

The Value of Tools in Career Coaching



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NICEC Seminar
27th January 2025

www.career-counselling-services.co.uk



TODAY'S SESSION

OBJECTIVES OF TODAY'S SESSION

- To consider the benefit of using tools in career coaching
- To emphasise the key is empowering client through the relationship and the sensitive, ethical use of tools
- To consider relative appropriateness of tools based on the approach taken
- To reflect on your own use of tools and to gain ideas for further integrating tools into your practice



CCS APPROACH TO CAREER COACHING

CAREER COACHING
IS A PROCESS
WHICH **ENABLES** PEOPLE
TO RECOGNISE AND UTILISE
THEIR RESOURCES TO MAKE
CAREER RELATED DECISIONS
AND MANAGE
CAREER RELATED ISSUES

DEFINITION AND UNDERPINNING OF TOOLS

- Open-ended exercises/tools which are not scored with no right or wrong answers
- Either self-created or increasingly available free online
- Good career tools are underpinned by career theories and empirical evidence
- Three tools we are sharing with you all based on career theories;
- **Planned Happenstance:** (Mitchell, K., Levin, A. & Krumboltz, J.1999)
- **Chapters of your Life:** (Cochran, L.1997, Ibarra, H. 2004)
- **When you are at your Best:** (Seligman, M. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. 2000; Proyer, R. & Ruch, W. 2015)

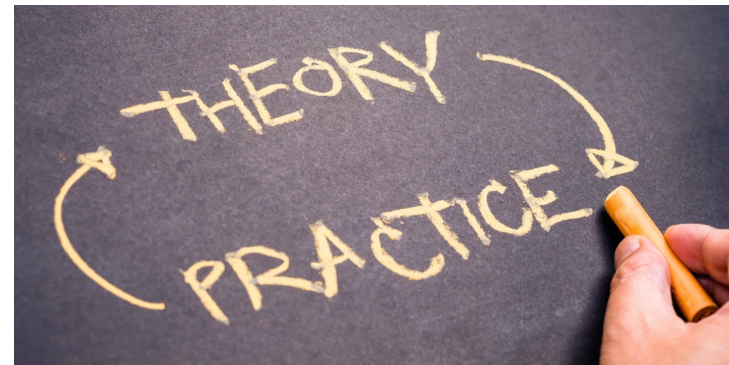


THEORETICAL BASIS FOR CAREER TOOLS

Of 5 critical factors in a meta-analysis of effective career interventions found:

- * **Written exercises** providing structure was key.
- * Other criteria:
 - Individualised feedback
 - Occupational resource exploration in and out of session
 - Role modelling
 - Attention to support building

(Brown S.D. and Krane. R, 2000)



THEORETICAL BASIS FOR CAREER TOOLS

Approaches that don't include or rely less on tools:

- * **Psychodynamic approaches:**
more focused on deep psychological processes
and tools might not capture these
- * **Existentialist approaches:**

more on purpose and meaning based on
philosophical questioning and tools might not address these
existential concerns.



THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF USING CAREER TOOLS

- Maintains continuity, interest and energy
- Acts as 'bridge' between meetings
- Gives coachee's the opportunity to explore topic in more depth and discuss with significant others
- Reinforces career coaching as a process, rather than an event
- Puts coachee in active position
- Contributes to identifying themes
- May point to behaviour relevant to coachee's career problem (either in content or process)



INTEGRATION OF CAREER TOOLS INTO CAREER COACHING

USES:

- For a particular concern/issue to **explain** and to **predict** eg Planned Happenstance
- To fit a career framework eg. CCS :
 - **Exploring** eg When I'm at My Best
 - **Clarifying**
 - **Visioning** eg Chapters of my Life
 - **Action**
- **KEY:**
 - Weave into the career coaching process
 - Client and relationship the most important
 - Coach prepared to abandon the tools if not working
 - A new version of a tool can be created in the moment.



BUZZ GROUP DISCUSSION

EXPERIENCES:

What have you noticed are the pros and cons of using career tools in your work?

Discuss in small groups



ETHICAL APPLICATION

Some ideas to support good practice:

- Focus on integrating insight from the tools into the career coaching process and to support the client's objectives
- Use a range of tools that might contribute to *themes or patterns* and reduce over-reliance or limited insight from only one tool
- Contract carefully with your coachee on how the tools will be used (*you will not be interpreting; this is for them to reflect more deeply*)
- Encourage the coachee to own any insight, *“What did they notice?” “How did they find doing it?”*
- Ensure you have experienced the tool for yourself
- Draw on regular supervision to support integration of tools in your practice



OUR FAVOURITE TOOLS

STRENGTH BASED CAREER COACHING : 'WHEN AT MY BEST'

(Seligman, M & Csikszentmihalyi, M. 2000); Proyer, R. et al. 2015)

Objectives:

- To identify examples of when you have been 'in the zone' and firing on all cylinders
- To observe *strengths* you were using and *enablers* for being 'at your best'



NARRATIVE CAREER THEORY

NARRATIVE

(Cochran, L. 1997, Ibarra, H. 2004)

- Creating meaningful narratives of the future
- 'Agent' not 'Patient'
- Client is author of own future



CAREER GOAL SETTING



Write career chapter headings for

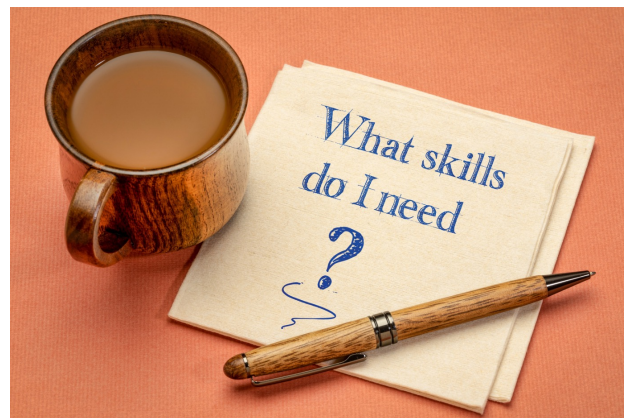
- The past couple of years
- One year from now
- 2 years from now...
- 5 years from now..

PLANNED HAPPENSTANCE CAREER THEORY

PLANNED HAPPENSTANCE

(Mitchell, K., Levin, A. & Krumboltz, J.1999)

- Careers are significantly affected by chance events
- Importance of constructing unexpected opportunities
- Encourages the skills of curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking



OPENNESS TO CHANGE: PLANNED HAPPENSTANCE TOOL

Objectives:

- To know about the value of a 'planned happenstance' approach as a more sustainable approach to managing careers and dealing with change
- To know about the key skills of planned happenstance
- To identify ways to develop your openness to new opportunities

There are 5 skills that have been identified as part of a planned happenstance approach:-

- **Curiosity:** exploring new possibilities
- **Persistence:** exerting effort despite setbacks
- **Flexibility:** changing attitude according to circumstances
- **Optimism:** viewing new opportunities as possible
- **Risk-Taking:** taking action in face of uncertain outcomes

BUZZ GROUP DISCUSSION

SHARED EXPERIENCES:

What are your own preferred career tools?

Discuss in small groups



FURTHER RESOURCES

Books

Nathan, R et al [The Holistic Career Coaching Handbook](#) (published April 2025)

Julia Yates [The Career Coaching Toolkit](#)

Nathan, R; Hill, L: [Career Counselling](#)

NICEC Journal Articles

Yates, J: [Career Coaching Tools: Evidence-based techniques for practice](#)

Mansfield, K Career Well-Being: [Practical tools and ideas for organisations to support employees](#)

Gregen-Cook, S: Beyond words: [An exploration of the use of visual tools within career guidance](#)

Podcasts

Association for Coaching Podcast: [The role of Self-Assessment Tools in Career Coaching](#)

A top-down view of a desk with a keyboard, mouse, pen, paper, and plant. The desk is white and features a silver keyboard, a white mouse, a pen, a piece of paper, and a small potted plant. A hand is visible at the bottom center of the frame, resting on the desk. A large orange rectangle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "Thank you!".

Thank you!