

Career Gear Student Guide

Foundations for Success
Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation



2007

Welcome to Career Gear – a workshop series to support you in your career journey.

Career Gear is comprised of two 2-hour workshops – one focused mainly on your vision for your future and the other on your strengths. But there will also be a range of suggested activities before, in between and after the workshops. The time you invest in these workshops and suggested activities is an investment in you and your future.

The workshop series will provide you with tools and strategies to help you:

- Explore myths and realities about today’s “labour market” (where and how people work)
- Develop a vision of your own preferred future
- Increase awareness of your personal interests, values, abilities and personality traits
- Apply the career planning process
- Apply both vision and awareness as tools to consider current program and career “fit”
- Expand your scope of career possibilities
- Identify personal strengths and skills which support career self-management
- Develop an action plan to move toward your preferred future

Is there anything in particular you're hoping to get out of this workshop series? Make note of it here:

Be sure to let the facilitator know about your expectations!

Career MYTHS and REALITIES

Over the next few pages, you'll find 10 myths and realities about learning and working in today's labour market. We're not going to spend time talking about these in the workshop. Rather, they are provided here as background information. You'll also find a few reflective questions for your consideration.

MYTH #1: By now I am supposed to be clear about my career direction

REALITY: In education, all students are required to make decisions about courses very early, some as early as grade 6. Career development research and theory suggest that an individual's career "interests" do not settle until the mid 20's and that indecision and lack of clarity are to be expected for many if not most young adults. In fact, 47% of students in post-secondary institutions in Canada change programs at the end of their first year (almost half!).

MYTH #2: There is one right job for me.

REALITY: The majority of new workers will have a minimum of eight jobs in three different fields over their working lives.

MYTH #3: There are some short courses that set people up for great jobs.

REALITY: While there are some great short courses out there that are very good, you need to be careful! When looking at your options, you'll want to be sure the course will give you the skills and knowledge you need and that it is recognized by employers in your field of choice. Usually, today's labour market demands time and effort. It is worth noting that over 70% of new jobs in Canada require a post-secondary qualification (diploma, degree, vocational qualification)

MYTH #4: If you're lucky enough to find a job at a large, secure company, then you will be set for life.

REALITY: In the past, a good education could sometimes guarantee a job for life with a secure company. This is less and less the case. Building a career today is a lifelong process which will likely involve many decisions along the way. Security will come from having skills

and positive attitudes that are attractive to many employers. It is worth noting that the majority of new jobs in Canada are in small business (less than 20 employees).

MYTH # 5: Employers are only interested in your past jobs and in your educational qualifications when they evaluate you.

REALITY: While most employers will be interested in your education and experience, increasingly employers are also keen to know about your “employability skills” -- the abilities (like initiative, communication skills, teamwork), attitudes (like enthusiasm and commitment) and personal qualities (like honesty and responsibility) you have that make you a good employee no matter what job you’re doing. For example, 83% of employers look for volunteer experience before hiring.

MYTH #6: If I am not in the right program, I am wasting my time and money.

REALITY: No learning is wasted. While what you study at college will no doubt help shape the skills you have to offer the labour market, many people do not pursue careers in the field they originally studied. Many of the skills you’re building now are “transferable” in that they can apply to jobs across many fields. A question employers often ask is “What have you been learning lately?”. They are less interested in specifically what you have been learning than in the fact that you keep on learning. This is an attitude and skill they want and need in their employees.

MYTH #7: By now, I should be able to make my own career decisions without any outside help.

REALITY: 70% of students in post-secondary education indicate that they need additional support to explore career possibilities and to decide on a career direction to pursue.

MYTH #8: It is almost impossible to find good jobs in today’s labour market.

REALITY: While the rules of the labour market may be different than they were for your parents, people are still finding work as well as creating their own. Many industries are expecting major labour shortages as employees are retiring and there aren’t enough new workers to keep up with labour demands. In some ways, the labour

market you'll likely be entering will be a very welcoming one. The key will be to find work that fits as closely with your interests, values, abilities, personality and lifestyle preferences as possible. It is interesting to note that in a recent survey of Canadian workers, the majority reported liking their work and not wanting to retire.

MYTH # 9: The first step in finding a job is to have a good résumé and to send it out to lots of employers.

REALITY: While it's important to have a strong résumé, it is only one part of looking for work. Success in today's labour market will likely demand a range of strategies, including more personal approaches such as information interviewing, networking, cold calls and developing a personal pitch. Because most jobs are never advertised, it will also demand finding opportunities in the "hidden" labour market.

MYTH # 10: Once you have had outside assistance with your career planning, you don't need to worry about it again.

REALITY: A good career counsellor can be an enormous help in sorting through what's most important, making sense of the labour market, inventorying your skills and/or developing a plan of action. Career development does require an investment of your time and energy – not once, but many times over your lifespan. None of us remains the same over our lifespans. We acquire new interests, our circumstances change, we move, the needs of employers change, new technologies appear. Life is full of change. Not all activities you undertake will necessarily be fun and energizing – you may not like a course that is necessary to graduate, you may not enjoy researching potential employers. But, if you have a career goal that is meaningful to you, the long-term gain will more than compensate for the short-term pain.

*A FEW REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
MYTHS AND REALITIES....*

1. What have you seen, heard or experienced in the labour market that confirms or refutes the 10 myths and realities?

Record anything that stands out to you.

2. If the myths are really myths and the realities are really realities, then what does this mean for your career future? Do the realities suggest knowledge, attitudes and skills you will need to have in order to succeed in education and the labour market? Record some of your ideas here:

● KNOWLEDGE: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

● ATTITUDES: WHAT ATTITUDES DO YOU NEED TO HAVE?

● SKILLS: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO?

3. Are these the knowledge, attitudes and skills you expected to need? Are there any surprises?

4. Do you feel you already have this knowledge, these attitudes and these skills?

5. If not, how might you acquire them?

WORKSHOP 1: BUILDING YOUR CAREER VISION

This workshop will provide you with tools and strategies to help you:

- *Explore myths and realities about today's "labour market" (where and how people work)*
- *Develop a vision of your own preferred future*
- *Increase awareness of your personal interests, values, abilities and personality traits*
- *Apply the career planning process*
- *Apply both vision and awareness as tools to consider current program and career "fit"*
- *Expand your scope of career possibilities*

Be sure to talk to your facilitator if you have any questions or problems any time during or after this workshop. Your facilitator can work with you individually to help you.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT 101

Some people talk about career development as though it's as simple as making one good decision:

“What do you want to do after you graduate?”

This is no simple question, however, and in today's labour market there is no “right” answer.

In reality, most of us have walked a pretty crooked path full of surprises when it comes to our careers. If you think back to when you were in school, chances are you've done lots of different kinds of jobs since graduating – some planned perhaps and others the result of good luck, good friends or serendipity.

Career development has been defined in many different ways. We like to think of it as:

*The lifelong process of managing your learning and work
in order to build your preferred future*

A lifelong process is not a single decision – it is a series of decisions, big and small, that help to move you in the direction of the life you want. It includes decisions we make both about the jobs we pursue and the learning we engage in over our lifespan. And it is not about choosing an occupation as much as it is about building a future that includes elements that are important us.

There are four key components to the career planning process:

DREAMING

Imagine yourself in the future in a positive way

SEEING

See options in the labour market

GETTING

Get the skills, attitudes and knowledge you need

DOING

Create a plan to build your own future

YOUR PREFERRED FUTURE

Imagine yourself 10 years from now. *In the best of all possible worlds, I would....*

● WHERE

Look around you. What do you see? Where are you? Are you in a particular city? Are you in the country? Where are you living? Look around. Are there any things you see that feel particularly important to you?

● WHO

Who is with you? Do you have a partner? Do you have children? Are other family members nearby or far away? Do you have a circle of old friends? Do you have new friends? Who are you spending your time with? What are you doing together that matters to you?

● *WORK*

What kind of work are you doing? What does your work day look like? Do you work alone? Do you work with others? Are you part of a team? What is your work setting like? Do you work in an office? Do you work outdoors? Are you working from your home? What are you enjoying about your work? What are you proud of?

● *FREE TIME*

How do you spend your free time? What do you especially enjoy?

● *ME AS A PERSON*

How do people see you in your community, at work and in your family? How do people describe you to others? How do you see yourself?

● *WHAT I LOVE MOST*

What do you love most about your life?

If you prefer to create a visual image to represent your preferred future, you can use this space:

Remember that your facilitator is available to talk with you individually about your preferred future.

The following 4 pages have lists of interests, values, abilities and preferences. You may want to use these as references for the activity on page 24 of this Guide.

INTERESTS 😊

Here are some examples of interests. They are all words or phrases that could be used to complete the sentence: “I really like....” Do not limit yourself to this list! Add others that are missing.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ The Arts | ▪ Working with my hands | ▪ Directing a group |
| ▪ Theatre | ▪ Helping others | ▪ Reading |
| ▪ Being in a group | ▪ Meeting people | ▪ Dancing |
| ▪ Music | ▪ Outdoors/Nature | ▪ Travelling |
| ▪ Public speaking | ▪ Surfing the internet | ▪ Shopping |
| ▪ Writing | ▪ Working with numbers | ▪ Cooking |
| ▪ Classifying things | ▪ Having new experiences | ▪ Politics |
| ▪ Math | ▪ Giving directions | ▪ Discussing |
| ▪ Fashion | ▪ Planning activities | ▪ Geography |
| ▪ Animals | ▪ Physical activities | ▪ Literature |
| ▪ History | ▪ Scientific reports | ▪ Cultural diversity |
| ▪ International development | ▪ Finding information | ▪ Learning new things |
| ▪ Selling | ▪ Giving explanations | ▪ Assembling things |
| ▪ Biology | ▪ Talking on the phone | ▪ Meeting challenges |
| ▪ Talking/Discussing with people | ▪ Psychology | ▪ |
| ▪ Chemistry | ▪ Physics | ▪ |
| ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |

VALUES ♥

Here are some examples of values. They are all words or phrases that could be used to complete the sentence: “I value...” Do not limit yourself to this list. Add any that are missing for you.

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Love/Friendship | ▪ Harmony | ▪ Prestige/Recognition |
| ▪ Money | ▪ Honesty/Sincerity | ▪ Progress/Innovation |
| ▪ Autonomy/Independence | ▪ Humour | ▪ Promoting Peace |
| ▪ Beauty | ▪ Integrity | ▪ Human Relations |
| ▪ Competition | ▪ Justice | ▪ Respect for self and others |
| ▪ Physical comfort | ▪ Freedom (to act and express views) | ▪ Personal achievement |
| ▪ Contributing to society | ▪ Leisure/Having fun | ▪ Health |
| ▪ Creativity | ▪ Loyalty | ▪ Personal satisfaction |
| ▪ Culture/Language | ▪ Modesty | ▪ Career security |
| ▪ Reaching my full potential | ▪ Optimism | ▪ Belonging |
| ▪ Education/Knowledge | ▪ Order | ▪ Social status |
| ▪ Cooperation | ▪ Openness | ▪ Work |
| ▪ The Environment | ▪ Perseverance | ▪ Variety/Change |
| ▪ Excellence | ▪ Punctuality | ▪ |
| ▪ Family | ▪ Power | ▪ |
| ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |
| ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |

ABILITIES ☆

Here are some examples of abilities. They are all words or phrases that could be used to complete the sentence: “I am really good at....” Add any that are missing to make your abilities list complete.

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| ▪ Helping others (listening, understanding) | ▪ Giving instructions, information | ▪ Operating heavy equipment |
| ▪ Learning new things | ▪ Negotiating | ▪ Public speaking |
| ▪ Working with others | ▪ Developing strategies | ▪ Making decisions |
| ▪ Assembling things | ▪ Writing (grammar, spelling) | ▪ Preparing text, documents |
| ▪ Singing | ▪ Explaining or teaching | ▪ Predicting consequences |
| ▪ Classifying objects, documents | ▪ Researching | ▪ Selling |
| ▪ Understanding/Speaking other languages | ▪ Planning | ▪ Repairing (computers, things) |
| ▪ Composing (text, music) | ▪ Improvising | ▪ Summarizing |
| ▪ Driving | ▪ Manual labour | ▪ Problem-solving |
| ▪ Editing/Correcting text | ▪ Managing stress | ▪ Working with numbers |
| ▪ Creating/Inventing | ▪ Establishing systems/processes | ▪ Using camera equipment |
| ▪ Working independently | ▪ Interviewing people | ▪ Using different software |
| ▪ Consulting with people | ▪ Playing a musical instrument | ▪ Using laboratory apparatus |
| ▪ Drawing/Reproduction | ▪ Reading comprehension | ▪ Using tools (saw, hammer) |
| ▪ Leading a group discussion | ▪ Navigating online | ▪ Training animals |
| ▪ Giving good advice | ▪ Analyzing (text, data) | ▪ Making lists (of things, priorities) |
| ▪ Comparing (things, data) | ▪ | ▪ |

PERSONALITY TRAITS ✓

Here are some examples of personality traits. They are all words or phrases that could be used to complete the sentence: “I am....” Do not limit yourself to this list. It is far from complete!

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Hospitable/ Welcoming | ▪ Curious | ▪ Intuitive | ▪ Realistic |
| ▪ Active | ▪ Determined | ▪ Cheerful | ▪ Reflective/ Thoughtful |
| ▪ Ambitious | ▪ Disciplined | ▪ Loyal | ▪ Reserved/Shy |
| ▪ Likable | ▪ Discrete | ▪ Methodical | ▪ Respectful |
| ▪ Attentive | ▪ Dynamic | ▪ Careful | ▪ Responsible |
| ▪ Independent | ▪ Emotional | ▪ Optimistic | ▪ A Dreamer |
| ▪ Leading edge | ▪ Energetic/ Enthusiastic | ▪ Organized | ▪ Sensible |
| ▪ Adventurous | ▪ Reliable | ▪ Original | ▪ Serious |
| ▪ A Joker | ▪ Demanding | ▪ Open | ▪ Helpful |
| ▪ Calm | ▪ Expressive | ▪ Passionate | ▪ Sociable |
| ▪ Holistic | ▪ Entrepreneurial | ▪ Persevering | ▪ A Loner |
| ▪ Competitive | ▪ Flexible | ▪ Perceptive | ▪ Spontaneous |
| ▪ Confident | ▪ Generous | ▪ A Perfectionist | ▪ Sympathetic |
| ▪ Convincing | ▪ Honest | ▪ Patient | ▪ Tolerant |
| ▪ Courageous | ▪ Innovative | ▪ Positive | ▪ Brave |
| ▪ Creative | ▪ Honourable | ▪ Practical | ▪ |
| ▪ Critical | ▪ A Planner | ▪ | ▪ |

As you reflect on your preferred future, what stands out to you?

My Top Interests

😊 I really like...

😊 I really like...

😊 I really like...

My Top Values

♥ I value...

♥ I value...

♥ I value...

My Top Abilities

☆ I am really good at...

☆ I am really good at...

☆ I am really good at...

My Top Personality Traits

✓ I am...

✓ I am...

✓ I am...

Based on your preferred future and your profile of top interests, values, abilities and personality traits, what future plans could be possible for you? What kinds of work could be congruent and satisfying?

Three Possibilities for Me....

1.

2.

3.

Possibility 1: _____

What I like best about this possibility is....

This possibility is a good “fit” with my preferred future and my profile because...

What I don’t like about this possibility is....

In order to seriously consider this possibility, I need to find out...

Possibility2: _____

What I like best about this possibility is....

This possibility is a good “fit” with my preferred future and my profile because...

What I don’t like about this possibility is....

In order to seriously consider this possibility, I need to find out...

Possibility 3: _____

What I like best about this possibility is....

This possibility is a good “fit” with my preferred future and my profile because...

What I don’t like about this possibility is....

In order to seriously consider this possibility, I need to find out...

Are there other options that stand out to you as you reflect on your preferred future and profile?

Don't forget that your case manager is available to talk with you about options and can support you as you think about and build your preferred future.

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: WHAT IS MY “FIT”?

There are 5 parts to completing WHAT IS MY FIT as follows:

- Part 1: Complete the Career Circle
- Part 2: Complete the fit triangle
- Part 3: Prepare to move forward
- Part 4: Decide on action steps
- Part 5: Complete preferred future action plan

...And of course

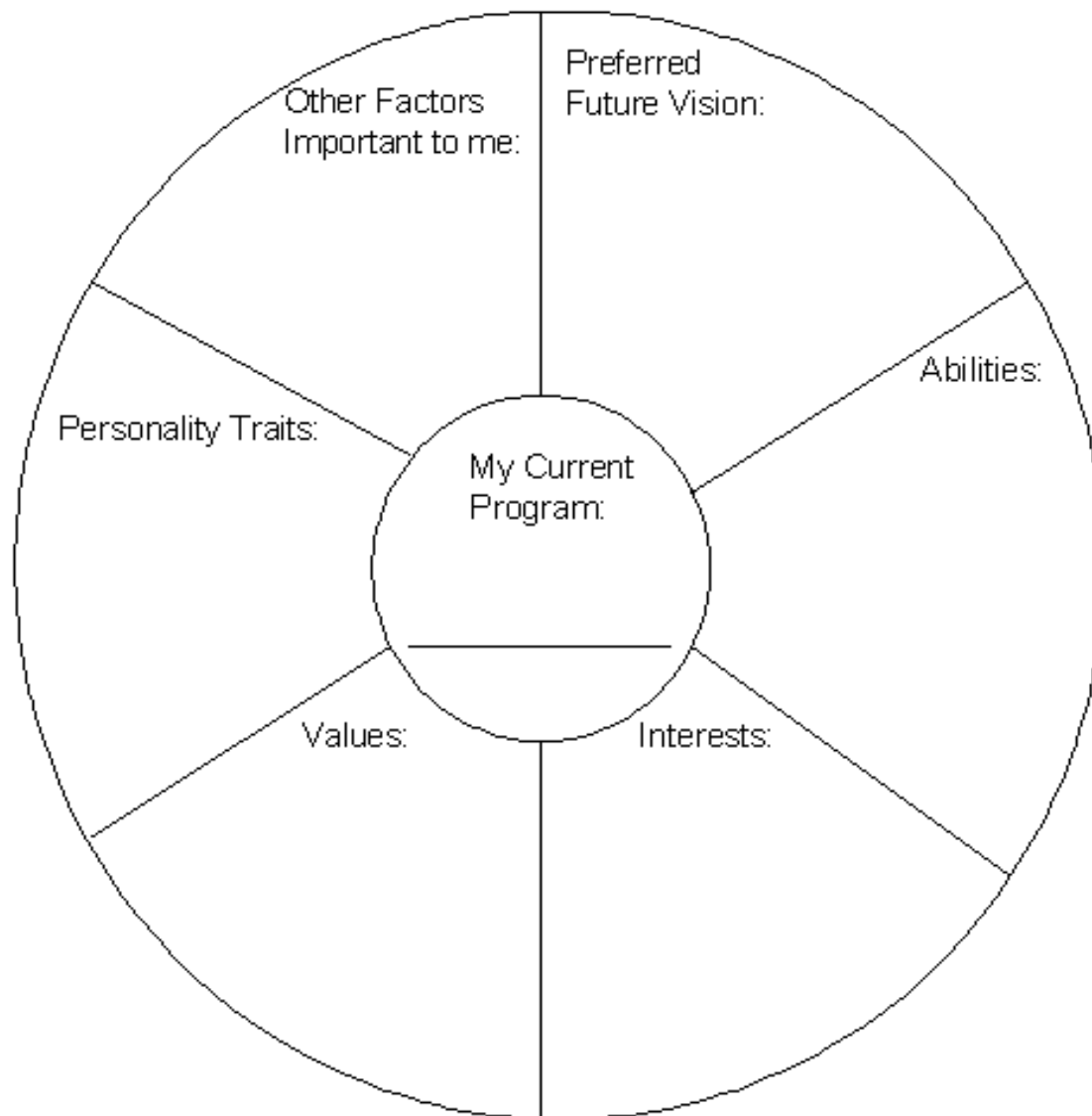
- Part 6, which is to DO it!

Let's get started...

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: WHAT IS MY “FIT”?

Part 1: Complete the Career Circle on the next page:

- 1. *Place your current program in the middle of the circle*
- 2. *Insert in the quadrants what you have learned about your personal interests, values, abilities and personality traits (refer to pages 24-25)*
- 3. *Insert the most important elements in your vision of your preferred future*
- 4. *Include any other important things that matter to you*



Consider the way you feel about the “fit” between your program (in the centre of the circle) and your characteristics (quadrants around the circle). When you are finished, go to the next pages to consider the “Fit” Triangle.

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM

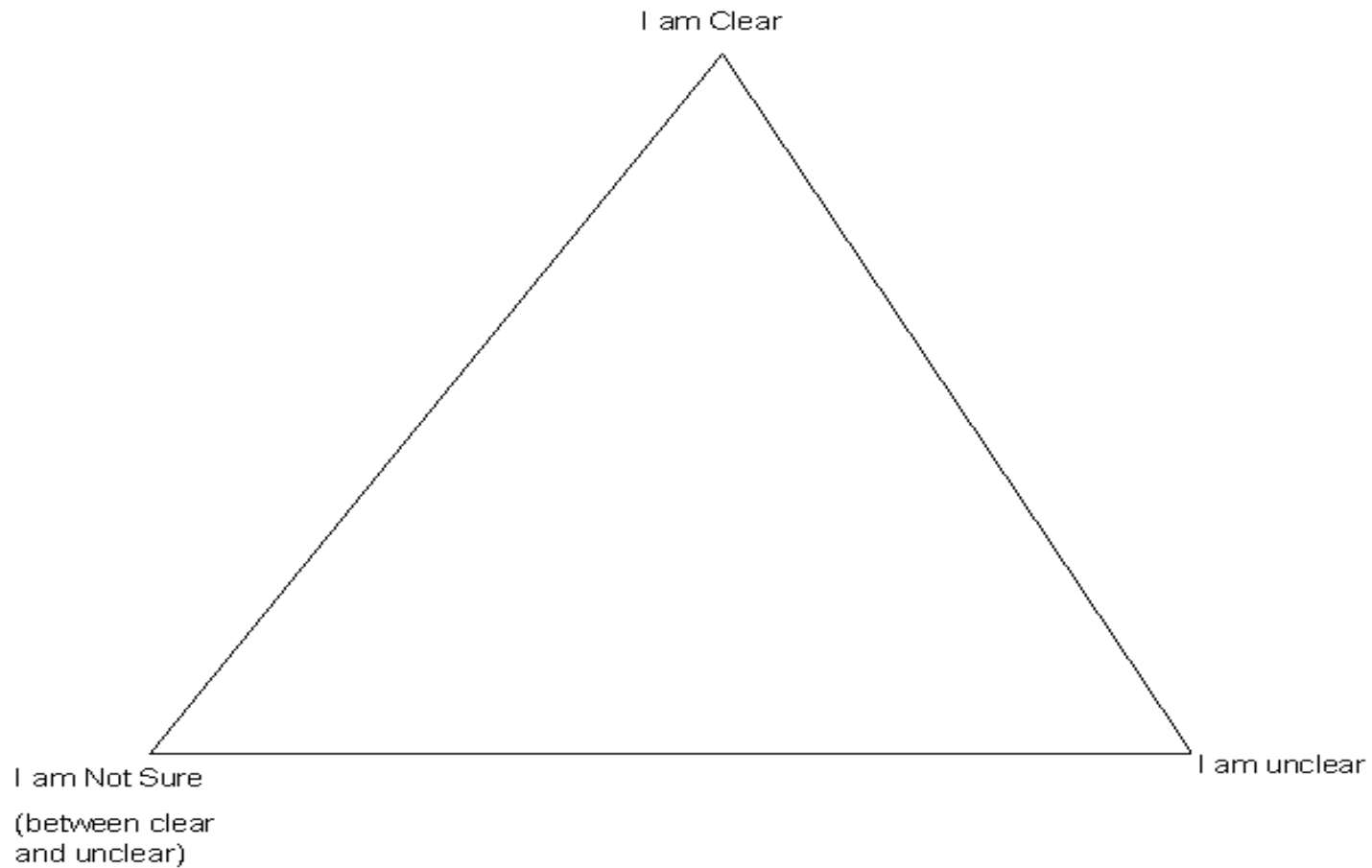
WHAT IS MY “FIT”?

Part 2: Place yourself in the “fit triangle” on the next page.

There are three positions on the fit triangle:

1. *My current program feels quite well connected to my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (good “fit*
2. *My current program feels disconnected from my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (poor “fit”);*
3. *I am just not sure enough about the fit between my current program, my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits.*

Place yourself on the triangle corner below that “fits” your situation best. On the next page, you’ll be asked to think about and then make some notes about your “fit”. Your notes will guide you to your next steps.



MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM

WHAT IS MY “FIT”?

Part 3: Prepare to move forward

In order to move forward, it is important to do some careful reflection about the fit between you and your current program.

- What is it that fits well?
- What is it that does not fit well?
- What is it that I am unsure about?

Get your thoughts down on paper. Each of the next three pages asks questions according to positions on the triangle. Go to the page that fits your position and complete as many of the questions as possible. Your reflections will give you a key to moving forward. Your reflections will also be very helpful in discussions you may have with a career counsellor and/or your case manager.

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: GOOD FIT

Part 3: Prepare to move forward

My current program feels quite well connected to my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (good “fit”)

What I like about my program is....

My current program is a good “fit” with my preferred future because...

My current program “fits” with my interests, values, personality traits and abilities because...

Other steps I need to take to move forward are... (see Part 4 for ideas and steps)

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: POOR FIT

Part 3: Prepare to move forward

My current program feels disconnected from my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (poor “fit”)

What I do not like about my program is...

My current program is not a good “fit” with my preferred future because...

My current program does not “fit” with my interests, values, personality traits and abilities because...

Steps I need to take to move forward are... (see Part 4 for ideas and steps)

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: UNCERTAIN/NOT SURE FIT

Part 3: Prepare to move forward

I am just not sure enough about the fit between my current program, my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits

What I am unsure about in my program is...

I am not sure that my current program is a good “fit” with my preferred future because...

I am not sure that my current program “fits” with my interests, values, personality traits and abilities because...

Steps I need to take to move forward are... (see Part 4 for ideas and steps)

MY PREFERRED FUTURE AND MY CURRENT PROGRAM: WHAT IS MY “FIT”?

Part 4: Taking Action

Each of the following three pages contain suggestions for actions you can start to do right away to help you move to a position of greater clarity and to address issues concerning you about your current “fit”.

- Go to the page which fits your situation;
- Review the suggested steps;
- Select the steps which seem to best respond to what you need;
- Highlight those steps and decide now to do these steps as soon as possible and certainly well before the next workshop;
- Write the steps down on the Career Action Plan on page --- of your Guide;
- Remember there are many resources you can find. some are listed on pages -----;
- Talk with your case manager who can help you access other sources of assistance;
- Discuss your notes with your career counsellor in your session following your career assessments and/or make a separate appointment to discuss;
- Talk with people who know you well and whose opinion you value;
- Above all, take positive steps to move forward!

Part 4: Taking Action: Good Fit

My current program feels quite well connected to my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (good “fit”)

Steps you can take:

- Find out about employment prospects for graduates of your program
- Contact graduates of your program and interview them about what they are now doing and what they like/do not like about their work
- Talk with other people you trust who know you well and ask them their views on your program fit
- Talk with professors in my program about how they see the future for graduates of your program
- Find out about the transferability of skills and knowledge from your program to other programs offered at the college or university levels
- Have a Plan B so you have a back-up plan should you discover that your views change over time.

Record your selected steps on your Action Plan for my preferred future (see page -----).

Part 4: Taking Action: Poor Fit

My current program feels disconnected from my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits (poor “fit”)

Steps you can take:

- See a career counsellor for additional assistance
- Talk to people whom you trust and who know you well; ask for their feedback about how they see your program fit
- Use on-line career clarification resources (Career Cruising; CHOICES)
- Ask people you trust and who know you well for feedback on how they see your strengths, interests and abilities
- Research other programs at the college that attract you
- Talk to people who are doing things that interest you
- Research the career paths that may open to you upon completion of your current program
- Contact graduates of your current program and find out what work they are in now
- Contact graduates of other programs that attract you and find out what work they are in now
- Take time to visualize more completely different preferred futures
- Arrange a work shadow experience in an area of interest
- Volunteer in an area of interest
- Talk to your professors about the transferability of knowledge and skills in your current program to other programs
- Make sure key allies are on your side
- Discuss with a career counsellor and people you trust about working for a year and using that time to seek greater clarity

These steps can become part of your Action Plan for my preferred future (see page -----)

Part 4: Taking Action: Uncertain/Not Sure Fit

I am just not sure enough about the fit between my current program, my preferred future and my top interests, values, abilities and personality traits

Steps you can take:

- Decide what experiences might give you more focus
- Consider volunteering in an area relevant to your current program
- Discuss your uncertainty with people whom you trust and who know you well; ask for their views and their feedback on how they see your program fit
- Discuss your uncertainty with your professors
- See a career counsellor for additional assistance
- Research the career paths that may open to you upon completion of your current program
- Contact graduates of your current program and find out what work they are in now
- Use on-line career clarification resources (Career Cruising; CHOICES)
- Find out about the transferability of skills and knowledge from your program to other programs offered at the college or university levels
- Have a Plan B so you have a back-up plan should you decide to make a change
- Arrange a work shadow experience in an area of interest
- Find out about employment prospects for graduates of your program

These steps can become part of your Action Plan for my preferred future (see page -----).

Part 5: Action Plan for My Preferred Future

| STEPS What will I do? | ALLIES Who can help me? | WHAT What resources will I use? | WHEN When will I start? finish? | PROGRESS What am I already doing that is contributing to this? | DONE ✓ |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |

RESEARCH TIPS

As you're exploring and researching possibilities for you, here are some strategies that might help:

- Understanding today's labour market is the starting point for exploring what possibilities it has to offer. You might want to start by visiting www.councils.org to explore different sectors. If there's a sector that appeals to you, call them up or find the link to that sector's website to find out about the :
 - kind of work environments they offer
 - skills they demand
 - kind of training required
 - earning potential
 - working conditions
 - work stability

- There are numerous publications, computer programs and Internet sites you can find with profiles or descriptions of a wide array of occupations/types of work. Here are a few to consider:
 - **Print & Online Resources**
 - Career Directions, Canada Prospects, Destination 2020 & The Work Handbook: A range of career resources including sectoral/occupational information available free online at http://www.careerccc.org/careerdirections/eng/e_ho_set.htm
 - *Alberta Occupation Profiles* by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, are 2 to 3 page on-line summary profiles of 500+ occupations researched in Alberta. Available from: Learning Resources Centre, Edmonton. Phone: (780) 427-5775 <http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo>
 - *Human Resources & Social Development Canada* (HRSDC) main youth site includes a wide range of information for students and work seekers. Visit <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca>
 - *Job Futures* is a two-part publication that provides Canadians with information about the current world of work and projections for the future. It is developed by the Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) of the Applied Research Branch of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). <http://www.jobfutures.ca>
 - *Essential Skills* (HRDC) provides information on skills you need to work in many fields. <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/>
 - *Creating You and Co. Think Like the CEO of Your Own Career* by William Bridges, Harper Collins, 1998. This is a practical guide to seeing beyond outdated notions of the job. Bridges shows that true job security comes not from clinging to a job, but from doing the work you're best at for the

employers who need it. Includes self-assessment exercises and other assistance in defining your "product" and spotting your "market." *Available from:* libraries and bookstores.

- *Finding Out: How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want*, by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 1997. This book teaches the reader what labour market research questions to ask and where to find the answers. *Available from:* CCDF (T: 613-729-6164; F: 613-729-3515; E: information@ccdf.ca; W: www.ccdf.ca)
- *Jobscape, Career Survival in the New Global Economy* by Colin Campbell, JIST Works, Inc., 1997. Details information on choosing the right career, searching for a job, interviewing, negotiating, and more. Plus, there's a special resource section with up-to-date information on online bulletin boards, forums, networking, and international job and business opportunities. *Available from:* libraries and bookstores.
- *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information, 2nd edition*, by Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2001. This text explains in basic, introductory terms what labour market information is and how it can be applied in career decision-making. *Available from:* Canadian Career Development Foundation. Phone: (613) 729-6164, Fax: (613) 729-3515, E-mail: information@ccdf.ca
- *National Occupation Classification System (NOC)* is a matrix of Canadian occupations arranged by skill level and sectors of the economy. It is the current national system commonly used for organizing information about occupations. *Available from:* Canada Communications Group Publishing, Ottawa. Phone: 1-800-565-7757 <http://www.worklogic.com:81/noc/home.html>

● **Computer Programs**

- *CHOICES, DISCOVER* and *Bridges Career Explorer* provide printed profiles of significant databases of occupations that are periodically updated by each company. Youth can scroll through a database of occupations independently or complete the self assessment profile that attempts to link or match suitable occupations for the user.

● When all is said and done, there's nothing like getting out there and talking to people who are actually working in an area that interests you or experiencing the sector for yourself. Consider the following strategies:

- **Information Interviews** are pre-arranged meetings with someone who is actually doing a job you want to learn more about. You get to choose who you want to interview and ask questions that are meaningful and relevant to you. You can ask about duties, responsibilities, training, work values, necessary qualities and characteristics, advancement and lateral movement opportunities, the hiring/application process, compensation range and other people whom you might interview. You'd be surprised how willing the average person is to take 30 minutes to meet with you.
- **Job Shadowing** combines the information interview at the beginning of the experience and then permits you to observe or participate in a sample of activities deemed typical of the work.

- **Work Study** generally consists of a one to three week experience. A schedule is agreed upon with an employer and you participate on the work site (at a minimal level) but also have the opportunity to observe tasks, duties, responsibilities and work relationships from within the organization.
- **Work Experience** (as opposed to job shadowing or work study) requires a greater level of responsibility and commitment by you and the employer. Co-op programs and practicum courses associated with programs like social work are examples.
- **Volunteer work**, rewarding in its own right, is also a low risk way to become knowledgeable about some kinds of work. Volunteering can be a powerful learning experience: helping you to clarify your interests, values and beliefs, learn new skills, extend your network and gain current information about the work world.
- **Part-time Employment** increases knowledge of the sector, the kinds of work it offers and the many pathways in between positions. It's a valuable tool for allowing you to manoeuvre into new roles. Think of a person who has an entry-level role, for example, running parts for an auto parts outfit. Every day she can meet people in the automotive industry. This is an ideal gateway into all kinds of work in the sector, providing her with a feel for the culture, solid experience and personal gain whether or not she stays within the automotive sector.

Too many people say,

*“If only I had found out what this field was **really** like before I made my decision.”*

Take the time to explore the areas that interest you now. Visit relevant web sites, read about them and, most importantly, find ways to actually get exposed to them.

Talk to people already working in areas that interest you and find out if there are ways you can get some first hand experience yourself.

WORKSHOP 2: SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

This workshop will provide you with tools and strategies to help you:

- Identify personal strengths and skills which support career self-management
- Develop an action plan to move toward your preferred future

SKILLS BINGO

Find someone in the room who possesses a skill below. Once you find someone, cross off that box and move to another. As soon as you've completed one line (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) AND have names on at least **eight** of the boxes, yell **BINGO!!**

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| HAS FIXED A CAR | HAS KNIT SOMETHING | HAS PLAYED A TEAM SPORT | HAS PASSED GRADE 12 MATH |
| HAS COOKED A MEAL FOR AT LEAST 4 PEOPLE | HAS DRIVEN A PIECE OF MACHINERY | HAS WRITTEN A SHORT STORY OR A POEM | CAN PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT |
| HAS DOWNLOADED MUSIC TO THEIR MP3 OR PC | HAS BUILT A DECK OR SHED | HAS ORGANIZED A PARTY FOR MORE THAN 20 PEOPLE | HAS TAKEN CARE OF A CHILD UNDER 4 YEARS OLD |
| HAS COACHED A TEAM | KNOWS THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY | CAN NAME AT LEAST 5 DIFFERENT PLANT SPECIES | CAN CALCULATE COMPOUND INTEREST |

DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS

Think of something you feel you did well, enjoyed doing and feel proud of. It can be anything – big or small.

1) What did you do? Describe it in some detail:

2) How did you do it? What steps did you have to undertake?

3) What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome these?

4) What did you enjoy most about it?

5) Looking back on the experience, what do you feel most proud of ?

MY STRENGTHS

Have the observer in your group record all the strengths they hear in your story here:

3 STRENGTHS I KNOW I HAVE ARE...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

For each of these, record your evidence – what have you done that proves you have these skills?

Example: I know I have strong organizational skills because I once organized an end of year banquet for my team, including managing the invitations, promotion, venue and catering. The coach said it was the best banquet we ever had.

| STRENGTH I know I ... | EVIDENCE Because... |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

SELF MARKETING TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Here are a few strategies that can help you to market your key strengths:

- **Networking:** There's no greater tool in marketing yourself than your personal network. This includes people you know really well (your family and close friends), acquaintances (family friends, people you know in the community or from college) as well as more formal networks (friends of friends, people who work in areas that interest you who you could get to know). The key is: TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN – If they don't know, they can't send information and leads your way!
- **The Personal Pitch:** Can you (in 30-90 seconds) say in a really clear and compelling way what you are interested in and why you'd be good at it (your strengths/evidence)? If not, you'll want to develop your personal pitch. It's a critical tool both for while you're exploring possibilities and for when you're searching for work.
- **The Thumbnail Sketch:** This is a very short written piece (half to a full page) which includes your contact information, your key accomplishments and solutions you'd bring to a specific employer. Note the word "specific" – This piece is tailored to every opportunity as is meant to complement your résumé. It shows the employer you've done some research pinpointing problems and focusing on solutions.
- **The Résumé:** A résumé is one of the most necessary and expected self marketing tools. It tells the employer what you have to offer and, as opposed to an application form, you control the content and format. The purpose of the résumé is very simply to get an interview! Therefore, the résumé must sell your skills and other assets to the point that employers will want to meet with you. There are a number of different kinds of résumés (chronological, functional, combination, electronic). You'll want to use different formats depending on your own background and the opportunities you're considering.
- **The Application Form:** Many companies and government departments use application forms to obtain information they deem important about applicants. With application forms, the only things over which you have any control are which information to present and the words you use to present it. It's critical to be neat, use proper grammar and spelling, present information clearly and logically and relate what you write back to the position being sought. There's usually some blank space to write about your goals, achievements, skills etc – be sure to have something prepared in advance so you're not caught off guard.

- **The Portfolio:** A portfolio is a pro-active self marketing tool and a personalized archive of your career development. Portfolios can include samples of work that demonstrate the relevant skills and expertise you have. A portfolio can set you apart, show your unique qualities and offer proof of your strengths and skills.
- **The Business Card, Flyer and/or CD-ROM:** Depending upon your skills, experience and intended line of work, any of these marketing tools may prove very useful. Simply designed business cards or flyers can help you market to a large audience CD-ROMs offer you another vehicle to demonstrate your skills if you are trying to enter the radio, voice-related, sound, music fields or other such lines of work.
- **The Proposal:** You may well come across work opportunities that are not packaged as jobs. In these instances, you may need to be able to create a proposal that portrays your view of the work to be done, the fees you'd charge and why you're the best one to undertake the work.
- **The Interview:** There are many things you can do now to build your confidence and skills when it comes to the job interview. There are some predictable questions you can prepare for and practice in advance. Think about the impression you want to leave and proactively create it

There are many free resources that can give you more information on any or all of these strategies. Talk to your facilitator, visit a career counsellor or google them to get additional information and/or support.

MOVING TO ACTION

Having an action plan with concrete steps is a key to success.

Think of the time you spend working on your action plan as an investment in yourself and in your future.

DREAM

- Inventory your interests, values, abilities and personality traits
- Ask people for feedback on your strengths and personal characteristics
- Visualize different preferred futures
- Use a career program (such as Choices or Career Cruising)
- See a career counsellor
- Talk to people you trust about your preferred future
- Decide what experiences might help give you more focus
- Check different options against your interests, values, abilities and personality traits

SEE

- Find out about prospects, turnover, work conditions, locations etc for work that interests you
- Volunteer
- Work shadow
- Conduct information interviews with people who are actually doing jobs that interest you
- Visit sector council sites to find out about different industries
- Check out the resources referenced on pages 29-31 of this Guide
- Find out about the range of training options available to prepare you for the work you want
- Find out about acceptance rates, pre-requisites, locations and costs associated with further education
- Research scholarships, bursaries, apprenticeships, work placements, internships and summer jobs
- Find out what employers offer orientation/information programs for interested candidates
- Find ways to actually visit workplaces of interest

GET

- Volunteer
- Get part-time work
- Work shadow
- Participate in work placements
- Sign up for an internship program
- Set up some summer employment
- Conduct information interviews (they're good practice for job interviews!)

Note: All these activities have a double benefit – They will not only help you learn more about possibilities, they're also a great way to build your skills.

- Take a range of courses that build skills and knowledge broadly
- Read with a critical and inquiring eye -- whether it's the newspaper, your favorite magazine or some non-fiction – be aware of what you're learning and what else you'd like to find out
- Make sure you are prepared for day-to-day life (Do you know how to secure a lease or get a mortgage? Can you cook, clean, and do laundry? Do you know how to effectively manage your time? Can you set and follow a budget? Do you have the skills to negotiate and live amicably with a roommate or partner?)
- Prepare your self-marketing pieces (see pages 38-39 of this Guide)

DO

- Have a short term plan to make money
- Create a budget that allows you to meet your living costs
- Select courses that keep your options open
- Tell everyone you know what you're interested in
- Be sure you have a back up plan (or two)
- Revisit your preferred future from time to time to see if anything has changed
- Secure housing you can afford
- Start a savings plan
- Continue to build and nourish your network
- Have a plan to keep learning no matter what work you choose
- Create a career action plan that is meaningful, realistic and motivating for you

MY PREFERRED FUTURE ACTION PLAN

| STEPS What will I do? | ALLIES Who can help me? | WHAT What resources will I use? | WHEN When will I start? finish? | PROGRESS What am I already doing that is contributing to this? | DONE ✓ |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |

What will help you to stay on track and keep working at your action plan? Are there any rewards, reminders or checkpoints that you could build in that would keep you focused and motivated?

If so, build them into your action plan or record them here:

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR
CAREER JOURNEY!