

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Significant change is rarely easy to accomplish. Some change occurs as a result of staff commitment to improve career resources and services for the adolescents¹ and adults they serve. Other change occurs as a result of new policies or regulations initiated by organizational leaders that provide funding for developing resources and delivering services. In either case, the likelihood of successful change is improved as a result of good leadership, careful planning, collaboration among staff and stakeholders, and adequate resources for implementation. The alternative is to spend unnecessary time and resources in order to cope with problems that could have been prevented. This publication is designed to help staff members make the most effective use of their time in implementing changes in the design and delivery of career resources and services.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to stimulate discussion among senior managers, managers, practitioners, administrative staff, and stakeholders about the cost-effective design and delivery of career resources, service-delivery tools, and services for adolescents and adults in career centers and schools who have varying needs for assistance in making occupational, educational, training, and employment decisions.² Terms used in this statement of purpose are defined as follows:

- *Senior managers* include persons who supervise staff, who in turn supervise other staff, while also being responsible for clarifying the organization’s mission, managing the organization’s finances, working with stakeholders, and establishing and maintaining the organizational culture.
- *Managers* include persons who supervise practitioners and administrative staff who provide direct services to adolescents and adults.
- *Practitioners* include persons with a variety of training, credentials, experience, and position titles who design and deliver career resources and services to adolescents and adults.
- *Administrative staff* include persons with a variety of position titles, including receptionists, secre-

taries, personal assistants, and clerks who interact with adolescents and adults being served and who complete various tasks that make the delivery of resources and services possible.

- *Stakeholders* can include parent organizations, adolescent or adult advocacy groups, education and training providers, employers, unions, local collaborating partners in service delivery, professional associations, employer associations, quality assurance organizations, and local, regional, and national governments, as well as agencies and organizations that provide funding for the design and delivery of career resources and services. Stakeholders can also include social partners.
- *Career services* include self-help, brief staff-assisted, and individual case-managed services, as well as services delivered at a distance, where staff members³ assist adolescents and adults in making informed and careful decisions about occupational, educational, training, and employment choices.
 - *Self-help services* include self-guided use of self-assessments and information in a library-like setting or Internet-based remote setting.
 - *Brief staff-assisted services* include practitioner-guided use of assessment and information in a library-like setting, Internet-based remote setting, classroom, or group setting.
 - *Individual case-managed services* include practitioner-guided use of assessment and information in an individual office, Internet-based remote setting, classroom, or group setting.
 - *Service delivery at a distance* allows a practitioner to deliver career services through the use of e-mail, chat, telephone, or videoconferencing to adolescents and adults who may be underserved with face-to-face services or who may prefer the convenience of remote assistance.
- *Service-delivery tools* include signage, maps, resource guides, diagnostic assessment, and individual learning plans to help adolescents and adults use career resources in a way that is appropriate for their needs.

¹ In some organizations, the terms “young person” or “student” is used instead of the term “adolescent.”

² Some organizations are responsible for delivering career resources and services in career centers or schools, but not both. For the sake of simplicity, the term “school” in this handbook is used to refer to a variety of educational institutions.

³ The terms “staff member” or “staff” are used when some combination of senior managers, managers, practitioners, or administrative staff are being described.

- *Signage* in a resource room⁴ helps adolescents and adults identify the location of specific types of resources.
- A *map* of the career resource room assists adolescents and adults in locating the help desk, resource guides, information handouts, files and bookcases for print-based resources, tables for reading print-based materials and Web-site print-outs, computer workstations, DVD players for presenting multimedia information, restrooms, etc.
- *Resource guides* identify specific resources (such as assessments and information) and services (such as workshops and individual counseling) that are related to questions commonly asked by adolescents and adults in career centers and schools.
- *Diagnostic assessment*, including diagnostic measures and diagnostic interviews, is designed to clarify the needs of an adolescent or adult so that an appropriate starting point can be determined for delivering career service
 - *Diagnostic measures* include tests, inventories, and questionnaires that are designed to help clarify the nature of an adolescent's or adult's career problem as well as provide an estimate of readiness for career decision making.
 - *Diagnostic interviews* provide an opportunity to explore factors (such as capability and complexity) that contribute to an adolescent's or adult's readiness for decision making.
- *Individual learning plans* (ILPs) are used by practitioners to assist adolescents and adults in planning their use of career resources and activities to meet their goals.
- *Career resources* include assessments and information that are designed to help individuals clarify what they know about themselves, their options, and their approach to decision making, which are delivered via career center and school resource rooms, Internet Web sites, and information handouts. The cognitive information processing (CIP) approach (described in Chapter 4), can be used as the basis for designing and organizing various career resources.
- *Career resource rooms*, or *career areas*, provide adolescents and adults with access to career resources with staff providing varying levels of assistance in using these resources based on individual needs
- *Web sites* provide remote access to career assessments and career information, as well as providing links and referrals to career services.
- *Information handouts* provide brief, consumable, and easy to use sources of information that can be printed for distribution in a career resource room or disseminated as document files from a Web site.
- *The cognitive information processing approach* (CIP approach) to career problem solving and decision making is designed to help adolescents and adults make informed and careful career choices. Two key elements of the CIP approach are the pyramid of information processing domains (What you need to *know* to make a career choice) and the CASVE cycle (What you need to *do* to make a career choice).
- *Adolescents* are typically between 13 and 19 years of age. They are primarily involved in education or training, and need to make periodic choices about occupations, additional educational or training, and employment, depending on their age, personal characteristics, and life circumstances. Some may also be employed, unemployed seeking employment, or not participating in the labor market.
- *Adults* are typically 20 years or older. They are primarily involved in paid or unpaid work that requires periodic choices about occupations, additional educational or training, and employment, depending on their age, personal characteristics, and life circumstances. Some adults may also be involved in full- or part-time education or training, be unemployed seeking employment, or not participating in the labor market.
- *Career centers* include offices where staff members from one or more organizations provide career resources and services to assist adolescents and adults in making a successful transition to employment or additional education. Career centers are often found in government agencies, as well as colleges and universities.
- *Schools* include a wide variety of educational institutions, such as secondary schools, vocational/technical schools, colleges, community colleges, further education colleges, polytechnic institutions, and universities, who provide career

⁴ When career resources are included in a large room that serves multiple purposes, the space is referred to as a "career resource area."

resources and services to assist their students in making a successful transition to employment or additional education and training.

- *Occupational decisions* involve choosing an occupation, or a small group of related occupations, as a starting point for making subsequent decisions about education, training, and employment.
- *Educational and training decisions* involve choosing a university or college subject/major, a vocational/technical school program of study, apprenticeship, or training opportunity that helps an individual to gain the competencies, knowledge base, and credentials necessary to obtain and maintain employment.
- *Employment decisions* involve identifying and applying for a potentially appropriate position with an employer.

A complete Glossary of key terms is available in Appendix A. This chapter continues with a discussion of assumptions concerning the design and delivery of career resources and services and concludes with suggestions for effective use of this publication.

Assumptions

This publication is based upon the following four assumptions concerning the design and delivery of career resources and services:

- 1) Career guidance, including career resources and services, is increasingly recognized as making an essential contribution to educational and training attainment and to sustained employment among adolescents and adults.
- 2) The funding that is available for the design and delivery of career resources and services is limited, and there are clear expectations from policy makers that the funding that is provided should be used as cost-effectively as possible (OECD and the European Commission, 2004).
- 3) The effective design and use of career resources and services is a collaborative effort among a variety of public, not-for-profit, and private partners who deliver career, educational, training, employment, and social services. The synergy potentially afforded by collaboration in the design and delivery of resources and services extends the impact of the funding for any one program. In this sense, “the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.”
- 4) Since the delivery of comprehensive career services

for adolescents and adults involves collaborating partners to varying degrees, it is important to articulate a common understanding of service delivery design and the nature of collaboration among service providers. It is also important to achieve consensus among collaborating partners on the purpose and strategies for evaluation and accountability.

Effective Use of This Handbook

This publication can be used in several ways. First, all staff members providing access to resources and delivering career services can use it to organize their thinking about the design and implementation of career resources, service-delivery tools, and career services. Table 1-1 presents a schema for remembering key concepts.

Table 1-1
Organizing Key Concepts

Career services

- Career services in a career center or a school
- Self-help services
- Brief staff-assisted services
- Individual case-managed services
- Service delivery at a distance

Service-delivery tools

- Signage
- Maps
- Resource guides
- Diagnostic assessment
 - Diagnostic measures
 - Diagnostic interviews
- Individual learning plans

Career resources

- Career resource rooms
- Web sites
- Information handouts

Cognitive information processing approach to career choice

- The pyramid of Information Processing Domains
 - (What you need to *know* to make a choice)
 - Self-knowledge (Knowing about myself)
 - Options knowledge (Knowing about my options)
 - Decision-making skills (Knowing how I make decisions)
 - Metacognitions (Thinking about my decision making, including self-talk and self-awareness)
- The CASVE cycle (What you need to *do* to make a choice)
 - Communication (Knowing I need to make a choice)

Analysis (Understanding myself and my options)
 Expanding and narrowing my list of options (Synthesis)
 Valuing (Choosing an occupation, program of study, or job)
 Execution (Implementing my choice)

Evaluation

Formative
 Summative

Evidence-based practice

Accountability

Diagnosis
 Prescription
 Process
 Outputs
 Outcomes

Implementation Model

Evaluation
 Selection, adaptation, revision, and development
 Integration
 Training for pilot testing
 Pilot Testing
 Training for all staff
 Delivery
 Evaluation and accountability

The key concepts presented in this table are included at the beginning of each appropriate chapter to emphasize chapter content that is important to remember.

This publication can also be used by staff members as a reference document to answer specific questions. The Table of Contents and the Subject Index provide access to specific topics. Third, staff members can use portions of the book that fit their role in the organization. For some staff members, the detail included in this publication is necessary to fully understand and apply the concepts that are presented. Other staff members who are not directly involved in the design and implementation process might be overwhelmed with the details provided. Appendix B provides a handout that presents essential information needed by staff members who are not actively working in design and implementation. The following suggestions are offered with the awareness that busy staff members are best motivated to read when it is clear that they need to soon use what they are reading. Of course, any staff member can read whatever portions of the handbook that they want to read, but specific use of the handbook by role is described as follows.

- Implementation coordinator and members of the implementation committee
 - All of the handbook

- Senior managers
 - Appendix B⁵ – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Table 1 – “Organizing Key Concepts from this Handbook”
 - Table 2-1 – “Three Levels of Service in the Differentiated Model of Service Delivery”
 - Table 6-1 – “Factors Contributing to Effective and Ineffective Implementation of Change”
 - Chapters 5 and 7
 - The introduction and “Assumptions” in Chapter 6
 - Appendix I – “Implementation Checklist”
 - Appendix J – “Managing Implementation of Improved Career Resources, Service-Delivery Tools, and Services”
- Pilot-site managers
 - Appendix B – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Chapters 1 through 7
 - Appendix I – “Implementation Checklist”
 - Appendix J – “Managing Implementation of Improved Career Resources, Service-Delivery Tools, and Services”
- Pilot-site practitioners and administrative staff
 - Appendix B – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Chapters 1 through 6
 - Appendix I – “Implementation Checklist”
 - Appendix J – “Managing Implementation of Improved Career Resources, Service-Delivery Tools, and Services”
- Task group members
 - Appendix B – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Chapters 1 through 7
 - Appendix I – “Implementation Checklist”
 - Appendix J – “Managing Implementation of Improved Career Resources, Service-Delivery Tools, and Services”
- Managers
 - Appendix B – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Chapters 1 through 7
 - I – “Implementation Checklist”
 - Appendix J – “Managing Implementation of Improved Career Resources, Service-Delivery Tools, and Services”

⁵ Most of the appendices in this Handbook are included in the CD accompanying this publication.

- Practitioners and administrative staff
 - Appendix B – “Key Elements in Designing and Implementing Career Resources and Services”
 - Table 1 – “Organizing Key Concepts from this Handbook”
 - Table 6-1 – “Factors Contributing to Effective and Ineffective Implementation of Change”
 - Specific sections of chapters that directly relate to their work

If this publication is being used to implement career resources, service-delivery tools, and services that do not

use the differentiated service delivery model and the CIP approach, chapters 2, 3, and 4 can be eliminated from the above list.

With an understanding of the purpose of this handbook, key terms, assumptions, and a strategy for using the book, Chapter 2 presents a service delivery design that emphasizes providing a level of service-delivery (self-help, brief staff-assisted, and individual case-managed) that meets the needs of adolescents and adults in a cost-effective manner.