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## Intersection of Career Counseling and Psychosocial Adjustment to Disability for Adults with Acquired Disabilities

Tina M. Anctil

Portland State University, [anctil@pdx.edu](mailto:anctil@pdx.edu)

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# Exploring the Intersection of Career Counseling and Psychosocial Adjustment to Disability for Adults with Acquired Disabilities

Tina Anctil, Ph.D., CRC, LPC  
Portland State University  
anctil@pdx.edu

# Overview

- What is psychosocial adaptation?
  - Bishop's Disability Centrality Model
- What role does career counseling play in it?
  - Blustein's Relational Theory of Working
    - (Focus on Self-Determination)
- What tools work well to promote adaptation?
  - Career Style Interview

# Let's talk about acquired disabilities

## Common Terms and Examples of Disability Claims Diagnoses

Claim Diagnosis Category	Lay Language Description	Specific Examples
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal System and Connective Tissue	Muscle, Back and Joint Disorders	Arthritis, Herniated or Degenerated Disc, Back Pain, Spine/Joint Disorders, Cartilage Sprain, Tendonitis, Fibromyitis, Osteoporosis, Rheumatism, Scoliosis, Sciatica
Diseases of the Nervous System and Sense Organs	Spine and Nervous System-Related Disorders	Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Paralysis, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Bell's Palsy, Guillain-Barré Syndrome, Eye Disorders including Diabetic Retinopathy and Macular Degeneration, Ear Disorders including Balance-Related Disorders like Ménière's Disease
Diseases of the Circulatory System	Cardiovascular and Circulatory Diseases	Hypertension, Heart Disease, Heart Attack, Stroke, Aneurysm, Coronary Artery Disease, Phlebitis
Cancer and Neoplasms	Cancer and Tumors	Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Lymphoma, Hodgkin's Disease, Leukemia, Tumors
Injuries and Poisonings	Accidents, Injuries and Poisonings	Fractures, Sprains and Strains, Dislocations, Contusions, Burns, Poisoning, Allergic Reactions
Mental Disorders	Mental Illness and Behavioral Disorders	Depression, Schizophrenia, Drug/Alcohol/Substance Abuse, Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Diseases of the Respiratory System	Respiratory System Disorders	Influenza, Pneumonia, Asthma, Bronchitis, Emphysema, Pulmonary Fibrosis, Cystic Fibrosis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD)

The specific relationship  
between psychosocial  
adaptation and career  
counseling is largely ignored in  
the literature

# Bishop's Disability Centrality Model (2005)

- Affective and cognitive factors as predictors of a dynamic interactive quality of life
- After CID there can be diminished satisfaction
  - with important life domains
  - decreased perceived personal control over valued life outcomes
  - increase in negative emotions
  - (Bishop et al., 2009).

The return to work process is intimately connected to QOL and satisfaction within important life domains, *and* there is a significant need for career counseling tools that bridge the gap between adjustment and the career decision-making process.

## Psychology-of-Working (Blustein, 2008, 2011)

- A radical reconceptualization of career theory: “work is psychologically constructed, culturally bound, and socially mediated”
- “Explores the impact of intrapsychic, relational, social, economic, political, and historical factors in people’s work lives”
- 3 human needs: survival and power, social connection, and self-determination



# Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2001)

Motivation is theorized to be  
an internal resource that  
drives behavior

# Contextual factors that foster the development of self-determination

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness

# Self-Determination Theory & The Psychology of Working

- How can we help individuals with CID to find meaning at work when their tasks may not be intrinsically interesting?
- And, how can this process *include and foster* a client's adaptation to disability?

## For Example:

“I need to make a choice, but I am not sure what to decide ... there are many factors to consider, but ultimately the choice is mine to make. I need you to understand my choice because when you do, it’s like you are on my side no matter what I decide. I feel accepted and ready to choose” (Bluestein, 2011).

A cookie-cutter career-counseling approach, such as an interest inventory and transferrable skills analysis, is a missed opportunity to explore psychosocial adjustment through the career-counseling lens

What career assessment tools will help the client understand their current functioning and support their self-determination?

# The Career Style Interview

(Taber, Hartung, Briddick, Briddick, & Rehfuss, 2011)

- Didactic counseling tool that empowers the client to share his or her personal narrative
  - identify significant life themes and unresolved problems;
  - construct a career that is congruent with their life theme and unresolved problem;
  - help the client develop career adaptability in order to better cope with the ever-changing ways to implement their narrative in their career.

# The Process

- The use of questioning and storytelling helps identify life themes
- Leads to conversations that include adaptation dialogue, such as “before and after” the disability or diagnosis
- Identifies unresolved problems that often include functional limitations from the CID, thus allowing for substantial movement toward a realistic employment goal



# Savickas (1995, 2012)

- 5-Step Approach to Career Counseling
  - Evoking stories that allow theme identification
  - Themes are described
  - The counselor “narrates” or described the themes to the client
  - The client and counselor interpret the problem in the context of the theme, edit or change the theme and extend it into the future
  - Counselor helps the client develop the behavioral skills needed to implement the future narrative theme

# Career Style Interview: Role Models = Ego Ideals

1. Whom did you admire when you were growing up? Whom would you like to pattern your life after? (Excluding immediate family members)
  - a. What did you admire about each of these role models?
  - b. How are you like each of these persons?
  - c. How are you different from them?

# Magazines, TV, Websites = Preferred Environments

2. What magazines do you read regularly? What TV shows do you really enjoy? What websites do you frequent?  
What do you like about them?

# Favorite Book or Movie = Problem Solving Style

3. Tell me about your favorite book/movie?

# Free time = Interests

4. What do you like to do with your free time?  
What are your hobbies? What do you enjoy  
about these hobbies?

# Motto = Life Story

5. Do you have a favorite saying or motto? Tell me a saying you remember hearing?

# Case Study Discussion & Application

# Ryan

- 44 year old African American man, referred by his VR counselor for career counseling
- Married, two children
- Sustained TBI in an assault last year: uses motorized scooter, has no-use of his right arm/hand, mild speech impairment/word finding, slowed cognitive processing speed, average IQ, no other cognitive limitations



# Work & Educational History

- High school diploma
- A barber for 20 years
- 3 years of training as a journeyman construction worker
- Interested in “working with computers”
- Goals: Earn at least \$50k per year to support his family

# 4-session model

- Session 1: Establishing a relationship with the client, discussing the client's satisfaction with their quality of life within Bishop's Disability Centrality Model.
- Session 2: Administering the Career Style Interview.
- Session 3: Interpreting the CSI, identifying elements and structures in work that are important to the individual through conceptualizing the client's actions in daily life.
- Session 4: Integration of assessment and career project planning through the identification of goal-directed behaviors and actions needed to develop: a) the career goal b) satisfaction within life domains; and c) accommodations and resources needed.

*Within these sessions the career counselor is listening for clues about identity and adaptation to the CID, to facilitate Ryan's self-awareness and understanding of how his actions will create his career transition.*

# Session One

- Using empathy to elicit emotional responses related to well-being domains
  - psychological well-being, physical well-being, social and interpersonal well-being, financial and material well-being, employment or productivity, and functional ability
- Uses counseling probes and questions to facilitate his self-awareness and understanding of his abilities
- Gathers standard career counseling info: work history, educational history, family background ,etc.

# Session Two: CSI

- *Who did you admire growing up?*
  - John (foster parent): he had a strong work ethic, an authentic person.
  - Mike (karate instructor): he was smart, he was tough, he was compassionate.
  - Grant (teacher): he was a very open guy, he liked and cared about what he was doing. He enjoyed ideas and loved to read books.

# *Magazines/Websites/TV Shows*

- *YouTube:* I like YouTube videos for DIY. I've learned some tricks about my scooter, like how to fill my tires.
- *Time Magazine and U.S. News WR:* drawn to what's relevant in the moment.
- *Facebook:* I like a combination of news and social, a glimpse inside other people's heads.

# *Favorite Movie/Favorite Book*

- *Malcolm Gladwell*: the way he lays the narrative down is very accessible, anyone can read his books. To me it's entertainment.
- *The Spook Who Sat By the Door*: The way the token black guy becomes a leader and revolts against the establishment. He exhibits discipline and leadership.

# *Hobbies*

- *Exercise:* I used to be able work out with weights and get results in my body. Now, it's the idea of not being stagnant and staying busy.
- *Cooking:* I like to feel my way through the recipes. I have a tendency to want to be precise.
- *Golf:* I used to golf before my accident. I liked it because it's always played at the best places, it's green and beautiful, it is crazy fun. You may never get good at it, but when I was done I always felt great.

## *Favorite Subjects in School*

- Social Studies, English, and Journalism
  - I liked learning about the world that I was living in.



# Session Three: Developing meaning from his life stories

- Ryan values a strong work ethic, intelligence, compassion, and the expression of ideas
- His best environment should foster his love of learning.
- He enjoys complex problems that required him to work within organizational structures.
- He also doesn't mind mastering a routine because it makes him feel productive.
  - As a carpenter, he liked adjusting the project as needed to complete it well.
- His hobbies and interest indicate that he enjoys being active, and creating things.
- His preferred job tasks and work environments were interpreted as working with information that is useful to his community.

# Counselor/Client Collaboration

- How are Ryan's current actions and behaviors in alignment with his life stories and identity?
- ONET & job accommodation exploration
  - Special attention is paid to the skills, abilities, and work context descriptions to determine if Ryan can physically and mentally perform the primary job tasks with accommodations.
  - Homework is assigned

# Session Four: realistic employment goal(s)

- Ryan explores computer sciences, information security analysts, business administration, and project management
  - requirements of the day-to-day work, educational requirements, and the level of interest.
- He explores the associate degree requirements for business management.
  - determined that the math requirements were reasonable and within his capacity.
  - Other major degree requirements are focused upon applied computer classes, which have many transferrable applications that Ryan likes.
  - employment options of this degree are interesting
  - accommodations needed appear to be realistic for Ryan's current functional limitations
- Internship: purchasing agent, which has an excellent labor market and salary.

# Questions & Discussion

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