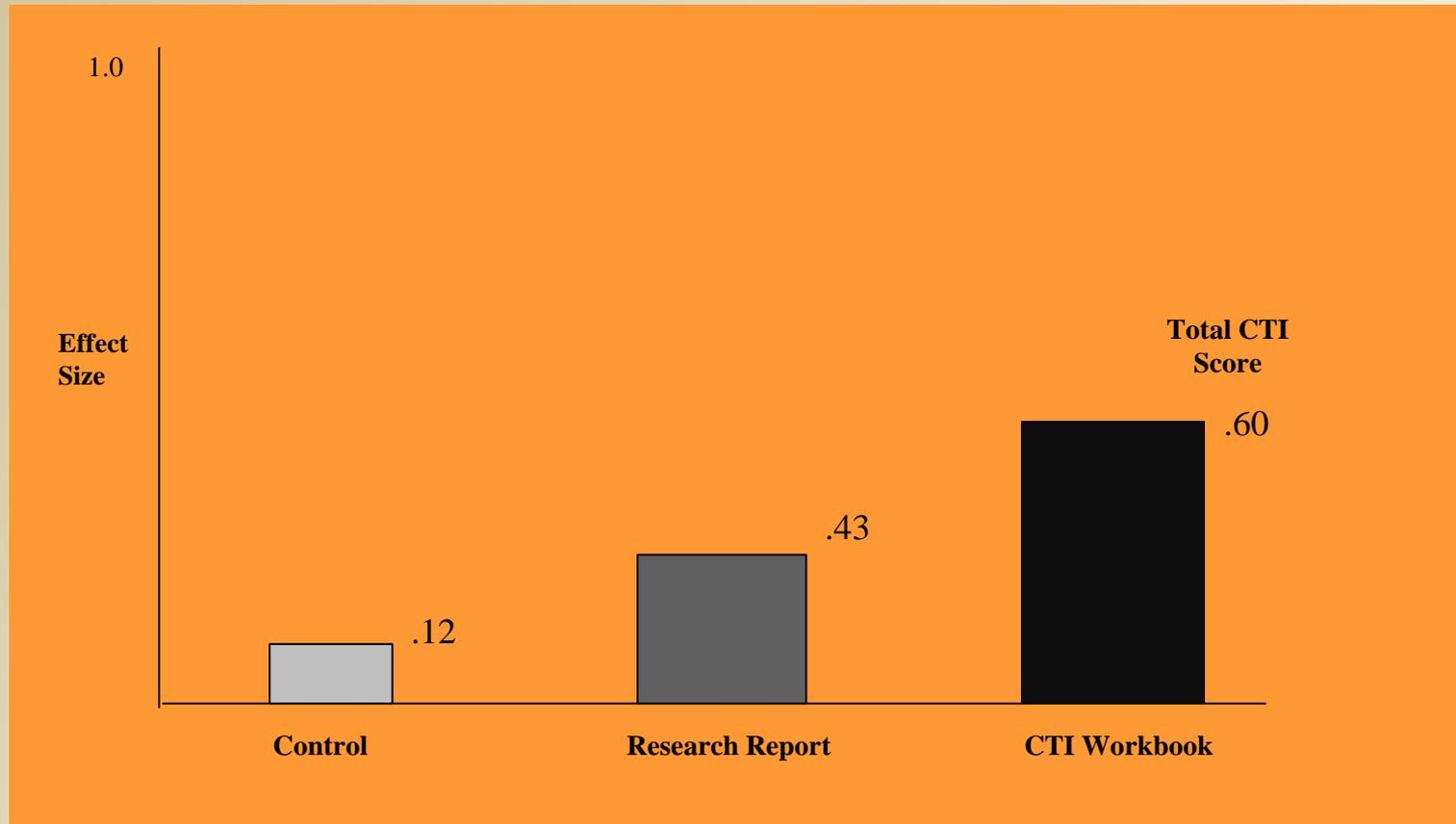
Video to enhance information-seeking behavior (ISB)

- video modeling & reinforcing of desired behavior
- effects: strategies, time on task, variety of references

McHugh, Lenz, Reardon, & Peterson (2012)



Classroom Instruction: Workbook, Oral Research Report



Thrift, Ulloa-Heath, Reardon, & Peterson (2012)



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