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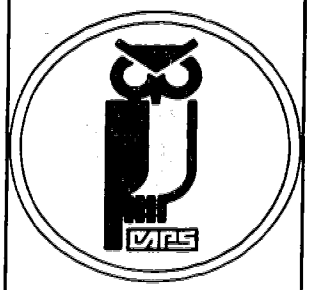
ABSTRACT

Although group counseling is recognized as a needed and helpful approach, group counseling for enhancing career development has received little attention. This monograph provides information on group process, ideas, and techniques which have helped tie the principles of career development to group counseling. Chapter 1 defines group career counseling, develops a rationale, suggests guidelines for implementation, and provides an overview of programs and research. Chapter 2 describes group process, stages, goals, and skills in order to establish a strong knowledge base in the foundations of group career counseling. Chapter 3 provides a specific and detailed model of group career counseling as an example for counselors based on the principles described in the second chapter. Chapter 4 discusses future possibilities of group career counseling with proposed applications for schools, business and industry, and the community. A seven-page reference list is included. (ABL)



GROUP CAREER COUNSELING:

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

K Richard Pyle

ERIC/CAPS
Educational Resources Information Center
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Dedicated to my family group

Betty, Kim, Matthew, Missy and Katy

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PREFACE

> There will come a time, I know, when people will take delight in one another, when each will be a star to the other, and when each will listen to his fellow as to music. Then free men will walk upon the earth, men great in their freedom. They will walk with open hearts, and the hearts of each will be pure of envy and greed, and therefore all mankind will be without malice, and there will be nothing to divorce the heart from reason. Then life will be one great service to man!
>
> Maxim Gorky

Much has been written about groups and their potential to help counselors' therapeutic and developmental goals. Group counseling has developed over the past 40 or 50 years, but the term was practically unknown until the late 1950s. Prior to that time, it was believed that the term counseling should be reserved for the one-to-one relationship (Anderson, 1969). In the past 20 years there has been a phenomenal growth in group counseling and it is generally recognized as a needed and helpful approach (Cohen, 1969). The promise has been well documented in numerous books and articles, e.g., Moreno (1962), Gazda (1978), Mahler (1969), Dreikurs and Corsini (1954), and Luft (1963). Although these authors have discussed special types of groups, group counseling for the purpose of enhancing career development has received scant attention, and what little there is has been limited to chapters in books and articles in professional journals. This monograph attempts to provide a fuller treatment of group counseling to facilitate career development, with the hope that career counselors will discover the dynamics of group process are a valuable tool in their efforts to assist clients with career decisions.

The monograph is directed to the counselor in the field who is interested not so much in theory as in practical information and applications. Therefore, much of the content covers group process ideas and techniques which have helped tie the principles of career development to group counseling. Chapter one defines group career counseling, develops a rationale, and suggests guidelines for implementation. In addition, an overview of group career counseling programs and research is provided. Having a firm idea of group career counseling is invaluable if the counselor is going to develop a strong program. Chapter two describes group process, stages, goals and skills in an effort to establish a strong knowledge base in

the foundations of group career counseling. Chapter three provides counselors with a specific and detailed model of group career counseling. The intent here is to provide a full example and model based upon the foundation and principles of chapter two. This model can be used by the practicing counselor or modified to fit an individual style and approach. Chapter four is a short but important discussion of the future possibilities of group career counseling. Based upon where we have been and where we are, the chapter describes possibilities and ideas for counselor consideration. Applications within schools, business and industry, and the community are proposed.

This monograph was greatly influenced by my colleagues at Alma College in Alma, Michigan and more recently at the University of Texas at Austin. Special recognition and appreciation are extended to Cynthia Johnson of Columbia University for her support in encouraging me through a W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant entitled Project LEARN. In addition, Jim Sampson and Bruce Reisenberg, two other Project Learn colleagues, are recognized for their valuable help in stimulating my thinking on the group career counseling concept.

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CHAPTER ONE
GROUP CAREER COUNSELING: WHAT, WHY, AND HOW?

This chapter provides an overview of what group career counseling is, why use it, and how to use it. The concept of "career" establishes the context for defining group career counseling, which is then compared and contrasted with individual counseling, group counseling and group guidance. The question of "why" is answered on the basis of experience and research, including a rationale for using the group counseling approach to career development. Guidelines for developing a group career counseling program and a description of some successful models serve as answers to the question of "how." For readers interested in a detailed review of research on group career counseling, the last section of the chapter discusses the following areas: comparative studies with individual counseling; career information-seeking behavior; career maturity, self-concept and attitudes; computer-assisted guidance; and work values, realism and self-exploration.

The "What" of Group Career Counseling

"Career" Defined

"Career" can be defined as the sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his or her pre-occupational, occupational, and post-occupational life. It includes all work-related positions such as those of student, employee (or employer or self-employed worker), and pensioner, together with complementary avocational, familial, and civic positions. Careers exist only as persons pursue them; they are person-centered (Super, 1976). A position becomes part of a career if it is a work position, if it prepares the person for a work position or enhances the person's work, or if it is a direct consequence of working (Healy, 1982).

Group Counseling Defined

Two of the most succinct and definitive statements of group counseling emerged in the late 1960s. Gazda, Duncan, and Meadows (1967) defined group counseling as a dynamic interpersonal process focusing on conscious thought and behavior and involving the therapy functions of permissiveness, orientation to

reality, catharsis and mutual trust, caring, understanding, acceptance, and support. Mahler's (1969) definition of group counseling emphasized these key points: (1) problems with developmental tasks are the members' main concerns; (2) group interaction is the process for achieving goals; (3) the climate within the group can permit the lowering of defenses so that feelings can be revealed and explored; and (4) self-understanding and self-acceptance are the goals.

Group Counseling vs. Individual Counseling

In comparing and contrasting individual and group counseling, Shertzer and Stone (1968) point out that the overall objectives are similar for both in helping the counselee achieve self-direction, integration and self-responsibility, self-acceptance, and understanding of motivation. In both, individuals feel free to examine feelings and experiences in an accepting, permissive climate. There is a privacy and confidential relationship in both. Counselor techniques are similar in respect to the use of clarification and reflection of feelings, restatement of content, etc. For groups, however, the counselor must be aware of not only the discussion but also the interplay of relations among members. The addition of this variable makes the processes and interactions more challenging and difficult. To make effective and positive use of all the members is not easily accomplished. Mahler (1969) indicates that groups tend to focus on interpersonal growth while individual counseling deals with personal growth. The culmination of personal growth lies in the ability to involve oneself with others. In addition, groups provide the individual with an immediate opportunity to try out ways of relating to others and with the experience of intimacy with others. This firsthand opportunity to test others' perceptions of oneself and to give as well as receive help does not exist in individual counseling. The group format also provides the counselor with the opportunity to observe a client's interaction with others, thereby gaining greater insights. It might be assumed that groups have a tendency, in comparison to individual counseling, to inhibit and slow down personal sharing because of the numbers of participants and the greater difficulty in maintaining confidentiality.

Group Counseling vs. Group Guidance

Group guidance is a term which has been around as long as the guidance movement. Frank Parsons, who is credited with the founding of guidance, no doubt used the term early in his work. Group guidance is generally thought of as a means

of delivering relevant information on matters related to educational, career, social and/or personal development. Synthesizing and discussing the information in the context of one's own personal situation is not a major feature of group guidance. The typical setting is the classroom, with class size ranging from 25 to 30. Group counseling is less concerned with the delivery of information and more with assisting the student in developing insights and knowledge of self and the world from within the individual's own unique frame of reference. In this context group counseling engenders growth insofar as it provides the participants the incentive and motivation to make changes that are in their best interest (Gazda, 1978). The motivation comes from within and is not externally imposed.

While the approach of the counselor in group guidance is more toward lecture and the delivery of information, in group counseling the counselor attempts to lead discussion and dialogue which helps the individual arrive at helpful insights and conclusions. In group counseling the counselor spends less time talking and more time facilitating dialogue. To determine whether or not a counselor is conducting a group guidance or a group counseling session, one might chart who is doing most of the talking, the counselor or the group members. If the counselor clearly monopolizes the process, then the session might be more accurately defined as group guidance.

Group Career Counseling Defined

Tolbert (1974) listed the following elements of group career counseling: (1) career planning and decision-making require input about occupations; (2) accurate data about self (abilities, interests and values) are needed; and (3) the process offers opportunities to explore personal meaning, identify and examine subjective aspects of the self, get feedback from others, and try on roles. This third element is what distinguishes group career counseling from group guidance. A synthesis of group counseling and group career counseling establishes an environment of acceptance and openness where individuals have the freedom and opportunity to try out and integrate information about themselves and the world of work. Within this environment decision-making skills are practiced and developed so that actual implementation of decisions can take place. The major differences between group counseling and group career counseling are the use of information and the emphasis on decision-making.

Information. As mentioned, group career counseling makes use of a lot of information which is usually externally generated. The goal of assisting individuals to understand information about self and the world of work is incorporated in the group counseling emphasis on gaining insight about self and others. In other words, group career counseling has a major added dimension, the processing of external information, to go along with personal insight development. In this context, group career counseling is every bit as complex as group counseling and possibly more so due to the added dimension of information processing.

Decision-Making. Most theorists of career counseling consider the learning of decision-making skills as a major ingredient in group career counseling. Group techniques that combine learning and decision-making concepts have been shown to stimulate occupational information-seeking behavior (Krumboltz & Thoreson, 1964). Gelatt, Varenhorst, and Carey (1972) emphasize a decision-making strategy built around the following steps:

(1) Purpose. The counselee needs to make a decision. He has at least two options.
(2) Information. Information about the options is identified or obtained.
(3) Possibilities. All of the possible courses of action are identified.
(4) Results possible. Possible consequences of each alternative are examined.
(5) Results probable. The likelihood of each consequence is predicted.
(6) Values. The personal desirability of each consequence is assessed.
(7) Decision. A choice is made. It may be terminal or investigatory.
(8) Feedback and Evaluation. The counselee judges the suitability of his decision and the counselor evaluates the effectiveness of his help. (p. 165)

A number of group career counseling programs use decision-making concepts to facilitate career development and improve decision-making (Chick, 1970; Hansen, 1970; Martin, 1970). The emphasis is on teaching decision-making skills as opposed to making an immediate decision.

The "Why" of Group Career Counseling

A Rationale for Group Career Counseling

There are many advantages to working with groups. These relate to and include (1) the enhancement of career counseling outcomes; (2) time, efficiency and cost effectiveness; (3) feedback enhancement; (4) personalizing information; and (5) enjoyment and variety.

All counselors are interested in achieving the outcomes which are generally prescribed for the career counseling process. These include helping an individual with a career decision, in the development of decisional skills, and in general adjustment (Montross & Shinkman, 1981). All three of these goals can be met within the group format. The third goal, assisting in general adjustment, is particularly conducive to a group setting. The fact that one's peers are a major part of the process can assist the individual with adjustment concerns. By hearing others' concerns and problems the tendency to see oneself as the only person with a career problem diminishes. Everyone has a need to feel that their problems are not unique and that they share with others the frustrations and anxieties inherent in their humanness. The simple process of empathizing and sharing with one another is known to be very beneficial to life functioning as well as vocational functioning. Because of the participation of peers, such an outcome appears to be more likely in a group format than in an individual setting. Group counseling takes on added dimensions when seen from the perspective that people are indivisible, social, decision-making beings whose actions have a social purpose (Dreikurs & Sonstegard, 1968). Dinkmeyer and Muro (1979) have the following to say regarding the rationale for group counseling:

> Recognizing that human beings are social beings creates a new awareness of both verbal and nonverbal interactions and transactions. The individual's life-style is always expressed in his social transactions and psychological movement with others. His unique approach to the problems of life is always consistent with his concept of self and his assumptions about life. Thus, all the transactions that occur within the group take on added meaning insofar as they enable us to observe the personality of the individual as it is developed in interaction patterns with others. Group counseling provides the counselor and the counselees with a very valuable social laboratory. The cohesive group becomes a small society or microcommunity. (p. 7)

The fact that more than one person's needs can be met within the same time format provides further evidence of the value of group career counseling. This has implications for cost effectiveness and the effective use of counselor time. With the emphasis on and pressures toward conformity, counselors need to determine creative and effective learning approaches to aid them in meeting more needs within the time constraints of the job.

Feedback enhancement, as mentioned previously, is another reason for the use of group career counseling. The fact that the counselor can call upon others to assist the individual to understand a certain aspect of self and/or use information from others is a particularly valuable learning resource. The group presents a broader perspective and mirror of the individual than the counselor alone can provide. It enables the participant to see himself both in others and in his own comments. The counselor, therefore, has the resources of the diverse and varied personalities within the group to call upon and utilize in the learning process. The old adage, "two heads are better than one," certainly applies to group career counseling.

In an age of information, individuals need assistance in personalizing information. Since career counseling often includes external information, such as test results and/or computer-assisted information, it is particularly important for individuals to be assisted with the understanding of information. Such understanding can be accomplished in an effective manner within the group. Participants have the advantage of hearing others' test- or computer-created results. This aids in putting the information in perspective and drawing appropriate conclusions. By using techniques which enhance the affective domain (these will be discussed in Chapter 2), the counselor can assist in the personalization of information. The group makes such a personalization even more powerful because of the influence of peers' comments and feedback.

The combination of affect with information needs is one of the major aspects of working with groups. All of us have heard the phrase, "high-tech, high-touch," which suggests that human beings need the affective domain enhanced as we are exposed to an increasing bombardment of technology and mechanical systems. Cold and impersonal information can be placed in this "high-tech" category, but, again, the counselor can draw upon the humanness of the group to enhance understanding of information. In addition, peer encouragement is usually far more significant than counselor suggestions and comments alone. The decision to commit oneself to

a particular next step and/or action in the presence of one's peers has greater implications than if the actions were disclosed only to the counselor.

Probably one of the most important advantages of working with groups is the fact that counselors generally enjoy the challenge and variety of working with several individuals at one time (Gazda, 1978). This author has supervised a number of counseling staffs and found that counselors generally prefer groups over individual counseling and that group counseling decreases the possibility for counselor burnout. Counselors' attraction to personality and the differences in human nature comes out in a vivid manner within the group context.

Due to the complexity of career development, it is often necessary to have more than one session. Unless counselors have some type of academic credit tied to participation, high attrition occurs when more than one session is necessary. It is not unusual for counselors to need three to five sessions in order to adequately teach a particular career development concept. The author has found that retention is generally higher within a group format than a classroom or workshop format. There seems to be something about the personalization process which the small group provides that motivates students to return. This may say something about the need humans have for intimacy and relating to others within an environment where they feel comfortable and not fearful of being rejected.

In summarizing the rationale for group counseling Dinkmeyer and Muro (1979) point out that groups provide a valuable therapeutic service by meeting a variety of needs at one time. These include:

(1) The need to belong, to find a place, and to be accepted as one is.
(2) Affection needs--to be loved and to be able to provide love; the opportunity to have a therapeutic effect on others, in essence to be a part of the helping process while receiving assistance.
(3) The opportunity to interact on meaningful developmental topics which are related to one's growth and development.
(4) Help in seeing that one's problem is not unique.
(5) The opportunity to develop feelings of equality and acceptance without feeling that one has to "prove" himself to belong.
(6) The need to work out one's identity as it relates to the various social and career tasks of life. (p. 11)

Examples of Group Career Counseling

There are a number of group career counseling programs which will help the reader make a connection between the principles and actual practice. These models are described here. Chapter three includes a more detailed description of a specific model.

Tolbert (1974) indicated a series of steps for conducting a group career counseling session which incorporated decision-making skill development. He emphasized that structure should be present and the counselor should have a specific plan for each session. Acceptance, positive regard, and understanding should characterize the climate of the group. Reflection and clarification are common responses of the counselor. A decision-making orientation should occur early in the process using an appropriate decision-making model as a teaching tool. Also early in the group process, participants should be provided with a folder of information from their cumulative record. This step is useful in explaining the meaning of test scores and other data. A suggested later activity is to have group members pursue career learning options outside the group. Examples of options are interviewing prospective employers, visiting a possible place of employment, and collecting information on a particular career of interest. Feedback, predictions, and plans of action characterize the last stage of Tolbert's model.

Hewer (1968) developed a group career counseling program at the University of Minnesota with a case conference approach in which counselees described their situations, plans, and difficulties. Other group members were expected to suggest courses of action, predict success, estimate satisfactions, and generally serve as helpers.

One example of a combination of group counseling and decision-making is a group career counseling plan, Vocational Choice Group Counseling, developed by Sprague and Strong (1970). Nine one-hour weekly meetings are established around the following content: (1) introductions, purpose of group, and a discussion of vocational problems and decision-making; (2) discussion of tests and inventory results; and (3) individual case presentations, discussion, and interaction. Participants are given work sheets on decision-making and related literature for study and background information. Quick decisions are not expected but some progress toward goals is encouraged.

A group career counseling activity which has been used extensively in a number of schools and colleges over the past fifteen years is the Vocational

Exploration Group (VEG) (Daane, 1971). This activity is a structured process which seeks to facilitate exploration of both world of work and self within a small group context (four to six members). The experience is designed to "free up" creative thinking, increase personal motivation, and widen the participants' pool of occupational awareness. The teaching of decision-making is not a stated objective of the VEG.

Awareness of Career Decision-Making (ACADEM) is a group career counseling program developed by Johnson (1973). It consists of "a program of activities that helps participants understand the educational, occupational, and personal aspects of life so that their decision-making will be smooth and rewarding" (p. 2).

ACADEM involves six stages with specific tasks associated with each stage: (1) Personal Assessment--the task for the student during this stage is to conduct an assessment of educational-occupational interests, abilities and values that can provide an individual with a set of personal criteria by which to evaluate occupations; (2) Occupational Exploration--this calls for the student to explore a wide range of occupational groups and evaluate how each group fits his personal criteria; (3) Tentative Occupational Choice--the task is to choose an occupational area which provides the greatest probability of success and satisfaction; (4) Educational Exploration--this involves the exploration of college majors which will facilitate entry into the chosen occupational area, taking into account personal interests and academic ability; (5) Tentative Educational Choice--the task is to choose a college major appropriate to an occupational choice and to choose one which has the greatest probability of success and satisfaction; and (6) Implementation of Choices--the student task is to "try out" experiences such as courses and part-time or volunteer work to test the adequacy and reality of choices. Each experience becomes new data from which previously made decisions may be modified.

There are nine activities which reflect the tasks associated with each stage. The activities were designed to be conducted in groups as large as 10 and as small as six. ACADEM was designed for use as a unit in a career development class or some type of orientation course for beginning college students. It is flexible and can be easily adapted to any institution of higher education.

The "How" of Group Career Counseling

Guidelines for Implementation

The process of implementing a group career counseling program is a critical element and one which needs special attention. Counselors need to think of creative ways in which students can be integrated into the program. Guidelines which have been found to be helpful in the development of programs are as follows:

1. Think of students' developmental needs which are being impacted and influenced by their environment. High school juniors and seniors and college freshmen and sophomores are continually asked, "What are you going to do when you finish school?" and/or, in the case of most college sophomores, are being told that a major has to be declared prior to their junior year. These individuals are particularly responsive to activities designed to help them with their decisions. The author has found it particularly helpful in developing groups to send out a letter to all undecided sophomores during the beginning of the second semester/term of their sophomore year informing them of the group program and indicating a date, place and time for an orientation to the program. At the orientation meeting students have been given information on what they can expect, how it has helped previous students, and the dates and times of the groups. Naturally, it is good to have a variety of times available in order to meet as many scheduling needs as possible. This meeting allows students to have a face-to-face meeting with one or more of the counselors who are conducting the program and gain valuable information which will assist in their motivation and commitment to the program. Such a process can also be very effective with freshmen, but it is recommended that this not be done until after a few months, since they are typically bombarded with so much information and activities at the beginning of the year. After the first semester many are ready and need to do some assimilation of their experience for purposes of determining or clarifying a direction, which has often been seriously tested during their first semester's experience.

2. Develop an intake system which includes group counseling as one of the major interventions for students who are at the exploration stage of career decision-making. Most counseling centers have some type of intake system which assesses the needs of the individual and helps to place them in an appropriate intervention. With a variety of group times and schedules, individuals can be assigned to groups according to the initial evaluation of needs. There are two types

of individuals who seem to be most suitable for the group career counseling process: those who have no idea of where they are going, and those who have been going in a particular direction but who are now uncertain of its appropriateness. The latter are in need of clarification while the former are in need of some crystallization.

3. Take advantage of your campus media and communication systems to advertize the groups and their advantages to students. This suggestion is not new and is basically common sense. However, the creative use of the media can greatly enhance the amount of participation. Counselors will have to put on their "marketing" hat to make good use of this approach.

4. Be careful to have groups that are of manageable size and which enhance the potential for learning. A size of five to eight members is generally accepted as ideal for generating participation and involvement. As group size grows, the group tends to become more impersonal, less intimate, and less satisfying to members (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). This is not surprising since increased size means decreased member-to-member interaction and perhaps a greater degree of leader dominance. Conversely, as the group size decreases, the affectual ties of members tend to increase, a factor also enhanced by the fact that the level of group participation is increased in smaller groups. As Ohlsen (1970) indicates, an individual, to function effectively, must be able to feel safe, attract the attention of others, interact meaningfully, and give, solicit, and accept feedback. Geller (1951) has approached the problem of group size within the context of depth, aims and goals. In a heavily psychoanalytic-oriented group, three to four participants would be satisfactory. Johnson (1963) considers group size in respect to emotional climate. The larger the group (in excess of eight), the less the emotional involvement. Gazda (1968) recommends five to ten, while Warters (1960) proposes a larger range of ten to 15. This author, based upon 15 years of experience in conducting career counseling groups, recommends four to eight.

Groups can be developed through a sign-up procedure whereby the dates, times and places of the group meetings are made available. A secretary or receptionist can monitor the sign-ups. It has been the author's experience that all students who sign up and/or are referred do not follow through with the group. Therefore, it may be a good idea to register at least 10 or 11 in order to assure a group size of seven or eight.

There appear to be three basic approaches to involving students in groups:

1. Announcements describing the group program and inviting sign-ups/registrations as if the group program were a class.

2. Orientations to the group program through scheduled meetings and/or classes, with an opportunity to sign-up/register at the end of the meeting.

3. Referrals by counselors/paraprofessionals/faculty, e. to the group program.

It has been the author's experience that a combination of all three is an effective way to implement and maintain the group program.

Research on Group Career Counseling

General Findings

Although research has produced mixed results, the majority of studies tend to support the efficacy of group career counseling as an important intervention in facilitating career development. However, there is limited information to aid a counselor in determining which method(s) most assist clients and at what time and with what people. The studies are diverse in design, and group procedures often are too skimpily described to be replicable in other settings. Research in group career counseling suffers from many of the shortcomings of group counseling research in general (Gazda, 1968). Most studies do not clearly present the nature of the treatment process. Lack of treatment, replicability, small or extreme sampling, and few multivariate studies are common problems. It is generally agreed that a coherent body of knowledge on effective group career counseling procedures for specific populations is not available to the practicing counselor.

This review is organized around the areas of (1) comparative studies with individual counseling; (2) career information-seeking behavior; (3) career maturity, self-concept and attitudes; (4) computer-assisted guidance; and (5) work values, realism and self-exploration. Each of these areas is related to the group career counseling method of intervention and its general impact.

Comparative Studies with Individual Counseling

Summary. The results of comparative studies provide evidence to support both approaches. Both are effective in achieving the desired outcomes of career

counseling. The counselor's decision on treatment might depend upon the student's receptivity to the group versus the individual format and upon the student's personality. Students who are more "social" may find it easier to become a part of the group and gain from it. Many authors recommend group counseling, both for its economy (Hoppock, 1967; Strang, 1970) and for the opportunity for client interaction and growth that a group can provide (Blocher, 1973; Mathewson, 1970; Strang, 1970; Traxler, 1970; Varenhorst, 1968; Wrenn, 1973). The group context can provide for greater peer interaction (Strang, 1970; Traxler, 1970), preparation for further counseling (Bennett, 1964), greater verbal interaction, a legitimate practice ground for new behaviors, a variety of models, and greater opportunities for the counselor to reinforce appropriate career behaviors (Varenhorst, 1968).

Specific Studies. Bilovsky (1951) found that there were no significant differences between individual and group counseling in increasing the realism of vocational goals among groups of students in a senior high school. For a population limited to college students of one sex, Hoyt (1955) concluded that career guidance, by either the individual or group method, is effective in producing positive changes on relevant criteria. He further concluded that there were no differences between the two methods in working with career undecided students. According to the criteria adopted by Hoyt, effective outcomes were attained by both group procedures and by the more traditional individual approach. In a research study similar to Hoyt's, Hewer (1968) found no significant difference in accomplishment between individual and group counseling.

Wright (1963) found very few postcounseling differences between individual counseling and group counseling in test interpretation interviews. Similarly, in a study of three methods of test interpretation, Folds and Gazda (1966) found that although individual counseling was more satisfying to the client, there was, again, no difference in effectiveness between individual and group methods.

Krumboltz and Thoreson (1964) attempted to produce information-seeking behavior in 192 eleventh graders through four treatments applied to both individual and group counseling. The four treatments were verbal reinforcement counseling, model reinforcement counseling, films and discussion, and no treatment. No differences were found between individual and group counseling. However, the results indicated that there were significant differences among the treatments in producing information-seeking behavior. Model reinforcement produced the most results followed by verbal reinforcement, films, and control. Some differences

related to sex were found. Model reinforcement was more effective than verbal reinforcement counseling for males; both types were effective for females. Therefore, counselors may particularly want to emphasize the model reinforcement techniques when working with males.

Das (1965) found no significant differences on the Vocational Development Inventory among a group of ninth grade potential dropouts experiencing three to five sessions of individual counseling, group counseling or no counseling. Tarrier (1968), in a study of different career counseling methods, found no difference between small group counseling and individual counseling.

Hanley (1970) studied individual and group counseling with high school underachievers. Thirty-six tenth and eleventh grade underachievers participated either in individual counseling, six sessions of group counseling, or no treatment. Group sessions involved counselor interaction plus structured discussion concerning values and attitudes about vocations. Using a pretest, posttest, and a six weeks delayed posttest design, Hanley found no significant differences between scores derived from the Vocational Development Inventory and a self-concept scale.

Hanson and Sander (1973) studied differential effects of individual and group counseling among eleventh and twelfth grade boys. The boys were classified as either "overshooters" or "undershooters" in the realism of their vocational choices. Thirty subjects participated in either an average of three individual counseling sessions involving flexible discussion, or four to six group counseling sessions structured around case study presentations by group members. "Overshooters" in group counseling and "undershooters" in individual counseling showed significantly more realism than control subjects. In an experimental study of community college students, Adams and Anderson (1971) found that a group career counseling program was more effective than individual counseling in helping entering students maintain higher grade point averages, gain greater satisfaction with the college program, achieve greater certainty about completing their program and make more appropriate educational vocational choices.

Pinkney (1974) investigated not only format (individual and group) for vocational counseling but also styles (structured and unstructured). The four treatments studied were structured group, structured individual, nonstructured group, and nonstructured individual career counseling. For counseling effectiveness of total change in expressed concern, clients in the group treatments had more change in expressed concern than did clients in the individual treatments, and the

structured group treatment produced more change than did the structured individual treatment.

Career Information-Seeking Behavior

Summary. Several studies have focused on the facilitation of career information-seeking behavior. The review in this area demonstrates the value of behavioral group counseling techniques. This includes such areas as modeling, positive reinforcement, and reinforcement plus taped modeling.

Specific Studies. Aiken (1970) reported a significant relationship between the counseling procedures used and the change in career information-seeking responses. The study was concerned with the effects of group reinforcement counseling on the frequency of career information-seeking behavior for college freshmen and sophomore males. Group reinforcement counseling was defined as any verbal or nonverbal positive reinforcement of a stated indication that the clients had sought, were seeking, or planned to seek information relevant to their major or career. In 1973, Aiken and Johnston studied the effects of group reinforcement counseling on the frequency of career information-seeking behaviors for 94 college freshmen and sophomore males. Crites' Career Maturity Inventory was used to identify career maturity-immaturity and Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory was used to identify consistent-inconsistent patterns. Both career mature and immature subjects tended to increase in exploratory behavior during treatment.

Krieger (1970) was able to increase career planning behavior and career planning strategies with mentally retarded adolescents. The treatment used was group career counseling with the content based on modeling, plus reinforcement counseling.

Studies have provided support for the value of social modeling in increasing students' information-seeking behaviors (Thoreson & Krumboltz, 1968; Thoreson, Krumboltz, & Varenhorst, 1967). Hamilton (1969) discovered that group social modeling plus participation in group counseling was found to promote significantly more knowledge of ability to stimulate career decision-making than either modeling or participation in group counseling by themselves. Krumboltz and Schroeder (1965) studied the effects of both reinforcement and social modeling tapes with 54 eleventh graders. One group participated in group discussion in which the leader verbally or nonverbally reinforced information-seeking responses of members. A

second participated in the same type of group discussion with reinforcement and also listened to a male model discussing the same topics at the beginning of the sessions. Both groups showed significantly more information-seeking behaviors than a control group. Reinforcement discussion was more effective than no treatment for females but not for males. Reinforcement plus taped modeling was more effective than no treatment for females but not for males. Reinforcement plus taped modeling was more effective for males but not for females.

In a study using the Vocational Exploration Group (VEG), Bergland and Lundquist (1974) were not able to increase information-seeking behaviors. However, the VEG participants were able to identify significantly more satisfiers obtainable from jobs and were more proficient at differentiating among jobs on the basis of interests and skills used in jobs than students in the control group.

Career Maturity, Self-Concept, and Attitude

Summary. There have been a number of studies where group career counseling has been used as the intervention to improve career maturity, self-concept and attitudes toward career and jobs. Significant change in any of these areas is possible, but the treatment time appears to be at least eight weeks.

Specific Studies. In a study designed to determine the effects of group counseling on the career maturity of ninth graders, Nichol (1969) found no significant differences between group counseling and the control group, as measured by a structured interview and the Attitude Scale of the Career Maturity Inventory. The treatment period was eight weeks in duration. The group sessions were not described.

Jackson (1971) found positive movement but no significant differences, as measured by the Career Maturity Inventory or a career maturity scale, between a control group and subjects participating in small group counseling. The treatment was not defined in this study beyond "group counseling." Gilliland (1966) was able to increase career maturity, academic achievement and occupational aspiration in 14 black adolescents participating in group counseling for 36 weeks. The results were positive but the time investment would be a problem for a practicing counselor. In a short-term study (six weeks), Flake, Roach, and Stenning (1975) were able to significantly increase career maturity attitude scores of tenth grade students. The researchers concluded that the results indicated that career maturity as a developmental process can be measured and facilitated through counseling.

Catron (1966) examined changes in self, ideal self, and "ordinary person" perceptions of high school students after treating the students to a College and Career Planning Group. The treatment took place in small groups and lasted for 14 one-and-one-half hour sessions. Fifty-four students were involved in test interpretation, listening to tapes and free discussion. Subjects' perceptions of self changed significantly to more positive images, although ideal self and "ordinary person" perceptions were unchanged. Similarly, Garrison (1972) reported that career development counseling over an eight-week period assisted college students to attain a positive change in their self-concept.

Grubbs (1971) compared 28 ninth grade students who experienced the VEG to 28 ninth grade students who visited job sites, listened to job topic speakers, visited libraries, and wrote career papers. On an attitude-toward-job questionnaire, VEG participants made significant gains from pre-to-posttesting in self-knowledge, self-assessment, and attitudes toward jobs. A classroom activity group used as a control made no significant gains. The instrument used was a 15-item self-made questionnaire. In a study in which the VEG was used with potential dropouts, Hawxhurst (1973) found no significant changes. The Attitude Scale of the Career Maturity Inventory was the instrument used in the study.

Computer-Assisted Guidance (CAG)

Summary. CAG appears to have some evidence to support its use as a means of enhancing career development when the process is managed by and includes the counselor.

Specific Studies. In a study on the computer-assisted guidance program, SIGI, Devine (1976) used a Solomon four-group design and found no significant effects on the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude or Competence test scales for students using SIGI on their own without the assistance of a counselor.

In a follow-up study, Pyle and Stripling (1976) studied the change of career maturity in students going through a small group counseling program with SIGI and without SIGI. Students using SIGI as a laboratory experience within a small group counseling program achieved significant levels of change on career maturity attitudes, while those who went through a small group career counseling program had no changes.

Sampson and Stripling (1979) were interested in the levels of traditional counseling intervention required to maximize the effectiveness of SIGI use.

Subjects were divided into three groups varying in terms of counselor involvement. One group received structured counseling with SIGI use; another received unstructured counseling with SIGI use upon request, and a third group used SIGI but did not interact with a counselor during the time they utilized the computer-assisted guidance system. Two self-report questionnaires served as dependent measures and mixed results were found regarding significant differences among groups. Students in the structured and control groups tended to evaluate SIGI similarly while significant differences were found between the structured and control groups and the nonstructured group on questions dealing with interest in and effectiveness of SIGI. Sampson and Stripling conclude: "This suggests that even though group approaches seem to meet student needs during their use of the system, counseling is perceived by many students as a necessary follow-up to the experience. Counselors seem to be a necessary component of computer-assisted guidance" (p. 237).

While the research results are mixed, there is evidence which supports group career counseling as a means of increasing career maturity and self-concept in students. However, because few of the group counseling treatments were defined, it is difficult to know which approaches and techniques are of most value. The major exception here is that from the initial research, it appears that the use of computer-assisted guidance within a group career counseling process is a very favorable means of assisting students.

Work Values, Realism, and Self-Exploration

Summary. Group career counseling appears to have the potential of increasing each of these areas if enough time and multiple sessions are provided.

Specific Studies. Thomas (1974) examined the effect of group counseling in changing work values of college students. The group studied was divided into undeclared and declared majors. Results demonstrated there were no significant differences in the work values of either group. Davis (1969) investigated whether group counseling for career choice reduced the magnitude of the difference between career aspiration and career expectation, and if there was any relationship between the number of hours students spent in group counseling and the realism of their career choice. Results indicated that realism between career aspirations and career expectations increased as the number of hours of group counseling increased. Anderson and Binnie (1971) investigated the effects of a group career counseling program designed to assist community college students in examining and

exploring their interests and aptitudes as they related to personal aspirations and plans. Over half of the subjects indicated a different occupational choice on the posttest than they had previously chosen on a pretest. There was also a greater commitment to this new choice. Approximately 25 percent indicated on the posttest that they planned to complete less education than they had indicated on a pretest.

CHAPTER TWO
GROUP CAREER COUNSELING: STAGES, GOALS AND SKILLS

Introduction

The stages, goals and skills of group career counseling are important components for counselors to learn if they are to become effective group leaders. This chapter describes these areas in some detail. Within each stage the goals and skills are specified. When counselors effectively use these skills, they enhance their potential for achieving goals. In turn, the achievement of goals for each stage enables movement from one stage to the next.

Group Counseling Stages

A number of group counseling specialists (Bonney, 1969; Gazda, 1978; Mahler, 1969; Yalom, 1970) have identified stages through which counseling groups pass. These range from three to seven stages. The amount, the kind, and the timing of counselor intervention is related to the stage of a group's development. The stages outlined by Gazda and Mahler will be discussed as a frame of reference for studying the stages of group career counseling.

Gazda views four rather definite stages and describes them as follows: (1) Exploratory Stage, (2) Transition Stage, (3) Action Stage, and (4) Termination Stage. Mahler's four stages are similar: (1) Involvement Stage, (2) Transition Stage, (3) Working Stage, and (4) Ending Stage. The characteristics of each stage are also very similar.

Stage One. (1) Getting acquainted is a high priority; (2) leader outlines group rationale, approach and number of sessions; (3) leader knows why the group is helpful and knows own beliefs about human behavior; (4) the basic ground rules are agreed upon; and (5) the emphasis is on participation and using the group members to assist one another.

Stage Two. (1) Newness wears off; (2) the major task of the leader is to keep group on task and committed; (3) the leader aids others in participation and taking leadership; (4) a problem for the leader is non-participation; and (5) the leader needs to assist individuals in self-disclosure.

Stage Three. (1) Participants bring problems to the group in a confident manner; (2) morale of the group is high; (3) the focus is on assisting others to work out problems; (4) the leader does not have to work as hard to bring about participation and self-disclosure; and (5) insights are developed and the energy level is quite high in the group.

Stage Four. (1) Members are ready to take action on insights and ideas gained; (2) the future is seen as positive; (3) individuals are more deeply aware of and more accepting of self; (4) feelings of empowerment are evident in members; and (5) the leader's challenge is to draw positive feelings into action steps and provide psychological closure to the group process.

Group Career Counseling Stages, Goals and Skills

Stages

As mentioned earlier, the component of external information processing is a major difference between group career counseling and group counseling. Consequently, some of the process and content of the stages are different, and the counselor has a number of informational/cognitive goals in addition to affective goals. The end result is that group career counseling tends to be more structured than group counseling ordinarily is.

The stages of group career counseling can be labeled along the lines described by Mahler and Gazda for group counseling. The first is called the Encounter Stage, where participants encounter one another, the counselor and the content of the group program. The second is the Exploration Stage because the members need to open up their thinking about the possibilities that exist for them. The third stage is the Working Stage, in which particpants work at, synthesize and make real for their lives the variety and amount of information that has been generated. The fourth is the Action Stage, since it calls for individuals to take actual steps and engage in activities aimed at gathering further information, and/or integrating what they already have in order to assist them wtih their career development. The action stage is not a termination or ending, however, because it is the stage which creates for individuals the need and drive to continue their learning on their own and under their own self-discipline. If our counseling is really going to be effective, then the individual should be involved in some behavior beyond the life of the group.

Goals

There are two types of goals which will be stressed for each stage. The first is the achievement of affective goals. Group counseling, as we have discussed previously, is marked by feelings and the enhancement of insight through interaction with the members of the group. It is critical that the individual feel comfortable and trust both the leader and group members in order for self-disclosure and insight development to take place. Therefore, it is assumed that certain affective goals are necessary for each stage. It is further assumed that if each goal is met, then the next level of goals can be more easily achieved.

The second dimension is cognitive or information goals. As stated earlier, one of the major differences between group career counseling and group counseling is the need to assist the client to understand and personalize information related to the world of work. It is assumed that the client needs to acquire certain levels of information to help him or her make good decisions and/or correct misconceptions or myths which are inhibiting career development. What makes it possible for these goals to be realized is the use of appropriate counseling skills. Well-timed and appropriate counseling skills can help insure the achievement of the affective and cognitive goals. This is where the art form takes place within counseling. The challenge for the counselor is to weave in the skills which are relevant to interpersonal communication and group process.

Stage One: Encounter

Affective Goals. During the first stage the individual needs to feel at ease with the group and comfortable with the leadership of the counselor. The counselor needs to develop credibility, with the individual feeling a high level of trust and the assurance that his needs can be met and some valued learning will take place. A sense of anticipation and excitement about the learning opportunities needs to be developed by the counselor. A feeling of discovery and the potential for gaining insight into self are crucial elements of this stage.

Cognitive/Informational Goals. The counselor strives during the first stage to impart certain information and knowledge. The members should know the first names of the group members. They should understand the rationale for the group program and know the format (times and places) when the sessions will be taking place. Each group member should have a good idea of how the program content and group can be of assistance in meeting their needs.

Counselor Skills. The skills the counselor uses during stage one are the most critical and important to the group process. Being able to establish the tone for the group through the use of effective group counseling skills will make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful group. The skills mentioned in stages one and two are familiar to the practicing counselor. They are mentioned here for the purpose of refreshing our thinking and putting them into the context of working with groups. The skills which are most important to stage one are as follows:

1. Attending. The counselor attends in an open and clear manner with each member of the group. As is known, this is facilitated by having the group sit in a circle without any tables or barriers in front of one another. The counselor's goal is to attend to the other, both physically and psychologically; to give himself entirely to "being with" the other; to work with the other. The counselor listens attentively to each individual, to both the verbal and the nonverbal messages. The counselor keeps asking: What is this person trying to communicate about feelings, about behavior? The attitude of the counselor is one of respect and concern. Although attending skills are easy to learn, attending carefully to another is work that demands a great amount of effort on the part of the counselor (Egan, 1975). How the counselor sits and the nature of his or her eye contact will make a difference in the attending process. If the counselor's body language suggests openness and interest, the participants will more likely model this attending behavior.

2. Concreteness. The counselor specifies very clearly the purpose and rationale for the group: how the group has helped others, what is required for their success, and how the sessions are designed to increase career maturity and decision-making skills, not to provide "magic answers." In many cases, these are the first of several steps beyond the life of the group which aid in the development of a specific career goal. The times of the meetings and the importance of attendance are emphasized, since the group process is one that builds upon itself and maximizes learning only when everyone attends each session. A crucial part of this is assisting one's peers and providing feedback, and missing just one session can jeopardize both the process and goals of the group. Another dimension of concreteness is the counselor's role in helping the client stay on task (Egan, 1975). To help avoid rambling, the counselor should ground comments in concrete feelings and concrete behavior, using language that is readily understood and free of jargon or vagueness.

3. Genuineness. The offer of assistance cannot be phony. The counselor is spontaneous and open and does not hide behind the counseling role. He or she must first of all be real and able to accurately communicate his or her humanness. This can be accomplished through appropriate self-disclosure, such as, "When I was a junior in college, I had no idea what I was going to do and, like many of you, felt frustrated about the future and what was ahead of me." Another way to accomplish this is to put the group at ease with appropriate humor. Everyone likes humor and the opportunity to laugh, and it is an important counseling skill which is too often ignored.

Stage Two: Exploration

Affective Goals. As counselors know, during the second stage individuals should be achieving a higher level of comfort with the group. Self-disclosure is more relaxed and comes more easily. Nervous laughter has decreased and been replaced with appropriate and well-timed humor. The fact that individuals are listening to one another rather than being preoccupied with what they are going to say next should be apparent to the counselor. Group attention is focused on other members instead of just the counselor; this can be observed in their good eye contact and the sincere and appropriate questions asked of one another.

Cognitive/Informational Goals. During the second stage the counselor is trying to develop a norm that emphasizes exploration of self and the world of work. This is not always an easy matter since individuals often want to get to specific careers as quickly as possible. All career counselors have heard the phrase, "give me a test that tells me what career to go into," or have had to assist a student who, on registration day, wants to know what career to go into before signing up for classes. The cognitive/informational goals are related to enhancing the participants' alternatives through helping them understand three specific areas of career development. The first relates to how their general personality make-up (such as values, interests and abilities) interacts with their career decision-making, and the second is to help them see how specific careers relate to their self-assessment information. What is equally important here is to improve the participants' awareness and knowledge of careers. An increase, therefore, in occupational literacy is a very important cognitive goal of the second stage. This includes an overall understanding of the world of work and how it is organized. The third area to be understood is how psychological barriers (such as culturally imposed values and sex role stereotypes) can inhibit alternatives and potentially good decisions.

Counselor Skills. The counselor during the exploration stage continues to use all the skills of stage one. Additional skills are as follows:

1. Facilitative Responses. The counselor employs a variety of responses to facilitate self-exploration. These include:

a. Reflection of feeling. As explained earlier, one of the important ways that group counseling differs from group guidance is that attention focuses on members' feelings and reactions as much as on their thoughts. Group leaders may encourage members to focus on feelings by reflecting the feeling component of participants' statements and by seeking clarification of their reaction to their experiences. The counselor responds in a way that demonstrates that he or she has listened, and understands how the individual feels and what is being said. In some sense, the counselor must see the individual's world from the individual's frame of reference--it is not enough to understand; the counselor must communicate his or her understanding.

b. Clarifying/Paraphrasing/Summarizing. The counselor repeats information heard from the participants so that they can hear it in another context and correct it if necessary. This also allows the other members of the group to hear again the information being provided.

c. Questioning. The counselor asks appropriate questions related to the goals of the stage. These need to be open-ended questions, questions that force deeper thinking, such as "tell me more" or questions starting with "what," "how," or why." This is opposed to close-ended questions, which allow the individual to respond with a simple yes or no.

2. Self-Disclosure. The counselor is willing to share his or her own experience with the client if sharing will actually help the individual's self-understanding. The counselor is extremely careful, however, not to lay any burdens on the client.

3. Circling. The counselor poses a question or puts an issue before the group and solicits a response from each member in turn. This technique is especially helpful in a group where members are reluctant to respond or when one member tends to dominate the discussions. It is particularly important who the counselor asks to go first within the group process. This individual will set the tone for the rest of the group. Therefore, it is a good idea to choose a person who has good verbal skills and is not afraid to risk him/herself with the information being sought. At the other extreme, it is good not to select someone who will use the opportunity to monopolize.

4. Pairing/Linking. This is a particularly important skill for the counselor to use in drawing the group together and helping members see similarities and commonalities. The counselor will notice similar comments or self-disclosures from several participants and will feed this information back through pairing the names of the individuals with one another along with the content. For example, "Tom, Joan and Barbara all seem to value the importance of independence and want to have this as a part of their career choice."

5. Personalizing. People have a tendency to speak in generalities or to attribute their feelings and thoughts to people in general. Group leaders should encourage members to speak in the first person when sharing reactions and experiences.

Stage Three: Working Stage

Affective Goals. By this time the group members should be fully relaxed and at ease with one another. They should feel open and receptive to feedback and be able to give feedback in an appropriate manner. They should be attentive to each other and be able to listen in a nondefensive manner. They should have a commitment to exploration and be open to a number of alternatives. A sense of excitement or anticipation of discovery should be present, as well as a high level of readiness for possibilities. This stage is particularly marked by great openness to change and the willingness to take risks in order to enhance learning. The individual sees more and more clearly the necessity for action. He or she might be fearful of change and even doubt that he or she has the resources necessary for change, but is willing to face up to these challenges and push toward some real action steps beyond the life of the group. In addition, the individual is seeing more clearly how the group and the individual members can help develop a clearer picture of self and the world of work. It is not unusual for feedback to be requested.

Cognitive/Informational Goals. During the third stage the counselor helps the group members to understand a large number of occupations which have potential for the future. This includes such aspects as nature of the work, a typical day, what those presently involved in the career area like and don't like, salary information, job security, educational/training opportunities, future outlook, and where to go for more information. The participants should be aware of the pro's and con's of each career area which is being seriously considered. In addition, they

should know something about the process and stages of career decision-making, how this process can be used in the future as well as at this point, and whether they tend to be dependent, objective or intuitive decision-makers. Another important cognitive goal is helping the individual learn about career information sources other than those involved in the group career counseling process. This externally generated information may come as a consequence of a library assignment, a computer-assisted guidance assignment, and/or testing.

Counselor Skills. The counseling skills which are most apparent during the third stage tend to be information generating and information processing. In addition to the skills of stages one and two, these skills are as follows:

1. Accurate Empathy. The counselor must communicate an understanding not only of what the group member says but also what is implied, what is hinted at and what is said nonverbally. The counselor begins to make connections between seemingly isolated statements. In this whole process, the counselor must not create anything new but put together all of the pieces and signals he or she is receiving for purposes of greater clarification and insight development.

2. Confrontation. The counselor challenges the discrepancies, distortions, stereotypes, and preconceived notions of the group members. This skill is particularly necessary to the discussion and clarification of occupational stereotypes.

3. Feedback Development. The counselor facilitates the exchange of feedback among group members to gain information which helps them understand themselves more fully. This skill is particularly important since so much potential information is available from the other group members.

4. Experiential Information Providing. While the counselor can easily become a lecturer of information in order to achieve cognitive/informational goals, it is suggested instead that the counselor guide discussion and thinking based upon the group member's experiences. Tying and connecting the experiences to the information will help the learning process. For example, rather than lecturing on occupational stereotypes, the counselor might engage the group by asking them to describe what they see in their mind's eye after certain occupations are mentioned. By using such stereotypical careers as nurse, doctor, social worker, accountant, pilot, funeral director, etc., the counselor can help members see how they each have stereotypes and can lead a discussion on the problems inherent in such limited perspectives. Where did the image come from? To what extent does the stereotype limit oneself? How powerful is the self-concept in determining an

occupation? These are just a few of the questions which can help the counselor build awareness and insight. The critical skill here is helping the group members to arrive at certain understandings for themselves rather than simply coming out and telling them what they should know. Some call this type of interaction the Socratic method of discussion.

5. Information Processing. In this age of information one of the most important skills a counselor can possess is that of information processing. Carkhuff indicates that processing, learning and thinking skills are the critical skills of the future for counselors, and that if we do not know how to process all the data available to us, it will overwhelm us (Anthony, 1985). For example, a number of years ago IBM, in conjunction wtih Donald Super and his associates, developed the computer-assisted information system called Educational and Career Exploration (ECES). Field testing provided no significant student benefits. Carkhuff and Friel analyzed the results and concluded that the students did not know how to process the data. Later versions of ECES under Friel's guidance incorporated processing features and produced significant student benefits (Anthony, 1985). Several other studies have provided further support for the information processing component of computer-assisted guidance and/or information systems (Cassie, Ragsdale, & Robinson, 1979; Pyle & Stripling, 1976; Risser & Tully, 1977). What are the component skills of information processing? Carkhuff indicates that it is the "ability to analyze data, diagnose ourselves in relation to it, personalize and operationalize learning objectives, and technologize the means to achieving the objectives" (Anthony, 1985, p. 372). For the counselor working within a group counseling format, information processing skill can be broken down into three components: (1) Exciting and motivating students to the information at hand, which will in turn help them to attend to it. (2) Helping them conceptualize and break down the information by asking them open-ended questions (the skills of stage one). For example, "Select five careers from your list of 25 that you might seriously consider and select two that you have no interest in whatsoever. Be prepared to discuss the reasons why you chose each one. What is it that makes you want to retain or discard the career area?" These probing questions develop a depth of introspection which are important to information processing. (3) Helping them take action upon the information by motivating them to use the information appropriately. What does this mean to you now? What do you need to do in order to act upon the information you now have? These are examples of questions which might be used within the third component.

Stage Four: Action Stage

Affective Goals. The final stage should be marked with energy and high morale regarding the possibilities that exist for the future. There should be a feeling of accomplishment and empowerment. A very close feeling should exist among the members of the group, with some sadness that the group process is drawing to a close. The feeling is one of enhanced understanding of self and the world of work and a confidence that one can use both the process learned and the information gained for other decision-making in the future. Most importantly, individuals should feel an interest and motivation to continue their career development activities with the realization that career development never stops but is an on-going activity.

Cognitive/Informational Goals. The group member by this time has a great deal of information about self and careers and has learned to break the information down into manageable and understandable units. There is an understanding of what is meant by "learning how to learn" and how this concept can be applied to the future. A specific knowledge of one's strengths and skills should be in place. The next steps that one needs to complete should be very explicit, with the exact times and dates for implementing them.

Counselor Skills. The skills the counselor uses during the last stage, in addition to those of the first three stages, are as follows:

1. Drawing Conclusions. The counselor needs to help the group members draw appropriate conclusions to their experience. This will necessitate helping them to look at what has been learned and how it can be applied to their lives.

2. Elaboration of Action Programs. The counselor helps each person determine concrete and specific tasks which need to be entered into in order to continue the learning process. These might be such tasks as (a) talking to a person who is working in a career area under consideration, (b) spending more time in the library researching a specific career, (c) changing a major, or (d) talking to a significant other about what was learned from the group program.

3. Bringing Closure. The counselor helps the members put in perspective what has transpired during the life of the group and assists them in building the bridge from the group to their next steps. Assisting the group to process the time together either through a verbal or written evaluation is an approach which can facilitate closure.

CHAPTER THREE
GROUP CAREER COUNSELING: APPROACHES AND METHODS

To accomplish the goals and apply the skills described in chapter two, counselors need various approaches or methods which they can use within the group process. The methods discussed in this chapter have been tested and refined over time and appear to be very helpful in achieving the goals, but they are not intended to be the only means. Most counselors have developed techniques to fit their own style, and the critical variable is their creativity in using approaches that effectively achieve the goals of each stage.

Several approaches are described here to reinforce the idea that no one set of techniques has to be used. The model is built around the four major stages of the group career counseling process. The techniques can be modified to fit the ages and developmental level of the participants. The program can be completed in three sessions of approximately 90 minutes each. The process involves out-of-group assignments for the generation of information. For counselors who are working in settings where one-hour sessions are more appropriate, the model can be modified to four-to-six sessions. The important aspect of this model is that it is designed to meet the goal of each of the four stages. The program was originally developed as a means of reinforcing the information generated by the computer-assisted guidance programs, the System of Interactive Guidance and Information (SIGI) and DISCOVER. The model was enhanced through Project Learn, a grant provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

SESSION ONE: ENCOUNTER AND EXPLORATION STAGES

Stage One: Encounter

I. Overview

A. Introduce the group program as a potentially useful tool for making educational and occupational plans.

B. Share program goals.

C. Establish group rules for group participation.

1. Clarify meeting times and places.
2. Emphasize importance of attendance.
3. Explain confidentiality.

D. Share agenda or objectives for the first session.

II. Introductions

Activity

Have each person introduce self to the group by sharing first name, year in school, major(s), where from, and career fantasy when in the fifth or sixth grade. Ask each person to restate the name of preceding participants before introducing self.

III. Expectations

A. Task--ask participants what they hope to gain from participation in the program.

B. Relate participants' expectations to program goals and/or session objectives to indicate how they might use the group activities to meet their expectation.

Stage Two: Exploration

I. Self-Assessment

A. Values

Activity: "Million Dollar Exercise"

Ask participants to write down how they would spend one million dollars if they just received it with no strings attached. Share information and relate to values (independence, security, leisure time, leadership, high income, etc.). Then ask them to tell about the type of work they would like to pursue if money was not a problem.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

The millionaire story provides a number of opportunities for the counselor to build group cohesiveness and understanding. For example, many times group members of all ages will comment that they would purchase a new car. At this point the counselor might say "Knowing what we know about _____, what type of car do you think he/she would look good in." This simple question always creates interest and excitement within the group. The focus of the sharing becomes more personal and is directed away from the counselor. The responses have certain elements of feedback contained within them. Such a lead by the counselor is an example of how to personalize the information being shared. A comment by the counselor which has been found to be of value in processing the activity after everyone has finished sharing is, "Why do you think I asked you to enter into such an activity as the millionaire exercise?" What has been discovered is that group members come up with such statements as, "You wanted to see what our priorities are," or sometimes even "what our values are." If the group members can come up with the word "values," it is better than the counselor imposing it on them. This helps keep the group counseling format from regressing into a group guidance session or classroom lecture. Another piece of learning which can be drawn out of this exercise is to ask members to identify the values which the group has in common and those which are different. This helps them conceptualize and visualize the values from an experiential base. The counselor can also ask group members if they can think of any careers that would help them actualize the values which have been mentioned. This is a good time to help them look at the word "entrepreneur," since many of their values will be related to independence. Also, it has been found helpful

to point out the importance of giving ourselves permission occasionally to dream without being inhibited or restricted by money. Most of us already have enough of that problem within our lives. Such a comment also gives the counselor the opportunity to begin emphasizing the value of exploration and creativity as a norm within the group. A final comment by the counselor can be, "Now that we have some idea of how you might lead your life if money was not a problem, let's think of ways you can do these things and make money at the same time."

B. Interests

Activity: "Past Experiences"

Have the group members think back to the variety of work-related positions they have had over their lifetimes. These positions can be voluntary work as well as paid--for example, candy striper at a hospital, boy scout leader, Sunday school teacher, etc. Everything should be listed, even baby sitting, mowing yards, and working at McDonald's, or in the case of adults, regular full-time salaried positions.

After lists are completed, have participants put a plus (+) by each position which was positive, a negative (-) by each that was negative, and a zero (0) by all that were neutral.

After rankings are completed, have them circle the position which was most positive and put a line through the one which was most negative.

Have the group share their responses.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

In order to personalize and provide feedback to this process, have each person simply read what they have done without saying what was most positive or negative. Then say to the group, "Now that we know _____, let's guess which of the work experiences _____ has been involved in was most positive and negative." Such a comment by the counselor and subsequent guessing by the group members helps the group members to fully attend to one another and shifts the focus from the counselor to the group members. The guessing will have some form of feedback since participants will often say such things as, "What is there about me that makes you think I liked baby sitting!"

As individuals respond to most liked and least liked activities, it is important for the counselor to ask, "What is there about that activity that caused you to like it" or if negative, "not like it." This will help the group members to formulate statements related to their interests and abilities. At the end of the session the counselor can use the same technique as was used in the millionaire processing by asking, "Why did we do this exercise, how does it relate to career development?" The group members will arrive at conclusions related to interests and abilities without the counselor having to initiate them. After they have been pinpointed into such areas as working with people, data, things and ideas, the counselor can assist the participants to conceptualize interests by these four areas. At this point group members might be asked to rank order their interests along these four dimensions. The same can be done with their abilities. What skills do they have based upon their experiences? The counselor's task here is not to let them put themselves down since most of us have a tendency to negate our abilities.

II. Decision-Making Stages

Activity

Ask the group members to think about the stages they go through when they make a decision. Use an example of a decision either you or one of the group members recently made. Break the decision down into the steps that were gone through. For example, this author often uses the illustration of purchasing a pair of cowboy boots. The first step was to walk into a boot shop and to be surrounded by boots. What was the first thing that one does in such a setting? Explore! One looks around and begins to check out boots by size, color, shape, etc. What happens next? One begins to narrow down possibilities. This is called Synthesis or Crystallization. At this point one has four or five boots. What happens next? A Tentative Choice is made and a pair of boots is tried on. At this point what happens? Usually one stands up and checks to see how the boots feel and how they look by standing in front of the little floor-level mirror. What is this called? Clarification!

Counselor Processing Suggestions

This activity is designed to help the participants understand the steps involved in career decision-making. After the activity the counselor asks, "What does this activity have to do with career decision-making?" Group members begin to draw connections between this process and choosing a career. The next question the counselor asks is, "Which of these stages do you think is most important to a good career choice and, interestingly, the one people seem to do the poorest job with when choosing a career?" Almost always group members indicate "exploration." The counselor asks "why?" A variety of responses come forth, from not knowing how to explore effectively to being in a hurry and rushing to judgment without adequate information. The counselor asks if these four stages are linear or circular. Circular means that one is always going through the process to varying degrees. At this point the counselor asks, "Which stage do we want to be sure to do well in order to help with a good decision?" The members will come up with "exploration" again. By going through this process, the counselor is trying to motivate the group members not to be in a rush to narrow down and come up with the magic answer, but to slow down and attend to the generation of information before they begin to narrow down. The counselor reinforces the need to leave no stone unturned in the exploration process. By so doing, the chances are increased that a good decision and direction can be achieved.

It might be asked by the reader at this point, why put so much emphasis on such a simple concept? It has been this author's experience that individuals of all ages, 15 and up, tend to have difficulty doing the research and exploration necessary to career decision-making. It is not unusual for people to put more effort and energy into choosing the right shoes, car or house than they put into the choice of the career where they will spend numerous hours and effort.

Closure to Session One and Homework Task to Generate Information

At the end of the first session the counselor needs to draw appropriate closure by saying such things as, "We are off to a good start and I have enjoyed working with you," and/or "What was one thing which you learned during this first session," and/or "What did you enjoy about today's session?" At this point it is not encour-

aged to ask for negatives since the counselor is trying to keep the morale high and the group open to possibilities. The tendency to critique is very much a part of all of us. Once it is started it can dampen the group's enthusiasm. It is important to withhold negative judgment until the group process is completed. Some type of homework activity should take place between the first and second sessions. This activity should be focused upon the development and generation of occupations based upon values, interests, and/or abilities. This can take the form of (1) career library research, using such tools as a keysort, card deck, or books which discuss occupations by their values, interests, and abilities; (2) computer-assisted guidance and/or information systems wtih assignments to specific sections; or (3) tests or self-assessment inventories (paper and pencil activities). Group members should be told very clearly that it is important for them to bring the information generated to their next session.

SESSION TWO: WORKING STAGE

I. Opening

A. Review names.

Activity

Ask participants who can name the other members of the group. Have two or three people state everyone's names.

B. Share agenda or objectives for the session.

II. Review homework assignment

Activity

Ask participants open-ended questions regarding the information generated from their homework assignment. Solicit reactions and discuss in general terms.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

This is the point where the counselor begins to assist the group in making sense of the information they have generated. Questions which might be used during this time are: What were your highest and lowest values? What were your top two interests? abilities? To what extent were

your values, interests and abilities consistent with what we discussed at our last meeting? What surprises came up? Why did that surprise you? (Note: These questions will be most pertinent for individuals going through a self-assessment homework exercise which evaluates their values, interests and abilities, as with computer-assisted guidance programs.)

III. Review Career Possibilities

Activity

Ask participants to select five career areas that they would give serious thought to and two that they don't want to have anything to do with. Have them jot these down for discussion purposes.

Counseling Processing Suggestions

As individuals share their top five careers, involve the other group members in the process by asking, "Which of those surprise you based upon what you know about _____," or "How do those career areas fit _____'s personality?" Ask, "What do the top five have in common?" Involve the group in helping to answer this question. Specifically, probe for reasons why they don't want to have anything to do with the two occupations they threw out. Listen carefully for prejudices or stereotypes. This will be the lead-in to the next activity.

IV. Sex Role Stereotyping and Career Prejudices

Activity

Ask the participants, "Why do you think I drilled you so hard on what it was you didn't like?" Have several of them respond to this question. Bring out the fact that we all have certain perceptions of careers. Ask them to describe what type of person comes to mind when you indiciate a specific career area. Ask them to go through a word association process. Mention such careers as "nurse, teacher, doctor, pilot, funeral director, etc." Use any career area where there are stereotypes operating.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

Ask the group if they know anyone that does not fit the stereotype mentioned during the word association. Ask them why they did this exercise. What dangers to each of them are there in stereotypes and/or

occupational prejudices? How does it limit them and the exploration process? Mention that the next set of homework exercises will be to read about and gain information on all the occupations to which one might give some thought. Warn them to be careful not to limit themselves because of stereotypes as they go through the research process.

V. Occupational Enhancement (Cool Seat)

Activity

Ask the group how many occupations there are in the world. After getting some responses explain that there are over 20,000 occupations in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Great bedtime reading! (Note: You may want to mention some unusual occupations such as "Egg Sexer" to add some humor to the discussion.) Mention that we have just begun to touch the surface of occupations and that most of us are occupational illiterates. We would be hard pressed to name over 40 occupations. Tell them that we want to enhance the possibilities before we start crystallizing our thinking. Indicate that from the occupational word association activity we relate certain personality characterisitcs to occupations and that each of us has an "occupational look." Now say, "In order to take full advantage of the fact that we are in a group, we are going to ask each of you to be in the cool seat, which is an empty seat in the circle. When you are in the cool seat, all you have to do is listen to what others are saying. No response is necessary. After we are finished you can respond. We are going to bombard the person in the cool seat with occupations that come to mind for them based upon what we have learned about them." Have each person take turns sitting in the cool seat and be bombarded with occupations from the group. Take about three to five minutes per person.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

During this exercise it is advised that the counselor act strictly as the facilitator and not enter into the brainstorming of occupations. The reason for this is the power and weight which individuals give to the so-called expert. The counselor asks the group to really stretch themselves and come up with any occupation at all. Use the rules of brainstorming by saying that the goal is to get out as many suggestions as possible in the shortest period

of time and that no occupation is too ridiculous or out of order. After the bombardment is over, ask the individual in the cool seat to describe his/her response to the careers mentioned by the group. This is another form of feedback and the attention, interest, and energy of the group will be quite high during this activity. (Note: It may be of help, before the bombardment, to provide the group with lists of occupations to stimulate their thinking.) Indicate that how we perceive others' perception of us has a lot to say about identity. Consequently, they may want to look into careers that were mentioned.

VI. Summary and Closure

The exercises and sequence mentioned here will take about an hour and a half and could, if necessary, be modified to fit one-hour formats. The counselor draws closure in the same manner as with the first session. The major difference is that the homework assignment will change; it is the task of the group at this time to gather as much specific information as possible on any career area they are considering. Specific reference books and the career library can be used along with computer-assisted guidance and information resources. The counselor may want to include research on educational/training resources as well as career information during this time.

SESSION THREE: WORKING AND ACTION STAGES

I. Opening

A. Review names again by using the same procedure as in the beginning of session two.

B. Go over the objectives for this session by emphasizing that this is the session where we are really going to get into a synthesis and begin to generate some realistic and positive directions.

II. Processing of Information from Homework

Activity

Ask the group how many occupations they were able to fully research. What were some of the questions they asked? What information did they find that was particularly interesting and/or unusual?

Counselor Processing Suggestions

This series of questions and process is very similar to the beginning of session two. It is important to help participants place the information in perspective and to review it with the group.

III. Decision-Making Styles

Activity

Mention that as a part of this session we hope to make some tentative decisions. In order to do this effectively, it may help us to know something about our approach to decision-making. Mention that there are three styles of decision-makers. Ask them to think of a major decision they have made recently and to jot it down. Share with the group. Now ask them what influenced their decisions. What role did significant others play? What information helped them make the decision? To what extent did they do what their intuition told them to do? Now share the three decision-making styles of dependent (others make the decision), objective (use of external information such as tests, employment trends, etc. as major criteria for decision-making) and intuitive (gather all the information and make the decision based upon what one feels). Ask them where the decision they jotted down would fall. To what extent did they make the decision and take responsibility for it?

Counselor Processing Suggestions

In this activity the counselor tries to assist group members to understand that their approach to decision-making can make a difference in their satisfaction with a particular decision. The open-ended questions suggested above should be embellished to help group members arrive at an understanding of the concept of decision-making style. In order to make effective use of the group members, the counselor could ask the group members to share their decision-making process and then ask others, "Which

style of decision-making did you hear coming through?" "What makes you think so?" Again, the counselor is trying to draw the members out and help them get in touch with their approach to decision-making. What will happen is that people ususally find that they use all three styles at various times. In this instance the counselor is trying to help the group see that when it comes to important decisions it may appear easier either to let others make it for us or to base the decision on some external piece of information rather than to accept ownership for it. Ownership means facing the possibility of failure and for many that is hard to face. It is also helpful during this activity to point out the myth a career decision happens only once and that a person is frozen with it. Point out that the average person will change careers four to six times in a lifetme.

IV. Career Matrix

Activity

This is an approach which helps the participants to determine the extent to which an occupation under consideration fits their values/interests. Along the left-hand side of a sheet of paper (going down), participants list the values/interests which are important to them. For each item listed, a value weight should be assigned (1=low to 10=high) to show the relative importance of those items to them. Along the top of the paper at least four occupations under serious consideration should be listed. Then, for each occupation in turn, they will place a checkmark next to each item (interest, value, etc.) which the occupation would satisfy. By adding up the weights of the items checked for each occupation, they will obtain numbers that indicate the relative satisfaction they might hope to achieve from the occupations. For greater precision, numbers rather than checkmarks can be entered whenever an item (value/interest) fits an occupation. This "occupation weight" should indicate the extent to which the occupation satisfies the particular item (1=low to 10=high). By multiplying the item weight and the occupational weight and then summing these for each occupation, participants again obtain numbers that reflect the relative satisfaction they might hope to achieve from the various occupations. Usually a 10-point or more differential indicates some significance is operating for one occupation over another.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

Participants should be asked to share their results and reflect upon the significance it has for them and their decision-making. Refer back to how this activity fits into the "decision-making styles" exercise. Group members should see that this is an objective approach which is important to be considered but should not be the only factor in their decision-making. What is advocated here is an intuitive approach to decision-making but with strong consideration given to what others see and what objective information is available. As a final step, ask each person to name the occupational area that he or she would go into if forced to make a decision today.

V. Strength Bombardment

Activity

Each group member in turn is in the "cool seat" and listens while the others make positive comments about the strengths they have observed about that person.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

This exercise is designed to come at the end of the time together in order to provide participants with a greater sense of the strengths they can use as they move away from the group and initiate their decision-making. It is meant to empower each person and to leave a positive feeling regarding the group experience. It is also designed to come immediately before the "next step" exercise in order to enhance the potential for follow-through. It is always a very positive and powerful experience. The counselor introduces it by saying, "In our culture we are very used to critiquing and looking at the negative side of ourselves and others. For a few minutes we are going to focus only on the positives and strengths which we have observed in the individuals in the group. As we leave the group, we will want to be able to think back about these strengths because career decision-making can sometimes be a very lonely and frustrating experience. We will want to remember the strengths that people see in us and to keep them in mind when we run into difficulties and frustrations." The counselor stimulates members to think of positive qualities and facilitates the comments by embellishing them as appropriate. After two to three minutes and after the individual has

had a chance to react to the comments, another person should be invited to sit in the "cool seat."

VI. Next Step

Activity

Ask participants to write down what they consider to be some next steps to take based upon where they are in the career decision-making process. Provide examples of what they might be doing. For example, go to the dean's office and change their major, visit with someone who is working in a career field of interest, conduct further research into a particular career field by using the career library, spend some time with a counselor to further process one's thinking, etc. After they have written these down, they should select the one which they want to implement first. After they have selected it, they are to write down when they will do it, including actual date and time. For example, "I will go to the Dean's office this coming Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. to complete the necessary forms for changing my major from computer science to English." Have the group share their responses.

Counselor Processing Suggestions

The most important element of this sequence is that the counselor stress the importance of stating in specific terms what the next step is going to be. By so doing the participants are stating a verbal contract which is more likely to be completed since it is stated publicly. After hearing the next steps, it is not unusual for members to indicate that they will be checking up on one another. This should be encouraged. The counselor should emphasize the importance of the next steps and that just because the group process has been completed does not mean that the career decision-making process is completed.

VII. Closure and Evaluation

Activity

The counselor summarizes briefly what has happened and states an evaluation of the experience. For example, "We have looked at a lot of information about ourselves and the world of work and tried to understand it in terms of a career direction. I appreciate the hard work you have put into

the process and hope it pays dividends for you and your future. I've enjoyed working with each one of you. Every time I lead one of these groups I learn something new and thoroughly enjoy the process. I wish each of you the best and I hope you will call on me if I can be of any further assistance." An evaluation should take place at this time. This can be a verbal and/or written statement to three questions. What did you learn and find helpful? What would you suggest for improvement of the program? What are any general comments you have toward the program?

Counselor Processing Suggestions

This final activity is designed to help the participants put their experience into perspective and to serve as a learning opportunity for the future. Counselor comments should be upbeat and encouraging toward the future in order to enhance the likelihood that group members will follow through with their next steps.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE FUTURE: WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR GROUP CAREER COUNSELING?

Introduction

In looking to the future, the group career counseling model can be applied to a variety of environments and conditions. The discussion here is based on using the model as a means of assisting individuals to focus upon a career direction, prepare for a career area, and/or enhance a person's work. Since work makes up such a major part of our lives, the third area provides a broad base for creative assistance to individuals. The chapter will center on innovative activities which are currently taking place, or show the potential to do so, in the following settings: (1) schools, (2) business and industry, and (3) the community.

Schools

It is generally recognized that during the elementary and middle school years children need exposure to the world of work in order to begin to develop a more accurate picture of what work is and how it relates to them. During the 1970s the Career Education movement made a number of developmental programs available for students of all ages (Tolbert, 1974). The emphasis in grades K-5 is Career Awareness, which involves awareness of self, the personal and social significance of work, and the broad range of career opportunities. In the middle school years, grades 6-8, the emphasis is Career Exploration. This includes actual visits to career sites, the evaluation of interests, abilities, values and needs in relation to life careers, and the identification of careers for more intensive exploration in the next phase. The high school years are directed toward Career Orientation with a more detailed study of occupations and the beginning of skill development in particular career areas. Counseling focuses on the selection of career specialties that will provide direction for further exploration and skill-building. Grades 11 and 12 provide preparation for carrying out post-high school plans, and intensified guidance and counseling helps with the planning and placement. Group career

counseling can be shaped for each of these levels, as indicated in the following example:

Career Awareness (K-5)

Questions for creating awareness:

What are careers and how do they relate to me?

How do careers make a difference in meeting my needs?

What types of careers are there?

Why do people work and how does it help them?

Information-building techniques for creating awareness:

Discussions of the word career.

Use of puppets to illustrate answers to questions.

Use of pictures of people working in a variety of occupations.

Sharing of career fantasies and why they are important.

Guest speakers with follow-up sharing and discussion.

Career Exploration (6-8)

Questions for creating exploration:

What are interests, values, abilities and needs and how do they relate to careers?

What are some of my interests, values, needs and abilities?

What are five to ten careers which I would really like to get more information about?

What have I learned about five to ten careers?

Information-building techniques to facilitate exploration:

Field trips to a variety of career sites with follow-up sharing and discussion.

Discussions of values, interests, abilities and needs (defined and applied to real-life experiences the students have had).

Test inventories and/or computer-assisted guidance programs aimed at this level.

Career Orientation (9-12)

Questions for assisting with orientation:

What are specific careers that really hold promise for me?

What are the courses that appear to be most relevant for me in realizing some of these careers?

What are the skills that need to be developed to actualize these careers?

How much education and/or on-the-job training will I need to fulfill these career goals?

Information-building techniques for the orientation stage:

Visits with career professionals who are working in the area of interest.

Shadowing experiences with individuals working in an area of career interest.

Inventories and/or computer-assisted guidance and/or information systems designed for this level of student.

Access to libraries for in-depth research.

Overview of educational opportunities for career possibilities.

Within the group career counseling format described in chapters two and three, students can have the opportunity to process the information and enhance their thinking through the appropriate facilitation by the counselor. The time for working with a group will probably be limited to 45 or 50 minutes because most schools have one-hour periods. Therefore, the model described in chapter three, which calls for three 90-minute sessions, will need to be extended to four or five sessions.

Business and Industry

There is an increasing interest within business and industry in the concept of "human resource development" because of the growing concern at all levels regarding the quality of work life. The realization that men and women are not passive, dependent creatures who meekly accept what "fate" has decreed has focused greater attention to the human aspect of work in all types of organizations.

Most people spend most of their adult waking lives at work. Work is typically the single most time-consuming and important adult activity, the major source of

income, and the major way in which skills and competence can be developed. The world of work provides social status and a sense of identity. Yet, for many, the experience is less than satisfactory. The report Work in America (1973) indicated that less than half (43 percent) of white-collar workers would voluntarily pick the same kind of work if given another opportunity. Position, salary, and education do not eliminate the problem. A survey by Lawler (1978) found that a fifth of the relatively affluent and well-educated were dissatisfied at work. A sizeable number of middle-level managers interviewed for a study of career satisfaction reported that they were "disgusted with their jobs" (Janis & Wheeler, 1978). A survey of more than 300 managers in organizations in the United States and Canada found that job satisfaction peaked at about age 38, then steadily declined until just before retirement (Miller, 1976).

There appear to be five major areas in which career development and the group career counseling approach has possibilities for application to business and industry. The first of these is the entry-level professional who needs assistance in planning a career path within the organization. Such a possibility exists most fully with large organizations which have a number of career paths and which offer potential for movement. Many managers and workers do not really plan their careers. Rather, they "just happen." Career decisions are made with little appreciation, care, or thought for the implications of their decisions, and with little recognition of their own role in creating a career. Many appear to have little or no sense of control or choice regarding careers. Yet, feelings of success and achievement, particularly with regard to careers, require self-directed goals, autonomy, challenge, and a sense of accomplishment. Psychological success is linked to satisfaction. External standards (including salary, position, and the opinions of others) are not enough without an internal feeling of success (Huse, 1980).

The second area is the mid-career manager or worker who has leveled off and needs assistance in future planning. The fact that organizations have a pyramid approach (to reward, growth and achievement) squeezes out a number of individuals during the mid-point of their career lives. The upper ranks have room for only so many. Those who have "plateaued" need assistance in making the best out of their time, energy and potential. Such assistance can only help both the individual and the organization. Many a personnel director can attest to the futility and frustration of the individual who has found after years of working that work and life have lost their challenge. Routines and boredom set in, with both psychological and

fiscal costs to all. Turnover, absenteeism, and reduced productivity for under-utilized employees are costly--as high as $11 billion per year (Augustine, 1972).

The third dimension is the individual preparing to leave the organization due to a cut-back, firing or retirement. Some organizations have moved to out-placement programs which assist those forced to leave by the decision of the management. However, the number of individuals assisted in outplacement activities is much less than those who could be helped. The same can be said for retirement planning assistance.

A fourth area is the enhancement of one's present job situation. Quality Circles, a term which evolved from the Japanese, is now a known approach to assisting individuals within an organization to be more fully involved in solving problems and enhancing the productivity of the organization. Presently, in Japan, quality circles and other small group activities have expanded beyond the manufacturing sector, especially into the sales and marketing fields. They focus on more than quality and productivity improvement. Employee development and the improvement of communication and morale among co-workers also are important. Quality circles in North America are similar to Japanese circles in spite of the fact that each may emphasize a particular function such as problem solving, team building, or quality control. In many cases, each company (and representative union) has its own unique name for the circle activity. For example, Ford Motor Company and the United Auto Workers have EI (Employee Involvement); Vickers, Inc. has PSI (People Seeking Improvement); and American Motors Corporation and the United Auto Workers have PIP (Partners in Progress) and JEEP (Joint Effort Employing People); the Toronto-Dominion Bank's circles are EWG (Employee Work Groups) (Crocker, 1984).

Canadian and U.S. quality circles, although concerned with quality and productivity, also study the improvement of life at the job site. It is not unusual for quality circle members to tackle such issues as carpooling, business, absenteeism, and child care. Also, the idea has expanded beyond the manufacturing sector into the service sector, particularly into retailing, finance, education and transportation.

Underlying the quality circle concept is the assumption that the causes of quality or productivity problems are unknown to workers and to management. It is also assumed that shop-floor workers have hands-on knowledge, are creative, and can be trained to use this natural creativity in job problem-solving. Quality circles,

however, are a people-building, rather than a people-using, approach. The intent is to make every worker a decision-maker concerning his or her own work (Crocker, 1984).

All of this is consistent and runs parallel with one of the goals of career development, which is to assist the employee to enhance and enrich his/her work environment. Quality circles have several other characteristics which run parallel to group career counseling. The average number of members is eight to ten with regular meetings of at least once a week. Meetings have a leader who has been specifically trained to work with a group. The leader's goal is to facilitate dialogue and enhance creativity toward the solving of problems which, if solved, can enhance the lives of the members.

It seems obvious that quality circles are very consistent with group career counseling and that the stages and skills mentioned in chapter two can be extrapolated and built into the training programs of corporations which undertake this approach to enhancing the employee's work environment.

The fifth and last area is a program which has already been developed and is fast becoming popular--Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). A good example of a creative approach to employee assistance, which uses groups as the foundation for career development assistance, is the United Auto Workers and Ford Motor Company program that has been developed in cooperation with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and funded in its developmental phases by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. No other national union or major corporation has an effort as far-ranging or as dynamic. This program is sharply focused on the individual--on personal growth and human development. Starting from scratch in late 1981, the UAW-Ford program has now reached out to some 22,000 UAW-represented Ford men and women. In a variety of ways, it has helped them enrich their lives, make new beginnings, or expand their personal horizons. Negotiated with both active and laid-off employees in mind, the program is an example of labor-management relations at its best. It demonstrates what can be accomplished when there is mutual commitment and dedication to a common goal. The foundation of the overall program is the Life/Educational Planning Program. This program provides participants with a wide range of education and planning services. With these services, participants can develop a personal course for their own lifetime objectives. Through group sessions the program helps people learn their individual strengths and interests. Then it helps them assess available options

and form realistic personal goals. Finally, it helps determine next steps for making the goals become reality. The principles discussed within the group career counseling model are all applied and are critical dimensions of this prototype program.

Thus, the proper mix of life and career planning is important for the individual for job satisfaction and quality of work life. Career development is also important to the organization, for the same reasons. The individual manager must manage both his or her own career and the careers of others. On the other hand, the organization has a responsibility (both moral and legal) to assist managers in their own career planning and in planning for others. Such planning must be tied to the developmental needs of the individual, the goals of the organization, and the principles of career development.

This discussion has pointed out that business and industry has a real need for the group career counseling approach and in many cases, although called different names such as quality circles, this career development approach is already being utilized. However, it appears that the potential for the group career counseling approach is only just beginning to be seen and developed within business and industry. The worth of this approach in respect to the improvement of the workers' lives needs to be enhanced through the creativity of counselors who understand how it can be applied to diverse and new settings.

Community

Within the community there are many opportunities to enhance one's work through the group career counseling model. Community is defined as those areas of involvement outside the work place and educational institution. These include family, organizations and other institutions. In the U.S. there are numerous opportunities to become involved in projects ranging from volunteer work to membership in clubs. The discussion which follows is directed at a rationale for the application of the group career counseling model to institutions within the community.

Research on work consistently points out that people are looking for meaning, for what their lives and directions mean for them. Levinson (1978), in his extensive interviews which resulted in the book, The Seasons of a Man's Life, found that

"finding meaning" was a continual need and interest of the participants in his study. The same was found by Studs Terkel (1972) in his research for Working and Gail Sheely (1976) in her studies which resulted in Passages.

It is interesting to note, in evaluations conducted by this author on the group career counseling model over the past ten years, that the aspect of the program which individuals continually rate the highest and enjoy the most is the interaction and involvement with the other group members. The same can be said for other groups the author has been involved with in the community. People always appreciate the opportunity to work with others in an environment of trust and openness. The success of such programs as Alcoholics Anonymous and Tough Love, which are founded upon the concept of the support group and sharing, is evidence of the need people have for companionship and for the opportunity to put their lives into perspective and attempt to understand the forces surrounding them. Such a role used to be played by members of the same family--uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents would gather together and share the events of their lives and provide the emotional and psychological support which is so important to mental health. This closeness no longer exists to the same extent, and our fast pace of life and mobile society have inhibited the development of intimacy and depth of relationships. The group career counseling model has the potential to help people sort out their identities and look at the meaning of their work and how it makes sense or doesn't make sense. More support groups are needed within our communities and lives in order to help individuals realize their potential. The meaning of one's existence and its relation to how one spends eight to 10 hours a day are important questions which community groups can assist people to focus on.

This can take place through such organizations as the church. Religious questions are a critical part of helping one to cope with the frustrations and possibilities of work. Soren Kierkegaard called work the great common denominator of life. It is the part of life in which people have to deal with reality and day-to-day existence. It brings us down to earth and helps us face real and current issues. Kierkegaard's concept of vocation also sees the necessity for people to confront squarely their relation to the material world, i.e., the nature of work, its desirability, its development, its dignity (Kierkegarrd, 1950). As Louis Savary (1967) points out: "Human work lies at the interesection where man confronts creation. Here, in that spending of human effort which each man calls his work, is the locus of man's productive self-expression." In the Aquarian Conspiracy Marilyn

Ferguson (1980) indicates that through work we are fully engaged in life. Work is that which "requires us to care. In responding to vocation--the call, the summons of that which needs doing," she says that "we create and discover meaning, unique to each of us and always changing" (p. 342).

In a public poll conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, 80 percent of the respondents expressed a strong interest in "an inner search for meaning." Thus, there is evidence to support the fact that people are striving to put the pieces together and to make sense of their lives.

Perhaps this has evolved because of the fact that in the mid-nineteenth-century small town, it was obvious that the work of each contributed to the good of all, that work is a moral relationship between people, not just a source of material or psychic rewards. But with the coming of large-scale industrial society, it became more difficult to see work as a contribution to the whole and easier to view it as a segmental, self-interested activity. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) indicate that "the idea of calling has become attenuated and the largely private 'job' and 'career' have taken its place; however, something of the notion of calling lingers on, not necessarily opposed to, but in addition to, job and career" (p. 66). In a few economically marginal but symbolically significant instances, we can still see what a calling is. The ballet dancer, devoted to an ill-paid art, whose habits and practices, beautiful in themselves, are handed down in a community based on a still-living tradition, so that the lives of the public may be enriched, is an example. In any case, however we define work, it is very close to our sense of self, and how we make sense of our world. What we "do" often translates to what we "are." As David Tiedeman (1965) succinctly states: "The philosophy of existentialism argues the values inherent in the right and the obligation of choosing while living. . . . A concept of such potential power deserves the careful scrutiny both of those who counsel and those who deal with careers" (p. 551).

For example, the Peace Corps is an international volunteer organization which provides opportunities to care and find self-expression through one's work. For over twenty-five years people throughout the United States have been devoting two years of their lives to working in poverty settings far removed from their homes, families and communities. The Peace Corps makes effective use of the small group career counseling approach to prepare volunteers for their two years of service. Prior to going overseas, volunteers are assembled in a central U.S.

location for a week of orientation and training. A major part of the week is spent in small groups to reflect upon the upcoming experience and to process information on the new country and the volunteer's assignment. The principles of information processing discussed earlier are used throughout the small groups, where creating understanding and personalizing information within each person's unique perspective are the critical aspects. Groups consist of five to seven members and are facilitated by trained staff who utilize the skills described in this monograph. Topics include such areas as (1) leaving significant others for two years, (2) being effective in a new culture, (3) expressing oneself through work, (4) developing new support systems and coping mechanisms, (5) considering whether this is the right career decision at this time, and (6) anticipating how each individual may be changed by such an experience. It is not unusual for groups to have 30 to 40 hours of time together during the week. Peace Corps believes that such an activity and process can add meaning and value to the experience and more fully assure that the volunteer will complete the two-year commitment.

The group career counseling model can thus help people within the community to make sense of and enrich their work by providing the means by which dialogue, reflection, focusing and feedback can take place. Exercises need to be modified from that described in chapter three to focus on issues of identity, and information related specifically to the particular career issues. Identity questions might be facilitated by reading such books as Passages, The Seasons of a Man's Life, Siddhartha, and Working.

A society in flux will have to create its communities in new ways. New systems are emerging from networks and communities, experimental and intentional groups, and friendships. The American Home Economics Association redefined the family in 1979 as "two or more persons who share resources, share responsibilities for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitment to one another over time. The family is that climate that one 'comes home to,' and it is this network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legal ties, adoption, or marriage" (Ferguson, 1980, p. 402).

John Naisbitt (1982) says we are living in a time of parenthesis, the time between eras. "In stable eras, everything has a name and everything knows its place, and we can leverage very little. But in the time of parenthesis we have extraordinary leverage and influence--individually, professionally, and institutionally--if we can only get a clear sense, a clear conception, a clear vision of the road ahead" (p. 252).

Does the group career counseling approach provide an opportunity for career counselors to meet many of the needs which we see around us? Can it become a modified family unit? Can we use this period of dramatic change as a means of helping us actualize our career development goals? The possibilities are there. How will we react to them?

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