



**Building Career Facilitation Skills**  
**Module 3: Informal Career Assessments**  
**Participant's Curriculum**

**Summary and Rationale**

This module introduces the use of informal career assessments and provides you with an opportunity to use an interest and skills checklist.

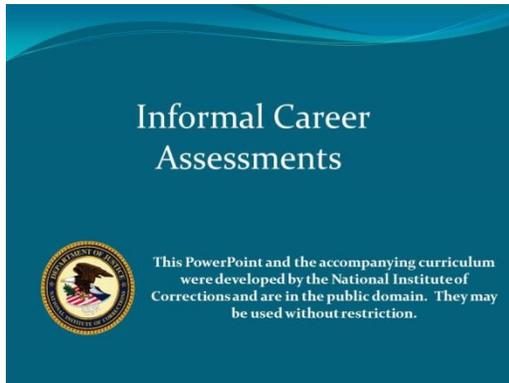
**Performance Objectives**

At the end of this module, participants will be able to

- Identify three strengths of informal assessments
- Identify three weaknesses of informal assessments
- Identify three different types of informal assessments and explain their use
- Demonstrate the use of an interest and skills check list

# CONTENT

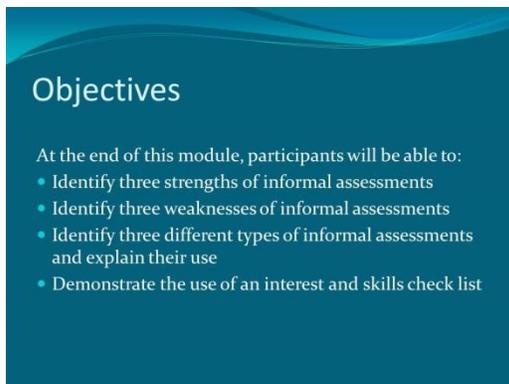
## PowerPoint 1



An important step in the process of assisting an offender to select training programs or a job is *assessment* of interests and skills. Theory and research document the fact that individuals are likely to perform better and achieve satisfaction in work when they perform job duties that allow them to engage in activities in which they have interest and skill.

This module will teach you about informal career assessments and give you an opportunity to try out a method that you can use with offenders.

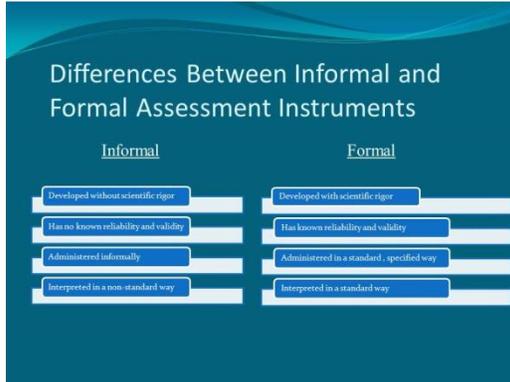
## PowerPoint 2



At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify three strengths of informal assessments
- Identify three weaknesses of informal assessments
- Identify three different types of informal assessments and explain their use
- Demonstrate the use of an interest and skills check list

### PowerPoint 3



An assessment is a way of gathering information about an individual or a group. It includes the use of interviews and other informal methods as well as more formal instruments.

There are two categories of assessment used in career planning: *informal* and *formal*. *Informal* assessments gather information about people through methods less structured than standardized tests.

Notice that:

- informal assessments have not been developed with scientific rigor while formal assessments have been.
- results from informal assessments are subjective and therefore open to different interpretations while those from formal assessments are objective and offer less opportunity for use of subjective judgment.
- informal assessments are likely to take more time to administer and/or to customize to a specific situation than formal assessments.
- there is no established validity or reliability for informal assessments. (These are measures of quality of assessment instruments that we will not study in this module.)

### PowerPoint 4

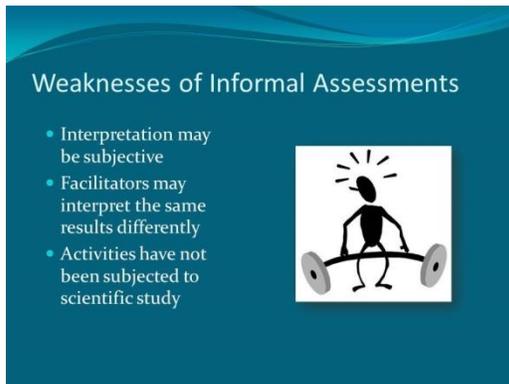
Strengths of Informal Assessments

- Low cost
- Can be administered without ordering materials
- Can offer greater opportunity to learn about the person taking the assessment

Informal assessments have some definite strengths.

- First, as you will see from the activities in this lesson, they are very low cost.
- Second, they can be administered by duplicating materials like those included in this lesson, thus not requiring ordering materials from a publisher.
- Third, informal activities such as those included here can provide an opportunity to learn more about the persons involved than a more formal instrument does.

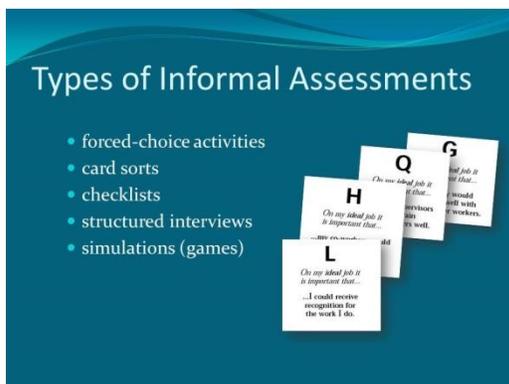
### PowerPoint 5



Of course, there are weaknesses as well. These include

- not having a defined method of interpretation
- that such activities have not been researched

### PowerPoint 6



Informal assessments include the following:

- forced-choice activities
- card sorts
- checklists

- structured interviews
- simulations (games)

A forced-choice assessment is an activity or checklist that requires a person to choose between two alternatives or to rank-order three or more alternatives.

Some values checklists, for example, require you to select one of two values or to place three or more in rank order by importance.

Forced-choice items or activities are valuable because they require an individual to state a preference for one characteristic or concept over another, thus assisting in defining what is really important.

A card sort is a second kind of useful informal assessment. In this assessment activity, an individual (or a group of individuals) is given a stack of cards. Each card has the title and definition of some characteristic related to career choice.

Such characteristics may be work tasks, skills, or work values. You could make a card sort yourself or purchase one. An important criterion is that the stack of cards cover a quite complete range of the different kinds of work tasks, skills that people possess, or work values they could hold.

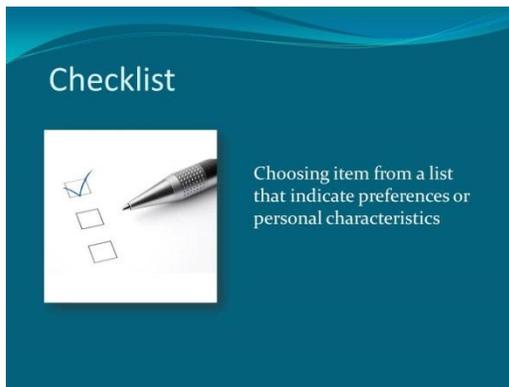
Typical instructions related to card sorts require participants to organize the cards into three stacks - those that represent a high level of something you possess or want to have, those that are at a medium level, and those that are at a low level.

In addition, the instructions may include placing the cards that are in the “most important” stack in priority order.

Additional important information can be gained if you ask offenders why they sorted the cards in the way that they did. This is an example of being able to obtain more information from an informal assessment than you could from a formal assessment.

A card sort can be a very helpful and inexpensive activity to use with offenders. You could make sets of cards that represent desired job characteristics, work tasks, work-related values, or skills. The difficult part is making the bridge between items rated “very important” and jobs that have those characteristics.

## PowerPoint 7



Another type of informal assessment is called a checklist. In this type of assessment, a person is asked to choose those items from a list of job characteristics or tasks, values, skills, or occupational titles that he or she prefers or has. The person may then be asked to prioritize those that are selected. Later in this lesson, you will have an opportunity to complete a checklist and evaluate its potential use with offenders.

## PowerPoint 8



A structured interview is one of the techniques that you will use most. It is simply a one-on-one conversation for which you have designed your part of the dialogue. In other words, you have pre-determined the kind of information that you are seeking and have pre-planned questions that are designed to collect this information. For example, once you understand Holland's theory of vocational choice, you could interview a person about life experience related to each of the six Holland types. This can be a quite accurate way of assessing a Holland code.

## PowerPoints 9 and 10

### Game Simulations

#### Holland Party Game

Imagine that you walk into a party with six groups of people. The descriptions of the type of people in each group are in the boxes below. Chose the group you are most drawn to - the people you would most like to meet and talk with. After that, find the second group you are most interested in, and then the third group. Think about why you chose that group. Does the description of that group describe you? Can you give an example?



### Game Simulations

#### Holland Party Game

| Realistic   | Investigative  | Artistic  | Social   | Enterprising  | Conventional  |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>People who exhibit or maintain an ability, who prefer to work with objects, tools, machines, parts or assemblies, or to be outdoors.</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing puzzle-word games</li> <li>• Discussing movies</li> <li>• Working with models</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Fixing household items</li> <li>• Doing craft projects</li> </ul> | <p>People who like to observe, learn, analyze, investigate, measure or solve problems.</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing puzzle-word games</li> <li>• Studying astronomy</li> <li>• Doing a class</li> <li>• Working in a lab</li> <li>• Creating a project for a science fair</li> </ul> | <p>People who have artistic abilities or an artistic ability and like to work in artistic and imaginative ways (their imagination and creativity).</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing clothes</li> <li>• Helping to put on a play</li> <li>• Learning languages</li> <li>• Drawing or painting</li> <li>• Writing stories or poetry</li> <li>• Playing music</li> </ul> | <p>People who like to work with people to train, to train others, help them, or create them, or are skilled with words.</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making new friends</li> <li>• Helping a friend</li> <li>• Teaching children</li> <li>• Working about other cultures</li> <li>• Helping people solve problems</li> </ul> | <p>People who like to perform, persuade, lead, or manage for organizational goals or monetary gain.</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading group activities</li> <li>• Working on a sales campaign</li> <li>• Working clothes for a store</li> <li>• Talking to people at a party</li> <li>• Selling insurance</li> </ul> | <p>People who like to work with data, have interest in numerical skills, and are interested in order or follow other instructions.</p> <p>Some activities they like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word processing or entering data</li> <li>• Keeping detailed records</li> <li>• Organizing paperwork</li> <li>• Working with a budget</li> <li>• Preparing reports</li> </ul> |

A game is a simulation of some kind that is designed to provide awareness of something in real life. There are several career games that can be used to teach concepts or provide awareness. For example, a game called The Real Game is a board game that makes adults aware of the chance events, planned events, and lifestyle implications related to career choice. Another game, called here the Holland Party Game, can be effectively used to assist offenders to identify their interests. This activity should be used with a group of at least 12 members.

## PowerPoint 11

### Interests and Skills Checklist

- Complete questionnaire about interests and work experiences
- Once completed, tally scores for all six categories
- Draw profile
- Join in group discussion

## **SUMMARY**

In this session we have introduced you to informal assessments, discussed their strengths and weaknesses, and described a variety of informal assessment methods. You also have had the opportunity to assess yourself using an interest and skills checklist and learn how that method can be applied to your work with offenders.