



FINAL REPORT



HOPE

CENTRED CAREER | RESEARCH
INTERVENTIONS | PROJECT



PROJECT PARTNERS



PROJECT FUNDING



ceric

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INSTITUT CANADIEN D'ÉDUCATION ET DE RECHERCHE EN ORIENTATION

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Executive Summary

The Hope Centred Career Interventions research project is a follow-up to earlier CERIC funded research, which was focused on university students and identified that higher levels of hope are linked to higher GPAs and a clearer career identity among post-secondary students.

Recognizing that hope has an impact on outlook, resilience, and actions, (Clarke, Amundson, Niles & Yoon, in press) the main goal of this second CERIC funded research project was to better understand how hope could be increased for unemployed adults accessing publicly-funded employment services. This project set out to create tangible interventions, targeted to increasing hope competencies for job seeking adults. The aim was that through carefully designed interventions, using a constructivist active-engagement approach, with an intentional focus of creating a mattering-climate, that short, early interventions could increase the hopefulness of job seekers and help them be in a greater place of readiness for moving forward.

As a secondary goal, the project set out to include practitioners in the design and testing of the interventions and to equip them with new and relevant tools, making the time they spend with clients more effective. The project set out to create five different interventions that would be available in face-to-face (F2F) and online delivery formats. Practitioners would be trained in the Hope based career development model for F2F and online delivery. Practitioners specialized in F2F or online delivery to allow a greater opportunity for mastery of the intervention delivery. Through this approach, practitioners would be able to give feedback on the impact the interventions had in their practice approach. Similarities and differences of the F2F and online delivery would provide insights on the integration of online methodologies in career service delivery.

In Canada, all provinces provide services to support the career development and job search needs of their residents. The need to provide timely, cost effective and impactful interventions exists across service regions, often with challenging geographic realities. This research has direct relevance for the careers work being done throughout Canada in public employment centres in relation to potential early intervention engagement strategies that can propel a client more quickly to address their return to work needs. Further, the integration of online delivery may shed insights as provinces consider effective strategies to reach its resident base.

The project **objectives** were:

1. To establish a baseline of unemployed job seekers' career hope using HCCI (Hope Centered Career Inventory) and to create a career hope profile for an unemployed adult job seeker reporting low hope and high barriers;
2. To develop and evaluate effective HOPE based interventions to be delivered face-to-face or by a practitioner led process in on online counselling platform to improve hope-centred career competencies;
3. To understand how hope centred interventions can influence the actions of job seekers with low hope facing significant barriers by reassessing them through a series of in-depth interviews immediately after the interventions as well as at a 3-month follow-up period; and
4. To obtain practitioner feedback after using the interventions to evaluate the differing/similar experiences of the online and face-to-face delivery and to be able to adjust the interventions as necessary.

All the planned project **deliverables** were achieved:

- Identification and development of 5 Hope Centred Career Interventions for practical use in Public Employment Centres, with unemployed individuals
- Documented guides for face-to-face delivery of the interventions (included in Appendix 3)
- Training of Practitioners in the HOPE Delivery Model
- Delivery of Interventions to Clients
- Collection of Data to Understand the Impact of the Interventions

Both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis indicates that after participating in the interventions clients had an increased sense of hopefulness and that the increased hopefulness helped them develop new perspectives for action. Taking both face-to-face and online delivery methods into consideration, there were statistically significant improvements in all measures. Seventy percent of the people who were interviewed reported that their involvement in the project helped them to develop new perspectives on job search, to develop better career plans, and to be more confident in the decisions they were making.

The practitioners involved in the study, also indicated that the interventions helped them engage more quickly and deeply with their clients and were able to have more meaningful conversations related to the context of the clients career concern and the pressures in their life that impacted their sense of hopefulness. Through the structure of the interventions, there was space for deeply-reflective dialogue (online and F2F), with an organized methodology that allowed the dialogue and focus to continue moving forward toward the goal of greater understanding, decision making and goal setting. Both the practitioners and clients indicated that a significant impact on the effectiveness of the interventions was the creative, metaphor-focused approach and the experience of a strong mattering-climate.

An unintended outcome of the research was that the researchers and practitioners involved saw experiences unfolding that challenged pre-existing beliefs about the efficacy and characteristics of online counselling. Ultimately, this project provided a rich opportunity for discourse between professionals about the challenges and opportunities of integrating client-centred facilitated online services into the field.

Overall, the project's timeline of completion followed the sequence as planned but was delayed a number of months due to the loss of key research team members and a slower recruiting process in the field. The project started in October 2014 with the development of the five Hope Centred Career Interventions in face-to-face and online delivery formats. Practitioners involved in the delivery of these interventions were trained in May 2015 by Dr. Amundson. Participant recruitment and intervention delivery started in September 2015 with the last Client completing the interventions in October 2016. We had aimed for 60 clients to complete the interventions (30 F2F and 30 online) and had 52 in the end (27 F2F and 25 online). Final data analysis and a findings report were concluded in November 2016.

The Need for the Project

This project further explores a new theoretical perspective, Hope Centred Career Development (HCCD) in the career counselling field. The HCCD Model was developed by Niles, Amundson and Joon as documented in *Career Flow* (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011). The HCCD model suggests that hope is the center point around which all the other career development competencies revolve as illustrated by the graphic below.



Hope is the starting point that helps to set career development in motion. The other competencies: Self Reflection, Self-Clarity, Visioning, Goal Setting & Planning and Implementing and Adapting are essential components to taking action to make career adjustments. It is assumed that at different times and circumstances, individuals will have varying levels of these competencies. Understanding one's general hopefulness and current strength and confidence in other competencies provides an indication of the areas where greater support may be needed and what strengths can help carry the process. The Hope Centred Career Inventory (HCCI) is a well-researched inventory that assesses these competencies in relation to the HCCD model. Using the HCCI as a pre-post measure, combined with the delivery of interventions to increase HOPE competencies provided the ability to examine if and how targeted interventions can increase specific HOPE competencies.

This project focused on the application of the HOPE model to unemployed individuals; whereas the previous research has focussed on post-secondary students and immigrants. This is a population base that often demonstrates low hope (Amundson, 2009) yet is not easy to access for research studies due to the pressure to find employment. Because the project model is short, early-intervention activities, Clients accessing public employment centres can be offered the potential to participate, without it delaying or impacting the job search efforts.

The project provided an opportunity to address the following knowledge gaps in the field:

- How the Hope Centred Career Inventory (HCCI) applies to the population of unemployment adults, accessing public employment services
- How HOPE constructs impact unemployed job seekers related to their career identify and labour market integration across a wide-section of individuals accessing a publicly-funded employment centre
- How the delivery experience of face-to-face and online interventions impact Practitioners and Clients

These questions, together, offer a comprehensive examination of a new theory and emerging practice models.

By measuring HOPE competencies and delivering interventions to Clients to increase their HOPE competencies, the project will convey information about Client hope levels when approaching and engaging in public employment services. While the adoption of technology for communicating with clients is increasing among practitioners, there is still very little research being done on the use of effective, facilitated online career development interventions. Engaging Clients in essentially the same interventions, utilizing parallel face-to-face and online modalities, will contribute knowledge to understanding the efficacy relationship between F2F and online interventions.

Stakeholders that may have an interest in our study include: policy makers and Ministries across Canada responsible for funding public employment centres; directors of centres implementing services for job seekers; career counsellors, career educators and other career practitioners.

Purpose, Goals or Objectives

This project allowed us to bring forward findings from our initial, CERIC funded research project, to field work being done in public employment centres. The project aimed to understand the effectiveness of implementing HOPE interventions in both face-to-face and online formats in a public employment centre in Canada. The subsequent objectives were:

- 1) To establish a baseline of unemployed job seekers' career hope using HCCI and to create a career hope profile for an unemployed adult job seeker reporting low hope and high barriers;
- 2) To develop and evaluate effective HOPE based interventions to be delivered face-to-face or by a practitioner led process in on online counselling platform to improve hope-centred career competencies;
- 3) To understand how hope centred interventions can influence the actions of job seekers with low hope facing significant barriers by reassessing them through a series of in-depth interviews immediately after the interventions as well as at a 3-month follow-up period; and
- 4) To obtain practitioner feedback after using the interventions to evaluate the differing/similar experiences of the online and face-to-face delivery and to be able to adjust the interventions as necessary.

The research methods utilized, to achieve our objectives, included repeat gathering of quantitative and qualitative data from participating clients and practitioners at different stages of the project. The quantitative data measures if a change has occurred from the initial baseline phase of the project and the structured interview format provides qualitative data to provide insight into how and why that change occurred. Specifics related to the measurement tools and approaches are outlined in the Activities and Research Methods section below. Our objectives remained consistent throughout the project.

Partnerships and Collaborations

This project involved collaborations from different team members and institutions. A summary of the key team members is provided below.

Dr. Norman E. Amundson is a Professor in Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Education at UBC. He has given numerous workshops and seminars and also has been a keynote speaker at many national and international conferences. His publications include over 100 journal articles as well as the following books: *Active Engagement*, *The Essential Elements of Career Counselling*; *The Physics of Living*; *Career Flow*, *Hope-Filled Engagement* and *Metaphor-Making*. He has also authored several career workbooks including *Career Pathways* and *Guiding Circles*. Dr. Amundson has won a number of awards including The Stu Conger Award for Leadership (2013) and Best Research Article in the *Career Development Quarterly* (2004).

Dr. Spencer G. Niles is Dean of the College of Education at William and Mary University, and he serves as the director of research for Kuder, Inc. (a web-based career planning service). Dr. Niles is the recipient of the National Career Development Association's (NCDA) Eminent Career Award, a NCDA Fellow, an American Counselling Association (ACA) Fellow, ACA's David Brooks Distinguished Mentor Award, the ACA Extended Research Award, and the UBC Noted Scholar Award. He served as President for the NCDA and Editor for *The Career Development Quarterly* (CDQ). Currently, he is the Editor of the *Journal of Counselling & Development* and serves on six additional editorial boards for national and international journals. He has authored or co-authored approximately 120 publications and delivered over 125 presentations on career development theory and practice.

Tannis Goddard is the founder of Training Innovations and is an independent Consultant in the field. She has designed large scale programming for provincial and federal governments and has provided consulting services to governments and non-profits for 20 years. Training Innovations currently operates three Employment Services Centres as a part of the Employment Program of BC. Over the past decade Tannis has been in the forefront of developing practice models for the delivery of online career interventions. Tannis holds a Masters of Arts in Education from the University of Sheffield (UK) and is completing her PhD in Employment Research through the University of Warwick (UK) where she is exploring the context and facilitative variables that impact the experience and perceived effectiveness of online career guidance interventions. In 2007 Tannis received the Award of Excellence, from the Career Management Association of BC. In 2013 she was the featured practitioner in the launch issue of *Careering* magazine. She has served on the Board of Directors as Vice President for the BC Career Development Association and routinely presents at national and international conferences.

Dr. Hyung Joon Yoon is currently Assistant Professor of Human and Organizational Learning at the George Washington University, Washington, DC. He worked as Assistant Professor and Human Resource Development (HRD) Program Coordinator at Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco. He also served as Graduate Faculty at Penn State. He holds a PhD in Workforce Education and Development from Penn State. He co-developed the Hope-Centered Model of Career Development (HCMCD) and Hope-Centered Career Inventory (HCCI). He also developed the Human Agency Based Individual Transformation (HABIT) model and the Assessment of Human Agency (AHA). He is certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resource (SPHR), and Career Development Facilitator Master Trainer. He serves on Board of Directors of the National Career Development Association (NCDA) as Trustee-at-Large (2013–2019).

The research team met quarterly to review the progress of the project and to discuss strategies, as needed. Tannis Goddard and Norm Amundson were responsible for the on-the-ground implementation of the project and met monthly to discuss progress and make operational adjustments as required.

The successful delivery of the project also required the dedication of five Career Practitioners, funded by this study, who facilitated the HOPE interventions with Clients. These team members were: Kristin Vandegriend, Liz James, Louise LeBlanc, Marni Bedrich & Svjetlana Pantovic. Norm Amundson provided training on the HOPE delivery model to these Practitioners and acted as a source for further follow up and questions during the implementation of the project. The research project would not have been possible without the dedication and complete commitment of these skilled Practitioners.

A team of Training Innovations staff and consultants were involved in the development of the interventions and ongoing coordination and implementation of the research project. These members included: Jane Schmidt, Maria Starosta, Mariana Braga, Andrej Dobos, and Kristin Vandegriend. UBC Masters of Counselling students were also integrated in the project to conduct the interviews with Clients.

With the research occurring in a public employment centre, numerous operational factors needed to be constantly considered and evaluated. Critical in the design of the research project was ensuring that Clients voluntarily participated and that participation in the research project in no way impacted the services they wanted and needed to receive from the Employment Centre. With the project running from two different geographical locations, ensuring organized and timely communications between all team members in the research project and in field operations was critical to successfully complete the project. There were operational changes in Centre staff during the delivery of the research project and this impacted the timelines of delivery as new staff learned the process of introducing Clients to the research opportunity.

CERIC was active in the conception and design of the research from the beginning, taking an interest in further researching the HCCD Model from its initial project. The CERIC team provided check-ins along the way, promoted the project through websites and other social media and provided opportunities to present about the model and updates on the research through conferences and webinars. CERIC's community outreach and marketing support allowed the project to garner national awareness and has brought many individuals forward to the research team asking and enquiring to learn more about the model and its findings. Raising awareness of the importance of HOPE along with F2F and online delivery models in the Career field are important advancements.

Activities and Research Methods

The project included three overarching activities: development of the HOPE interventions in face-to-face and online formats; facilitation of the interventions with research participants; analysis of the HCCI results along with interviews and focus groups. This project followed the overall plan and completed the activities defined in the proposal. The timeline, however, did extend longer than initially planned. The timeline was impacted by two factors:

1. Two key members of the research design team, needed to leave the project early in its development stage due to leaves from their employment. This required the researchers to bring in new developers to support the intervention design process, which delayed the actual field launch of the project by 8 months
2. Delivery in the field required a longer period of time than initially anticipated. Optimistic goals were initially set to be in field for five months. In reality, the field work required just over 12 months. Key reasons for this included:
 - HCCI benchmark was initially set too high. Client participation initially required a HOPE score of 3.00 on the HCCI as we were seeking to recruit Clients with a lower sense of hopefulness. Quickly in the project, we realized that this level was too low as most Clients interested in participating were scoring higher than this. In November 2015, we made the decision to increase the HOPE score level to 3.25. While this opened up our pool of participants, we still regularly had Clients scoring higher than our benchmark. It could be that the very act of volunteering to participate in a research study requires enough self-confidence and hope that we were having a difficult time reaching clients with even a lower sense of hope.
 - Urgency of Client Employments supports took precedent over participation in a voluntary research project. Over the research period, the employment centres experienced slightly slower client volume and saw more clients with urgent needs, for whom participating in the research project did not seem to meet the practical needs that brought them to the Centres. This increased the length of recruitment time in the field.

Development of the Interventions

The early work in this research project focused on the development of the interventions, in face-to-face and online versions. Considerable time was spent identifying intervention activities that addressed all the competencies of the HOPE model and that would work well together to ensure an integrated experience for the participants, with a natural flow. The following interventions were developed to address the HOPE model competencies:

- **Career Flow** – Self Reflection
- **Circle of Strengths** – Hope, Self-Clarity
- **Walking the Problem** – Hope, Visioning, Goal-Setting & Planning
- **Two or Three Chairs** – Hope, Goal Setting & Planning
- **Staying Afloat** – Implementing and Adapting

Full details of each intervention are available in Appendix 2. To develop the interventions, we used the following process:

- Identify the theoretical constructs of the HOPE Model from Dr. Amundson and Dr. Niles published materials and delivery experience
- Identify complementary concepts and learning/counselling processes that support the HOPE Model
- Write the face-to-face delivery guides for Practitioners, test for clarity, intent and ease of implementation
- Conceptualize online interventions to address the intent of the interventions, not to specifically replicate. Testing of the online interventions was initially completed by Dr. Amundson, who himself was new to online learning. This provided great opportunities for dialogue and refinement.

During the development of the interventions, we lost a key team member. While the structure and wire-frames were in place, it did require a longer period of time to integrate new members to complete this work. During this phase there were ongoing discussions and experimentation regarding the design and approach of the online interventions. The team realized that the goal could not be to replicate the F2F interventions online, but that the online interventions needed to be designed using the affordances of the online space to elicit the type of personal and actively engaged model we had used for the F2F interventions.

Once the interventions were developed, we began the process of onboarding and training our project practitioners. We began with two face-to-face and two online practitioners, not the three staff as anticipated in our proposal, to meet operational scheduling demands. Dr. Amundson provided training on the HOPE model and effective strategies for facilitating and working with Clients. Practitioners then learned and tested the effectiveness of the intervention designs by role playing together. Minor adjustments were made to the interventions, based on this feedback, before we began delivering the interventions in the field.

Participant Recruitment & Intervention Delivery

Participant recruitment was the greatest challenge in this project. In our planning stages, we over-estimated the number of Clients that would be interested and eligible to participate in the project. We had aimed for 60 Clients to complete the interventions (30 F2F and 30 online). In the end, we were able to serve 27 Clients Face to Face and 25 Online.

In our planning stages, we also thought we could randomly assign participants to online and face-to-face groups. However, as we worked further through the process, we made the decision to take a more natural selection process. Based on experience delivering F2F and online interventions, we recognized that for people to have a successful online experience, they need to be willing and interested in the delivery format, just as some people prefer 1-1 or group learning experiences. We adjusted the recruitment process to invite Clients to consider their preferred delivery format. While this was effective for the majority of time in the field, the last participants were limited with us only having online sessions available, due to practitioner scheduling availability.

Participants that engaged in the F2F sessions, participated over two days. On day one they debriefed the HCCI with their practitioner and completed Career Flow and Circle of Strengths. On average these sessions lasted 2 hours. The second session, usually scheduled a couple of days later would typically last 1.5 – 2 hours and included Walking the Problem, Two or Three Chairs and Staying Afloat interventions. At the end of the session

Clients then completed the Post HCCI and a short summary reflection exercise. Three months later, the client was asked to complete the third HCCI assessment.

The online sessions were delivered in a learning management system that supported synchronous and a-synchronous communication with the practitioner. Participants began by meeting with the practitioner by phone to discuss the HCCI results and have an online orientation of the HOPE learning site. Participants then received an email guiding them to log into the intervention and begin their work on the units for 2 weeks. Participants could engage in the learning and dialogue activities at any time that was convenient for them as the majority of the communication was a-synchronous. Participation online included participants reading materials, watching a video, completing interactive online activities and debriefing and elaborating upon their learning with their practitioner through threaded online conversations. One intervention was supplemented with a phone call and the use of a shared whiteboard in a web conference. Once clients completed the 5 intervention units and a short reflective exercise, the practitioner sent the post HCCI assessment log-in by email. Three months later, the client was asked to complete the third HCCI assessment.

Of the Clients engaged in the research study, 3 online participants did not complete the interventions. One client obtained temporary work and two others began the process but did not follow through. All face-to-face Clients completed the interventions, however Practitioners were given the latitude to adjust schedules to meet Client needs.

Data Collection & Analysis

Informed consent was gathered by both the client and practitioner participants in the study to ensure that the project intent and confidentiality of the data collected was understood and agreed to. The research data was collected and processed in a manner consistent with our proposal.

After clients participants signed consent, they were asked to complete a series of questions, in an online system. This included:

- Demographic Data
- Hope Centred Career Inventory (Niles, Yoon & Amundson, 2010)
- General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwartz & Jerusalem, 1995)
- Vocational Identity (Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980)
- Career Engagement Scale (Hirschi, Freund, & Herrmann, 2014)
- Ways of Mattering Scale (Corbière & Amundson, 2007)

Upon completion of the interventions, Clients answered these questions for a second time which formed the base of our quantitative data collection. In addition, Clients also completed the Ways of Mattering scale, upon completion of their interventions, to provide insights into the practicing conditions and the role that mattering contributed.

Instead of completing a structured reflection questionnaire at the end of the process, Practitioners maintained reflective learning journals throughout their facilitation and completed an adapted Ways of Mattering scale, for Practitioners, after serving each participant.

20 Client participants (10 F2F and 10 online) were interviewed utilizing the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT). The focus of the interviews was to understand the clients' experiences of the factors that affect their hope and their experiences of the counselling interventions. ECIT is based on the Critical Incident Technique

(CIT), a qualitative method developed by Flanagan (1984). ECIT strengthens CIT by adding credibility and trustworthiness checks, which improve the validity of the results (Butterfield et al., 2009). ECIT enables investigators to explore “effective and ineffective ways of doing something, looking at helping and hindering factors, collecting functional or behavioural descriptions of events or problems, examining success and failure, and determining characteristics that are critical to important aspects of an activity or event” (Butterfield et al., 2005, p.476). ECIT consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews involving open-ended, clarifying questions. Incidents include antecedent information, detailed description of experiences, and descriptions of the outcomes (Smith et al., in press).

At this stage of the project, the first part of the quantitative data analysis has been completed (pre-post; 3-month follow-up) along with the ECIT qualitative evaluation interviews. Further data collection will occur after 9 months when we intend to re-administer the HCCI to determine any long-time benefits or changes.

Additional findings and discussions will be integrated into the forthcoming article for the Canadian Journal of Career Development.

Timelines

The project timelines were adjusted due to a number of factors, described above. The target and actual timelines are presented below.

TASK	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE
Research Project Launch Meeting	September, 2014	September, 2014
Submission of presentation proposal for NCDCA 2015 (focus on Interventions developed)	September, 2014	September, 2014
F2F Interventions Developed	October 31, 2014	January, 2015
Online Interventions Developed	December 31, 2014	June, 2015
Presentation at Cannexus 2015 (focus on Interventions developed)	January, 2015	January, 2015
Training Completed	January 31, 2015	May, 2015
Recruitment Begins	February 1, 2015	September, 2015
Baseline Assessments and Delivery of Interventions Completed in Port Moody Centre	April 30, 2015	October, 2016
Baseline Assessments and Delivery of Interventions Completed in Squamish Centre	June 30, 2015	October, 2016
Submit presentation proposal of preliminary findings to CERIC for CANNEXUS 2016	June 30, 2015	June, 2015
Present at NCDCA 2015	July, 2015	July, 2015
Present at NCDCA Vancouver 2015		November, 2015
Present at NCDCA 2016	July 2016	July, 2016
Post-test and Interviews Completed	July 31, 2015	October, 2016
Post post-test at 4-month follow-up Completed	October 31, 2015	January, 2017
Data coding and cleaning Completed - Interviews	December 31, 2015	June, 2016
Transcription of interviews Completed	December 31, 2015	June, 2016
Presentation at Cannexus 2016 (focus on preliminary findings)	January, 2016	January, 2016
Data analysis and validation	March 30, 2016	November, 2016
Write up findings	May 30, 2016	November, 2016
Submit final report to CERIC	June 30, 2016	November, 2016
Submit presentation proposal for Cannexus 2017 – final finding	June, 2016	June, 2016
Submit quantitative findings to applicable Journals	September, 2016	Spring 2017
Submit qualitative findings to applicable Journals	September, 2016	
Presentation at Cannexus 2017 (focus on final findings)	January, 2017	January, 2017

Deliverables

This project proposed to integrate multiple deliverables, including:

- Identification and development of five Hope Centred Career Interventions, based on Dr. Amundson's Active Engagement (2009) approach, for practical use in Public Employment Centres, with unemployed individuals.
- Documenting guides for face-to-face delivery of the interventions
- Training of Practitioners in the HOPE Delivery Model
- Delivery of Interventions to Clients
- Collection of Data to Understand the Impact of the Interventions

Hope Interventions

The Hope interventions were developed for face-to-face and online delivery. The five interventions were consistently used throughout the intervention delivery. As we were building the delivery model, we debated if we wanted to have all participants completed each intervention, in the same logical order to systematically build HOPE competencies. Or, if we should organize the delivery flow, based on the Client's HCCI scores. We opted for the systematic delivery as it allowed for more control in the research process. However, feedback from the practitioners and comments from participants indicate that customizing the flow to Client needs would likely result in even greater relevance for Clients.

Intervention Delivery Guides

To make the process of delivering HOPE based interventions more accessible, the facilitation process of the F2F interventions have been documented and are attached as Appendix 2. While aspects of these interventions are included in previously published materials (Amundson, 2009; Amundson, 2010; Niles, Amundson & Neault, 2011; Amundson, Harris- Bowsbey, & Niles, 2014; Niles, In & Amundson, 2014; Niles, Yoon, Balin & Amundson, 2010; Yoon, Niles, Amundson, Smith & Mills, 2015), these step-by-step processes will, we hope, give Practitioners confidence to further explore the use of these interventions.

Training of Practitioners in the HOPE Delivery Model

In May 2015, Dr. Amundson provided a full day of training to the practitioners delivering the interventions and to other Career Centre staff working in the delivery locations. This allowed for the concepts of HOPE to have a greater impact than just for those staff and participants involved in the research project. All the staff in attendance were and engaged and clearly motivated by the idea of looking at the work they do with Clients through a HOPE based theoretical perspective.

Delivery of Interventions to Clients

The interventions were delivered to Clients, however recruitment was more difficult than anticipated. In addition to the issues identified above, we had not anticipated the significant challenge we would have engaging Clients into the online interventions. Rather than continuing with random assignment, we decided to use purposive sampling to ensure that Clients engaging in the online services had a personal willingness and inclination to do so. We adopted this method to highlight a typical intake process, whereby a Client being offered an opportunity to engage in services online, may opt to choose this over face-to-face services. We were interested in learning more about the efficacy of the online interventions from those participants willing and able to engage in this delivery model in favour of seeking generalizability through random assignment (Patton, 2002). Through the recruitment process, we also observed some bias with staff having a natural preference to refer Clients to face-to-face interventions. This suggests that future research involving online delivery also consider motivational issues of both staff and Clients related to the use of this delivery mechanism to gain further insights into how online services can be more willingly and effectively integrated into the field.

Another challenge that came to our attention during the project concerned expectations for involvement in the project. We worked very hard to ensure that people who were participating understood at the start that this was not a job search intervention (e.g. developing the resume, networking, interviewing with employers). Despite this fact, there was one participant that did get into the project assuming that we would be dealing with job search. The Client had been given the Project Fact Sheet and had a 1-1 conversation with the Research Assistant, however, the Client continued to anticipate that the interventions would produce tangible work search tools. This misalignment is articulated in the participant's interview. The Client then engaged in workshops at the Employment Centre to address identified needs.

Collection of Data to Understand Impact of the Interventions

Data collection of the surveys was done through a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) enabled website where data is encrypted using AES_256_CBC, with HMAC-SHA1 for message authentication and ECDHE_RSA. The data collected from Clients was stored in a password protected database with an encrypted administrator password. The server has an extensive firewall in place with flood protection and restricted physical access. Survey data downloaded from the website are stored in a password protected, Bit Locker enabled computer. Interviews and Focus Groups were recorded and transcribed. These recordings are stored in a secure web-based server under control of Training Innovations.

Ethical Considerations

The research team discussed potential ethical issues at the beginning of the project and continued to monitor and discuss issues as they emerged throughout the delivery with a balance on preserving research integrity, while addressing real participant/Client needs. A summary of the ethical considerations we addressed is presented below.

Practitioners Learning New Delivery Strategies

While the project engaged experienced practitioners in the delivery of the interventions, the interventions and focus on Client hope-related experiences was a slightly different approach than most Practitioners had used in

the past. Practitioners noted that the interventions brought forward personal and deep stories from Clients more quickly than they were used to and they needed to utilize different counselling strategies and communication skills than often used in early relationship forming in public employment services. Supervision was provided to Practitioners and they also provided peer support to discuss experiences and consider strategies and approaches.

Clients Presenting with Higher Hope Scores

The project premise was built on attracting Clients with lower hope scores into the project. We initially experienced Clients scoring higher than expected based on their unemployment context and determined that we would adjust the acceptance level from an HCCI score of 3.0 up slightly to 3.25 to engage more Clients into the project. However, even with this change, many Clients were excluded from the research study due to their HOPE scores, even though they perceived and articulated personal benefit from participating in the project. Upon reflection, the premise may have been adjusted to allow more Clients into the program. Perhaps the focus could have been less on the overall HCCI Hope score and instead could have focused on the specific competency scores to allow Clients to increase specific lower-scored hope competencies. Given the range of Client needs that present at a public employment centre, it would be beneficial to rethink this measurement strategy for future, similar projects.

Clients Engaging in Other Services

The project began with the intent of having willing participants engaging in HOPE research interventions before engaging in other employment support services offered through the Centre, such as workshops. Based on a variety of factors (ie: wait times into the HOPE interventions, urgency of Client presenting needs, or Clients who were already attending the Centre enquiring about the research project), we had 15 Clients engage in additional services (ie: workshops) while participating in the HOPE project. We have not identified any specific data patterns that differ for these Clients engaged in dual interventions.

Reflections on the Project – What we would do differently

The project has illuminated many valuable findings about the nature of Hope, the use of metaphors to describe hope or lack of it, the value of active engagement in intervention design, and promise of integrating online counselling into our field. What was complex, is the varying needs, readiness, and skills of the research participants. While our results show statistically significant improvement in their hope competencies, we did observe that intervention delivery strategies needed to be modified to meet differing Client needs. For some, the metaphors in our intervention design were easy to relate to, for others we evidenced some dissonance or lack of relevance. It raises questions about the universality of design and the need to consider how we design interventions and train practitioners to stay true to intent, while having the skills and knowledge to adapt to meet Client needs. However, what remained consistent across all participants was the value that short, targeted, early interventions can offer.

Another key observation we were reminded of is that research is messy. While we designed the methodology with consistency in mind, there were every-day occurrences in the lives of the participants that complicated the experience such as participants being sick, missing appointments, delays in traffic, and encountering technical computer challenges. Thus, the experience of our research reflected the real-life experiences in a public

employment centre. This required constant communication, evaluation and subtle modification of processes to ensure that clients' engagement was not compromised.

In terms of financial management, the project successfully met its outcomes on budget. A couple of learnings regarding budget:

- We neglected to include MERCs, benefits and WCB in our initial budget
- We also came in significantly under budget for our travel costs due to greater use of conference calls which was cost and time efficient.

Whenever one undertakes this kind of research, there are questions about what can be realistically hoped for in the deliverables. In this project, we were pleasantly surprised by the positive results that were obtained through the quantitative and qualitative assessment. These results were clear and definitive and showed the power of a short-term dynamic intervention process. Of course, there are many ways that the interventions might be further refined and evaluated, but it is clear that the Hope Centred model, delivered with active, targeted interventions offers promise. The results point to an impact on increasing hopefulness and further follow up and administration of the HCCI will indicate if these increases are sustained over time. As a next step it would be interesting to further research how specifically increased hope impacts the actions of job seekers and to explore how interventions designed with creative, active engagement methodologies could be more widely used and integrated in other career development activities throughout broader system delivery.

Marketing and Dissemination

We have presented our preliminary findings at several events – the 2015 NCD A fall symposium in Vancouver; CANNEXUS 2016; CONTACT 2016, NCD A 2016. We are also scheduled to do a comprehensive project presentation at CANNEXUS 2017 and NCD A 2017. We will update the HOPE project website <https://hopecareerinterventions.wordpress.com/> with details of the project outcomes and will push this content through social media, internationally, to engage a wider audience base for the findings.

We will be writing a journal article that will provide more data analysis and detailed findings from this research and will submit it to the Canadian Journal of Counselling Development. Once published, we will use this article to support our discussions with other practitioners, policy makers, and academics that are interested in learning more about this approach and how to conduct this type of research. We will also discuss the more detailed findings at CANNEXUS, NCD A and IAEVG.

The findings from this project have already informed a number of other presentations. For example, in a CERIC organized webinar series with Norm Amundson and Kris Magnusson, the results were highlighted as part of the second session. Dr. Niles also was in Taiwan giving a keynote address in May, 2016 and this research was part of the presentation.

The research has also inspired other research projects. For example, MOSAIC in Vancouver has received government funding for a research project with Syrian refugees. This research is grounded in the Hope Centered Model of Career Development and some of the research has utilized intervention methods from this project. It is interesting to note that the preliminary results from this project are very positive and are consistent with our results from this project. In December 2016, a press conference was held and two government ministers were

on hand to discuss the importance of this kind of research. The publicity from this event received attention in the local media (TV, radio, print).

Other projects underway involved organizations from Australia and from Alberta. The focus for two of the groups is on using this type of approach with youth. The other group is looking at ways to work more effectively with immigrant women, and is hoping to get funding from the Status of Women ministry in Alberta.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The project research team was distributed. It met as needed at the beginning of the project and quarterly through its delivery. The operation of the research project was monitored by Tannis Goddard and Norm Amundson who remained in regular contact regarding any project challenges and set-backs that required time adjustments or changes in processes.

As this was a research project, the evaluation tools were embedded in the research process. This included monitoring attendance of Clients at appointments, sessions and online participation and tracking the completion of pre-post measures. The Practitioners evaluated the effectiveness of the sessions through debriefs with Clients and shared observations, questions and learning through peer support meetings. The HCCI was used to measure the growth and development of the Client's sense of hope and related competencies. This provided both an initial assessment of client readiness and allowed us to assess the impact of change over time.

We also will be conducting a further assessment of the results at the 9-month stage. This will allow us to better assess the long-term impact of this type of intervention. This further information will hopefully lead to another related publication.

It is our intention to share our research report with the initial group of stakeholders that offered support at the beginning of the project. Once reviewed we will offer follow up discussions regarding the research results and how these may support their current service delivery and/or to explore potential further research partnerships.

It should be noted that this research is part of an ongoing series of research projects associated with the Hope Centred Career Inventory. These other projects are based in several different countries (Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, Korea, Brazil, USA and Canada).

Impact Assessment/Outcomes

In our proposal, we indicated that the project would be successful if some or all of the following occurred with our findings:

- The quantitative data sets collected indicate a statistically significant effect on the participating individuals' HCCI following their participation in either the face-to-face or online formats.
- The quantitative or qualitative data analysis indicates differences in effectiveness between face-to-face delivery and online delivery of the interventions or indicates they are equally effective.
- The qualitative data analysis provides insight into what occurred during the interventions and what did not occur that influenced the adult job seekers to be more hopeful, less hopeful, or unchanged about employment and attachment to the labour market.
- The qualitative data analysis collected from practitioners gives new insight into how interventions can move from development into the field, how to structure training, and the practitioners' experience working with hope as a central factor in client service.

We also indicated that we would be producing two peer reviewed articles regarding the quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

We are pleased to report that most of these outcomes have been realized in this research study. The quantitative data has supported the significance of the interventions as illustrated by the HCCI. Both F2F and online methods showed statistically significant improvements in all measures with no exceptions.

The Ways of Mattering Scale data was administered to both groups after the intervention to see if there were any differences between the F2F and online groups. Both groups showed a high level of mattering and no significant differences were indicated.

As an additional assessment measure, we included a retrospective assessment question in the 20 qualitative interviews that were conducted. This question focused on how people were feeling prior to the intervention and how they were feeling at the end of the process. A 10 point Likert scale was used for the assessment. The results were significant and were consistent with the other quantitative data. There was only one person that reported a negative outcome, and this was the result of a misunderstanding regarding the goals of the program.

The data from the qualitative interviews was very positive and yielded some interesting results. The 20 participants reported a total of 200 positive incidents. Seven of the participants were unable to report any hindering incidents. The 13 people who did provide hindering responses reported only 29 incidents. Participant wish list items were also collected. These items will be useful as we consider ways of improving practice.

The qualitative data supported the importance of creating a mattering climate. This applied to both F2F and online counselling groups. There were numerous indicators that pointed to the effectiveness of a more active and dynamic career counselling process, in both the face-to-face and online interventions. Participants were pleased by the overall design and implementation of the intervention program.

A focus group was held with the practitioners after the research program was completed. The practitioners were very pleased by their experiences and the outcomes they witnessed with their clients. They were amazed at how much was accomplished in such a short period of time. They felt that they had achieved very positive and trusting relationships with the clients (a high level of mattering). They were excited, empowered, and energized

by the process and could see the changes that were happening. The practitioners enjoyed the creative and flexible ways of delivery and felt that this was different from what they often experienced with a more traditional employment counselling approach. Of particular interest was the consistency of language and emotion conveyed by both the online and face-to-face practitioners. Words and phrases such as “amazed at the power of interventions; trust seemed to instantly occur; more flexibility; clients told their story” were repeated by all. This gives indication that Practitioners can have meaningful and mattering relationships with their clients through both face-to-face and online delivery modalities.

Our intention is to collect HCCI data from participants 9 months following their completion of the intervention. This data would give us further information about impact over a longer time period. We will need to evaluate if we get sufficient participant response to utilize the data.

We will begin writing our first journal article in January 2017. We had initially thought about separating out the quantitative and qualitative data. We now feel that it would be stronger to incorporate both data sets into the article. The second article we may write will come after the last HCCI data has been collected; if sufficient data is collected. This follow-up article will focus on the lasting benefits and challenges of this form of intervention.

As a footnote to this research report, it is important to acknowledge that when developing our initial research proposal, the focus was primarily on assessing the impact of the HOPE interventions on the participants. As the research unfolded we became aware of how the intervention process was impacting not only clients, but also practitioners and the research team. Of particular importance here was the unstated assumptions about the utility of online career intervention. The research experience and findings challenged us, as professionals, to rethink assumptions about the relationships between face-to-face and online delivery. Another unexpected outcome involved the general impact of the research on the office atmosphere. People at all levels were being energized by the research as it unfolded.

Key Findings / Insights

What stands out in this project is the significant gains that were made in a relatively short period of time. Through the intervention process a high level of trust and understanding was established between the participants and the practitioners. The practitioners appreciated being able to employ a more flexible, creative, and dynamic approach to employment counselling. Participants reported on the overall effectiveness of this counselling approach. The quantitative and qualitative data illustrated that significant positive changes were happening through this process.

The results clearly illustrate how the interventions helped to create a significant shift towards greater HOPE. This attitudinal change creates a situation where clients are in a better place to develop action plans and start their job search activity. Seventy percent of the people who were interviewed reported that their involvement in the project helped them to develop new perspectives on job search, to develop better career plans, and to be more confident in the decisions they were making. This builds on research that links the importance and impact of hope as a tenant to increase an individual's ability to consider and engage in career development activities (Clarke, Amundson, Niles & Yoon, in press).

The qualitative results offer some interesting findings about the nature of face-to-face and online career service delivery. The F2F results illustrated very positive relationships with the practitioners and some of the comments focused on them being respectful, caring, encouraging, open and honest, intelligent, and being flexible. These factors are recognized in the literature as critical components of a working alliance (Masdonati, Massoudi & Rossier, 2009). Challenges that clients noted included personal difficulties, differences in expectations, and inability to relate to metaphoric content.

The online delivery included synchronous and a-synchronous communication channels. We designed the online interventions with a focus on ensuring facilitator presence based on Lehman and Conceicao's (2010) design determinants as adapted to the context of career development (Bimrose, Kettunen, Goddard, 2014). The goal was to create parallel interventions in the online space that utilized the affordances of computer mediated communication to create a mattering climate and strong relationship between clients and practitioners without attempting to purely replicate the face-to-face interventions.

Through the interviews, online Clients highlighted the strong relationship with their practitioner, the time and space to reflect, the value of writing to articulate their thoughts, the tangible, written, printable record and flexibility to access and complete the interventions based on personal needs as key benefits (Anthony & Nagel 2010; Carver & Kosloski, 2015; De Raff, Shek-wai Hui, & Vincent, 2012; Dunn, 2012; Paz Dennen, 2007; Richards & Vigano, 2013; Wright, 2002). These factors are repetitively emerging in the online counselling and learning literature as hallmarks of effective online delivery and the data collected in this project concurs that these factors matter to participants in online career interventions as well. Challenges that Clients experienced included technological difficulties, differences in expectations, inability to relate to metaphoric content, and the desire for more synchronous/live connection with their practitioner.

An unintended outcome of the research was that the researchers and practitioners involved saw experiences unfolding that challenged pre-existing beliefs about the efficacy and characteristics of online counselling. Through peer discussions, practitioners were exposed to the online discourse and this tangible encounter appears to have been the impacting factor to adjust perceptions and assumptions. This learning and awareness generating process reflected the assertion that developing competencies to integrate digital delivery in career

services in a “dynamic combination of cognitive, social, emotional and ethical factors that are interwoven” (Kettunen, Sampson, & Vuorinen, 2015).

There was a great deal of reported overlap between the F2F and Online counselling experiences. Both groups highlighted the quality of the relationship, the flexibility and customization of the service delivery, and the power of creative and metaphoric activities. The Circle of Strength, and the water images associated with Career Flow were repetitively highlighted and meaningful and accessible. It was clear that the more active, creative, and dynamic learning approach was appreciated and had considerable impact. These results reinforce the importance of hope as a central factor in the career development process (Feldman & Snyder, 2005; Niles, In & Amundson, 2014) and the importance of integrating creative methods and engaging process into career intervention design (Amundson, in press).

The data suggests that F2F and online methods can both be used to good advantage. Rather than seeing F2F and online delivery as oppositional or dichotomous options, this research reinforces the value of considering the methods as complementary when designed and built and facilitated from a common theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. Opportunities could further be explored to create a blended delivery approach that incorporates online and face-to-face communication as a means to increase the overall engagement in the process for clients and practitioners (Richards & Simpson, 2015).

When interpreting these findings, it is important to acknowledge the similarities and differences between online and F2F career counselling. There were some clients for whom the online delivery method was a natural option and others that weren't well suited to it. Some clients did not have the computer skills necessary to manage an online system or stable access to technology, while others preferred the familiarity of F2F support. Understanding the value and fit of online services is an important theme in the field as we continue the integration of technologies in service delivery. Some key differences between two groups in terms of demographics include: the F2F group had more people identified as white (85.7%) than the online group (70.8%); F2F group had more people unemployed over 2 years (39.3%) compared to the online group (20.8%); the online group had more immigrants (29.2%) than the F2F group (17.9%); and the F2F group had more male (35.7%) than the online group (25%). This study demonstrates that an online delivery approach offers a great deal of promise, however, continued research is required to offer further insights about effective and purposeful use in the delivery of career interventions.

The quantitative results support the efficacy of both F2F and Online counselling, but there are some cautions about comparing the groups to one another. Pre-test scores of the Career Engagement Scale for the F2F group were significantly lower than the online group. For a true experimental comparison, participants in the two different groups need to share very close characteristics including their career development needs. What is consistent, however, is that the participants engaged in the research study do reflect a cross-section of unemployed individuals choosing to access support from a public employment centre.

In summary, our findings from this research project indicate three major outcomes:

1. Targeted, early intervention, hope-focused interventions, designed with a constructivist active-engagement framework can increase the hopefulness of adult job seekers. Increased hopefulness of job seekers helped them to develop new perspectives on job search and be more confident in the career decisions they were making.

2. Training career practitioners on the hope centred career development model combined with facilitation strategies for F2F and online delivery resulted in a positive and impactful experience for practitioners and clients; with a safe mattering climate being noted as critical to the success of the interventions.
3. Online interventions can evoke the same, or similar, emotions of mattering as a F2F environment and can facilitate an interactive relationship between clients and practitioners that supports learning and competency development.

While these findings are worthy of consideration in the design of service models, the risk is assuming these findings can be applied for all employment centres in all situations. The people targeted for this project were those who were struggling with feeling hopeful. There are undoubtedly many clients for whom this isn't an issue. Also, it is important to keep in mind that the focus of this intervention process was only on creating a sense of hopefulness and understanding how intervention designs could incr. There is much more to unemployment than one's attitude towards the future, there remains many important employability and job search skills to be learned, and these go beyond the scope of this project.

To conclude, the focus on hope as a central component of career development seemed to be inspiring for other Centre staff. People at all levels were energized by what was happening and this led to a more positive working climate. This observation goes beyond the data we collected, and is something that is worth assessing in further projects. The project supported capacity building for staff within the host organization and the skills developed are being used in the continued delivery employment services.

Next Steps and Recommendations

1. The results from this project were significant and spoke to the power of a few well-placed hope focused interventions at the beginning of the unemployment experience. These interventions were targeted and time efficient and prepared clients with a more positive and hope filled perspective on their job search. Current employment services are often quite structured and reflect a particular philosophy of service delivery. The hope centered intervention approach is more flexible, active, creative and focused on establishing a mattering climate. The question is whether these two philosophies can co-exist and complement one another within a unitary delivery system.

The current research is in many respects a pilot project and needs to be interpreted in this light. There is a need for a larger project to explore the viability of this framework within a broader system to create a stronger evidence base. A question now is how to fit early HOPE focused interventions, such as these, into the regular stream of client service delivery. This would require consultation with policy makers on the service value and program design considerations, training at the field level to implement and deliver interventions, and an ongoing monitoring and evaluation process.

2. A second recommendation is to revisit and potentially modify and add to the interventions utilized in this research project. We focused on five interventions, linked to the 5 key HOPE competencies. As we learned through the study, all Clients did not necessarily need each intervention. Creating a suite of interventions that have theoretical consistency with the HOPE Centred Career Development model that provides practitioners with flexibility to target appropriate interventions based on Client's HCCI competency results would be valuable to explore.
3. This research project assumed that HCCD interventions could be effectively delivered through face-to-face and online modalities; from our data analysis, both methods appear to be effective. Engagement with a practitioner was cited as valuable and important in both modalities and designing the intervention with active learning and mattering principles were noted as positive. A future area of exploration could be designing a blended online and F2F intervention that integrates strengths from both mediums such as more synchronous, personal time in the online intervention and more time for reflection and writing in the face-to-face delivery.

Appendix 1 – Theories and Definitions

Definitions of Terms for the Hope Centred Model *

The dimension of *'Action-oriented Hope'* involves “envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur should specific actions be taken” (Niles, Yoon, Balin & Amundson, 2010, p. 102). Whatever the situation, people with high levels of action-oriented hope are better able to consider possibilities, initiate action and overcome adversity. Action-oriented hope brings together agency, pathways thinking, and goals.

Self-reflection refers to the process of examining one’s beliefs, thoughts, behaviors, feelings and circumstances (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011). With self-reflection, there is a focus on bigger life issues and people ask themselves questions such as what matters in life, what do they want to do with their life, what are the possibilities, and so on. With self-reflection, there is an awareness of a dynamic interplay between internal and external factors.

Self-clarity shifts toward a more in-depth identification of skills, interests, values, and personality factors. This is the phase where people move beyond the broader questions and begin to seek understanding of their own unique sets of attributes and values.

Visioning focuses on brainstorming and looking ahead to what are the possibilities. Many clients come into counselling with a restricted vision of what is possible. The career counsellor helps them to expand their perspective and identify desired future outcomes. With visioning the focus is on possibility rather than probability thinking (Pryor, Amundson & Bright, 2008).

Goal setting and planning involve thoughtful consideration and specific action steps. There is a narrowing of choices and a delineation of pathways that can be followed. In this domain, it is important to set concrete goals that are well defined, realistic and doable. All actions are directed towards goal attainment.

Within Implementation and Adaptation, there is movement forward but also the recognition that things might not turn out quite the same as they were planned. Flexibility is required to modify goals and set new pathways in motion. The term ‘positive uncertainty’ might apply to this phase; there is positive action but also sensitivity to changing circumstances.

* Amundson, in press.

Appendix 2 – Hope Centred Career Interventions

Career Flow

Overview

The idea of “Career Flow” is a Metaphor. The flow of a river with its twists and currents seems similar to the twists and currents of work or career. It may include:

- **White water** which requires strong paddling and knowledge to navigate the rapids
- **Still waters** which require you to generate momentum using your strength to move along the river
- **Steady currents** where work occurs at a steady and manageable rate
- **Twists and Bends** which involves unexpected and expected challenges

With each experience on the river, you have to use certain strategies and skills. When the challenges of the river match your skills and interests the likelihood increases for you to experience a positive journey as you flow through the water.

The career flow metaphor is designed to help you think in new ways about challenges you encounter with work and the strategies you can use to manage those challenges.

It is easy, especially if you have experienced work challenges for an extended period of time, to begin to feel hopeless and maybe even helpless. You can begin to feel there is no clear solution to your challenge. Managing your career effectively requires a substantial amount of career and **self-awareness**.

Hope is another important aspect of managing your career well. Hopefulness relates to envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur should you take specific actions. There are certain attitudes and behaviors you can develop to increase your level of hope and to better manage the Career Flow experiences. These are called Career Flow Competencies. They are a foundation, an anchor that grounds your beliefs, goals, and actions. They are:

- **Self-reflection** – identifying what is important to you, what you value, what skills you possess, and what you want to develop further
- **Self-clarity** – developing answers to the questions from self-reflection
- **Visioning** – considering future possibilities that are desirable
- **Goal Setting & Planning** – identifying meaningful goals using the answers you clarified
- **Implementing & Adapting** – taking action and re-evaluating with new information

Optimal flow moments is a term used to describe an experience of being totally immersed in a work-related activity or task. People are more likely to experience optimal flow moments when they value the task and when they do work that requires them to use skills they enjoy using and feel reasonably competent doing. By focusing on optimal moments in your past, you can identify the work tasks you are most likely to find highly satisfying.

Career Flow Competency

This intervention focuses on developing career competency in **Self-Reflection**.

Set-up

1. Re-introduce the Hope-Centred Model of Career Development and share how the Career Flow competencies of: Self-reflection, Self-clarity, Visioning, Goal Setting & Planning, and Implementing & Adapting are foundational to navigating career and maintaining a sense of hopefulness when navigating different currents, bends, and twist in a river – especially as environmental factors push in on one’s experience. Define competency if necessary.
 - a. Discuss the client’s reaction to this model. Ask her/him to share any additional thoughts about the competencies s/he feels strong at since the debrief meeting.
 - b. Explain that the upcoming activities / conversations will touch on each of the competencies in the Hope-Centered Model.

2. Introduce the metaphor of Career Flow and expand on the types of currents, twists, and turns one may experience in their work life.
 - a. Discuss the client's reaction to this metaphor. Ask her/him to describe the current Career Flow. Ask if there have been recent times when s/he was in different currents or waters. Ask what has changed.
3. Introduce the idea of Optimal Flow Moments.
 - a. Read out loud / post on your wall - *When you are in the flow you are involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought flows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost.* - M. Csikszentmihalyi
 - b. Ask the client to focus attention on tasks in the past when s/he felt in "optimal flow". Try to have the client describe 2-3. They can be work / volunteer / general life related. Ask what made them special experiences?
 - c. Ask the client to think about what skills, interests, values or attitudes s/he was expressing during the Optimal Flow Moments.

Circle of Strength

Overview

Our stories and experiences can give us insights into our values, interests, personal characteristics and those tasks that are more likely to impact our career flow. Often our experiences are so close to us that we can miss valuable information about ourselves. We miss out on really seeing our own strengths (personality characteristics, skills, values and interests).

When we are able to make observations grounded in real behaviour it is more likely that we will accept the information and integrate it into our thinking. Awareness of our own strengths can lead to decisions about work that feel more positive and hopeful.

Career Flow Competency

This intervention focuses on developing career competency in **Self-clarity**.

Set-up

1. Ask the client to think about an activity s/he participated in the past where s/he felt engaged in the activity and proud of his/her contributions and/or outcome. Explain that this can be a work, volunteer or education activity.
2. Take a large flip chart paper, and use it to write notes as the client tells her/his story. This should be done in clear view for both client and practitioner. This information will be used in the analysis later in the intervention. As the client is talking and describing the activity and his / her experience with it, probe for a full description including feelings, thoughts, people and motivation involved.
3. Take a second large flip chart piece of paper and write a very large letter S in the middle of the paper. The S stands for "story" as well as the strength that is embedded in the story.
4. At the end of the story sharing, look at the details and observations generated on the first flip chart and begin to identify what those observations might say in terms of the client's goals, strengths, interests, personal style and values. Write each new insight as a spoke around the large S on the flip chart paper.
5. Once you are done, ask the client if there are any other observations or reframing that s/he would want to add to the S flip chart.
6. You may also ask the client to think of a time when the activity they shared didn't go well and see what new information arises in terms of the client's strengths, values, interests, personal style etc., or what "traps" or "pitfalls" to avoid in the future. (Ensure that the "S" flipchart is full of positive strengths only, so if you identify pitfalls to avoid, either reframe them as a strength or don't write those down on the "S" flip chart.)
7. Discuss how the strengths identified might be applied to her/his vision for work and decision about job search.

Walking the Problem

Overview

You can create energy and creativity by standing and physically moving from one point to another – problem to solution – identifying steps along the way and then physically looking back to observe the problem from a new position.

Once standing victorious and looking back at the beginning it makes the path to victory much more clear and feasible. For example, if you are already at the top of the mountain, you must have already overcome whatever obstacles there were on the path to the top. Your visioning and planning can then work backwards toward the start rather than the other way around.

Career Flow Competency

This intervention focuses on developing career competency in **Visioning** and in **Goal Setting & Planning**.

Set-up

1. Set up two locations in your office. One location could be a wall and the second location could be the opposite wall. If it is a small space, the first location could be a bookshelf and the second location could be something like a plant. The idea is to have two distinct locations identified.
2. Ask the client to stand at the first location. While here, ask the client to describe a problem s/he is facing, issue s/he is trying to resolve or goal s/he's trying to reach. You can probe for additional context and details to assist the client in identifying the issue.
3. Ask the client to look at the second spot and visualize the solution to the problem at that spot. Ask the client to imagine a miracle has occurred and his /her problem has been solved. Ask the client to walk towards the second solution, and without worrying about the details to stand in the solution and take it in. Ask the client to describe the solution. You can again probe for additional context and details? What is different? How does it feel?
4. Ask the client to look back at the problem solution and ask: "What steps do you need to take to get you to where you have arrived?" Discuss what new insights the client has of her / his problem or goal.

Two or Three Chairs

Overview

Feeling torn when resolving a problem, thinking about change, and/or making a decision can lead to:

- Agitation
- Confusion
- Cry out for some resolution

You may feel it's time for a change but have certain responsibilities to consider or may feel inadequate. At the same time you may be plagued with indecision where one part of you wants to move in a certain direction but another part of you has very different desires.

Using role playing to handle the feelings of being torn can help clarify two positions of a problem or decision and can lead to significant resolutions. As you take on the full identity of each opposing position or choice, you are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in a way that can be difficult when standing in the middle.

Career Flow Competency

This intervention focuses on developing career competency in **Goal Setting & Planning**.

Set-up

1. Discuss how feeling torn can impact one's ability to set goals or move forward with planning.
2. Ask the client to think about a problem or decision that s/he feels confused, agitated, torn about. This can be something general in her/his life or something specific about job search and work. Discuss the problem to bring the details of the problem out on the table.
3. Place two empty chairs in the room, some distance apart from each other. Set the scene for using re-enactment to look at problem from two different perspectives. It is a good idea to explain how the exercise will go to give the client the big picture.
 - a. Tell the client to imagine two chairs – each representing a different perspective to the same problem. When s/he imagines sitting in Chair #1, s/he should assume the full identity of that position. When s/he imagines sitting in the opposite chair, Chair #2, s/he should assume the full identity of that position.
4. Ask the client to go to the first chair.
 - a. When the client goes to the first chair, ask the client to describe that choice, decision, or solution to the issue. Summarize and probe deep to have the client describe how that decision has positively and negatively impacted her/his work or life in general.
5. Next ask the client to move to the second chair.
 - a. When the client goes to the second chair, ask the client to describe the choice, decision, or solution from the new viewpoint. Remind the client to fully embrace the identity of the alternate decision. As with the first chair, probe for a deeper understanding of the experience of living with the decision represented in the 2nd chair.
6. A third chair can be introduced to represent the role of a mediator (A person who attempts to bring people involved in a conflict closer to an agreement.). Tell the client why you are adding the third chair.
 - a. Ask the client to move to the third chair. While in the chair, ask the client to step outside the problem and think about what s/he may want to do with the chairs to solve their problem. – for example, move them closer together, stack them, arrange them in a line, shrink one or the other, get rid of one chair, etc.

Staying Afloat

Overview

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity, to work through challenges, to overcome obstacles. Imagine a ball in the water. It stays afloat above the water. You can push it down and hold it under water but when you let go, it bounces back to the surface.

No matter where you are in the metaphor of career flow, unexpected challenges – be it economic, family, health, or personal, it is normal to feel like you are sinking under the weight of your problems and it may feel difficult to stay afloat. Looking at your current experience through how you have handled previous adverse situations can help you see what dead weight you may need to let go of or ways that you can increase your own buoyancy to stay afloat.

Career Flow Competency

This intervention focuses on developing career competency in **Implementing and Adapting**.

Set-up

1. Introduce the idea of resiliency to the client. Ask the client to think about what resiliency means to him / her? Re-introduce the idea of the water metaphor and also introduce the idea of a beach ball floating in water as an example of resiliency.
2. Explain that sometimes in our lives we face unexpected situations or events that force us to change course or our current plans. Explain that in those instances, there are ways we can positively support ourselves – either that we try to remove whatever is pulling us down, or that we can focus on increasing the things that lift us up. Examples that you can share with the client about “letting go” or “lifting up” may include:
 - a. Letting go - consolidate debt, limiting your involvement in other people’s problems, putting aside projects that don’t need your immediate attention, etc.
 - b. Lifting up – surround yourself with the right kind of people, enhance physical / psychological well-being through exercise programs and involvement in other meaningful activities, get a survival job, etc.
3. Ask the client to describe an unexpected challenge they are facing - in his /her job search or other aspect of life. If a client is unable to think of a current challenge, give some examples of real challenges he / she may face in the future – i.e. finding a job may take longer, childcare falls through and that the idea of resiliency will better prepare him / her to deal with those unexpected challenges.
4. Explain that one of the best way to positively deal with unexpected challenges or those “twists & bends” is for the client to take time to think back to a previous life challenge that he / she has faced and overcome and to notice what we did to get through that situation.
5. Ask the client to describe an unexpected challenge from the past.
 - a. What thinking was helpful?
 - b. What activities did you engage in?
 - c. What support did you seek out?
 - d. What resources did you turn to?
 - e. What didn’t work for you in this situation?
 - f. Is there anything that you wished you did differently?
6. Prepare a flipchart with 4 quadrants on it and label it: Thinking, Acting (Internal), Support and Resources (External). After the client completes explaining the situation, use a flipchart paper to help brainstorm and organize the ways that the client got through the situation.
7. Ask the client to think about the core things that kept him/her safe and got him/her through the difficult situation (you can relate this to the PFD metaphor or toolkit)
8. Ask the client to think about and highlight which of the PFD / toolkit tools may be particularly with respect to the current challenging situation

Appendix 3 – Survey Questions

* Only sample questions are listed for psychological assessment tools for copyright reasons.

Hope Centered Career Inventory* (Niles, Yoon, & Amundson, 2010; 28 items; Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2)

For each item, rate how true each of the statements is for you using the response scale shown below. Please remember that only honest answers will help you to understand your situation well.

1. I am hopeful when I think about my future.
2. I take time to think about my thoughts and feelings.
3. I can describe who I am.
4. I often dream about my future.
5. I set deadlines to complete my goals.
6. I keep myself focused so that I can complete my plans.
7. I am willing to try new experiences that might help me to achieve my goals.

Response Options: definitely false, somewhat false, somewhat true, and definitely true

General Self-Efficacy Scale* (Schwartz & Jerusalem, 1995; 10 items; Pre-test, Post-test1, and Post-test 2)

For each item, rate how true each of the statements is for you using the response scale shown below. Please remember that only honest answers will help you to understand your situation well.

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Response Options: not at all true, hardly true, moderately true, and exactly true

Vocational Identity Scale* (Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980; 18 items; Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2)

Try to answer all the following statements as mostly TRUE or mostly FALSE. Click the answer that best represents your present opinion. In thinking about your present job or in planning for future work,...

1. I need reassurance that I have made the right career choice.
2. I am concerned that my present interests may change over the years.
3. I am uncertain about the jobs I could perform well.

Response Options: yes or no

Career Engagement Scale* (Hirschi, Freund, & Herrmann, 2014; 9 items; Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2)

To what extent have you in the past 3 months...

1. Actively sought to design your professional future.
2. Undertook things to achieve your career goals.

3. Cared for the development of your career.

Response Options: not much, little, somewhat, much, and a great deal

The Ways of Mattering Scale* (Corbière & Amundson, 2007; 24 items; Post-test 1 only)

This questionnaire focuses on some of the ways you perceive your relationship with your Hope Facilitator. Of particular interest is the extent to which you feel that you are important or matter in your work together. Think carefully about each question and choose the number that BEST describes how often each one occurred.

1. My facilitator took my feelings into account.
2. My facilitator treated me like a number.
3. My facilitator greeted me in a way that made me feel that I am not important.
4. My facilitator encouraged me to give ideas.

Response Options: very seldom, seldom, sometimes, often, and very often

Demographic Questions (Pre-test only)

Please provide the following demographic information. It will only be used to make statistical comparisons between different groups of respondents; it will not be used to profile individual respondents.

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female

2. How old are you? _____

3. With which of the following groups do you most identify?

- Asian Black Hispanic/Latino White Multiracial Other

4. Are you an immigrant to Canada?

- Yes No

If yes, how many years have you lived in Canada? _____

5. Which of the following best represents your highest level of education?

- Did not finish high school
 Graduated from High School
 Attended College/University but did not complete
 Completed a College Diploma/Certificate
 Completed an Apprenticeship Trade
 Completed a Bachelor's Degree
 Completed a Graduate Degree

6. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Part Time Employed, looking for more hours
 Unemployed, looking for work

7. If unemployed, what is the length of time unemployed?

- Less than 3 months

- 3 months to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1-2 years
- Over 2 years

8. How long have you been looking for work?

- Less than 3 months
- 3 months to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1-2 years
- Over 2 years

9. Are you receiving any of the following income supports?

- Active EI Claim
- BC Employment Assistance
- Disability Supports
- No

10. What kind of work are you currently looking for? (please specify type of occupation i.e., accounting clerk, mechanic, retail associate, etc.) _____

11. What two things do you find most challenging in your job search?

Topic 1:

Topic 2:

12. Please enter your name. It will appear on the assessment results page.

13. Please leave your email address here for a potential follow-up.

Appendix 4 – Interview Questions

Below is the structure of the ECIT Interviews.

- A. General contextual discussion at the beginning
 - Building rapport

- B. Specifying helpful and hindering incidents
 - What exactly made it helpful / unhelpful?
 - What went on before or after?
 - How did it turn out?
 - What were your thoughts and feelings?
 - Can you tell me more about what happened?
 - Is there anything else that you would like to add?

- C. Focusing on wish list items
 - What else would have been helpful at that time but was not available?

- D. Summarizing the key helpful and hindering incidents

- E. Ten point Likert scale self assessment. Clients assess where they were before the interventions and where they are now – where 0 is doing poorly; 5 is being OK; and 10 is doing really well.

Appendix 5 – Draft Journal Abstract

This field based and mixed methods research study builds on the Hope Centred Career Development model (Niles, Yoon & Amundson, 2010) and investigates how a series of hope-based interventions can be used with clients in employment counselling centers. The interventions used in the study included Walking the Problem; Circle of Strengths; Career Flow; Two or Three Chair Problem Solving; and Staying Afloat. Two different delivery methods were used, one involving face-to-face career counselling and the other a parallel set of interventions using an online platform. 27 clients were involved in F2F delivery and 25 clients participated online. Quantitative results included the Hope-Centered Career Inventory (HCCI; Niles, Yoon, & Amundson, 2010); the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE; Schwartzer & Jerusalem, 1995); Vocational Identity (VI; Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980); and the Career Engagement Scale (CES; Hirschi, Freund, & Herrmann, 2014). Taking both delivery methods into consideration, there were statistically significant improvements in all measures. Qualitative assessment used the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio & Amundson, 2009) and involved interviews with members from both groups. These interviews helped to identify helpful and hindering themes as well as wish list items. A focus group was used to gather perspectives of the career development counsellors.

Appendix 6 – Testimonials

Below are some quotes from our Client Interviews indicating the value of the HOPE Interventions:

I would recommend the program to anyone. It was especially good for people like me who have been unemployed for a couple of years. Obviously, if you've been unemployed that long basically you need something to focus you and something like this might help.

After I finished I felt more hopeful and I felt that I recognized my skills, and the work I'd done because the activities were well organized to do that, to remind me. It helped me to get out of that negative mental state and be more positive.

In going to job interviews I felt more relaxed. I think the interviewers sensed that, and I even offered my services as a volunteer. Anyways, they hired me, which was great....But the job is only part time, and I still need to find another job. Being part of this research was really helpful.

For me it was a really good experience, just because it brought out all these different emotions. It was good to get those emotions out sometimes and have a good look at yourself on paper and talk about it. I like it, I enjoyed it (really liked the Circle of Strengths).

Walking the Problem gave me confidence that many of these little fear tasks are not difficult, they're just little difficulties... We're all human and need help and that's OK. Something I realized today is that I've got another person who would be a fantastic character reference.

It definitely helped! It was supportive. You get a lot of pressure when you are unemployed. You're not seen as worthwhile in society unless you're working. So to be supported enough to step back and think about what you want to do and where your strengths are and what you can do better – this helps because it makes you think about the things that are important to you.

Now I can look at job prospects and realize that "okay you know what, that's not for me. That's not aligning with the goals I set out for myself". Yeah, there's taking the job to just make the money, which is fine, but then there's building a career.

It was good! I thought it was all good. I thought each segment was well developed, well designed and interesting.

Below are some quotes from the project practitioners, shared during the Focus Group session:

I noticed the most from the clients that what changed was their ability to talk about unemployment, not from a place of shame but more from a place of, I suppose, hope but in some cases it was just that the client said, "I no longer feel ashamed of not having a job," and now they have the language and the tools to say, "I'm in the process of transition" or make it clear they were looking for work.

I was amazed by the power of interventions itself – like, unfolding in front of my eyes... what can be done in 4 hours!

The circle of strengths was so powerful. People would come up from this dark hole.

... this power of short intense interventions is kind of amazing.

It's an opportunity for them to tell their story and be accepted and I think they felt like they know they had me at the end. It was just care, the true care, that we're not just here to get down to the business.

I think [the interventions] are very client led, and I think that's a big shift, so although we have structure it is a very fluid structure when we are facilitating and the client is able to make the story work for them, it's much more from a holistic view point.

It's like this authentic true connection, being really in the present with the client. Well, we all are, but there are always all these papers between us...

There is also that "are we willing, as employment counsellors, to step out of our own comfort zones and not hang onto something that is, in the end, an illusion?" Really, that structure, it's what stops being genuine and authentic. When you've got structure, it gets in the way of that authenticity and genuineness, too much structure anyways. [...] Are we actually meeting the person from a heart connective space?

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