**Marginalized Group Career Counseling Paper**

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**Why Should Individuals Changing Careers Receive Career Counseling?**

Here I am, a mother of five young adults, the wife to an amazing husband of 26 years, a licensed Cosmetologist, and the recipient of a responsibility and job that I never asked to receive. Yes, I am a First Lady, a role recognized by the church as a leader and example to the Body of Christ because I am married to a Pastor. Well, what does this have in common with changing careers? Undertaking this responsibility required wisdom and leadership skills that I believed I lacked over 20 years ago. As I consider this population, I reference my experience as the backdrop to advocate for career counseling when contemplating a career change. My decision to pursue an education in Biblical Studies with a minor in Biblical Counseling provided the knowledge I needed to develop my confidence. However, a further pursuit to receive my MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling was motivated by the opportunity to advance in the counseling profession. This paper will provide a comprehensive explanation of individuals changing careers and why they must receive counsel. Furthermore, we will discuss statistics, a career counseling theory, and a counseling plan. In addition to, discussing environmental/personal barriers, local resources, and spirituality.

 Career change is defined by the Dictionary of Human Resources and Personnel

Management as a change in a person's profession or the type of job they do that often involves going to work for a different employer (career change 2006). The experience of changing careers is different for everyone. People contemplating a career change may do so for various reasons. It is safe to assume that a lack of satisfaction in a current line of work or an unfulfilled level of achievement is prompting the change. A desire to learn a new skill set and engage in more meaningful work may also be the motivation. My motivation was to refocus my career path on a desired goal and purpose to become an (LPC) and develop a more excellent knowledge and skill set to reinforce my competence in the workforce. A career shift is never simple, and doing it alone can be challenging; therefore, seeking career counsel can support the transition process. Career counseling is ongoing face-to-face engagement with trained professionals to help people understand themselves (e.g., interests, talents, values, personality traits) and the world of work to make decisions that lead to meaningful work lives. Heppner, M. J., & Heppner, P. P. (2004). Professional counselors aid clients with career choices, transitions, impediments, and enhancing work lives over their lifespan. When preparing to change careers, a counselor can assist you in exploring your strengths, interests, and abilities. They can also support healthy rejection handling or confidence-building before interviews. Speaking with a counselor before and after a career shift has many benefits, one of which is that they are impartial. Throughout sessions, they prioritize the client's needs and desires. They are there to help clients take the necessary steps to lead a happy, healthy life, which is their primary objective. If you're unsure of what you want from a career or what skills you'll need to make a career move, speaking with a career transitions counselor can be quite beneficial.

**Statistics**

According to Goodman, J., & Hoppin, J. (2007), the average worker will change careers significantly half a dozen times throughout the course of their careers. The basic structure of the labor force has changed because birth rates have changed, more women have joined the workforce, workers are getting older, and increased diversity in the workforce (Toossi, 2002). When you add to this the fact that the U.S. population is growing (it was estimated to be 300 million in October 2006) and that there is a new wave of immigration, you have a society where workers are not likely to be able to make a single career choice. Furthermore, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002) estimated that the average baby boomer in the United States held 9.6 jobs from 18 to 36. But the findings of a qualitative study by Masdonati et al. (2017) emphasize the need to comprehend the subjective reasons for job choices and the necessity to modify career interventions.

**Career Counseling Theory**

A person's sense of self in relation to his or her chosen field of work develops over a lifetime, beginning in childhood and continuing into old age. Numerous Career Development theories exist, but none can claim to be all-encompassing. Therefore, professionals in the field must be familiar with each theory's advantages, disadvantages, and biases. It is recommended that career counselors take a more integrative approach, using a combination of theories that work for both the counselor and their client. Therefore, career-related issues motivating the career change would further provide direction into which approach to use. To help a client who is changing careers, the Social Cognitive Career Theory will be explored in this case study. Lent and Brown's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a well-researched framework for analyzing learning and work behaviors. It aims to create a unifying framework for explaining how people (a) develop vocational interests, (b) make occupational choices, (c) achieve varying levels of career success and stability, (d) experience satisfaction or well-being in the work environment, and (e) manage more and less predictable work/life events by bringing together common elements identified by earlier career theorists, especially Super, Holland, Krumboltz, and Lofquist and Dawis.

**Plan for Counseling Individuals Changing Careers**

Even though career counseling should be tailored to each client, most assessments and action plans follow these five steps: Ph.D., J. S. (2022, March 11).

* Exploring: Who are they? Learning about the client, including what they have done in the past that is relevant and where they are now.
* Clarifying:  What do they want? Knowing what the client's wants, hopes, and dreams are.
* Identifying options: How can they move forward? Seeing the different ways they can work toward their goals. Find out what is stopping them from moving forward.
* Identifying blockers: What stops them from reaching their goals, or what could stop them?
* Action planning: What do they need to do? Discovery and agreeing on the steps the client needs to take to reach their career goals.

**Environmental/Personal Barriers and Specific intervention**

Career transitions are complex and multifaceted because such transitions can be voluntary (e.g., based on a desire to do something more meaningful) or involuntary (e.g., due to a job layoff). Therefore, interventions that help individuals identify environmental barriers and supports that impact the ability to implement career options should be used. According to Lent (2013), one of the most significant benefits of SCCT-based counseling could be assisting people in dealing with environmental obstacles and resources. As recognized in the counseling plan, identifying what is and can stop clients from reaching their goals should be evaluated. The most significant barrier I faced when choosing to pursue my degree as a Licensed Professional counselor was the anxiety of not receiving the support of my husband and church family. However, SCCT clarifies that people aren't always free to pursue their primary interests and that settings aren't always conducive to their preferences. Cultural barriers may include collectivist societies in which family groups are taught that the benefit of the group is more important than the likes and preferences of the individual.

**Local Resources Available and Activity Descriptions**

A counselor can teach technical or personal development skills to help a client get a better career by assisting the client in setting objectives, finding a mentor, or receiving tutoring. In addition, helping clients hone their soft skills by having them evaluate themselves in critical areas like communication and leadership. The Work Source, an Atlanta Regional-Gwinnett Career Resource Center, provides resources that provide phone service to help people file claims, free internet access, and tools for writing resumes. There is a full range of services for job seekers and employers, and clients can look for jobs, learn how to interview, and learn about training programs**.**

**Spirituality Discussion**

One definition of spirituality is "beliefs and practices that are both intensely personal and transcendent and can be experienced either within or outside formal religious institutions. Walsh, F. (1999). There is more and more evidence that spirituality is a key part of how clients who identify as spiritual do in their careers. Spiritual identities, on the other hand, are an area of diversity that is "often neglected." Spirituality is becoming increasingly important to look for and pay attention to in the work world. Considerations and practical tools help counselors consider how a client's career interests, values, and decisions affect their spiritual identity. By paying attention to these touchpoints, career counselors can learn more about their clients' identities and figure out what role spirituality plays in their lives. Asking the following questions can help professionals figure out how vital spirituality is:

\* Do you consider yourself spiritual?

\*Would you like to tell me what you believe about God?

\* What does your spirituality mean to you?

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