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BY

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ii

ABSTRACT

This list of considerations for counselling multi-cultural individuals is to be used as a working tool by career counsellors. This list of considerations outlines the changing demographics of the 21st century work force in Canada and identifies the need for career counsellors to develop competencies around multi-cultural sensitivity, specifically in the domain of self-awareness. This list of considerations also outlines how to use the working alliance model to facilitate client change and offers a case example utilizing a solution-focused career counselling intervention framework.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract i

Acknowledgements .....

Table of Contents v

Introduction 7

Importance of the Project 8

Changing Demographics of the 21st Century Work Force 12

The Working Alliance and Roles of Equality within Counselling 13

Equity and Diversity 17

Understanding World Views 19

Acculturation and Power 20

Racism 22

Ethnocentrism 23

Career Counselling 27

What is Career Counselling? 27

The Challenge of Career Development in a Rapidly Changing Work Place 10

Solution Focused Career Counselling Intervention 30

Case Study Application of a Solution Focused Career Development Intervention 34

The Client's Current State and the Client's Desired Future Direction 36

Life Structure Including Life Roles 37

The Client's Self Perception 38

Skills 39

Interests 40

Values 40

Personality 41

Options 42

Action Plan 42

Evolving Multi-cultural Sensitive Career Counselling Resources 40

Synthesis and Conclusion 45

References 51

A List of Considerations for Career Counselling Multi-cultural Individuals

Introduction

For the purpose of this project, the term multi-cultural individual is used to refer to a client from a culturally diverse background. The term is used universally and is not isolated to ethnic or racial diversity although ethnic and racial examples of diversity are listed in the project as examples of diversity. Diversity, or difference, is the result of an individual having been exposed to a unique culture. Culture, for the purpose of this paper, is a set of constructs such as beliefs, values, religion, behavioural patterns, education, and socio-economic factors which have been instrumental in the individual's personal mode of operation. At times the term immigrant is used as a pure example of diversity where the individual's internalized culture is not necessarily the same as the host culture in which the individual currently resides.

Organizations and corporations of the 21st century are changing at an intense rate. Downsizing, mergers, international trade, and globalization impact the way individuals plan, develop, and manage their careers. Specifically, there are key trends directly impacting Canada's future labour force.

> Beginning in 2010, the proportion of the population in the age group 65 and over will expand rapidly, reinforced by a low birth rate and longer life expectancy. Retiring baby boomers will have a significant impact on the size of the labour market, especially as relatively small cohorts of young people will be entering it. Boomers, those aged 37 to 55 in 2001, made up 47% of the labour force. Ten years from now, half of them will be 55 or over, and 18% of them will be over the age of 60 (Canada Census, 2001).

The Canadian work force is aging; the number of young Canadians entering the work force is lower than the number of the baby boomers preparing to retire in 10 years, resulting in a shrinking skilled work force. Therefore, Canada will become more dependent upon immigrants by 2011 to fill jobs vacated by baby boomers. With an increase of immigrants, international workers and multi-cultural individuals in the Canadian work force, there is a need for a list of considerations discussing multi-cultural sensitive career counselling issues such as promoting equality and diversity within the context of a working alliance.

In addition to exploring the shifting demographics of the 21st Century work force and the implications of that shift in terms of increased diversity, the project also outlines a collaborative model of counselling presented in the working alliance section which addresses the roles of both the client and counsellor. The working alliance is a potential framework to be used in career counselling as a means of promoting equity within the counselling relationship. Further exploring the topic of equity and diversity, the following aspects are considered: worldview, acculturation, racism, and ethnocentrism. Within this frame work, cultural sensitivity as it relates to career counselling is discussed and a solution focused intervention is outlined. Finally, the project concludes with a list of practical considerations and recommendations to improve multi-cultural competencies for career counselling

Within the context of this project, career counselling is in reference to career planning, development, and management. When working with multi-cultural clients from diverse backgrounds, career counselling must be conducted in a manner that promotes equality. Equality empowers the individual receiving counselling rather than enabling counter productive learned behaviours that are socially learned and contextually reinforced such as learned helplessness. Culturally sensitive career counselling must also take into

considerations conditions in the receiving society which may act as either enablers or barriers for career development.

Importance of the Project

The federal innovation strategy supported by the government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with the provinces and territories, professional regulatory bodies and stakeholder groups to address the barriers of successful economic integration of immigrants (Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2003). In general, for all individuals representing diversity, Canada has employment equity legislation surrounding women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities (Arthur, Brodhead, Magnusson, & Redekopp, 2003). In addition to the government's commitment to assist immigrants and multi-cultural individuals with integration into the Canadian work force, it is important for career counsellors to develop competencies that are inclusive of equity and diversity founded upon the working alliance to help multi-cultural individuals integrate into the Canadian work force. The objective of this project is to produce a culturally sensitive career counselling intervention list of considerations to be used by career counsellors when working with immigrants and other diverse or multi-cultural individuals planning, developing, and managing their careers.

Ongoing development of career counselling competencies is an important part of ensuring high quality counselling. As outlined in Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Counsellors Core Competencies (National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004), commitment to professional development is encouraged to continue developing one's skills. In particular, the two core interpersonal competencies relating to diversity are: recognize diversity and respect diversity.

Recognizing diversity includes physical ability, mental ability, emotional ability, disabilities, self-image/concept, educational background, language, social barriers, spirituality/religion, motivations, aspirations, race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation/preference, socio-economic status, and cultural influences. The second competency is respect for diversity by being sensitive to the intra- and interpersonal dynamics of people from diverse populations.

Counsellors of career counselling have highlighted the need for career counsellors to develop social justice competencies in international standards in order to improve the services offered to diverse clientele. Social justice competencies in international standards are intended to close the gap in deficiencies that exist in career resources currently available to multi-cultural individuals (Arthur, 2005). Therefore career counselors need to look for opportunities to enhance their competencies on topics such as the working alliance and equity and diversity issues to support the best possible service delivery to clients.

> Identifying and using both culturally appropriate processes and goals are central to career counselling that provides effective and culturally relevant career interventions and appropriate and desirable outcomes for the client. Failure to attend to the cultural dimension is likely to lead to culturally inappropriate processes and culturally inappropriate goals in career counselling which in turn are likely to result in premature terminations and undesirable counselling outcomes (Leong & Hartung, 2000, p. 223).

The skilled career counsellor assists the client with keeping up with the rapid changes in the world of work that impact the client directly. Changes such as greater diversity within the Canadian work place and shifting demographics are explored in greater detail below.

The Challenge of Career Development in a Rapidly Changing Work Place

Change is the one thing that is consistent in the world of work. In the 21st century work and family life continues to change perhaps at a greater pace than ever. In the workplace changes can be difficult to keep up with—changes such as globalization, deregulation, downsizing, upsizing, free trade, mergers, and growing diversity in work teams. Large scale and ongoing change can create challenges, stress and anxiety. For instance, when workers experience job loss, they lose a tangible anchor in their lives which may be a large part of their identity. An impact to a person's identity will inevitably have an impact on the person's family life as well. According to Allyn and Bacon's (2003) spill-over theory,

> The boundaries between work and family become clouded—what happens at work spills over into the family sphere and vice versa. Because of the multi-faceted complexity of career counselling, a systems approach is best in order to integrate all the complex interrelated systems in an individual's life such as family and work. Richardson (1992) has forcefully argued that 'we need to move beyond career development to a broader emphasis on fostering the development of individuals considered as whole persons in relation to the work in their lives. I no longer think it is tenable to separate out the study of career from the multiple and interacting strands and trajectories of development which make up the texture of lives over the life span (p. 20-21) (as cited by Krumboltz, 1993, p. 148).

Changing Demographics of the 21st Century Work Force

Theoretically, the nature of reality is multi-faceted based on multiple socially constructed realities, and the nature of knowing is based on a relationship between the knower and the would-be-known to explore values and create findings (Mertens, 1998). Diversity is a word that defines this multi-faceted nature of reality. Within the 21st Century work force, demographics continue to change as a result of globalization. Canada's diversity is exemplary. In addition to Aboriginal people and the founding British and French groups, there are a wide variety of ethnic groups represented in the Canadian population, including large numbers of German, Italian, Dutch, Ukrainian, Chinese, Black, and Indo - Pakistani people, among others (Kelly, 1995; Renaud & Badets, 1993, as cited by Esses & Gardner, 1996). Close to 10% of the adult population of Canada are visible minorities, with this figure expected to double in the next twenty years (Kelly, 1995, as cited by Esses & Gardner, 1996). The psychological study of ethnic relations has much to contribute toward understanding and promoting positive relations among the varied ethnic groups now calling themselves Canadians.

> In the next 20 years, the representation of visible minorities in Canada is expected to continue to rise so that, by the year 2016, it is estimated that visible minorities will likely comprise close to 20% of the adult population and 25% of children (projections based on trends in migration, fertility, and mortality; Kelly, 1995; Statistics Canada, 1995b). In addition, within the population of visible minorities, the growth rate of specific groups is expected to differ, leading to increased diversification. In 1991, Chinese, Blacks, and Indo - Pakistanis accounted for the largest percentage of visible minorities in Canada. However,

> the West Asian and Arab community in Canada is expected to show the fastest future growth rate, whereas Blacks and Indo - Pakistanis are expected to show the slowest growth rates (Kelly, 1995) (Esses & Gardner, 1996, p. 149).

The Working Alliance and Roles of Equality within Counselling

Clearly the Canadian workforce will continue to increase in diversity. To ensure that quality counselling services are available to multi-cultural individuals, one can not overlook the influences of power within the counselling transaction. The working alliance is a construct that can be operationalized to promote equal use of power within the counselling transaction.

Working alliance refers to a framework that can be used in all forms of communication for the purpose of providing structure that eventually concludes with having accomplished the goals that were defined and agreed upon throughout the communication exchange. More specifically the working alliance refers to a specific set of skills that are purposefully and intentionally applied within the context of a counselling scenario. The working alliance can be used for the purpose of creating "a strong working alliance [that] encourages self-exploration and the disclosure of relevant information and helps people feel ready to risk trying new approaches for dealing with a problem situation" (Hiebert, 2003, p. 2). Extensive research has established that the quality of the relationship is an essential ingredient of effective psychotherapy (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Wolfe & Goldfried, 1988). As Hiebert pointed out, "It is generally accepted (cf. Gelso & Carter, 1994; Manera & Patton, 1994; Horvath & Symonds, 1991) that a strong working alliance develops when there is:

1) agreement on the goals toward which counsellor and client are working,

2) agreement on the tasks that need to be accomplished in order for those goals to be realized, and

3) Mutual respect and trust between counsellor and client (Hiebert, 2003, p. 2).

To ensure that the working alliance is firmly established it is important for the counsellor to solicit feed back from the client to ensure their mutual understanding of the goals that have been set. An effective way of doing this is to have the client paraphrase the goals in his own words. This will provide the counsellor with an opportunity to further clarify the goals if necessary until both the client and counsellor reach the same understanding.

Hiebert identifies five possible goals of counselling: relationship building, problem solving or decision making, skill training, personal coping, and self-management (2003, p. 18 – 19). Regarding the efficacy of the working alliance model, Kivlighan, Patrick, and Schmitz (1992), indicate that the working alliance is most effective when the counsellor uses a "concrete focus which involves attention to specific thoughts or behaviors" (p. 34). When instituting the various components of the working alliance, the counsellor is able to assist the client with problem solving or decision making by entering into a collaborative relationship with the client that assists and supports the client with exploration and application of various strategies that the client may not be inclined to utilize on his or her own. Once a strategy is agreed upon, the counsellor may assist the client with skill training to help the client effectively implement and apply the chosen problem solving or decision making strategy. In addition to offering coping skills and support to the client, the working alliance relationship may offer self-management skills to help the client follow through on the chosen course of action.

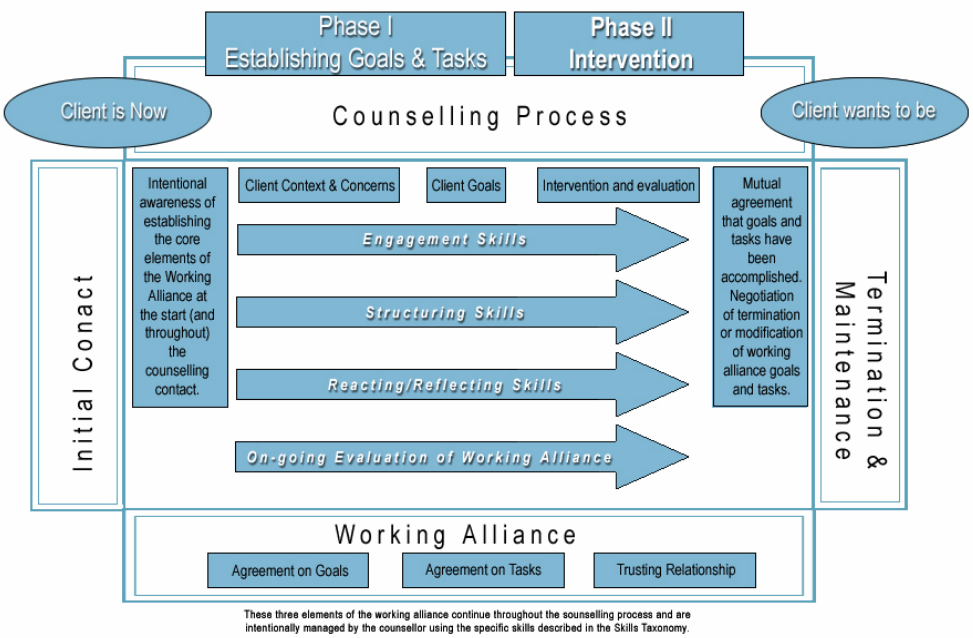

Figure 1: *The working alliance concept*. Printed with permission. Hiebert, B., & Jerry, P. (2002). Retrieved from the CAAP website, May, 2003.

The working alliance provides skills that, when utilized during counselling, help to enhance meaningfulness, engage people, clarify and provide feedback, and offers skills for attending. Skills that help to enhance meaning consist of over viewing, goal setting, transitioning, reviewing, summarizing, and providing information. In order to establish structure within the context of the working alliance, it is helpful to think of the conversation in terms of art galleries and picture frames. As the client discusses a specific topic, that can be viewed as a gallery and as the client explores the various topics from various perspectives, this can be viewed as frames (Keeney, 1990). Within the context of the working alliance, as the client moves from frame to frame, this creates galleries—in therapy, there is often a presenting gallery, a bridging gallery, and a therapeutic gallery (Keeney).

Creating a working alliance is founded upon a trusting relationship, mutually agreed upon goals and tasks, and is fundamental to effective counselling. Within the context of the working alliance, there are six factors necessary for constructive change to occur, as outlined by Rogers (1992):

1. "Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved)" (p. 827).

In order to convey unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding to the client, it is necessary for the multi-cultural career counsellor to be cognizant of issues of equality and diversity (Pope, 2003). Equality is in reference to creating a working environment where the therapist and client are given equal power over the interaction. "Power is a central dynamic in multi-cultural encounters. Yet many people, especially counsellors, are reluctant to discuss their experiences with power and what it means to them. As a result, power remains an often unspoken, disturbing issue in multi-cultural counselling and counsellor education" (Ramsey, 1997, p. 277). Power may be defined as the capacity to produce desired effects on others or the capacity to influence, for one's own benefit, the forces that affect one's life

(Pinderhughes, 1989 as cited by Ramsey, 1997, p. 277). A question I often ask of clients at the start of our session is, “How do you want to spend this time today”. This turns the power over to the client and allows the client to set the agenda for the working relationship.

Although the focus of this list of considerations for counsellors is directed towards individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds such as immigrants, a universalistic view of culture suggests that all clients have unique cultural backgrounds (Pedersen, 2001). Attention to the working alliance is critical in all forms of counselling to ensure that culture is appropriately considered in goals and processes (Collins & Arthur, 2005). To further strengthen the working alliance in a manner that accomplishes collaboration, it is critical to incorporate respect for diversity and equal uses of power within the transaction.

A useful way to learn about and further respect diversity is to take the time to learn about other cultures through networking with diverse individuals outside the context of counselling as well as network with other counsellors who share a passion for celebrating cultural diversity. Such exposure will provide the counsellor with the opportunity to further assess her own beliefs of reality further strengthening the counsellor’s self-awareness.

Equity and Diversity

In addition to establishing a working alliance built on diversity, it is essential to become cognizant of one’s own personal use of power by analyzing one’s worldview, acculturation, racism, and ethnocentrism. It is within these contexts that our use of power evolves. Because of the diversity represented in the Canadian workforce, the reality is that every encounter with an individual has the potential to be a cross-cultural one, in that there will be relative similarities and differences between the worldviews of each of the individuals. Because of this diversity and cross-cultural encounter, cognitive awareness of

uniqueness and differences is an essential component to making room for and celebrating differences.

> Worldview is a cultural construction of reality that has developed as a basis for sanctioned actions to permit survival and adaptation under particular shared living conditions, geographic circumstances, and catastrophic events. It is based upon this worldview that one's values, beliefs, language, behaviors, and customs are established. Personality is formed by those characteristics considered to be important within the culture, particularly as a result of child-rearing practices and by living conditions that accrue from caste and class and include socioeconomic status and educational level as well as life experiences and trauma (Dana, 1998, p. 17).

Out of one's worldview an individual's level of awareness of such ideologies on a cognitive and affective level, one's behaviours or actions are formed. With this in mind we turn our focus next to internal acculturation and one's resulting use of power—the result of acculturation. In order for career counsellors to work effectively with multi-cultural individuals, it is necessary to become aware of enculturation. Ethnocentrism is when an individual believes that her worldview is shared by all of human history (Dana, 1998) The concept of culture most relevant to counselling pertains not to the culture external to the individual but to the culture internalized by the individual through enculturation (Ho, 1995). The key to effective multi-cultural career counselling is the awareness of cultural diversity which has value not only for understanding another person's culture but also one's own, and ultimately, for greater self-understanding.

> Such awareness facilitates psychological decentering through adopting a comparative frame of mind that liberates people from cultural encapsulation,

> that is, from viewing the world through only one cognitive system rooted in a culture. A strong claim may be made: Those who do not know the culture of others do not really know their own (Ho, 1992 as cited by Ho, 1995, p. 20).

Ethnic stereotyping, ethnic attitudes, and ethnic prejudice can be studied with respect to both the receiving society and immigrants. Berry (2001) asserts that only when people are secure in their own cultural identity will they be able to accept those who differ from themselves.

A potential tool for counsellors to utilize to help assess their own self awareness and multi-cultural counselling competencies is the *Multi-cultural Counseling Inventory.* "The MCI is a 40-item self-report inventory designed to assess the competencies of counsellors who work with minority or culturally diverse clients" (Sodowsky et al., 1994 as cited by Arthur & Januszkowski, 2001, p. 37). The tool provides insight into the counsellor's multi-cultural responsiveness, understanding and advocacy for multi-cultural clients.

Understanding World Views

Career counsellors working with diverse or multi-cultural individuals must become aware of their own cultural background and socialization as well as develop an understanding of how their cultural heritage influences their worldview and understanding of diversity in a culturally pluralistic society. Counsellors need to understand how the history of their heritage has shaped their beliefs about human functioning and concepts of normalcy (Arthur & Stewart, 2001). Counsellors need to recognize that their effectiveness depends partially on their awareness of their 'culture within' and how it differs from that of a client from a non-dominant group thereby exploring one's own affective beliefs and ideologies from an 'idiographic perspective' (Ridley, 1995 as cited by Arthur & Stewart, 2001). Idiographic

refers to discrete or unique facts or events, for instance history is an idiographic discipline, studying events that cannot be repeated (*Merriam-Webster, 2000.).*

Acculturation and Power

Acculturation is an adaptation or assimilation process by an ethnic/racial group to a host culture (Berry, 1989 as cited by Dana, 1998, p. 20). Counsellors must not discount the extent to which their own socialization accounts for their level of acculturation and how that affects her worldview and ensuing behavior. Socialization refers to the learning process that begins at infancy by which an individual acquired the values, rules, skills, and attitudes relevant to her participation in society (Longman, 1984, p. 1419). In multi-cultural counselling, self-awareness is vital such that the counsellor does not respond to the client in a manner that is condescending or paternalistic which may only serve to reinforce learned powerlessness and passivity. An example of paternalistic behavior that would reinforce powerlessness would be if the counsellor were to treat the client as though he were incapable of thinking for himself, perhaps requiring the individual to always justify his thoughts.

> Enhancing awareness of cultural diversity has value for understanding not only another person's culture but also one's own, and, ultimately, for greater self-understanding. Such awareness facilitates psychological decentering through adopting a comparative frame of mind that liberates people from cultural encapsulation, that is, from viewing the world through only one cognitive system rooted in a culture. Psychological decentering is thus therapeutic to guilt-ridden researchers and professionals (Ho, 1995, p. 20).

Power and the use thereof is an important aspect of multi-cultural encounters and counselling. "Power may be defined as the capacity to produce desired effects on others or

the capacity to influence, for one's own benefit, the forces that affect one's life" (Pinderhughes, 1989 as cited by Ramsey, 1997, p. 277). How one applies power is influenced by that person's beliefs, and at times unexamined beliefs, which can be unhelpful in dealing with individuals representing diversity. For this reason, the counsellor must take time to understand her acculturation and how that affects her use of power within the counselling scenario. An example of this would be a counsellor who is highly educated encountering an immigrant whose experiences and worldview differ from that of the counsellor. The counsellor may assume the client is ignorant because she does not have the same acculturation experience of being highly educated. Such an assumption could lead to the misuse of power. The need to identify subconsciously formulated assumptions and biases as early as possible will help the counsellor prevent misuses of power incorrectly founded upon false assumptions.

Achieving a deeper level of self awareness by examining one's own acculturation one can better identify faulty beliefs founded upon false conclusions resulting in biases and racism. To eliminate or at least minimize biases and racism, it is essential that the counsellor assess her own cognitive and affective awareness of her acculturation and resulting behaviors. In keeping with the example cited above regarding the highly educated counsellor working with an immigrant whose own experiences and education differs from the client, unexamined acculturation of the counsellor's back ground, may cause the counsellor to falsely conclude that all immigrants have little education. Such an assumption would be an example of a bias or racism. To guard against bias and racism, it would be useful for the counsellor to start the self-reflection process by considering if conclusive, quantifiable data is available to support the assumption.

Racism

Racism is the implicit assumption that an individual shares certain characteristics in common with another individual based on the common shared racial heritage (Longman (1984). An outcome of racism is the development of biases that adversely affect our relationships with individuals who differ from ourselves. In particular there are three distinct forms of bias: cultural, individual, and institutional.

> Cultural or group bias often appears in the form of stereotyping that defines the culture of one group as superior and by insidious comparison denigrates another cultural group. Individual or personal bias occurs in decisions that affect the life and well-being of persons in various cultural groups and in aversive encounters that individuals in these groups have with Anglo Americans. Institutional bias appears in the formal or informal policies of all societal systems at the national, state, or agency levels. These policies are often subtle and have indirect effects on cultural groups that serve to restrict, minimize, discourage, or deny mental health services (Griffin, 1991 as cited by Dana, 1998, p. 21).

To promote change and help eliminate damaging biases and stereotypes, there is a need to value diversity in both the individual and the environment. In order to establish this value for diversity, one's own ethnocentrism must be explored. Some examples of ethnocentrism may be occupational segregation or belief that only certain groups can excel, or that certain groups are incapable of performing a certain job.

Ethnocentrism

"Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's worldview is reality that pervades human history" (Dana, 1998, p. 23). Only with ongoing work in the arenas of cognitive, affective, and behavioral awareness, can the walls of ethnocentrism be broken down.

> Bennett (1986) described a model of ethnocentrism/ethnorelativism in which denial, an initial stage of ethnocentrism resulting from isolation and separation, is successively replaced by defense with postures of denigration, then by negative stereotyping and superiority, and finally, by minimization of differences" (Cited by Dana, 1998, p. 23). "For example, consider two sub cultural differences within the same cultural group, between women and men, old and young people, or rich and the poor. The evidence suggests that men and women in different groups are socialized differently (Pearson, Turner, & Todd-Mancillas, 1991). It supports the contention that they have different internalized cultures and that, in a psychological sense, they belong to different sub cultural groupings. Moreover, individual differences in internalized culture would be found among women and men alike. The same argument applies to the old and the young, as well as to the rich and the poor. (Ho, 1995, p. 6).

As we spend time understanding ourselves, our world, and our place in it we can begin to transcend limiting ethnocentrism or the belief that one's own perspective or worldview is reality for all. An example of a limiting ethnocentric belief on behalf of the counsellor is that the client's problem can best be resolved using a Westernized worldview. Rather a more appropriate approach would be to ask the client for insight into how a particular problem would likely be resolved in the client's culture of origin

using the client's own worldview. Keep in mind that the nature of reality is multi-faceted based on multiple socially constructed realities, and the nature of knowing is based on a relationship between the knower and the would-be-known to explore values and create findings (Mertens, 1998). In a world as pluralistic as our own, there is room for the diversity of all. Therefore, the counsellor must be cognizant of the fact that her reality is not shared by her client. In order to eliminate ethnocentrism, the counsellor must make an effort to experience the world from the client's reality or the client's point of view. This is in keeping with the old adage of walking a mile in someone else's shoes.

A potential tool for counsellors to use to assess their awareness of their own worldview, acculturation and ethnocentrism is a technique called *Critical Incidents.* This is a tool that is generally used with clients to help them reflect on past experiences and learn from those experiences. This tool can be used by counsellors in recounting a multi-cultural encounter and their competent handling of the scenario in order to learn from such encounters. The counsellor could ask herself the following questions:

1. "Think of a recent client whose cultural background was different than your own when a counselling session went particularly well.
2. Think of a recent client whose cultural background was different than your own when a counselling session did not proceed as well as it could have" (Arthur and Januszkowki, 2001, p. 38).

Counselling Immigrants and Refugees

Research reveals people's fears around immigration. "On one hand people take pride in their appreciation for cultural diversity; on the other, they fear immigrants because of

perceived threats to their economic and social stability. “When resources in the larger society are limited, anti-immigration attitudes emerge as a protective stance against competition for commodities such as employment and social services” (Berry, 2001; Palmer, 1996 as cited by Arthur & Merali, 2002, p. 9). One of the roles, as a multi-cultural counsellor, is to build a bridge of understanding between the host culture and new members to that culture. Counsellors can be an advocate on behalf of all humanity regarding the importance of effectively managing the world’s mutual resources which have been given to sustain all and not a select few. It may at times be necessary to directly challenge the values, beliefs, behaviours and customs of Western worldview. The counsellor can help the host culture understand the importance of helping the diverse client succeed. For instance when internationally trained professionals enter the Canadian workforce and succeed within their new roles, the entire economy benefits.

Counsellors can prepare for multi-cultural counselling by becoming informed about the culturally diverse groups who live in their local area and province. Second, counsellors can make contact with immigrant-serving agencies to become familiar with settlement services and programs. Three factors that influence an immigrant’s experience in a pluralistic society such as Canada include *assimilation, separation,* and *integration* (Berry, 2001).

> *Assimilation* is the adaptive process whereby refugees discard their own cultures and customs and replace them with the customs and cultures predominant in the mainstream society of their new homeland. With *separation*, individuals take on none of the customs and culture of their new country and remain segregated from mainstream society. With marginalization, individuals fail to fit in with both their old customs and

> culture and those of their new country. With *integration*, people take on the best of both worlds and continue to observe the customs and preserve the culture of their native culture and also take on the values and customs of their new society. (Prendes-Lintel, 2001, p. 737 – 738).

> *Mutual accommodation* is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both dominant and non-dominant groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples within the same society. This strategy requires immigrants to adopt the basic values of the receiving society, and at the same time the receiving society must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g., education, health, justice, and labour) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the larger plural society. (Berry, 2001, p. 620).

Ethnic stereotyping, ethnic attitudes, and ethnic prejudice can be studied with respect to both the receiving society and immigrants. Berry, (2001), asserted that only when people are secure in their own cultural identity will they be able to accept those who differ from themselves. An important part of facilitating mutual accommodation for a diverse client who is trying to assimilate into a host culture is counsellor advocacy on behalf of the client. As counsellors begin to convey to the general public the experiences of the diverse client within a new host culture, the counsellor can better explore personal prejudices through attempting to advocate on behalf of clients within a new host culture.

Having outlined specific examples of the multi-cultural client (immigrants and refugees) in the section above, I would like to outline next what is meant by career counselling within the context of career development.

Career Counselling

What is Career Counselling?

Career counselling plays a central role in career development. Career counselling is essentially about gaining an,

> "Understanding that helps in guiding human development, in facilitating self-actualization in ways that benefit both the individual and society." (Super & Bohn, 1970, p. vii). Sears (1982) describes career development as, "The total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape individual career behaviour over the life span" (as cited by Herr, 2001 p. 196).

Based on this one can conclude that an individual's career development is impacted by one's behaviours, one's perceptions, as well as external influences, e.g., experiences that shape a person's capabilities and career path opportunities. Given this combination of behaviours and career socialization, career counsellors increasingly take on roles as planners, applied behavioural scientists, and technologists as they strive to keep up with the increasing pace of change in the world of work (Herr, 2001). Career planning, management and development is important because it is recognized that,

> A life that has some structure, some sequence, some order imposed by the abilities and interests of the individual interacting with the conditions and demands of society is likely to be more satisfying than a life that lacks structure and that is not guided by the inner capacities of the man or woman living it (Super & Bohn, 1970, p. 2).

As the landscape of Canadian career development changes due to increasing amounts of diversity, career development counsellors must stay current on the theories of career counselling and the diverse practical issues that emerge. Career development services must be delivered in a way that is cost-effective and solution focused ensuring efficacy while researching to understand how career behaviour of the poor and less educated can be strengthened in a time when the work force is shrinking due to aging demographics. Access to public services such as Human Resources and Employment Centres can provide career counsellors with many useful tools to build cost-effective, solution focused interventions.

Career development counsellors are turning more to a model of coaching and mentoring to help enhance career performance and stimulate exploration of meaningful career development with individuals. Within this paradigm, clients are viewed as active agents in creating their own experiences and meaning. This could be considered the constructivist perspective where career counsellors value the possibility of multiple realities and thereby strive toward enhancing their own and their clients' understandings of the world.

> Peavy (1994) proposes three essential competencies of constructivist career counsellors. *Mindfulness* refers to the capacity of a career counsellor to understand oneself as a constructed(ing) person without imposing personal meanings or directions onto clients. *Receptive inquiry* refers to creating a respectful climate in which clients can explore their assumptions and interpretations of their life experiences and preferred futures. *Meaning making* requires career counsellors to competently use a variety of strategies to support clients in discovering patterns, core themes, and meanings within their life stories. Career counsellors collaborate with clients to increase self-

reflection about meaning of work in their lives, to explore alternative possibilities, and to empower individuals to take action in their career construction process (Richardson, 2000) for the future (Arthur, 2003, CAAP 621 website, no longer have access to cite URL).

As career counsellors step into the role of coach/mentor, in order to be effective with *mindfulness, receptive inquiry* and *meaning making*, they must engage in further self-exploration in order to further develop multi-cultural competencies. To accomplish this, they may explore personal values and believes within their own worldview, assess the level at which they have automatically assimilated the Western culture both consciously and unconsciously, and measure their own level of ethnocentrism or the belief that one reality is shared by others.

Given the complexity of career development, indecision and procrastination around career choices may be experienced by clients. Career problems have a strong emotional component, and the fear of career exploration could be labelled as zeteophobia. Zeteophobia has a Greek origin and means “fear of searching out” (Krumboltz, 1993). The daunting task of determining meaningful employment or career development could result in various behaviours by individuals. Some procrastinate, some make quick decisions to reach closure, and some tackle the problem by engaging in exploration and thought provoking self investigation. The role of career development counsellors is to help individuals understand their unique personal qualities and how that uniqueness aligns with potential career profiles (Krumboltz, 1993). In the area of fitting individuals with specific career options, computers greatly assist career counsellors with career profiles but the element of human subjectivity in the process is not eliminated. On occasion, the client may have developed assumptions that

limit full exploration and hinder the consideration of some career options. At times the systemic influences in one's past might lead to learned counterproductive thinking patterns, for instance one might believe that her gender may limit certain career options. Although counsellors do their best to help clients explore suitable career options, the possibility of problems around human subjectivity remains.

> Career counsellors, theorists, and researchers must work together to meet the enormous challenge of bridging the gap between objective knowledge and subjective understanding to make possible a science of career intervention. It is a substantial challenge to create a systematic science of intervention, especially one that benefits clients. Nevertheless, this is precisely the challenge that counsellors and researchers must meet if they are to advance the field beyond its present accomplishments and refurbish vocational psychology and career counselling for the 21st century (Savickas, 1996, p. 205).

No only must theory be bridged with application, but this must also be done within the framework of evaluating the career counsellor's multi-cultural counselling competencies. Strengthening these competencies can be done through careful consideration of one's own worldview, acculturation, and ethnocentrism. The objective is to strengthen the self-awareness of the counsellor.

Solution Focused Career Counselling Intervention

The following section further builds upon the exploration of career counselling by offering a practical application solution focused intervention which has as its foundation career development theory of the past and present. Donald Super's career development

theory (1970) outlines that careers unfold over the course of an individual's life span. Super identified five primary stages: growth stage, exploration stage, establishment stage, maintenance stage, and decline stage. A high level summary from Super's theory which is foundational to the proposed solution focused career counselling intervention is as follows:

- Identify individual differences (aptitudes such as reasoning, spatial visualization, perceptual speed and accuracy, manual dexterities)
- Identify motivation and needs (psychological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, importance, respect, self-esteem, information, understanding, beauty, self-actualization or achievement, deference, order, exhibition, autonomy, affiliation, interception (subjectivism), succorance, dominance, abasement, nurturance, change, endurance, heterosexuality, and aggression)
- Personality traits and adjustments
- Values (altruism, aesthetics, creativity, intellectual stimulation, independence, achievement, prestige, management, economic returns, security, surroundings, supervisory relations, associates, variety, way of life)
- Interests
- Achievements (Super & Bohn, 1970).

During each stage the individual's self concept is affected differently and the counsellor can offer a valuable service to the client by exploring these self-concept phases within each of the stages (formation process, translation of self-concepts, implementation process, preservation of the self-concept, and adequacy of the translation).

This proposed career development intervention is holistic in that it examines a person's current level of satisfaction in the following areas: career, individually,

interpersonally, socially, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, and overall. As a way of guiding the process as well as establishing a baseline against which to measure progress, the client is asked to specify what goal(s) the career counselling relationship will focus on, and what will be different when the client reaches those goals.

Once a baseline is established outlining where the client is now and where the client would like to go, prior to exploring the client's accomplishments, skills, interests, values, personality, and potential opportunities that would be in keeping with the client's self discovery (Mittertreiner, 1998), the client's life roles and self-concept are explored. An understanding of life roles is important to ensure congruence between those roles and one's career development. It is essential to understand how the client perceives him/herself (self-concept) and how those perceptions help or hinder the individual's development. Once life roles and self concept are understood, the first step in the process is to examine accomplishments. From past accomplishments individuals establish dreams and aspirations for their future. Through the use of narrative stories, individuals begin exploring their past accomplishments in order to identify underlying themes and values that influenced their former decisions and why those accomplishments were so meaningful.

The second step is to explore skills in three broad areas: 1) technical skills, these may be the result of education, training or experience. 2) Self-management skills, these skills are in relation to a person's temperament, personality characteristics, and psychological abilities to overcome adversity, and 3) transferable skills, these are functional skills that have many applications in many settings. From these three categories, the client then narrows down her strongest skills with things, people, and information or data.

The third step is to explore interests within six broad categories—social, artistic, investigative, realistic, conventional, and enterprising (Holland's Theory of Types as cited by Scharf, 2002). Social interests refer to a desire to work with people. Artistic interests refer to a desire to work with creative imagination. Investigative interests refer to analytical evaluation for problem solving. Realistic interests refer to a person's ability to work with objects, machines, plants, animals, etc. Conventional interests refer to a desire to work with data, numbers and details. Enterprising interests refer to a desire to manage, influence and persuade others. The fourth step is to evaluate one's values or anchors for how she conducts her life. For example, values can be as diverse as autonomy and freedom to money and security. Culturally sensitive career counselling recognizes that values are culturally learned and internalized through enculturation as outlined above. The culturally sensitive counsellor will respect the individual client's values and become aware of her own internalized values so as to not overtly or covertly allow the work with the client to be hindered by the counsellor's personal values.

The fifth step is to examine the client's personality type. One reputable tool that has been used to help people understand their personality type is the Myers-Briggs personality assessment. The model is built upon Carl Jung's work and classifies a person using eight broad categories, introvert/extrovert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving (Myers, 1993). Another useful tool to help individuals understand their communication personality style is the DiSC dimensions of behaviour (DiSC Classic Version 9.0, 2001). The DiSC uses four broad categories of classifying individuals: director, influencer, steady and conscientious.

The sixth step is to examine career opportunities that would match the person's accomplishments, skills, interests, values, and personality. When considering options, it is important to be open to the client's cultural background. For instance perhaps a Muslim woman may wish to be a car mechanic but her family will not permit her to work with men. In addition to computer generated inventories, there are many good reference guides that can be utilized to help the client identify career options and explore the past, present, and future trends for specific career options such as the Alberta Career Update 2004.

To pull all these aspects together and help the client develop an action plan, it is important to look at discrepancies between where the client is now and where the client envisions moving toward in order to establish short-term and long-term goals toward a desired future. A useful tool that can help monitor a person's progress toward a desired end is the use of a time journey that schedules activities linked to the individual's priorities each day. It is important for clients to internalize responsibility for making change versus waiting for change to occur. During each consultation sessions, the client provides an account of progress made over the past week toward her desired end assigning a grade to each day in terms of how successful she had used that day toward attainment of goals. A useful tool to be used in assigning an effectiveness rating is the Corporate Performance Coaching Inc OnCourse tool (Kalley & Pitsel, 2000).

Case Study Application of the Solution-Focused Career Development Intervention

In the application of the solution focused career development intervention, firstly it is acknowledged that individuals continue to grow, develop and change as a result of the experiences they have and the new information they take in over the span of their lives. Therefore, the application of this procedural career development intervention is an iterative

process that an individual can refer back to throughout her career progression in order to more effectively manage her career and the development of various components over the span of her career.

In providing career counselling to clients, the following intervention is divided into three phases—planning, development and management phases. The planning phase is an introspective phase which offers clients' tools to explore in depth the foundation of their uniqueness upon which to build/develop their career. During the management phase, the client asks herself if a particular career/role/employment option is in keeping with the person's overall life/career management plan. This career development intervention is designed for use with clients primarily at the planning and initial development phase. The population that could most benefit from this intervention is the group of individuals who have begun in some manner their career and are mature enough to engage in self introspection with the use of a counsellor playing the role primarily as coach. In general the target group will be between the ages of 25 and 35 with some work experience and understanding of herself in the world.

This solution focused career development intervention is further demonstrated by applying the intervention to a fictitious scenario with an individual named E.K. Personal, and contextual information is highlighted along with considerations for career counselling. E.K. can be considered a client with multiple barriers. For instance, E.K. has little formal education having left high school at grade 10. E.K. is from a large family that has little resources and reserve to encourage or support E.K. in career development pursuits. E.K. is a 30 year old married female who reveals throughout the intervention that she feels her social, economical and educational back ground are hindrances in her career development. With the

revelation of these self-concept factors, the primary role of the culturally sensitive career counsellor is help the client move past perceived barriers to challenge and empower themselves in taking responsibility and ownership for their own career planning, development, and management. The counsellor's own acculturation of having experiences that are dissimilar from the client must be clearly understood, e.g., differences in education levels. An understanding of acculturation is necessary so as to not interfere with the effort of establishing client ownership. An example of misuse of power in this instance would be for the counsellor to resort to paternalistic behaviour assuming that she knows what is best for the client because, for instance, the counsellor's breadth of education level is perhaps broader than the education obtained by the client. Such conscious and unconscious behaviour would only serve to reinforce learned helplessness rather than encourage the client to take responsibility for her life and career development. E.K. had been contemplating the start up of her own business which formed the basis of our work together. Together E.K. and I explored where she is currently and her desired direction, life roles and life structure, how E.K. perceives herself (self-concept), her skills, interests, values, personality, career options and action plan.

The Client's Current State and the Client's Desired Future Direction

Establishing where the client is currently and identifying a desired destination helps to establish a baseline against which progress can be measured. This holistic career development intervention integrates several of the complex systems in one's personhood and acknowledges their interconnectedness. In order to strike the initial baseline, clients are encouraged to identify their current level of satisfaction, by simply placing a mark on a line scale in the following areas: career, individually, interpersonally, socially, spiritually,

emotionally, mentally, physically, and overall. From there the client begins to identify career development related goals and desired direction based upon the findings from the individual's exploration of current satisfaction levels. Together the client and counsellor identify the highest priority areas upon which to focus their attention. The culturally sensitive career counsellor must be continually cognizant of their own internalized culture and sense of what is deemed acceptable goals and progress toward those goals. This is particularly important where a Westernized counsellor whose culture is heavily influence by goals and progress toward those goals is working with a multi-cultural client, for instance an immigrant, whose internalized culture may place less emphasis on goal setting and attainment and more emphasis on family and harmony with the universe.

Working with E.K., it was discovered that E.K. had recently left her part-time job where she had been for several years. The reason for her departure is that she was no longer enjoying her role. Looking toward the future, E.K. wanted to establish her own means of employment that she could regulate and integrate with the other areas of her life. E.K. wanted to have the benefit of flexibility that would allow her to fully participate in all the different areas of her life. Once E.K. reaches that goal, E.K. would be in a position to generate income and manage her time how she deemed important. That then formed the starting point of our work together.

Life Structure Including Life Roles

As was previously pointed out, when the individual's life roles work in alignment with the individual's career, it is likely that the individual will experience greater satisfaction in their work life than if the career were to be unaligned with that individual's life roles. Life roles change along with the individual's stages in life. For instance some individuals are at

the beginning of their career; they are single and have no dependants. Others may be at the end of their career, may be supporting children at university as well as having children at home, and may be providing support to their aging parents. The individual's life structure and life roles play an important part in the individual's career development, and overall satisfaction in this area is dependent upon congruence between/among all the various roles in the individual's life.

Working with E.K. she outlined that her husband was experiencing some financial pressure as a result he indicated to her that it would be helpful to their household if she could begin earning a salary again. E.K. also expressed that there were some significant responsibilities/obligations with her extended family which would require her to potentially be out of town for extended periods of time as she spends time with her father who had recently been in a car accident. Because of this, E.K. emphasized how important flexibility is to her.

In the Western worldview the care of family members may not share the same level of priority as in other cultures and worldviews. It is important for the counsellor to take a close look at her own values, beliefs, behaviours, and customs that may be different from the client's. Having an awareness of potential worldview differences is essential to guard against the counsellor imposing her values, beliefs, and behaviours regarding the care of extended family members onto the client.

The Client's Self Perception

The client's self-perception can either help or hinder the career development process. For instance, subconsciously some individuals may eliminate certain options for a number of reasons that need not be determining factors. For instance, some individuals may deem a

particular career option unattainable because of the amount of formal training required which the individual feels is unattainable for reasons such as time commitment and the associated costs. Another example may be linked to race or gender—for instance, if a particular occupation group is largely characterized by male Caucasians, a female Asian may rule out such a career option.

E.K. indicated that she thought maybe her education level would be a hindrance to her in starting her own business. Working together it is important that we identify specifically what areas that E.K. feels need to be stronger and develop a strategy around strengthening those skills. It may not be necessary for E.K. to obtain formal, expensive, and time consuming training. The same information may be available to E.K. in a manner that is cost effective, accessible, and convenient for E.K.'s circumstances.

Skills

When assessing skills, it is important to note that people differ in aptitudes, motivation, and achievement (Super & Bohn, 1970). As indicated above, there are three broad categories of skills: technical skills, self-management skills, and transferable skills. When exploring skills it is important to remember that people have different strengths of skills in the areas of things, people, and information or data. E.K. noted that she has strong interpersonal skills, she enjoys working with people and she has been successful in networking people and resources together to accomplish tasks. E.K. particularly enjoys using her networking skills and she listed a number of client/clientele connection services that she could develop.

In making the assessment of skills, the counsellor must view each diverse client as a unique individual. Falsely making an assumption about the specific skills of a client being

similar to or the same as another client who demonstrates similar characteristics is an example of uncensored bias.

Interests

Holland's theory of types identifies five broad categories of interests: social, artistic, investigative, realistic, conventional, and enterprising (Scharf, 2002). It is valuable for individuals to narrow down and be specific about her interests. A high degree of specificity is encouraged because the more clear an individual can be about her interests the easier it will be to evaluate options that would be in keeping with the person's interests. Understanding interests also help's the individual manage their career by evaluating if they are spending the majority of their time and energy on things that are of interest.

E.K. indicated that she has primarily social, investigative, and realistic interests. E.K. is interested in helping people enjoy life, helping people to connect and learn more about themselves. E.K. is interested in continual learning, development, and overall investigation. She feels that her other interests are realistic because she enjoys doing practical things with her hands.

Values

Values are at the core of everything we do whether we realize it or not. The things an individual values most will ultimately influence and drive the way in which the individual conducts their life. For instance some people value leisure and family time and others value constant activity or seclusion. These values must be front and center when contemplating career development because they will help guide the process. Again, the culturally sensitive career counsellor will know their own values and how those values differ from the client so

as to avoid having the counsellor's values influence the client in either a covert or an overt manner.

E.K. found the exploration of her values the most enlightening part of our work together. When she took the time to prioritize her values, she was surprised to see her resulting top three values. She noted that this was most helpful because it helped her identify the things that she should be saying yes to. She indicated that by knowing what her 'yes' is, it helped her better identify what her 'no' is.

Counsellor self-awareness is essential to guard against the counsellor imposing, either consciously or unconsciously, his own values onto the client. Having a firm grasp on his own worldview will prevent the counsellor from imposing his way of being in the world. As previously discussed, tools such as journaling about critical incidents or completing self-assessments such as the *Multi-cultural Counselling Inventory* may be useful in helping the counsellor explore personal worldview.

Personality

Personality is an important part of the career development process wither a person is an introvert or an extrovert, thinking or feeling ought to be taken into consideration during the career development process. By matching one's personality with career options helps ensure a greater congruence between the two. If an individual's authentic personality is not nurtured in one's work, eventually the individual may experience frustration within that context.

E.K. discovered that she is an extrovert. She indicated that had come as a surprise to her because she explained how she was once very shy and typically avoided people. Now she enjoys spending time with people and as she ages she has discovered that she is becoming

less shy and enjoys being surrounded by people. E.K. also discovered that she is a great promoter of ideas and finds influencing others easy. Subsequently she feels that she would be frustrated with a routine job that allowed for little contact with people or minimal creativity such as filing, accounting, or a job that requires strict attention to detail.

Options

With the use of multiple computerized assessment tools, the generation of options is no longer tedious or time consuming. The one caution about using computers to generate options is that it may overlook some of the less tangible elements of the individual that are difficult to measure or capture; determinants such as values and the individual's life structure or life roles. Options can also be clouded if the client is not honest with themselves and the individual's miscalculated self-concept may result in misleading information.

The career counsellor can demonstrate respect for the client's worldview when considering options. For instance a client whose worldview does not honour working on Sunday, the counsellor could respect that important aspect of the client's worldview by not identifying options that would routinely require the client to work on Sunday.

Action Plan

The action plan is an important part of the overall intervention. Without an action plan the career development intervention will be ineffective. The action plan helps the client break out into manageable tangible sequential steps the actions the individual must engage in order to make progress toward a desired end.

E.K. pointed out that as a result of our work together she experienced a 65 – 75% improvement in productivity by focusing on progress and improved self-talk. At times E.K. struggles with procrastination and when that occurs she begins berating herself mentally

which further contributes to a lack of progress. E.K. discovered that the best way to move forward with her career development was to break things out for herself in what she calls, “smaller than small steps”.

Evolving Multi-cultural Sensitive Career Counselling Resources

As career development continues to evolve, career counselling models designed to help manage the evolution will also continue to grow in scope to include an ever increasing multi-cultural component. In this section, I will highlight specific resources which include a multi-cultural component for future reference for career counsellors.

Zunker (2002) in his book, *Career Counselling Applied Concepts of Life Planning,* devotes entire chapters to discuss the specific multi-cultural needs of ‘special populations’ including career counselling with individuals with disabilities as well as career counselling for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Clients. Zunker discusses three overarching dimensions of the skilled culturally sensitive career counsellor which are necessary in working with multi-cultural individuals: ‘(1) understanding own assumptions, values, and biases; (2) understanding the worldview of the culturally different client; and (3) developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques’ (2002).

Leong (1995), in his book, *Career Development and Vocational Behaviour of Racial and Ethnic Minorities,* offers specific theory and research for career counselling Hispanic, Asian, Native, and African American clients. Leong discusses the importance of ‘self-efficacy or one’s ability to complete a task’ (Bandura, 1977 as cited by Leong, 1995) as important to one’s career development. He states that, the underlying concept of self-efficacy is the premise that people are able to self-govern their preferred reality and concludes that

African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans have been on the periphery of the power distribution (1995).

Drummond and Ryan (1995) in their book, *Career Counselling a Developmental Approach,* outline future trends in the job market that impact multi-cultural career counselling as well as offers assessment instruments to be used with minority groups and culturally sensitive counselling interventions.

> Our society is characterized by cultural heterogeneity. Minority groups will become the majority group in the next century. Career counsellors need to recognize the career development needs of minority group members and the types of interventions that are successful in working with these groups. Counsellors need not only be culturally sensitive but also culturally competent. Sensitivity begins with the awareness of other cultures based on firsthand knowledge and experience. Cultural competence begins with the acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural differences (Drummond and Ryan, 1995, p. 248).

Fouad and Bingham (1995) offer a culturally appropriate career counselling model (CACCM) which is sensitive to the needs of individuals from diverse ethnic groups. The authors indicate that some multi-cultural individuals have made career choices to avoid conflict or discomfort from discrimination and prejudice, and the model is designed to help such individuals move past these types of external barriers (as cited by Pope-Davis, Coleman, and, Ming Liu, 2003).

Leong and Hartung (1997) offer an integrative-sequential model (ISM) for multi-cultural career counselling that assists with identifying and comprehending cultural elements

within the client and counsellor relationship in order to help prevent barriers to effective counselling and positive outcomes (as cited by Pope-Davis, Coleman, and Ming, 2003).

Lastly, the multi-cultural competencies model (MCC) focuses on the importance of the self-awareness, knowledge, and skills of the career counsellor to provide multi-culturally competent carer counselling.

> The MCC model of career counselling will (a) help career counsellors better integrate multi-cultural factors in their career counselling interventions, (b) help stimulate future research on the applicability of the multi-cultural competencies model in career counselling, and (c) help career educators teach current and future career counsellors how to become more multi-culturally competent (as cited by Pope-Davis, Coleman, and Ming, 2003).

Synthesis and Conclusion

"Pedersen and Ivey (1993) suggest that counsellors adopt a 'culture-centered' or a 'culture within the person' perspective" (Arthur & Stewart, 2001, p. 5). "Culture-centered counselling competence is the counsellor's ability to provide services effectively to individuals with a different worldview" (Diller, 1999 as cited by Arthur & Stewart, 2001, p. 5). Within the counselling scenario, it is important that counsellors set an example of cognitive, affective, and behavioral awareness focusing on the desired outcome and creating an environment where everyone's voice is heard particularly the marginalized voices such that everyone is appropriately utilizing their own personal power.

Cultural identity refers to "a complex set of beliefs and attitudes that people have about themselves in relation to their culture group membership; usually these come to the forefront when people are in contact with another culture, rather than when they live entirely

within a single culture" (Berry, 1996b, Phinney, 1990, as cited by Berry, 2001, p. 620). Multi-cultural counselling requires counsellors to develop cross-cultural awareness, incorporate unique skills, and to appreciate how political, economic, and social systems impact migration and settlement (Arthur & Merali, 2002).

> Sue and Sue (1990), indicated that counsellors who work in cross-cultural settings must also consider the following: "(a) be aware of the socio-political factors that affect the client, (b) understand that culture and language may present barriers in the counselling process, (c) acknowledge that feeling different may influence the client's openness to change, (d) emphasize the importance of world views and cultural identity in the counselling process, (e) understand cultural and communication style differences among various groups, and (f) become aware of one's own cultural biases and assumptions (Sue & Sue, 1990, as cited by Poonwassie, 2001, p. 71).

The counsellor must also consider worldview, acculturation, racism, and ethnocentrism in multi-cultural counselling. Worldview is a cultural construction of reality that has developed as a basis for sanctioned actions to permit survival and adaptation under particular shared living conditions, geographic circumstances, and catastrophic events. It is based upon this worldview that one's values, beliefs, language, behaviours, and customs are established (Dana, 1998). Out of one's worldview and her level of awareness of such ideologies on a cognitive and affective level, one's behaviours or actions are formed.

Counsellors who take the time to educate themselves on the immigrant and multi-cultural individual's worldview are able to establish a relationship based on a common

understanding of the immigrant's perceptual framework and are more appropriately prepared to respond to the immigrant's level of need for counselling. Culture-centered counselling competence is the counsellor's ability to provide services effectively to individuals with a different worldview (Diller, 1999, as cited by Arthur & Stewart, 2001).

A diverse individual such as an immigrant's transition into the host culture is not always smooth and when individuals of that host culture impose their own Western views, this does nothing to support the transition. In working with multi-cultural clients, a collaborative approach is best. Such an approach helps counsellors to discard, verify, or correct their hypothesis and begin intervention (Prendes-Lintel, 2001). Further, collaborating resources include the refugee/immigrant client and/or family, interpreters, physicians, hospital personnel, case managers, resettlement workers, school personnel including English-as-a-Second–Language teachers, native healers, religious leaders, and others with whom the refugee or multi-cultural individual is significantly involved. Collaboration enhances understanding of the refugee/immigrant client's personal, familial, cultural, and traumatic experience with current adjustment difficulties (Prendes-Lintel, 2001).

The rate of acculturation is affected by *acculturation attitudes* that relate to the extent that people wish to have contact with (or avoid) others outside their group and the extent to which people wish to maintain (or give up) their cultural attitudes (Berry, 2001). In order for the counsellor to be effective, it is essential for the counsellor to recognize how ethnocentric Western views influence the counsellor's internal culture. For instance, Western culture of North America is characterized by a focus on the future, a task-orientation that emphasizes doing over being, and the mastery of humans over nature. The working alliance model represents Westernized thinking

offering a systematic linear process that emphasizes goals and tasks. When working with diverse individuals such as immigrants and multi-cultural clients, the counsellor will need to be cognizant of the fact that the working alliance model may need to be broken down into smaller pieces that the client finds useful. The emphasis ought to remain on the importance of building a trusting relationship and the working alliance model is a tool to help facilitate a beneficial outcome. In contrast with Westernized cultures, non-Western cultures have a past or present orientation and value learning from history, emphasize the importance of being over doing, and reflect subjugation of humans to nature (e.g., life is determined by external forces, such as fate or God's will), or alternatively, harmony with nature (Arthur & Merali, 2002).

Counsellors working with multi-cultural clients must become aware of their own cultural background and socialization as well as develop an understanding of how their cultural heritage influences their worldview and understanding of diversity in a culturally pluralistic society. Counsellors need to understand how the history of their heritage has shaped their beliefs about human functioning and concepts of normalcy (Arthur & Stewart, 2001). Counsellors need to recognize that their effectiveness depends partially on their awareness of their 'culture within' and how it differs from that of a client from a non-dominant group thereby exploring one's own affective beliefs and ideologies from an idiographic perspective (Ridley, 1995, as cited in Arthur & Stewart, 2001).

Summary of Practical Considerations and Recommendations to Improve Multi-cultural Competencies for Career Counselling

1. As more international and multi-cultural individuals enter the Canadian workforce, diversity will continue to increase in organizations and the work force of the future.

Culturally sensitive career counsellors must acknowledge the diversity and help diverse clients explore their uniqueness and identify their personal needs to help the client celebrate their uniqueness and manage their personal needs.

2. The working alliance provides a framework for use in career counselling, within that framework counsellors must consider cultural factors to further develop the capacity to share in another's feelings or ideas.
3. The process of becoming cultural and diversity sensitive is an ongoing obligation for career development counsellors. Sensitivity can be further established by exploring one's own cultural background, internalized culture and personal values in an effort to increase overall self-awareness.
4. Culturally sensitive career counsellors must enhance awareness around their own ethnocentrism constructs to ensure they do not promote racism either covertly or overtly.
5. Culturally sensitive career counsellors must work toward maintaining an open-mind, being non-judgmental and inclusive toward differences.
6. Persons from diverse backgrounds often have experience with oppression, discrimination and prejudice. Culturally sensitive career counsellors need to be cognizant of their use of power with diverse clients in order to help empower versus oppress the client.
7. Diverse individuals integrating into a new culture may lack power and access to the new society's resources. Culturally sensitive career counsellors need to help empower diverse clients to take responsibility and control of their preferred future through ongoing support and advocacy.

Conclusion

This list of considerations for career counselling multi-cultural individuals is intended to provide a baseline against which the counsellor can examine her own level of self awareness and multi-cultural career counselling competencies. It also offers some useful resources that can be referenced when providing the service of career counselling for the multi-cultural client.

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