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Why Seek Career Counseling?

It is likely that depending on your career related needs you may consider career counseling to learn more about yourself and how to carry out decisions and plans that relate to your life and future career direction. Whether you are thinking about seeking services at a private practice, college setting, government agency or community organization, you may want to seek appropriate career professionals to meet your career related needs. If you are in the K-12 school setting, a school counselor may also be able to assist you.

It is important that you understand that career professionals hold different credentials and levels of expertise (see "[Career Service Providers Comparison Chart](#)"). Depending on your career related needs you may want to learn more about career professionals before deciding who best to work with (including career counselors, advisors, consultants, career development facilitators, or other career management professionals), their titles, licenses, backgrounds and what they can offer to you.

A Career Counselor or other Career Development Professional can assist you to:

1. Learn more about yourself:

- Gain awareness and knowledge of self by assessing interests, abilities/ transferable skills, values, and personality as they relate to career choices
- Explore and integrate gender, sexual orientation, socio economic status, ethnicity, spirituality, culture, disabilities, and/or social/familial influences into career choices
- Explore life styles, sense of meaning, and contributions to society
- A career counselor may choose to administer and interpret a career assessment if needed.

2. Gain educational and occupational information:

- Identify and become familiar with various educational and career related resources (i.e. internet, printed materials)
- Gather, summarize, and process information about occupations as they relate to nature of work, working conditions, job market, world and US job trends, employment outlook, earnings and salary, educational/academic training, and related occupations
- Gather, summarize, and process information about academic options and college requirements
- Generate career options and alternative plans as needed

3. Learn about decision-making and career planning:

- Learn decision-making styles and strategies applied to career decision-making
- Clarify and set realistic and achievable goals
- Develop and implement an action plan related to a career path
- A career counselor can assist you to develop coping skills to manage anxiety, deal with rejections, disappointments, grieving issues, lacking of confidence, stress, and/or depression associated with career choices, among others.

4. Conduct a job search:

- Discuss and learn how to create and maintain a professional image
- Learn how to write resumes, vitas, and job search letters

- Learn how to put together a career portfolio
- Conduct mock interviews addressing strengths and areas of growth
- Conduct informational interviews
- Identify and initiate contact with potential employers
- Create and utilize network systems as well as job shadowing experiences
- Identify and learn how to respond to job ads in a timely manner
- Attend and actively participate in job/internships fairs
- Select among job/internship offers
- Learn how to negotiate salary and acquire knowledge of benefit packages
- Learn job interviewing etiquette and how to communicate with potential employers
- Gain awareness and understanding about how to differentiate among culturally sensitive employers
- Learn how and when to disclose a disability and/or ask for reasonable accommodations
- Learn about equal employment opportunities (EEO) guidelines
- Increase confidence and commitment to the job search process

5. Apply to graduate or professional schools or apply for other training programs

- Identify programs that match interests
- Learn how to obtain letters of recommendations
- Write personal statements/biographical essays
- Identify and prepare for appropriate admissions tests
- Conduct successful mock interviews
- Find financial aid information
- Develop a plan B in case of not being accepted
- Feel confident about graduate school/professional application process

6. Cope with career challenges and transition issues:

- Develop strategies to handle work functions and/or self-employment
- Create a plan to become marketable and remain competitive
- Develop coping strategies to deal with retirement plans, unpredictable aspects of work life, such as personality conflicts, challenging situations, unemployment, underemployment, layoffs, and reentering the job market, among others.