Vocational Guidance and Counseling

Module 8

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NOTE: Funding for TACE 8 ended on December 31, 2014. Materials can be used freely for their intended purposes.
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How to Use the Learning Modules:

The learning modules are designed to provide rehabilitation personnel with relevant, applicable knowledge pertaining to the rehabilitation process. The ultimate goal is to assure that all rehabilitation personnel are adequately trained and prepared to provide high quality rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

These modules can be utilized in a variety of ways: new counselor training (individual study or with supervisor mentoring); professional development or refresher for current rehabilitation professionals; or CRC study guides.


Steps for Successful Completion:

Content for "Steps for Successful Completion" has been deleted as this section is no longer relevant with the conclusion of TACE 8 cooperative agreement between U.S. Department of Education and the University of Northern Colorado.

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Rationale

Just as counseling theory guides counseling practice, theories of career counseling guide the practice of providing career counseling. Since one of the primary tasks of the vocational rehabilitation counselor is to assist consumers in identifying, exploring, and seeking jobs in areas that match the consumers’ interests, abilities, values, and choices, it is critical for counselors to have a framework for understanding the career needs and concerns of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the various theories of career development provide ways of understanding individual career development in the context of the life cycle, identifying personal traits and characteristics needed for various occupations, and matching individual characteristics and abilities with appropriate career choices.

Goal

- To provide an overview of major theories of career counseling and guidance and their applications to vocational rehabilitation.

Learning Objectives

- To provide an understanding of the differences between career guidance and career counseling.

- To provide an overview of several theories of career development and counseling.
To provide counselors with resources of occupational information.

**Topics Covered**

- The history of career counseling and guidance in vocational rehabilitation counseling.
- Definitions of career counseling and career guidance.
- Theories of career development and counseling often used in vocational rehabilitation counseling.
- Resources for occupational information.

**Materials Needed**

- Written material for Module Eight.
- Mastery Test.
Introduction

Within the public vocational rehabilitation program, the vocational rehabilitation counselor is the central service provider for eligible rehabilitation consumers. Many consumers report that the most important, valued or enduring service provided is effective counseling and guidance. Nell C. Carney (1992), former Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner, provides the following when writing about guidance and counseling:

Another real strength of rehabilitation practice is the interpersonal relationship between the rehabilitation counselor and the person with a disability. It is not surprising to hear some former rehabilitation clients, now successful professionals say they could have made it without everything rehabilitation provided except the “coaching” from the rehabilitation counselor. This interaction between counselor and client occurs at the time the person with a disability is learning to physically and psychologically adjust to the presence of a disability and learning to cope with society's attitudes about disability. The counselor has the potential to offer the support and guidance necessary to build the self-esteem of the individual and give the sense of self-worth so essential to successful rehabilitation. The rehabilitation counselor acting as a listener, information provider, supporter, and friend can-and often does-contribute to the empowerment of the person with a disability (pp. 8-9).
But what is counseling and what is guidance within the vocational rehabilitation setting? Are counseling and guidance one and the same function or two very distinct functions? Is counseling in the vocational rehabilitation setting different from counseling in another setting, such as a psychotherapist's office? To add to the confusion about these terms, the word “career” has recently been placed in front of these two terms. This module will attempt to define career counseling and guidance, provide an overview of the topics, as well as cover the terminology, theories, and applications associated with the field of career counseling and guidance.

The Research and Training Center at the University of Wisconsin-Stout devoted the Twentieth Institute on Rehabilitation Issues to the exploration of counseling and career guidance within vocational rehabilitation counseling. Much of the following terminology and discussion of the difference between guidance and counseling comes from the findings of the Research and Training Center study group.

**Terminology**

**Career:** Refers to how individuals see themselves in relationship to what they do. It also refers to the lifetime pursuits of the individual.

**Career Choice:** Decisions that an individual makes at any point in their career about particular work or leisure activities they choose to pursue at that time.

**Jobs:** Positions requiring similar skills within one organization.
**Occupation:** Similar jobs found in many organizations.

**Counseling:** A number of counseling definitions are used in rehabilitation. Gustad (1953) defined counseling as a learning-oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which a counselor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client by methods appropriate to the latter's needs and within one context of the total personal program, to learn more about him or herself, to learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals to the end that the client may become a happier and more productive member of society. McGowan and Schmidt (1966) state “Counseling differs from advising, where emphasis is on informing persons of obligations and requirements so as to solve immediate environmental problems; and from psychotherapy, where the intention is to establish a more intense and lengthy interaction for purposes of major changes or alterations in the client's behavior or personality (p. 11).” Additionally, Corthell (1993) defined counseling as a process whereby two individuals collaborate to identify, prepare for, and achieve meaningful vocational outcomes for the consumer. It is a process that may entail extensive discussion, planning, exploration, and clarification of values, needs, desires, and realities facing both partners in the rehabilitation relationship.

**Guidance Services:** Uniquely individualized, advice driven services, primarily involving the imparting of information (Corthell, 1993).

**Choice:** According to Corthell (1993):
Fundamental to all discussion of counseling services is the clear understanding that in the rehabilitation process a partnership is formed between the consumer and counselor. This partnership has as its foundation, a consumer empowerment strategy. The counselor must shift roles within the relationship to best facilitate empowerment of the consumer. Guidance skills, as well as counseling skills, are critical to the process if the outcome is to have a reasonable chance for success. (p. 2)

Consumers want and have a right to make choices that impact the direction of their lives. This is especially true when talking about career and vocational choices. The rehabilitation counselor's role in the process is providing the structure for the individual to make those choices. It must be clear from the outset that the empowerment of the consumer should take place within this partnership. Counseling services and guidance are provided with the primary purpose of empowering the consumer to make the most appropriate choices offering the greatest chance of vocational success (Corthell, 1993).

**Informed Choice**

The opportunity for consumers to make informed choices throughout the rehabilitation process is required by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 102(d)). This requirement creates the opportunity for the consumer and the rehabilitation counselor to maintain an ongoing partnership throughout the rehabilitation process that enables the consumer to make informed choices with regard to the selection of a
long-term vocational goal, intermediate rehabilitation objectives, and vocational rehabilitation services, including the selection of assessment services and service providers. Further, the rehabilitation counselor ensures that the consumer receives, through the appropriate modes of communication, information concerning the availability and scope of informed choice, the manner in which informed choice may be exercised, and the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice.

During the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), the counselor provides the consumer with 1) information on the individual's options for developing an individualized plan for employment, 2) information necessary to make informed selection of a specific employment outcome, 3) information about specific services, and 4) information about providers of services needed to achieve the individual's specific employment outcome (1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments (Section 102(b)(c)). The information includes a description of plan components and development procedures, data regarding the cost, financial participation, accessibility and duration of potential services, the consumer satisfaction with those services, the qualifications of potential service providers, the types of services provided by those providers, and the degree to which services are provided in integrated settings (34 CFR 361.52).

In other words, informed choice, in the context of career counseling and guidance, is the process by which the rehabilitation counselor provides information or assists the consumer in acquiring the information necessary to make an appropriate career choice and to choose among various service options and providers. The issue
of informed choice creates a significant challenge and responsibility for the counselor to provide the counseling and information necessary to facilitate consumer informed choice.

**Career Counseling**

Career counseling is a structured, systematic interview and teaching process intended to help the consumer discover and articulate her or his vocational interests and goals. It has as its aims identification of vocational alternatives and the development of a strategy to select an attainable goal. Career counseling attempts to discover and take into account the consumer's values, interests, skills, and social needs (Corthell, 1993).

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, Title I, Section 100(a)(3)(c) address the concept of career counseling. The Title states:

> Individuals with disabilities must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs; including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals and objectives and the vocational rehabilitation services they receive (Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1993).

**Difference between Career Counseling and Career Guidance**

In the history of vocational rehabilitation, counseling and guidance have been thrown
together as if they were one and the same thing. Only recently has the profession acknowledged the difference and the importance of these two different processes. According to Corthell (1993),

Guidance is informed advice. Guidance is the giving of information, and in the case of career guidance, the sharing of information relative to careers. Guidance is guiding. Conversely, counseling is a structured process of intervention with the objective of helping the individual defines her/his thoughts and feelings, in the case of career counseling, about possible occupations. (p. 51)

The meanings of the words “counseling” and “guidance” in the vocational rehabilitation system have never been clear. Frequently “counseling” and “guidance” were viewed as though they were one thing. The fact is that counseling and guidance are two different activities. Examples of guidance include: 1) referring consumers for aptitude, achievement, interest, personality, and intelligence tests; 2) directing consumers to computer-based vocational exploration systems and helping them to use and interpret the products of those systems; 3) helping consumers explore opportunities at universities, community colleges, and community service providers; and referral of consumers for vocational evaluation and interpretation plus application of results (Corthell, 1993). Counseling, on the other hand, includes activities such as 1) assisting a consumer through a process that promotes identification, exploration, and articulation of personal needs and desires; 2) assisting a consumer to identify, clarify, and articulate likes and dislikes; and 3) assisting a consumer to identify and articulate fears (Corthell, 1993). “The assistive process becomes career counseling when it
includes exploring how those needs, desires, likes, dislikes, fears etc., pertain to possible career choices” (Corthell, 1993, p. 52).

In the past, the field of vocational rehabilitation counseling has used the term vocational counseling for what is now understood to be vocational guidance. Now, the term career counseling is preferred in the field to talk about the process of helping a consumer to explore values, interests, feelings, goals, and emotional barriers related to discovering and entering a suitable career.

For the majority of rehabilitation consumers, career guidance will be appropriate and sufficient where guidance will consist of the exploration of aptitudes, interests, abilities, etc., utilizing psychometric instruments coupled with information about occupations and occupational requirements. For some consumers, career guidance alone will not suffice. Some people require a more structured and thorough examination of their values and interests and a comparison of those values and interests with the realities of their current situation. Examples of people who can benefit from career counseling include individuals with self image problems, unrealistic vocational goals, undetermined vocational goals, unspecified vocational goals, and perhaps unresolved grief associated with the acquisition of a disability that has created the need to change careers. It is important to remember that even if the counselor's assessment is that career counseling is needed, the decision to participate in career counseling must be one jointly agreed upon by both consumer and counselor.

**Advantages of Career Counseling**
Thorough career counseling may negate the need for psychometric testing or vocational evaluation (Corthell, 1993). By taking the time to listen, the counselor may help the consumer explore, identify, and clarify basic values, likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses. The counselor may also observe basic communication and problem solving skills. To replicate this assessment using psychometric tests would be costly and redundant.

Another benefit of career counseling is that it can be done in group settings which allow the counselor to maximize time spent with clients (Corthell, 1993). It also provides the opportunity for clients to receive additional feedback and support from peers.

Stages of Career Counseling

Sharf (1997) states, “The two most common goals of career counseling are the selection of an occupation and the adjustment to an occupation” (p. 17). There are many different theories and approaches to career counseling. In practice; however, there are certain elements or components of career counseling shared by most approaches. The following outline by Corthell (1993) summarizes common stages and skills of career counseling:

I. Exploring the Consumer’s Career Alternative

   A. Exploring information about the consumer’s world
Module Eight: Vocational Guidance and Counseling

I. Exploring information about the consumer's world

1. Exploring work/interest areas
2. Identifying preferred work/interest area
3. Exploring educational requirement categories
4. Identifying preferred educational requirement categories
5. Expanding the number of realistic occupational alternatives

II. Understanding the Consumer's Career Alternative

A. Understanding the consumer's unique career value system

1. Defining career values
2. Scaling career values
3. Weighing career values

B. Understanding the world of work in relation to the consumer's career value system

1. Investigating specific occupational alternatives
2. Making career decision using values/occupational knowledge
3. Developing new understanding through an internship experience
III. Acting on the Consumer's Career Choice

A. Acting to develop a career plan
   1. Identifying and categorizing problems
   2. Assessing present problem behavior
   3. Assessing the needed goal level
   4. Developing career steps to the needed goals

B. Acting to implement the career plan
   1. Specifying needed resources
   2. Assigning completion dates (pp. 54-55)

In the exploration stage, the individual is encouraged to increase his or her knowledge about self and the world of work by exploring underlying values, general interests, and any experiences that may provide clues about the person’s work orientation. Once areas of interest and experience are identified, the individual can begin to explore occupations congruent with the person’s interest and use this as a starting point for career exploration. The outcome of the exploration stage should be the identification of a large number of career options.

In the understanding stage, the goal is to “understand the consumer’s unique career values in relation to the world of work” (Corthell, 1993, p. 56). During this phase the number of potential occupations is narrowed as the individual discovers more about the nature and requirements of the occupations being considered in relationship to the individual’s values and interests.
In the action stage, the goal is to transform understanding into action. At this point potential barriers and needs for obtaining the desired career goal are identified. Specific goals towards obtaining the career objectives are set along with time lines and completion dates. The formulation of goals is essential to career counseling. Goals serve as a guide for the counseling process.

As with all persons seeking career counseling, persons with disabilities are a very heterogeneous population. There is no one approach that will be applicable to all consumers. In the case of career counseling with persons with disabilities, there are many variables to consider such as age of onset of disability, severity of the disability, previous life or work experience, level of maturity etc. Regardless of the career counseling approaches used, central to all approaches is the importance of the consumer’s participation in the career discovery process and the consumer’s final decision in the process.

**Career Guidance**

Career guidance as defined by Corthell (1993),

...is a service in which the counselor is the orchestrator, directing or leading consumers to information. This service is time-limited and is an activity-directed service. The guidance is provided concurrently with other services and is goal-oriented. Guidance may employ the use of technology such as computer systems or paper and pencil tests. Career
guidance is giving information so that appropriate and realistic employment options can be chosen. It is different from counseling which involves looking at values and effecting change. Career guidance is giving information so that appropriate and realistic employment options can be chosen. (p. 63)

Career guidance includes giving consumers information on how to learn about their interests, skills, and abilities. It discusses how to obtain information about work and current local labor market information. It addresses how to prepare and look for work, how to conduct oneself in an interview, and whether and how to discuss disabilities in employment interviews.

**Relationship of Career Guidance to Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**

The goal of the state vocational rehabilitation agency is successful job placement and maintenance of competitive employment by individuals with disabilities. Career guidance is essential to assist consumers in fulfilling this goal. Effective career guidance will help ensure that consumers are successful in employment and know how to secure employment. (Corthell, 1993, pp. 64-65)

The vocational rehabilitation counselor's role in obtaining these goals is multifaceted. In terms of providing career guidance, the counselor is called upon to show the way through the rehabilitation process as well as the process specific to career selection. The tasks of the counselor in providing career guidance include everything
from explaining services that are available, the eligibility process, and consumer rights, to those tasks directly related to career selection such as providing occupational information and resources, assisting consumers in matching skills and interests to occupational types, and providing instruction on locating, applying for, and interviewing for jobs. Providing guidance may also include helping consumers to deal with issues like transportation, child care needs, or accommodations for successful job performance.

Additional characteristics of career guidance provided in vocational rehabilitation include the following: 1) guidance is provided from referral to closure; 2) guidance empowers consumers to make realistic and appropriate vocational choices; and 3) a majority of career guidance is provided after the consumer is found eligible or ready for employment. In sum, the counselor's role is to determine what consumers already know about themselves, the world of work, and what they need to know to seek and secure appropriate employment. The role of the counselor is to assist consumers in acquiring, processing, and applying information and skills to make effective decisions (Gysbers & Moore, 1987).

The process of providing career guidance must be flexible and individualized since consumers bring a wide variety of work backgrounds, skills, individual characteristics, and challenges to the counselor (Corthell, 1993). Some consumers know what types of jobs they would like to pursue but do not know how to go about obtaining jobs. Other consumers lack knowledge of their abilities and interests, and how these relate to work. Some consumers have never worked, possess little knowledge of appropriate work behavior, and have no understanding of how they fit
into the world of work. Other consumers cannot return to previous employment due to a disabling condition and need guidance in putting together past history with current abilities and skills in order to find a new occupational fit (Corthell, 1993).

In order to provide effective career guidance, the counselor must be acquainted with a wide variety of occupations and labor market trends. Corthell (1993) states,

Because of the rapidly changing work world and the global economy, consumers have increased job choices. However, it is impossible for a counselor to know all occupations. Instead counselors need to know about available job data banks in order to direct consumers to the appropriate job information resources. It is important that consumers, to the fullest extent possible, check resources and not rely on the counselor to do this for them. When they are checking, they are learning about themselves and the labor market. They are also investing their time and themselves in the process and, thus, will gain confidence and independence. (p. 66)

The investment of time and energy toward the provision of appropriate career guidance services is extremely valuable for the consumer as it will assist in the acquisition of appropriate employment, congruent with the consumer's values, interests, abilities, and choice.

Theories of Occupational Choice and Career Development
Career development theory provides a framework for understanding and assisting a consumer with career problems. Career development theory offers a framework within which to conceptualize the consumer's specific career concerns. Tests, inventories, and occupational information further aid the conceptualization process. Counseling skills are used to provide feedback about test and inventory results, to provide occupational information, and to encourage change and progress related to occupational issues. Just as counseling theory guides the counseling practice of the mental health counselor, career development theory guides the practice of the vocational counselor (Sharf, 1997).

There are a number of theories of career development from which to choose. Most career development theories are based on consideration and integration of factors such as individual traits, personality characteristics, developmental history, individual needs, typology, social learning, self-concept, cultural influences, etc. It is important to note that not all career development theories may be directly applicable to individuals with disabilities; however, familiarity with a wide variety of career development theory will provide rehabilitation counselors with additional resources and greater flexibility in the career counseling process.

Sharf (1997) suggests that to select a theory of career development, counselors must understand and have confidence in the theory as well as the ability to make judgments about the applicability of a particular theory with a particular consumer. In the selection of a theory a counselor should also consider his or her own views of career development and his or her own counseling style. Further, the
counselor needs to select a theory of career development that fits the environment and resources in which he or she is practicing. Counselors work in a variety of public and private agency settings with a variety of opportunities, demands, and limitations. Elementary and junior high school counselors work with students who are at the beginning of the career information and selection process. High school and college counselors help students who are more immediately concerned with choices that will impact vocational selection such as whether to pursue advanced education, a course of study, career options, and job placement. Employment counselors may encounter the same issues as high school and college counselors as well as additional issues related to job satisfaction and adjustment.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors who work with individuals with physical and mental disabilities deal with the issues mentioned previously, plus the special and complex variety of issues related to disability including psychological and physical adjustment to a disability, stereotypes and fears of employers, assistive technology, and other accommodations that will allow the person with a disability to achieve a good vocational outcome. The vocational rehabilitation counselor must be especially concerned whether the theory of choice is applicable with persons with disabilities. Further, counselors must also consider the applicability of career development theories across gender, culture, economic, and religious differences among the people with whom they work.

**Trait and Factor Theory**

In 1909, Frank Parsons described the concept of vocational guidance in his book
“Choosing a Vocation.” His views served as the foundation for what later became known as Trait-Factor Theory. The word trait refers to a characteristic of an individual that can be measured through testing. The word factor is a characteristic required for successful job performance. Used together, the terms trait and factor refer to the assessment of characteristics of the person and a specific job.

The writings of Edmund G. Williamson, known as the “Minnesota point of view,” epitomize the trait and factor approach. Williamson’s methods involve information giving and direct suggestion. According to Williamson, the counselor should share his or her wisdom with the client in guiding the client to a correct vocational decision (Sharf, 1997).

**Key Concepts**

Four key assumptions of trait and factor theory are described by Brown (1990):

1. Each individual has a unique set of traits that can be measured reliably and validly.

2. Occupations require that workers possess certain very specific traits for success, although a worker with a wide range of characteristics can still be successful in a given job.

3. The choice of an occupation is a rather straightforward process, and matching is possible.
4. The closer the match between personal characteristics and job requirements, the greater the likelihood of success (productivity and satisfaction) (p. 17).

The trait and factor (Minnesota) approach has been widely used in many programs, including vocational rehabilitation counseling. Parsons (1909) identified three steps in the career decision making process in trait and factor theory: 1) gaining self understanding, 2) obtaining knowledge about the world of work, and 3) integrating information about oneself and the world of work. Following is a description of each of the three steps:

Gaining Self-Understanding refers to the process of helping the consumer to learn more about him or herself by identifying likes, dislikes, interests, personality traits, aptitudes, and achievements. Techniques and resources used by counselors to help consumers gain self-understanding and choose a career include interviews and discussions with consumers, the use of tests, inventories, and the use of occupational information. The five basic traits and factors emphasized in the assessment process are aptitudes, achievements, interests, values, and personality. In addition, assessment of an individual's functional limitations associated with a physical and/or mental disability is an important component of the assessment process. (Further descriptions of the tests and procedures used in the assessment process are covered in Module Twelve: Evaluation: Assessing Client Needs.)

Obtaining Knowledge about the World of Work is the second major component of trait and factor theory. It is the counselor's role to help the consumer gather occupational information. This does not infer that there must be sole reliance upon
the counselor's knowledge of occupations; rather, it is preferable that the counselor teach the consumer about resources that are available so that the consumer has the option of researching occupations independent of the counselor. Sharf (1997) identifies three aspects of occupational information to consider: 1) the type of information such as a description of an occupation, the working conditions, or the salary, 2) classification of occupation, that is, how occupational information is organized in a meaningful way, and 3) the trait and factor requirements for each occupation being considered by the consumer.

The third step in the career decision process (Integrating Information about Oneself and the World of Work) involves integrating the knowledge gained from interviews, inventories, tests, and occupational exploration to create an occupational goal or focus. This process can be more complicated than it sounds since test scores may conflict with interests or a person's perceptions of him or herself. For example, it is possible for a person's abilities as measured on the GATB to suggest one set of occupations, interests as measured on the SII to suggest another set of occupations, and personality as measured on the 16PF to suggest a third group of occupations. It is the counselor's role to use the full range of counseling skills to assist the consumer in making sense of the seeming contradictions (keeping in mind the limitations of testing instruments) and in utilizing the information gained. Counselors can help consumers to further clarify values and interests by exploring the aspects of different occupations that most interest them and why.

Trait and factor theory is the oldest and most widely used of all career development theories. It focuses on the match between an individual's aptitudes,
achievements, interests, values, and personality and the requirements and conditions and the wide variety of occupations available in the work world today. This approach relies heavily on the integration of knowledge gained from a variety of sources including tests and inventories. Trait and factor theory is also compatible with many computer guidance systems now in use.

Computer guidance systems allow consumers to apply trait and factor theory in a self-assessment format. Two frequently used computer guidance systems are SIGI PLUS (1985) and DISCOVER (1984). Both systems measure interests, values, and self-reported competencies. The systems do not measure personality traits but do measure work values. Occupational information is then matched with the consumer's competencies, values, and interests so that the consumer is able to examine information about occupations that match his or her self-assessment profile. Both computer systems reduce the number of career alternatives which helps to simplify and expedite the decision making process.

One advantage that computer systems have over tests and inventories is that they are interactive. There is interplay of information between the consumer and the computer resulting in immediate feedback to the consumer. It is important to note that neither tests nor computer programs can help consumers in working out difficult and unusual concerns such as parental pressure to enter an unwanted occupation (Sharf, 1997).

Counselor Issues
One concern associated with trait-factor theory is its emphasis on testing. The
counselor should take measures to ensure that the consumer does not leave the
counseling session saying, “the test told me I should be a ....” Although tests and
inventories are used in trait and factor theory, they are not necessarily the determinant
of a final career choice. Sharf (1997) states, “Trait and factory theory is deceptively
simple. It is easy for a beginning counselor to develop a style in which he or she
asks questions and the client gives the answers (p. 56).” Often tests are viewed by
consumers as having a great deal of authority and power. This perception can inhibit
the interaction and rapport between consumer and counselor. By taking time to
discuss relevant personal information along with test and inventory results, the
counselor can assist the consumer in taking charge of the career decision process.

**Application to Persons with Disabilities**

Trait and factor theory has been criticized in its application to people with disabilities.
Conte (1983) argues that the theory’s focus on individual traits obscures the
capability of people with severe disabilities to perform most jobs with appropriate
assistive devices and job modifications, and the impact of limited early experiences on
the career development of people with congenital disabilities. Nonetheless, trait and
factor theory can be found in most current rehabilitation practices in both public and
private sectors. Job matching systems and analyses of transferable skills are
examples of trait and factor theory application in rehabilitation practice.

**Roe’s Theory of Occupational Choice and Personality**
Anne Roe devoted many years of research regarding the influence of parental child-rearing styles on individual occupational choice. In the process, she developed a widely used occupational classification system. Roe developed a theory to predict occupational selection based on individual differences, which are biological, sociological, and psychological. She focused on predicting occupational selection based on psychological needs that develop through parent-child interaction. It was her intention to show that people in certain occupations have a common background in terms of the way they were raised. As a result, Roe developed an occupational classification system where parent-child relationships could relate to specific occupational groups.

Through years of extensive research, Roe developed a list of eight occupational groups. These groups are identified by Roe and Klos (1972) as follows:

1. **Service:** This involves one person doing something for another person. Occupations include clinical psychologist, social worker, career counselor, nurse, waiter, and servant.

2. **Business contact:** People in this group are involved in persuading others, possibly selling products. Examples include public relations work, car sales, insurance sales, and door-to-door sales.

3. **Organization:** Management is the primary activity. It may be government on a federal, state, or local level, or it may refer to
management in a privately owned company. Examples are senator, accountant, and secretary.

4. **Technology**: This category includes making, producing, maintaining, and transporting products. Included in this category are engineers, production managers, pilots, electricians, and heavy-equipment operators.

5. **Outdoor**: Protection of the environment and production of crops and forest products are included in this group. Also included is work with natural resources, such as oil and coal, as well as those found in lakes, rivers, and streams. Examples of such occupations are corporate farm manager, landscape architect, fish and game warden, miner, and lumberjack.

6. **Science**: These occupations concern the development and application of science in many areas: natural science, physical science, social science, and so on. Scientific careers include university professor, pharmacist, medical technician, and lab technician.

7. **General Culture**: People in this group tend to be interested in human activity and culture. This group includes communicating and preserving culture (the humanities). Fields included are law, ministry, history, and education. Principals and teachers may be found in this group, but university science teachers would be in Group 6 and art
professors in Group 8. Examples of occupations are lawyer, editor, elementary school teacher, and radio announcer.

8. Arts and Entertainment: This group includes those who perform for the public or create. Areas include music, art, writing, and athletics. Examples of careers in this category are music conductor, museum curator, music critic, interior designer, football player, and stagehand (pp. 202-203).

In addition to the occupational groups, Roe and Los (1972) identified six levels of occupations based on the level of responsibility and ability that is required by the occupation. Roe felt that responsibility is particularly important and refers to the difficulty and complexity of decisions along with the variety of problems people encounter in their work (Sharf, 1997). The six levels of occupations are described as follows:

1. Professional and Managerial: Independent responsibility. This category includes those who have the highest level of responsibility within a group. Their responsibilities tend to be very important and varied. They may make policy decisions that affect many people through government, education, health, or private companies. Those in the sciences and many in the general cultural group often have a doctorate. Others usually have a high level of education in their group.

2. Professional and Managerial: Similar to Level 1 but differs in that
the individual may have less independence or fewer or less important responsibilities. Often, individuals at this level have a bachelor's degree or possibly a master's degree. They may be involved in interpreting policy and making important decisions for themselves and others.

3. **Semiprofessional and Small Business**: Only a moderate level of responsibility for others, such as the responsibility of police sergeants for other police officers, or of retail businesspeople for their sales clerks. Often, only a high school education is required, but many people have degrees from technical schools or four-year institutions.

4. **Skilled**: Training is required, whether in the form of an apprenticeship or vocational education, at either a technical school or a high school.

5. **Semiskilled**: On-the-job training and some special schooling may be required. For example, truck drivers may receive training from their union or a special school. Taxi drivers may receive very brief training before being given assignments.

6. **Unskilled**: Little special training is required. Individuals need only to follow basic directions. No specific education is required. (Roe & Klos, 1972, pp. 208-209)
Several interest inventories have been developed which use Roe's classification system. Two particularly well used inventories are the Career Occupational Preference System Interest Inventory (COPS; Knapp & Knapp, 1985) and the Vocational Interest Inventory (VII; Lunneborg, 1981). The COPS inventory provides a score for each Roe group and includes scales for more than one level per group. “For example, science, organization, arts and entertainment, and service each have scales on two levels, and technology provides scores on three levels” (Sharf, 1997, p. 304). “The VII is a forced-choice inventory designed for high school and college students that controls for sex bias” (Sharf, 1997, p. 304).

Application

According to Sharf (1997), Roe’s system provides a useful framework to make sense of a vast array of occupations. By using a classification system which limits the number of occupational categories, a counselor is able to organize information about occupations when discussing occupational choices with consumers. In Roe’s system, categories that are more closely related are placed near each other thus allowing counselors easy assess to information on related occupations that the consumer may not have considered. In addition, the levels of occupations represented in the model allow the consumer and counselor to explore a variety of occupation categories and levels taking into consideration the level or responsibility and education the consumer is interested in and capable of acquiring.

Application to Persons with Disabilities
Rehabilitation counselors should be aware that Roe's theory has been described as particularly inapplicable to persons with disabilities due to its dependence on inherent personal factors (e.g., genetic inheritance, family interactions), the effect of which may have been altered by the presence of a congenital or acquired disability (Conte, 1983). However, certain aspects of Roe's theory, especially the classification of occupations by group and level, may be helpful to rehabilitation counselors. Some of the other aspects may be useful if the rehabilitation counselor keeps in mind that disability may significantly alter the potential effect of normal determinants of occupational choice. For example, congenital disability may impact parent-child interactions and other factors (Turner & Syzmanski, 1990). Acquired disability may alter the relationship of past experiences to current occupational choices (Conte, 1983). Thus, it is suggested that Roe's theory be applied with the same caution as other theories (Hershenson & Syzmanski, 1992).

**Holland's Theory of Types**

John Holland purports that career choice and career adjustment represents an extension of a person's personality. “Individuals are attracted to a given career by their particular personalities and numerous variables that constitute their backgrounds (Zunker, 1990, p. 40).” People express themselves, their interests, and values through their work choices and experience. In his theory, Holland assumes that people's impressions and generalizations, which he refers to as stereotypes, are generally accurate. “Congruence of one's view of self with occupational preference establishes what Holland refers to as the modal personal style” (Zunker, 1990, p. 40). By studying and refining the stereotypes, people and work environments are
assigned to specific categories. Holland describes six work environments that can be matched to specific personality types that best correspond with each environment. Holland’s six types of personal orientations to life include: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. These personal orientations are models or pure types against which a real person may be measured (Holland, 1985). Zunker (1990) displays the relationships between Holland’s personality styles, the six types or themes, and occupational environments in the following table:
### Holland’s Model Personal Styles and Occupational Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Styles</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Occupational Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive, prefers concrete vs. abstract work tasks, basically less sociable, poor interpersonal interactions</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Skilled trades such as plumber, electrician, and machine operator; technician skills such as airplane mechanic, photographer, draftsperson, and some service occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual, abstract, analytical, independent, sometimes radical and task oriented</td>
<td>Investigative</td>
<td>Scientific such as chemist, physicist, and mathematician; technician such as laboratory technician, computer programmer, and electronics worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginative, values aesthetics, prefers self-expression through the arts, rather independent and extroverted</td>
<td>Artistic</td>
<td>Artistic such as sculptor, artist, and designer; musical such as music teacher, orchestra leader, and musician; literary such as editor, writer, and critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Type</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers social interaction, social presence, concerned with social problems, religious, community service oriented, and interested in educational activities</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Educational such as teacher, educational administrator, and college professor; social welfare such as social worker, sociologist, rehabilitation counselor, and professional nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Holland’s personality types are often displayed in a hexagonal model that
provides a presentation of the inner relationships of personality styles and occupational environment coefficients of correlation (Zunker, 1990). Categories that are most alike are located adjacent to one another, while categories that are most unlike are displayed opposite one another. In other words, a person can fit into more than one occupational environment. Usually the person's first and second preference is similar to one another.

**Application**

A major goal of counseling is to help consumers discern and broaden their knowledge of their interests, abilities, and values within each of the six types identified by Holland. Some consumers who are trying to find a new career goal will find that they have interests and abilities in many different areas. It then becomes the counselor's role to assist the consumer in further exploration of values, interests, and experiences, and to make explicit the differing values of each of the six personality types. Other consumers find they have few interests and low self-estimates of their abilities across all types. Such consumers need to first address issues involving self-esteem or depression. Holland's typology serves as a frame of reference for exploring areas of interest of which consumers may not be aware. A discussion of a consumer's experiences with hobbies, part-time or previous full-time work, volunteer work, and use of leisure time provides the counselor with the opportunity to conceptualize the consumer in terms of Holland's personality types. Congruence, the most important of Holland's constructs, is sought by assessing the type of the consumer and attempting to match the consumer's personality type with appropriate occupations (Sharf, 1997).
A strength of Holland's theory is its encouragement of consumer self-learning and self-directed search. Another benefit of the practice of Holland's theory is that it is a time-saving technique for the counselor.

According to Sharf (1997) a limitation of Holland's theory is that it is probably not appropriate for use with individuals with mental retardation and severe mental illness. The theory has also been criticized because it is not readily applicable to people with disabilities since it stresses individual traits without consideration for societal and environmental factors (Conte, 1983). Because of these limitations, when testing individuals with disabilities using any of the tests based on Holland's theories, supplemental assessments, the availability of assistive technology, plus potential adaptations or job modifications should be factored into the interpretation of the test results. A third criticism of Holland's theory is that it tends to be gender biased, in that the theory and the Self-Directed Search tend to limit the career considerations for women (Zunker, 1990). Nevertheless, the instruments based on Holland's theory tend to be easy to use and interpret, making them valuable tools for career counseling.

Ginzberg and Associates' Theory of Career Development

Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) are generally considered to be among the first to approach career development from a developmental point of view (Zunker, 1990). Ginzberg & Associates view career development as a long-term developmental process divided into three periods characterized as fantasy, tentative, and realistic, with career decisions being an optimal adjustment between your ideal
preferences and the available job opportunities (Lock, 1996). The fantasy period is characterized by children imagining themselves in work roles that they see adults performing such as an astronaut, a firefighter, a movie star, or a professional athlete. The tentative period is divided into three stages of interest, capacity, and value. During the interest stage, the child becomes aware of likes and dislikes. The capacity stage is marked by the discovery that one is better at some things than others. The value stage is distinguished by the emerging consciousness that some things are more important to the person than others. The third period, the Realistic period, follows a transition stage. It is marked by greater self-reliance and awareness of occupations. The realistic period consists of three stages. The exploration stage begins when the young adult enters college or full-time work for the first time and investigates several occupations, even though a specific choice is not needed at the time. A crystallization stage follows when a career pattern emerges, and the person declares a college major or commits him or herself to a particular kind of work. Finally, the specification stage is reached when the individual specializes in graduate school or in a specific job.

Ginzberg cautions against interpreting his theory too rigidly because variations in the decision making pattern are possible. Some people decide on an occupation early in life and never deviate from it, some may vary widely on occupational choices before establishing a clear pattern, and others may not ever settle on one occupational choice (Lock, 1996). In Ginzberg’s theory, deviant patterns of career development were attributed to two primary causes: 1) early, well-developed occupational skills resulting in early career patterns deviant from the normal cycle of development; and 2) delayed development due to variables such as emotional
instability, various personal problems, and financial affluence (Zunker, 1990).

**Application**

The developmental theory of Ginzberg and Associates is the product of a more comprehensive study of the world of work and occupational choice. The theory is more descriptive of the development of occupational interests from childhood to young adulthood. The theory does not provide specific strategies for facilitating career development, nor does it address changes in career patterns later in life. The theory's primary usefulness is in providing a framework for understanding career development within individuals. The theory does not specifically address career development in persons with congenital disabilities.

**Super’s Life-Span Theory of Career Development**

Super conceives vocational development as one aspect of an individual's total growth that begins early in life. Extending the ideas of Ginzberg, Super divides the life span into three stages: “childhood, adolescent, and adult” (Lock, 1996, p. 15). Lock (1996) created an outline of Super's conceptualization of vocational development across the life-span. A summary of Lock's outline of Super's Life-span stages is provided:

1. **Growth stage:** A period of general physical and psychological development, when attitudes and behavior are formed that shape an individual's self-concept. It entails
several sub-stages which are identified as:

a. **Prevocational Substage**: No interest in or involvement with careers and occupational choices is expressed.

b. **Fantasy Substage**: Needs and fantasy are the bases of vocational thinking.

c. **Interest Substage**: Thoughts about occupations are based on individual likes and dislikes.

d. **Capacity Substage**: Abilities and career requirements are considered.

2. **Exploration Stage**: An individual becomes aware that a career will be a major feature of life and begins to explore occupations in school, part-time work, and leisure activities. Sub-stages contained within the exploration stage are:

a. **Tentative Substage**: Needs, interests, abilities, and values become the basis for occupational choices.

b. **Transition Substage**: As the individual enters the job market or seeks further education and training, realistic considerations about employment opportunities in the world of work characterize his or her thinking.
c. **Trial Substage:** A beginning work role believed to be suitable is found and tried out as a potential life's work. At this point a final commitment is not made.

3. **Establishment Stage:** The individual believes the appropriate field or work has been found, and tries to create a permanent place in it. Sub-stages at this level include:

   a. **Stabilization** (or second trial substage). One or two career changes may mark this period, but there is greater commitment to an occupational choice. (For some people, it may become clear that work could possibly be a series of unrelated occupations.)

   b. **Advancement Substage:** As the career pattern becomes clearer, the individual attempts to make a secure place for himself or herself in the world of work. It is a time of creativity and promotion for many individuals.

4. **Maintenance Stage:** The major concern is continuation in one's chosen occupation, holding onto the gains that have already been established.

5. **Decline (or disengagement) Stage:** Physical and mental activity decreases; work slows down and, eventually stops. Sub-stages during the decline period are identified as:

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*Module Eight: Vocational Guidance and Counseling*
a. **Deceleration:** This is a time of declining work activity. Some people take on part-time work to replace their full-time career.

b. **Retirement:** Work stops—easily, with difficulty, or only with death.

Super has developed a table to assess career development status. See Table 1. Using the table the individual can locate where he or she belongs on the “career development line.” The result provides an indication of one’s “vocational maturity”. According to Super, “vocational maturity means developing attitudes, performing behaviors, and completing tasks that are appropriate at various stages in life” (Lock, 1996, p. 16). Mastery of the developmental tasks of each stage equates with greater career maturity and achievement in later life (Zunker, 1990).

![Table 1: Super's Stages of Vocational Development](image)

(Lock, 1996, p. 17)
Super has also contributed a study of career patterns that can be seen in the lives of workers. Table 2 describes the vocational developmental tasks for each life stage.

**Table 2  Vocational Developmental Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Stage</th>
<th>Vocational Developmental Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Attitudes and Behaviors Appropriate to Vocational Developmental Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early adolescence</td>
<td>Crystallizing a vocational preference</td>
<td>Developing ideas about work that are appropriate for yourself</td>
<td>Awareness of the need to crystallize, use of personal resources, noticing environmental factors, distinguishing interests from values, awareness of present/future relationships, developing a generalized preference, obtaining information on and planning for the preferred occupation, and wisdom of the vocational preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle adolescence</td>
<td>Specifying a vocational preference</td>
<td>Narrowing a general career direction into a specific one</td>
<td>Attitudes and behaviors similar to crystallization task, but relating to the need for specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late adolescence</td>
<td>Implementing a vocational preference and Completing training and entering suitable employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of the need to carry out the vocational preference, planning to implement the preference, accomplishing plans to qualify for job entry, and obtaining an entry-level job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adulthood</td>
<td>Stabilizing in a vocation and Settling into a field of work showing appropriateness of choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of the need to stabilize, planning for stabilization, becoming qualified for a stable regular job (or accepting the inevitability of instability), and obtaining a stable job (or acting on resignation to instability)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle adulthood</td>
<td>Consolidating status and advancing in a vocation and Creating a secure job position for yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of the need to consolidate and advance, gaining information on how to consolidate and advance, planning for consolidation and advancement, and carrying out these plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lock, 1996, p. 17)

Super (1957) states, “In choosing an occupation, one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept” (p. 196). A self-concept can be simply described as a set of beliefs an individual has about himself or herself (Lock, 1996). A healthy self-concept is presumed to emerge as an individual successfully
progresses through the tasks and masters the crises at each stage of vocational-development. By making an occupational choice, the individual is making a statement about the type of person he or she is. When the individual enters into and adjusts to an occupation, then he or she discovers whether the work is agreeable and congruent with the role the individual envisions for his or her life. Working in an occupation is one way to test one’s self-concept against reality (Lock, 1996).

**Application**

Super's work has been used frequently in career counseling. An example of its application is Bowlsby's computerized DISCOVER program (American College Testing Program, 1984). His work on career maturity has been incorporated into career counseling instruments such as the Career Development Inventory (Thompson & Lindeman, 1984) and Crites Career Maturity Inventory (1978) (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). Super's theory is particularly applicable to rehabilitation counseling. It provides a framework for addressing the career development needs of persons with congenital disabilities whose career development may be delayed. It also applies to those with acquired disabilities whose career development may have regressed in order to adjust to the presence of a disability.

Super's construct of career maturity has considerable utility for individuals with either congenital or acquired disabilities. Super's model allows the counselor to identify the level of career maturity achieved by the client thus giving the counselor a better idea of the extent to which the client is capable of participating in career planning and decision making. In addition, counselors can identify experiential or
knowledge deficiencies and develop rehabilitation plans to remediate these deficiencies and facilitate the consumer's full and informed participation in career planning (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992).

When a person acquires a disability, career development can be destabilized and result in the need for reexploration and reestablishment. Hershenson and Szymanski (1992) suggest that one critical element missing in Super's model is a way to address the interaction of limitation resulting from acquired disability and the individual's current or previous job skills and experience. The limitations of disabilities are not inherent within the individual but are a function of the interaction of the disability, the person, and the environment (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). Although Super's theory addresses the issue in congenital disabilities by allowing for the effects of limitations in early experiences, the theory appears to fall short in this regard for people with acquired disabilities. In addition the theory does not adequately integrate the impact of chance, which is frequently a critical factor in career development (Cabral & Salomone, 1990). Nonetheless, many aspects of Super's theory are applicable to individuals with disabilities. The application, however, must be individually designed, with consideration of individual ability and disability, early experiences, work history, and functional limitations (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992).

**Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory**

Krumboltz's theory addresses the issue of “how career interests develop, how the environment influences one's career decision-making, and the manner in which career
decision-making skills are developed” (National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee [NOICC], 1986, p. 31). Krumboltz’s theory suggests that four factors influence career decisions:

1. Genetic endowment and special abilities,

2. Environmental conditions and events,

3. Learning experiences, and

4. Task approach skills.

The complex interaction of these factors leads individuals to form beliefs about themselves and about the world around them (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). Krumboltz’s theory indicates that interests are a consequence of learning, and learning, not interests, is what leads people to make occupational choices. Access to a wide variety of learning experiences is crucial for the career decision making process.

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) suggest that decision making and future learning are related to past learning, and one’s beliefs about oneself and the world influence a person’s approach to learning new skills and ultimately one’s aspirations and actions. Problematic views of oneself and the world may develop and may impede career development in several ways:
1. Persons may fail to recognize that a remedial problem exists.

2. Persons may fail to exert the effort needed to make a decision or solve a problem.

3. Persons may eliminate a potentially satisfying alternative for inappropriate reasons.

4. Persons may choose poor alternatives for inappropriate reasons.

5. Persons may suffer anguish and anxiety over perceived inability to achieve goals. (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, pp. 179-180)

Cognitive counseling strategies are an integral component of Krumboltz’s model. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) describe several strategies for determining and changing inaccurate thoughts and generalizations in career decision making. These strategies have been incorporated into the following guidelines for working with consumers:

1. Examine the assumptions and presuppositions of the expressed belief:
   Consumers frequently make generalizations that are inaccurate or that may inhibit their career exploration.

2. Look for inconsistencies between words and actions: Consumers may say they need to improve their appearance but then do nothing about it.
3. Test simplistic answers for inadequacies: If a consumer says, “I'll find a job if I only try hard enough,” the consumer is likely oversimplifying the process.

4. Confront attempts to build an illogical consistency: Some clients may wish to validate a point of view even if it does not fit.

5. Identify barriers to the goal: Sometimes consumers make inaccurate self-observation generalizations about their abilities, such as “I can't write well enough to go to graduate school.” Such self-assessments create barriers to going after potential goals.

6. Challenge the validity of key beliefs: Consumers frequently hold beliefs that keep them from exploring alternative occupational choices. Stereotypical and inaccurate information about occupations is found frequently among consumers.

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990), suggest that these guidelines must be utilized with care and caution since their use could be interpreted as threatening and confrontive to the consumer. A good relationship between the counselor and consumer is essential. The counselor should not confront faulty beliefs before rapport has developed. It is also essential that the counselor explain the importance of uncovering these beliefs and how the uncovering of these beliefs can help the consumer in the career decision making process. Moreover, the consumer should be
encouraged to take responsibility for discovering his or her own inaccurate beliefs.

Another aspect of Krumboltz’s model is the systematic seven-step approach to career decision making. Krumboltz and Hamel (1977) describe the decision making process by the acronym DECIDES which stands for: Define the problem, Establish an action plan, Clarify values, Identify alternatives, Discover probable outcomes, Eliminate alternatives systematically, and Start action. According to Sharf (1997) these steps provide a way to conceptualize or think about a consumer as well as to identify specific counselor behaviors or actions conducive to the facilitation of successful career decision making.

Sharf (1997) described the Krumboltz Seven Step approach to career decision making. A summary of Sharf’s description is provided.

**Step 1:** Define the problem. The career decision making problem must be defined so that it is clear to the consumer and the counselor (Sharf, 1997).

**Step 2:** Establish an action plan. This phase consists of describing the entire DECIDES process and how it will be applied to the problem identified by the client (Sharf, 1997). The action plan should include actions to be taken for each step and dates by which actions should be completed.

**Step 3:** Clarify values. Values related to careers may be clarified in a number of ways inside and outside the counseling session. Within the session, the counselor can discuss values that the consumer has learned from previous job experience.
Outside the session, the consumer can do several things to clarify his or her values such as discussing job related values with friends and family, keeping a record of how time and money are spent, and reading books about people whom the consumer admires (Sharf, 1997).

**Step 4:** Identify alternatives. In order to identify alternatives, the counselor assists the consumer to perform several tasks needed to provide information for learning about his or her interests and capacities, about jobs, and about the world of work. Books and pamphlets may be made available to the consumer to facilitate the learning process (Sharf, 1997).

**Step 5:** Discover probable outcomes. This step focuses on the evaluation of educational and career alternatives. It may include strategies such as using job experience kits, talking with people who work in an occupation, visiting them at their work site, and fantasizing about what it would be like to work in a specific occupation. The use of guided imagery may help a consumer imagine what it would be like to work in a specific job for a day. As information about occupational alternatives is discovered, it can be compared to the consumer’s self-observation generalizations about interests, values, and capacities. Krumboltz and Hamel (1977) suggest that the consumer make a grid that compares occupational alternatives with values. This grid could be extended to include abilities and interests. Thus, the outcome from this step would enable the consumer to determine if certain occupations are sufficiently interesting or fit in his or her ability range.

**Step 6:** Eliminate alternatives systematically. Following completion of an
occupational alternatives list, the alternatives may be compared and the least appropriate ones can be eliminated. This may require a more detailed exploration of possible occupational alternatives and making a decision to eliminate risky and/or less desirable (Sharf, 1997).

**Step 7:** Start action. As soon as the consumer has made a choice, actions should be initiated immediately which lead to the attainment of the occupational goal (Sharf, 1997).

**Application to Vocational Rehabilitation**

Krumboltz's theory is applicable for counseling people with disabilities because of its ecological nature and focus on learning. The theory is useful with people with congenital disabilities who may experience problems such as limited early experiences, underdeveloped decision-making skills and negative self-concept. Consequently, a wide variety of learning experiences (e.g., career education, job shadowing, work tryouts) should be encouraged as preparation for individuals with congenital disabilities (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992).

Krumboltz's theory can be used to assist persons with acquired or congenital disabilities to make informed career decisions and to identify dysfunctional career-related beliefs. In addition, the learning-based concepts of career education and work tryout may be considered for people with acquired disabilities who face changes of both employer and occupation (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992).
Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment and other work adjustment theories were developed by authors whose initial concern was directed, in part, toward persons with disabilities. "These approaches tend to emphasize work behavior and work adjustment rather than occupational choice or career development since the latter concepts are considered of dubious applicability to many persons with severe disabilities" (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992, p. 288).

Work personality is a key construct in work adjustment theories. Neff (1985) suggests that the work personality is the “concrete set of interrelated motives, coping styles, defensive maneuvers, and the like with which a given individual confronts the world of work” (p. 156). Neff further stated that work personality constitutes a semiautonomous area of personality. Consequently, a person may be well adjusted in one area and poorly adjusted in other areas (e.g., social relationships). Implicit in this point of view is that treatment of problems in one area, such as marriage, many not improve functioning in another area, such as work performance. The Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment was developed by Lofquist and Dawis starting in 1959, with continuing development over a ten-year period.

According to Lofquist and Dawis work personality consists of the person’s abilities and work-related needs (Sharf, 1997).

These individual abilities and needs are matched with the ability requirements and reinforcer system of the work environment. The
match between the person's abilities and the ability requirements of the work environment determines satisfactoriness (i.e., the extent to which the person is able to perform the job). The match between the person's needs and the reinforcer system of the work environment determines the person's satisfaction with the job. (Sharf, 1997, p. 289)

Work adjustment is defined as “the continuous and dynamic process by which the individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with the work environment (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). The following work adjustment propositions are suggested by Lofquist and Dawis (1969):

1. An individual's work adjustment at any point in time is indicated by his (her) concurrent levels of satisfactoriness and satisfaction....

2. Satisfactoriness is a function of the correspondence between an individual's abilities and the ability requirements of the work environment, provided that the individual's needs correspond with the reinforcer system of the work environment....

3. Satisfaction is a function of the correspondence between the reinforcer system of the work environment and the individual's needs, provided that the individual's abilities correspond with the ability requirements of the work environment....

4. Satisfaction moderates the functional relationship between satisfactoriness...
and ability-requirement correspondence....

5. Satisfactoriness moderates the functional relationship between satisfaction and need-reinforcer correspondence....

6. The probability that an individual will be forced out of the work environment is inversely related to his (her) satisfaction....

7. Tenure is a joint function of satisfactoriness and satisfaction....

8. Work personality-work environment correspondence increases as a function of tenure (pp. 50-53).

Application

Within work adjustment theory, abilities are frequently measured by the U. S. Department of Labor’s (1979) General Aptitude Battery (GATB), and needs are assessed by the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ), which was developed for this purpose (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). Ability requirements are included in a system of occupational patterns (OAP’s) which is keyed to the GATB. The Minnesota Importance Questionnaire is used to assess the kinds and levels of reinforcers in different types of jobs. Based on responses from workers in a particular job, an occupation reinforcer pattern (ORP) is developed to profile the reinforcer system for that job. Congruence between GATB scores and OAP’s and between MIQ scores and ORP’s is then examined. These objective measures of worker-
environment congruence are complemented by subjective measures; satisfactoriness is measured by the supervisor's rating on the Minnesota Satisfactoriness Scales, and satisfaction is measured by self-report on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992, p. 290). Because the Minnesota Work Adjustment Project was primarily supported by federal rehabilitation funds, there was a great deal of attention to the applicability of the materials to persons with disabilities. The authors of the theory indicated that the Minnesota theory focuses more on the work adjustment potential of persons being evaluated for rehabilitation than does any other theory.

Another advantage of the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment is the assistance of a corresponding instrument, the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ). The MIQ is easy to administer and score, making it a time efficient instrument for counselors (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969).

Conte (1983) criticized the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment for having a restricted range of focus, thus limiting its utility for persons with disabilities. According to Hershenson & Szymanski (1992), a potential criticism is that “it fails to address the life long process of career development” (p. 290). However, they further state, that this claim may be unwarranted since the theory set out to address work adjustment and made no claims for career development (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). The Minnesota theory, which is based largely on the trait-factor model does nothing to compensate for the limited early experiences of some persons with congenital disabilities nor does it suggest supportive interventions that assist persons with disabilities to enter, function, and sustain themselves in the work environment.
Hershenson’s Model of Work Adjustment

One theory designed specifically with persons with disabilities in mind is David Hershenson’s Model of Work Adjustment. Two essential elements in this model are the person and the person’s environment. According to Hershenson, within the person, three domains develop in sequence: 1) the work personality, which consists of the person’s self-concept as a worker and the person’s system of motivation for work, 2) work competencies, which is composed of work habits, physical and mental skills applicable to jobs, and work-related interpersonal skills, and 3) work goals (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). As the three domains develop, these domains interact with each other and with the environment. The product of this domain interaction and the environment is called work adjustment (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992).

Work adjustment, as understood by Hershenson, has three components:

- task performance (i.e., quality and quantity of work output),
- work-role behavior (i.e., behavior appropriate to the work setting, such as wearing suitable clothes, taking responsibility, following directions, getting along with supervisors and coworkers), and
- work satisfaction (i.e., the person’s own degree of gratification resulting from work).

Of these three components of work adjustment, task performance is linked primarily with work competencies and secondarily with work personality.
work-role behavior is linked primarily to work personality and secondarily to the work habits component of work competencies, and work satisfaction is linked primarily to work goals and secondarily to work personality. (pp. 291-292)

The Hershenson model proposes that all domains continue to develop throughout a person’s life. However, work personality develops focally during the preschool years, primarily under the influence of the family, which is the principal environmental influence on the child at this point in life. Work competencies have their focal development during the school years, largely as a result of the experiences of success and/or failure in the school setting. Finally, work goals reflect the influences of peer or reference groups as the person goes through the process of preparing to leave school and enter the world of work.

Application

As indicated earlier, this theory was specifically designed to be applicable to persons with disabilities. It addresses the impact of both congenital and acquired disabilities on career development. According to Hershenson’s theory, disability initially has its impact on work competencies, although the impact of disability rapidly spreads to the interconnected domains of work personality and work goals. For persons with acquired disabilities, this means that the initial impact of disability on work adjustment results from the interaction of established work competencies, with the functional limitations resulting from the disability, the specific job tasks of the current or desired position, and the possibilities for job modification. (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992,
For persons with disabilities from birth, the scenario is somewhat different, because work personality generally develops before disability has its major impact on work competencies. "The child with a disability is particularly likely to experience a conflict between preschool work personality and work competencies shown at school. Thus, the transition from home to school is more likely to be discontinuous, providing a negative set for the second transition, from school to work" (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992, p. 293.) One criticism of Hershenson's theory is that it has a restricted range of focus on the specific person-job relationship and does not adequately account for the developmental process (Conte, 1983).

**Career Decision Making and Planning**

There is no one exact method or step-by-step process for career planning for all people since people vary on individual abilities, interests, and preferences (Lock, 1996). One step-by-step approach to career-planning is given by Lock (1996) who describes the process as follows:

1. **Become aware and committed:** You become conscious that you are confused and undecided about your career future and are willing to dedicate yourself to a program of action toward resolving this problem.

2. **Study your environment:** You examine the social, economic, political, and geographic setting around you in order to weigh the environmental factors influencing
your career choice.

3. **Study yourself**: You analyze and process data about your personality characteristics—your interests, needs, achievements, abilities, and values.

4. **Generate alternatives**: You create several goals, plans or courses of action, called occupational prospects in career planning.

5. **Gather information**: You collect and study accurate information about your occupational prospects.

6. **Make the decision**: You determine a career goal from judgments you make about yourself and the characteristics of your occupational prospects.

7. **Implement the decision**: You put the career decision you have made into action by developing your own job search campaign.

8. **Get feedback**: You evaluate how well the career decision is working. If there is too much negative feedback, the process starts over again (p. 6).

The counselor may provide essential assistance and support during each step of the process. Counselor support may be manifest through the provision of several services such as helping consumers to clarify their needs, values, and interests, assisting the consumer to gather additional information, to understand test results from aptitude, interest, and personality tests, to analyze local labor market

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opportunities, and to apply individual choice and responsibility in the career planning process. The career planning process is frequently a challenge for individuals. At times consumer beliefs may be self-defeating. Without challenging unrealistic or self-defeating beliefs, consumers could choose unrealistic occupations in which they will ultimately fail or they may neglect to recognize an occupation that might be very satisfying. Lock (1996) provides a list of troublesome thoughts or beliefs associated with career decision making and the job search:

1. Something is terribly wrong with me because I don’t know what I want to do.

2. Others seem to have goals and know the occupations they want.

3. Somewhere there is an expert or a test that will tell me the right occupation (or educational major) to choose.

4. I will probably end up failing in an occupation or course of study that I really want.

5. If the economy goes into a downturn, I’ll never get a job.

6. Making a long list of occupations to explore is a waste of time.

7. I must find the one and only occupation that is just right for me.

8. I can do anything if I just work at it hard enough.
9. Once I make a career choice, I should stick to it for the rest of my life.

10. You really can’t plan your career because today’s world changes too fast.

11. No woman (or man) would enter an occupation like that.

12. I can’t work for a boss who is male (or female) (p. 20).

These thoughts may represent times when consumers feel frustrated, depressed, guilty, bored, vulnerable, worthless, resentful, and/or anxious. A counselor can challenge negative thoughts by asking questions such as: 1) How do I know this is true? 2) What steps could I take to find out if this is true? 3) What evidence could convince me that the opposite is true (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990)? Some information that can help to dispel inaccurate consumer beliefs includes the reality that there is more than one right occupation, that there are thousands of occupations that correlate too many different individual interests and abilities (Lock, 1996). It is also helpful for the consumer to know that it is normal for people to be undecided about what they want to do. According to Lock (1996), “more that half of students change their educational goals in the first year of college, and the average person now changes jobs seven to ten times over a career lifetime” (p. 20).

Utilization of Occupational Information

It is important that rehabilitation counselors know about occupations and the
importance of occupational information in counseling. Hoppock (1976) states that counselors should:

Know where their clients get their first jobs or where their clients go to work after they've completed counseling.

Determine the principal employment opportunities in their local area. The geographic area within which college students search for jobs is likely to be much larger than for high school students, who are more likely to look for jobs close to home.

Learn about occupations that are being considered by their clients, so they can provide information appropriate for their clients.

Learn about at least one occupation that is central to each of three of the most important and largest local employers. This will entail visiting and developing contacts with these employers.

Know how to obtain information and to evaluate it for accuracy and usefulness. (Sharf, 1997, p. 15)

Sharf (1997) indicates that it is important for counselors to know certain types of information and specific sources of career information. The types of information may include descriptions of the occupation, working conditions, qualifications required by job duties, beginning and average salaries, the employment outlook, education
required by the job, and where additional information can be obtained about the occupation.

**Types of Occupational Information**

A wide variety of occupational information is available to the counselor and consumer. Resources include booklets made available by professional trade associations, pamphlets made available through publishers of occupational information, lengthier books or encyclopedias, audio or video cassettes, and computer based information systems. Almost all occupational information includes a description of the occupation, the qualifications required for entry, the necessary education, the working conditions, the salary, and employment outlook. A publication widely used by counselors to answer questions about occupations is the Occupational Outlook Handbook (1996) which is issued every two years (Sharf, 1996).

**Classification Systems**

Classification systems have been developed to deal with the volume of occupational information available to counselors and consumers. Three government classification systems have evolved over the years that are particularly important. These systems are summarized as follows:

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), fourth edition (1991), classifies about 20,000 occupations that exist in the United States. It uses a nine-digit code to organize these occupations. The first digit
identifies one of nine broad occupational categories. The second digit breaks up the occupations into 82 divisions, and the third digit divides the occupations into 559 groups. For example, the occupation of counselor has the first three digits 045. The 0 relates to professional, technical, and managerial occupations. The 04 designates occupations in the life sciences. Within the division, 045 designate occupations in psychology. The next three digits relate to three ways of doing tasks. The fourth digit describes how the individual deals with data; the fifth, how a person deals with people; and the sixth, how a person uses things. The last three digits indicate the alphabetical order of the occupational titles (Sharf, 1997, p. 40). For example, the DOT entry for the occupation of counselor looks like this:

045.107-010 COUNSELOR (profess. & kin.) guidance counselor; vocational adviser; vocational counselor.

Counsels individuals and provides group educational and vocational guidance services: Collects, organizes, and analyzes information about individuals through records, tests, interviews, and professional sources, to appraise their interests, aptitudes, abilities, and personality characteristics, for vocational and educational planning. Compiles and studies occupational, educational, and economic information to aid counselees in making and carrying out vocational and educational objectives. Refers students to placement service. Assists individuals to understand and overcome social and emotional problems.
May engage in research and follow-up activities to evaluate counseling techniques. May teach classes. May be designated according to area of activity as COUNSELOR, COLLEGE (education); COUNSELOR, EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (education); COUNSELOR, SCHOOL (education); COUNSELOR, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (gov.ser.) (DOT, 1977, p. 48).

The DOT allows consumers to explore a number of occupational descriptions in a brief period of time. The DOT can be useful in situations where the consumer has limited knowledge about career options in a certain field or incomplete information about a job and what a particular job entails. For example, maybe a vocational rehabilitation counselor is working with a consumer who knows that he or she would like to work with people in a service related occupation but does not know the scope of occupational options in this category. Using the DOT, the consumer can look under service occupations and find the titles and descriptions of numerous jobs that involve contact with people. The consumer can also get a better idea about which jobs would fit the person's abilities and interests.

The Enhanced Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE; 1991) features a three-digit code similar to the first three digits of the DOT code. The difference is that the codes are more related to the interest requirements of occupations than are the DOT codes. There are twelve basic interest areas used including artistic, scientific, plants and animals, protective, mechanical, industrial, business detail, selling, accommodating, humanitarian, leading-influencing, and physical performing (Sharf, 1997). The GOE usually makes more intuitive sense to the client; therefore its use
requires less help from the counselor than using DOT (Sharf, 1997).

The Standard Occupational Classification Manual (SOC; 1980) has four levels: division, major group, minor group, and then unit group. The SOC code clusters jobs by similar work function, rather than by interests, as in the GOE (Sharf, 1997). There are 22 broad occupational divisions and 64 major groups that comprise the SOC. The SOC was developed to bridge the DOT with a classification system used by the U.S. Census Bureau (Sharf, 1997). The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) has adopted this system for its work as have many career centers throughout the country.

**Psychometric Measures**

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, psychologists have developed a large number of psychometric measures that can be applied to the decision making process. In fact, there are currently so many instruments that it is impossible for vocational rehabilitation counselors to be familiar with all of them. Two primary resources have been developed that provide information about the measurement instruments currently available, the Eighteenth Mental Measurements Yearbook (Kramer & Conoley, 2010) and Tests in Print VIII (Murphy, Conoley, & Impara, 2011). These resources provide information such as populations for which the test might be appropriate, administration issues, norming groups, reliability, and validity, plus information on cost of administration. Another resource available to counselors is A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment (Kapes, Mastie, & Whitfield, 1994) which also reviews a number of instruments. A brief review of tests frequently used in
vocational rehabilitation counseling will be given in Module Twelve: Evaluation: Assessing Consumer Needs.

**Gathering Occupational Information**

A variety of ways to gather information about jobs are available. Frequently many consumers have inaccurate, insufficient or stereotyped information regarding work and work settings. They may not have information about the job requirements or actual duties for careers they may be considering. Corthell (1993) suggests that consumers may know their interests and limitations with respect to their disabilities but may encounter difficulty translating this information into potential work or actual job situations. Many do not know much about work and have not had many work experiences. Often a job sounds interesting until the specifics of the job are identified. Therefore, it is imperative that consumers learn about vocations and what is actually involved in working so that realistic decisions can be made.

When exploring information about work, the consumer needs to know several things such as 1) the nature of the work, 2) the essential job tasks involved, 3) the principal duties required to perform with or without accommodation, 4) special qualification requirements (e.g., certification, licenses, special training, or testing, such as the civil service examination), 5) the aptitudes needed, and 6) the working conditions of the job. The consumer will be able to make a more realistic job choice when these facts are known (Corthell, 1993). In addition, Corthell (1993) identified a number of occupational information resources available which may be used by consumers including:
1. **Personal Contacts**: An excellent source of information about jobs is to talk with people who are employed in the job under consideration. This enables the consumer to find out what they actually do on the job, what the working hours are, the type and amount of education needed to enter the field, and what the worker likes or dislikes about the job. Other advantages of this method are that it helps the consumer learn about potential job openings and acquaints the consumer and employer with each other.

2. **Shadowing**: Shadowing is a method of learning about a job by spending time with a person who is working in the career. The consumer has the opportunity to ask questions, to experience the job, to evaluate whether he/she would like the job, and to see if he/she has the ability to perform the essential job functions with or without accommodations, and to gain first-hand knowledge of the job.

3. **Career Days**: Career days provide the opportunity for consumers to visit with representatives from different fields to ask questions about various careers. Career conferences provide information on a wide variety of career opportunities in a short period of time. An advantage of career days is the opportunity to learn about options not previously considered.

4. **Work or Volunteer Experience**: A consumer can learn about a job by working in the job area. Through this experience, the consumer gains an understanding of the job and evaluates its potential. Methods used in this approach are apprenticeships, volunteer work and temporary work.
5. **Libraries:** Libraries are an easily accessible source of career information. Career information may be found under the topics of vocations or under job titles of jobs being researched. The periodical section of the library may have copies of a company’s annual report and copies of trade magazines. Consumers can read these to learn more about a company under consideration.

6. **Career Centers:** Career centers are special areas in libraries devoted to career and occupational information. Consumers can find information and read about occupations. Centers may be located in high schools, junior colleges, and colleges. They are available to the public.

7. **Professional Journals and Societies:** Trade magazines and professional journals are another source of information. Junior colleges and universities often have sizeable collections of professional journals.

8. **Chronicle Occupational Guide:** This publication is a print source given to consumers who desire to learn more about a specific occupation. It defines the job, explains the work performed, the education and training required, personal qualifications needed, where jobs are, the employment outlook, entry methods advancement, related occupation information, and lists of other information resources.

9. **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH):** The handbook is published every two years by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. It provides up-to-date career information including the nature of the work, educational requirements,
earnings, work conditions, and employment outlook (Chapman, 1976). The Handbook describes about 250 occupations, provides current job information, stresses occupations requiring education or training, provides summary information for jobs not described in detail, and supplies information regarding related occupations, including where to find further information. It also includes Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) numbers for jobs. The DOT numbers classify occupations by the type of work, training required, physical demands, and working conditions, whereas the Handbook describes occupations and gives specific information using the same format for each so that jobs are easily compared. The Handbook also gives information regarding how to find job openings, tips on interviewing, and resume writing. Included is a section listing of the names and addresses of state and local agencies that provide job information.

10. **The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT):** The DOT is published by the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides information about a) occupations in today's labor market, b) specific job duties, c) the level of education required, d) jobs that are grouped into occupations based on their similarities, and e) content of jobs. The DOT uses the term “occupation” as a collective description of a number of individual jobs performed. There are seven parts to the occupational definition that follow the same order in every definition. The seven parts of the occupational definition are:

1. The occupational code number

2. The occupational title
3. The industry designation

4. Alternate titles

5. The body of the definition
   a) Lead statement
   b) Task elements
   c) “May” items - one or more sentences beginning with the word “may” that
describe duties required by workers in some settings but not all.

6. Undefined related items

7. Definition trailer

Additional information about the DOT and its use is contained in this module under
Classification Systems.

11. The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) is a national database that
is linked to a computerized job-matching system. Many evaluators prefer O*NET to
the DOT. O*NET is a comprehensive database that includes worker attributes and job
characteristics. This database can be used to predict jobs that individuals can
perform as well as the potential wages for these jobs. Also included on this website
are career exploration tools for those who wish to explore their vocational interests.
O*NET is currently the nation's primary source of occupational information (O*NET
Resource Center).
12. **The Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE):** The GOE is developed by the U.S. Department of Labor as a tool for use in guidance. As a guidance tool, the GOE assists consumers to develop a realistic picture of themselves and occupations. By comparing GOE information to the consumer's interests, aptitudes, and limitations, the consumer can determine if the occupations are realistic and if there is a “fit” between them and the job requirements. The GOE is used to provide an overview of work, an understanding of specific occupations, and a way of creating realistic career goals. One method of using the GOE involves identifying an occupation in which a consumer has expressed an interest, then looking at work groups that most closely relate to the skills, abilities, aptitudes, interests, education level, and physical abilities of the consumer to determine which occupations to consider.

13. **Local Labor Market Information:** Most states are members of a national network of state occupational information coordinating committees, and therefore, local labor market information is available to counselors and consumers. There are a number of computer programs available to access local labor market information. For example, the Realistic Assessment of Vocational Experiences (RAVE) program is based on data gathered by the U.S. Department of Labor. The data base is composed of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and job characteristics such as aptitudes, working conditions, temperaments, physical requirements, materials, products, and services. RAVE is used to get ideas about where to start looking and how evaluate traits required in specific occupations. The program has the capacity to compile a list of occupations based on the consumer's abilities. An employer search feature makes possible the development of a list of employers in industries related to
the chosen occupations. It also considers transferable skills consumers have and identifies a list of appropriate alternative occupations (American College Testing, 1992).

The occupational information system is another method of accessing local labor market information. The Occupational Coordinating Committee provides the information which includes state and local labor market information. Included is the projected demand for workers and the current supply of trained graduates. It also provides information on the educational requirements of a job and expected wages for occupations. It includes a directory of employers in various industries in specified geographical areas that can be used in locating local employment opportunities.

**Conclusion**

Module Eight has presented an overview of theories of career development and counseling. Some of the theories reviewed date back to the beginning of the twentieth century. With this in mind, it is important to consider the historical context in which each of the theories was constructed. For instance, many early theories were based almost exclusively on the career development patterns of males, specifically white males. Occupational development and choices for females were not even considered or were extremely limited to stereotypical occupations for that time period. Another consideration is that few of the career development and counseling theories take into account differences in cultural, religious, socio-economic background, or other issues associated with diversity. A third consideration is that few of the theories...
were designed to incorporate the perspective of persons with disabilities.

When attempting to apply any theory of career development, it is important to take into account the nature of the current job market, economy, current work and lifestyle values among diverse populations, the availability of resources, and access to educational opportunities. Hershenson & Szymanski (1992) note the lack of connection between career development and counseling theory to actual practice with persons with and without disabilities. They have also commented that theory and research in the field have developed relatively independently of one another. Thus, the point is emphasized, that no one approach is sufficient for all clients, and it is absolutely critical that individual differences be honored and incorporated into the career development and planning process. In addition, the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments (Section 102(d)) emphasize the importance of ensuring the utilization of consumer informed choice during vocational guidance and counseling provision and the entire vocational rehabilitation process.

**Case Studies**

Please respond in writing to the following case scenarios and discuss your answers with your supervisor.

**Case 1**

Susan is a 47 year old white, single, female who has held several jobs over the last twenty five years, none of which have been very satisfying. She has come to
vocational rehabilitation counseling because she is experiencing disabling effects of arthritis plus extreme fatigue. She tells you that at this point, she has no idea what to do vocationally. She is no longer sure what is important to her in a job except that she is concerned about establishing some financial stability in her life in order to prepare for retirement.

1. Indicate whether career counseling or career guidance is more appropriate and explain why.

2. Identify the career development theory that would be most appropriate for addressing this consumer's needs and explain why.

3. Briefly outline the steps you would pursue with this client in identifying an
appropriate occupational goal.
Case 2

Johnny is a 17 year old, African American male, with spina bifida from birth. He is paralyzed from the waist down but is otherwise healthy, articulate, emotionally stable, and capable. He is in his junior year of high school and is concerned about planning for the future. Johnny wants to go to college but does not know what he wants to study and is unsure of his vocational interests. He briefly expresses interest in computer engineering because he thinks that it would give him a job with a fairly high annual income.

1. Indicate whether career counseling or career guidance is more appropriate and explain why.

2. Identify the career development theory that would be most appropriate for addressing this consumer's needs and explain why.

3. Briefly outline the steps you would pursue with this client in identifying an appropriate occupational goal.

Case Study Considerations

Case 1

Key points to consider:
1. Career counseling, including exploration of personality, interests, aptitudes, and values, would be most appropriate for Susan. Since she reports that none of her previous work experiences have been satisfying, it would be important to explore why this has been the case. The counselor would also be encouraged to explore issues and feelings related to the disabling conditions. Some questions to consider include: Is the fatigue specific to work or is it global? What roles are stress and lack of job satisfaction playing in the presentation of Susan's symptoms?

2. The choice of a theory is individual; therefore, there is no right and wrong answer here. However, it is important that your theory provide a framework for understanding this client. For instance, does the theory that you chose consider Susan's job history and inability to stabilize in a career? Does it provide a framework for understanding the impact of disability? Does it give you ideas about what to do with Susan in the career development process?

3. In Susan's case, it would be very appropriate to assess interests, values, abilities, aptitudes, and personality traits using interviews and psychometric instruments. Occupational exploration would be extremely important since Susan does not have any specific goals. Next, it would be appropriate to use the information about Susan's aptitudes, interest, personality, and values to identify career options.

**Case 2**

Key points to consider:
1. Based on the information given, career guidance would be the starting point for Johnny. Although other issues may emerge in the process, the primary need is for occupational information and exploration of interests.

2. Once again, selection of a theory of career development is highly individual. In this case, it would be helpful if the theory selected provides a framework for understanding the developmental issues and needs of a person with a disability from birth.

3. At the very least, the counselor would want to introduce Johnny to some of the numerous resources for exploring occupational options. The counselor might consider having Johnny complete interest inventories and/or other psychometric instruments that might help Johnny to match his interests and abilities to an occupation. Note that one value for Johnny is making a high annual income. This should be considered in the selection process.
References


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