What’s Involved in a Career Choice

A pyramid can be used to show what’s involved in making a career choice (see figure 1):

Knowing About Myself

- My values
  Example: security
- My interests
  Example: working with people
- My skills
  Example: using a computer to plan a budget

Knowing About My Options

Understanding specific occupations, programs of study, and jobs.

Examples:
- What are typical work tasks for a real estate appraiser?
- How much math is required for a major in Finance?
- What is the average starting salary for a retail salesperson?
- What type of training is required to be a physical therapist?

Understanding how occupations and programs of study are organized.

Examples:

- Realistic
- Artistic
- Enterprising
- Investigative
- Social
- Conventional

Understanding how job settings are organized.

Examples

- Business/Industry
- Education
- Professions
- Government
- Non-Profit
- Private Enterprise

Knowing How I Make Decisions

How do I usually make important decisions?

Thinking About My Decision Making

Self Talk

Example: “I’ll never be able to make a good career choice.”

Self-Awareness

Example: “I’m getting very scared about this.”

Being aware of and controlling my self-talk.

Example: “I can’t really predict the future and imagining failure is not going to help me find a good job.”

Figure 1: What’s Involved in a Career Choice

A cycle can be used to show steps in making a career choice (see figure 2):

**Knowing I Need to Make a Choice**
- Events-Things that happen to me: “I need to choose a program of study by next semester.”
- Comments from my friends and relatives: “My roommate said that I’ll have problems if I don’t make a decision soon.”
- The way I feel: “I’m scared about committing to a choice.”
- Procrastinating: “I’ll get started next week.”
- Physical problems: “I’m so upset about this, I can’t eat.”

**Understanding Myself and My Options**
- Understanding myself: My values, interests, and skills
- Understanding occupations, programs of study, or jobs.
  - Understanding specific occupations or programs of study.
  - Understanding how occupations are organized.
- Understanding how I make important decisions.
- Understanding how I think about my decisions.
  - Self-talk
  - Self-awareness
  - Being aware of and controlling my self-talk

**Expanding and Narrowing My List of Occupations, Programs of Study, or Jobs**
- Identify occupations or programs of study that fit my values, interests, and skills.
- Pick the 3 to 5 best occupations or programs of study using what I learned from “Understanding Myself and My Options.”

**Choosing an Occupation or Program of Study**
- Costs and benefits of each occupation, program of study, or job to myself, my family, my cultural background, my community, or society.
  1. Rank occupations or programs of study.
  2. Make a choice.
  3. Make back-up choice(s) in case I have a problem with my first choice.

**Implementing My Choice**
- Plan-Make a plan for getting an education or training.
- Try Out-Get work experience (full-time, part-time, volunteer) and take courses or get training to test my choice.
- Apply-Apply for and get a job.

**Knowing I Made a Good Decision**
- Have events changed?
- How did my friends and relatives react to my choice?
- How do I feel now?
- Am I avoiding doing what needs to be done?

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