

Figure 1. Evaluation framework: A tool for organizing relevant evaluation information

As a starting point, members of the CRWG chose a very basic framework consisting of three elements: Inputs, Processes, and Outcomes (Figure 1). The framework is focused on understanding the changes (outcomes) experienced by people receiving career services. Inputs refer to the resources that are available to help clients change (i.e., pursue the outcomes). Processes are the mechanisms that are involved in achieving the outcomes. Outcomes are the changes in service recipients (clients), i.e., the results of the inputs enacting the processes.

Outcomes

In the model depicted in Figure 1, outcomes refer to the specific results of an intervention, including changes in client competence (knowledge and skills), changes in client personal attributes, changes in client situation, and/or broader changes for the client and/or community.

Changes in client learning outcomes.

As a means of organizing the things that clients might learn as a result of accessing career services, the CRWG suggests using the framework from *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* (Haché, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000). The Blueprint contains 11 categories of knowledge and/or skills grouped into three clusters. See Figure 2. The *Blueprint* has become widely accepted as a way of describing client learning outcomes and many of the resources available to career practitioners are now indexed to the *Blueprint*, making it easier to choose resources that are appropriate for the learning outcomes being sought.

1. Personal management outcomes

- Build and maintain a positive personal image
- Interact positively and effectively with others
- Change and grow throughout one's life

2. Learning and work exploration outcomes

- Participate in life-long learning supportive of life/work goals
- Locate and effectively use life/work information
- Understand the relationship between work and society/economy

3. Life/work building outcomes

- Secure, create and maintain work
- Make life/work-enhancing decisions
- Maintain balanced life and work roles
- Understand the changing nature of life/work roles
- Understand, engage in and manage one's own life/work process

Figure 2. The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs: A framework for organizing client learning outcomes

Changes in client personal attribute

We have identified personal attributes as a separate category of outcomes, acknowledging that some people may view these as learning outcomes and others may not. We have organized these personal attributes into three broad categories:

- (a) attitudes (e.g., belief that change is possible, internal locus of control),
- (b) intrapersonal factors (e.g., confidence, motivation, self-esteem), and
- (c) client independence (e.g., client self-reliance, client initiative, independent client use of tools provided in career services).

Changes in impact on client situation and on the community

Impact outcomes are the spin-off effects that derive from the learning outcomes, and perhaps from the personal attribute outcomes. They are the ultimate, hoped-for end result of an intervention. They include things such as: employment status, placement rates, participation in training, engaging in job search, client ability to fit in at the workplace (resulting in increased job stability), societal impacts (such as reduced crime, or reduced substance abuse), relational impacts (e.g., better relations with co-workers, or spouse), an economic impacts.

Processes

We conceptualize two broad categories of interventions: generic and specific. Generic interventions are those actions that are common to most interactions between service providers and clients or third parties. For example, a strong working alliance between service provider and client has been shown to be important in facilitating client change, and developing a working alliance likely will be part of virtually all interventions.

Similarly, teaching a client to reframe an unpleasant event and view it as an opportunity for growth could be part of several interventions and could contribute to achieving numerous client outcomes. Specific interventions are more singularly focused than generic interventions. They usually are linked directly to client goals and outcomes, or linked to interactions with third parties that are intended to foster client change. Specific interventions can be part of interactions with clients directly or they can be bundled together as part of a program and workshops.

The categories in Figure 3 represent topics that are addressed in specific interventions. We have used topical headings as our organizing tool, recognizing that the topics might be addressed in programs or other services in a variety of different ways, e.g., through counselling, teaching, workshop facilitation, guidance, and made available in a group setting, a classroom, through individual counselling, or guided self-help. Furthermore, different agencies may decide to address some topic with different delivery mechanisms. The mandate of the agency, the expertise of the staff, and the learning styles of the clients typically all come into play when deciding how the interventions are implemented.

1. Career decision making

- Self-awareness of: occupational interests, relevant aptitudes, personal values, job-related skills, adaptability skills
- How to find and use labour market information
- Knowledge of community resources
- Awareness of alternative employment options
- Adaptability in range of options considered

2. Work-specific skills enhancement

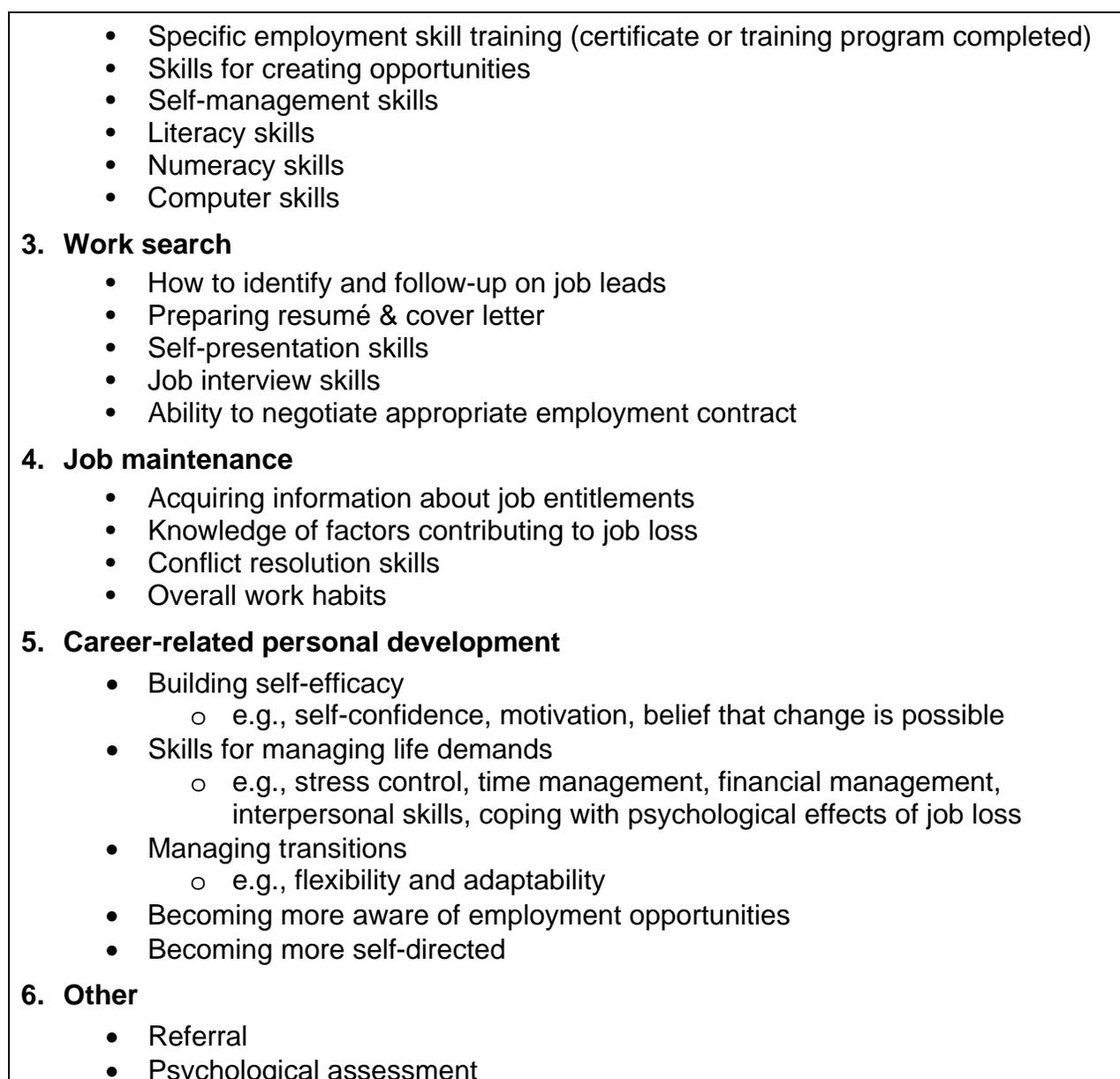


Figure 3. Framework for organizing client change interventions

Inputs

Inputs refer to the resource base that an agency can access to deliver career services. The amount and scope of resources that an agency can access has a large influence on the agency's ability to offer quality services. We offer as a starting point, the following framework for tracking inputs:

- staff (number of staff, competencies of staff, staff level of training, type of training),

- funding level, infrastructure (facilities, support staff, consultants),
- community resources (other professionals, physical resources such as libraries, internet cafes, etc.).

Documenting inputs is an important part of demonstrating cost-effective service delivery and making sure that an agency had an adequate resource base to be able to achieve the outcomes that are expected.

Using the Draft Evaluation Framework

The three elements in Figure 1 can be thought of as related in a linear way, but the relationship is not strictly linear. Inputs feed processes and processes result in outcomes. However, outcomes also are influenced by the inputs available and the nature of the inputs (especially the competencies of the staff) influence the process that can be enacted. Thus, even though Figure 1 depicts a linear relationship pictorially, in reality, the three elements are very interactive

An important part of evidence-based practice involves documenting the processes followed by both service providers and service recipients, as well as any significant others that potentially could be affecting the achievement of outcomes. In order to claim that an intervention is responsible for producing a client outcome, it is important to be able to say with confidence that both service provider and client have followed the intervention plan. There are many examples in the career development field where an intervention appears to be ineffective, but closer scrutiny reveals that the intervention plan was in fact not followed.

Finally, when developing programs, the logical place to begin is by identifying the outcomes that are desired, then planning the processes that will be needed to produce the outcomes. After the processes are elaborated, then it is sensible to look at the inputs that will be needed in order to implement the process. Some agencies may have limitations on their inputs, especially in matters relating to budget, or to the credentials

of their service providers, including the other community resources that are available. Those sorts of factors may restrict the interventions or programs that can be implemented, and subsequently the outcomes that can be achieved, or by implication, it may also mean that additional resources will be needed in order to implement a program successfully.

Please note. The framework presented is a draft, intended for discussion and further refinement by the career development community. In field testing the framework described in this paper, we particularly want users to ask themselves “How will this approach fit in our work place?” and “What changes need to be made in the framework in order for it more adequately address the unique needs of our work place?” We expect that the organizing categories in the framework will change as the framework is tested in the field. Thus, this is a dynamic framework, that is very much a work in progress, and one that the CRWG will revise as needed to accommodate user feedback and the realities that exist in the field.

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