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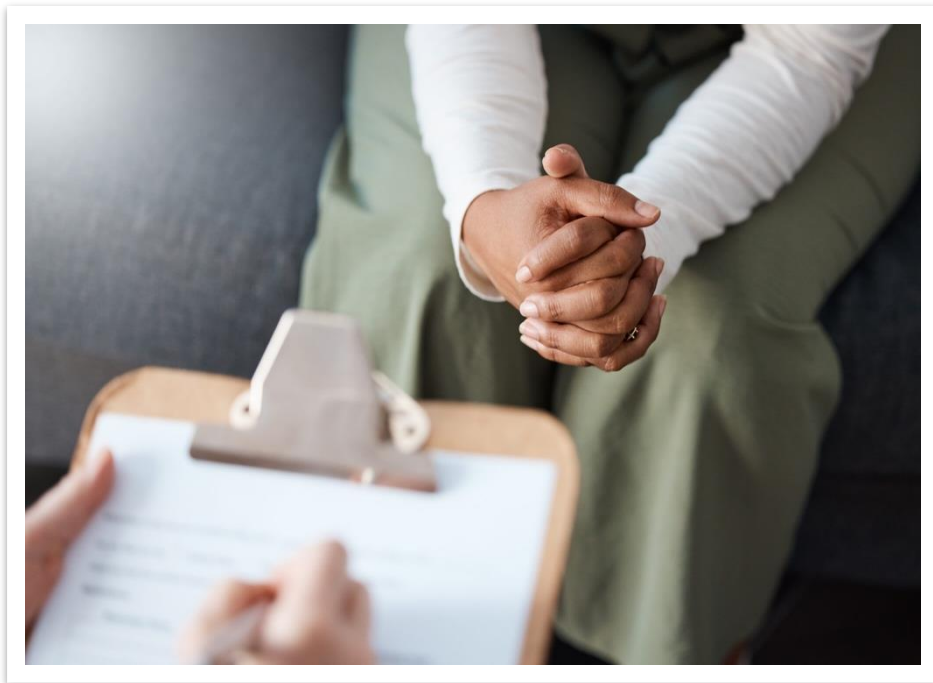
**Contact@OneOp.org**

# **Evidence-Based Interventions for Supporting Military Spouse Career Development**

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# Today's Webinar

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# OneOp

## Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2023-48770-41333.

# Today's Presenter

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## **Seth C.W. Hayden, Ph.D.**

LCMHC (NC), NCC, CCMHC, ACS

Associate Professor of Counseling & Coordinator of Clinical  
Mental Health Counseling at Wake Forest University

# Learning Objectives

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- Describe the unique experiences and challenges related to the career development and employment of military spouses.
- Examine current research on the career and work stressors faced by military spouses.
- Apply a career development theory and related interventions to empower military spouses in achieving positive career development outcomes.
- Identify resources and strategies to effectively support the career development and work experiences of military spouses.

# Where Are You Joining Us From?

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- Organization/Position
- State
- Town
- Installation



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A close-up photograph of a person's hands assembling a jigsaw puzzle on a wooden table. The person is wearing a dark ring on their left hand. The puzzle pieces are scattered across the table, with some already in place. The background is slightly blurred, showing more puzzle pieces and the wooden surface.

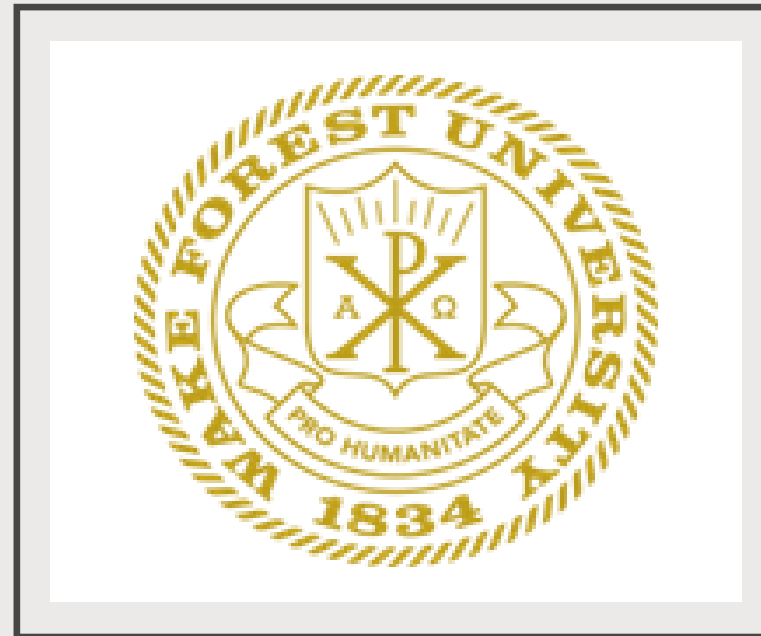
# PROVIDING CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO MILITARY SPOUSES

- **Seth C.W. Hayden Ph.D.**
- **Wake Forest University**

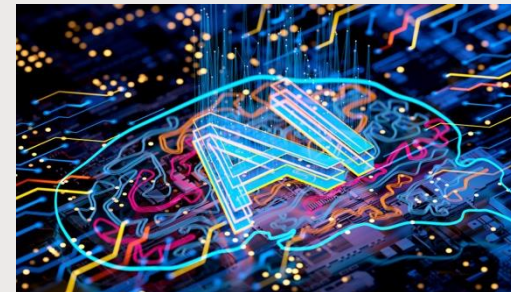
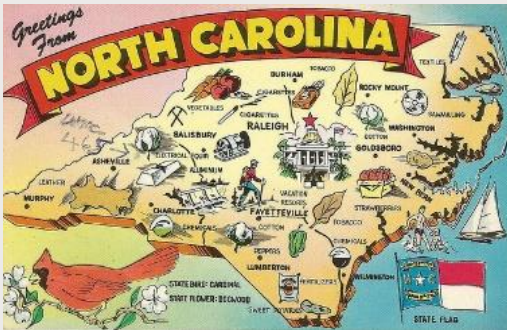
# INTRODUCTION

## **Seth C.W. Hayden, Ph.D.**

- Associate Professor at Wake Forest University
- Coordinator of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program
- LCMHC (NC), NCC, CCMHC, ACS
- Associate Editor of The Career Development Quarterly
- Focus on Career Development and Mental Health: Career and Personal Needs of Military Service Members, Veterans, and Family Members



# CAREER AND MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION?



# CONCERNS OF MILITARY SPOUSES



Photo by Johans Chavarro / CC BY-SA 4.0  
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## Experience of Military Spouses

### Most pressing issues<sup>1</sup>

#### ➤ Active-duty spouses

- Military spouse employment (54%)
- Military pay (45%)
- Time away from family due to service (40%)
- Housing affordability (38%)

## Experience of Military Spouses

### Most pressing issues<sup>1</sup>

#### ➤ Veteran spouses

- Access to military/VA health care system(s) (57%)
- Military benefits (39%)
- Understanding of military/Veteran issues among civilians (36%)
- Military spouse employment (31%)

<sup>1</sup>Blue Star Military Family Lifestyle Survey (2024)

# CHALLENGES AND TRANSITIONS

- Unemployment rate for active-duty spouses is 20%<sup>1</sup>
- Two incomes have become increasingly vital for 77% of military families.
- **Transitions and Cultural Awareness**
  - Understanding of military and Veteran issues among civilians (37% for Veteran respondents and 36% for spouses of Veterans).
  - Veteran respondents and spouses of Veterans express concerns about the transition from military to civilian life (25% and 29%, respectively)
  - 19% of active-duty spouses believe the public truly appreciates military families' sacrifices.

<sup>1</sup>Office of People Analytics (2025)

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the perceived stress amongst military spouses transitioning from the military?
- What is the degree of perceived resources for military spouses transitioning from the military?
- Is there a relationship between perceived stress and perceived resources?
- Are perceived resources predictive of perceived stress?

# THE STUDY SAMPLE

- 126 (101-106 completed items of demographic data)

## Ethnic/Racial Identity

- White - 83.8
- Hispanic/Latino - 8.6%
- Black/African-American - 1.9%
- Asian - 1%

## Gender Identity

- Female - 99.1%
- Male 0.9%

## Age (in years)

- 33-40 - 32.1%
- 41-45 - 23.6%
- 46-50 - 24.5%

# STUDY SAMPLE

- How long until your spouse will separate from the military?
  - 0-5 months - 33%
  - Other - 30.2%
    - Singular responses from 10 years from now to 21 days ago.
    - Fair amount have already separated.
  - 2 years - 11.3%
- Service Status
  - Active Duty - 98%
  - Reserves - 1%
  - National Guard - 1%
- Branch Affiliation
  - Army - 53.8%
  - Air Force - 21.7%
  - Navy - 15.1%
  - Marines - 5.7%
  - Coast Guard - 3.8%



# ASSESSMENTS

- Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1994).
- Personal Resource Questionnaire (PRQ2000; Weinert, 2003).
- Demographic Data

# RESULTS

- PSS Total Score (correction, n = 126)
  - Mean = 29.497
  - Standard Deviation = 6.443
  - 27 - 40 range of total score - high perceived stress
  
- PRQ2000 Total Score (n = 121; Range of 15 - 105)
  - Mean = 80.149
  - Standard Deviation = 13.836

# IMPLICATIONS

- Practice
  - Counseling
    - Assess for stress and resources for transitioning spouses
    - Connect spouses with resources to potentially mitigate stress
    - Understand military and military spouse culture
    - Self-reflect on personal pre-existing beliefs
    - Ask questions regarding the following:
      - The reason for the spousal transition
      - Years of spousal service
      - Education
      - Prior work experience
      - Marriage Quality/ Satisfaction
      - Perception regarding gender roles
      - Identity

# COGNITIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING THEORY



Cognitive-Behavioral  
in nature



Focus on career  
problem solving and  
decision-making  
process



Assess readiness-  
adapt interventions  
to client needs



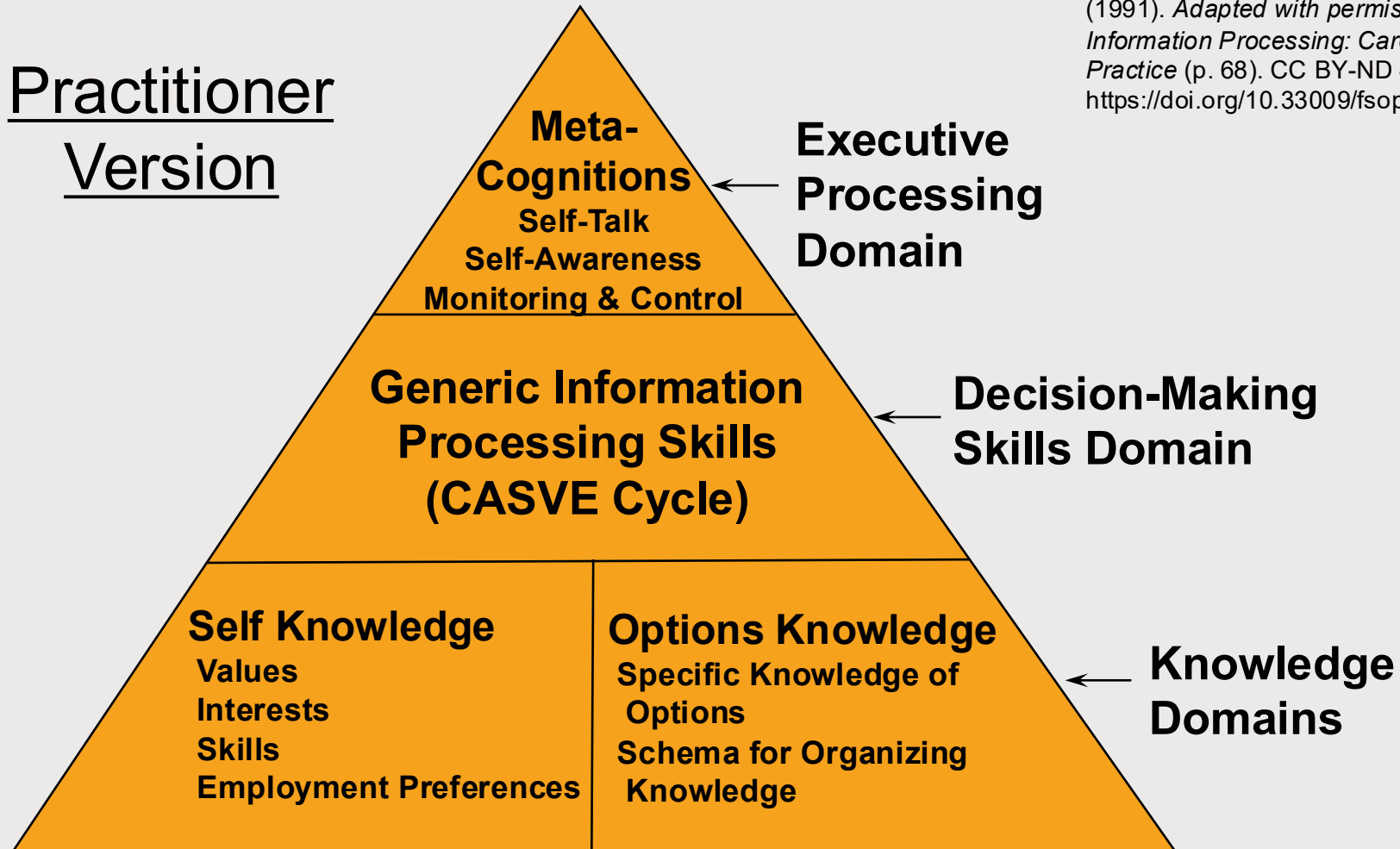
Expand knowledge of  
self, options, and  
decision-making



Intended to empower  
client to effectively  
engage in career problem  
solving and decision  
making

# Pyramid of Information Processing Domains

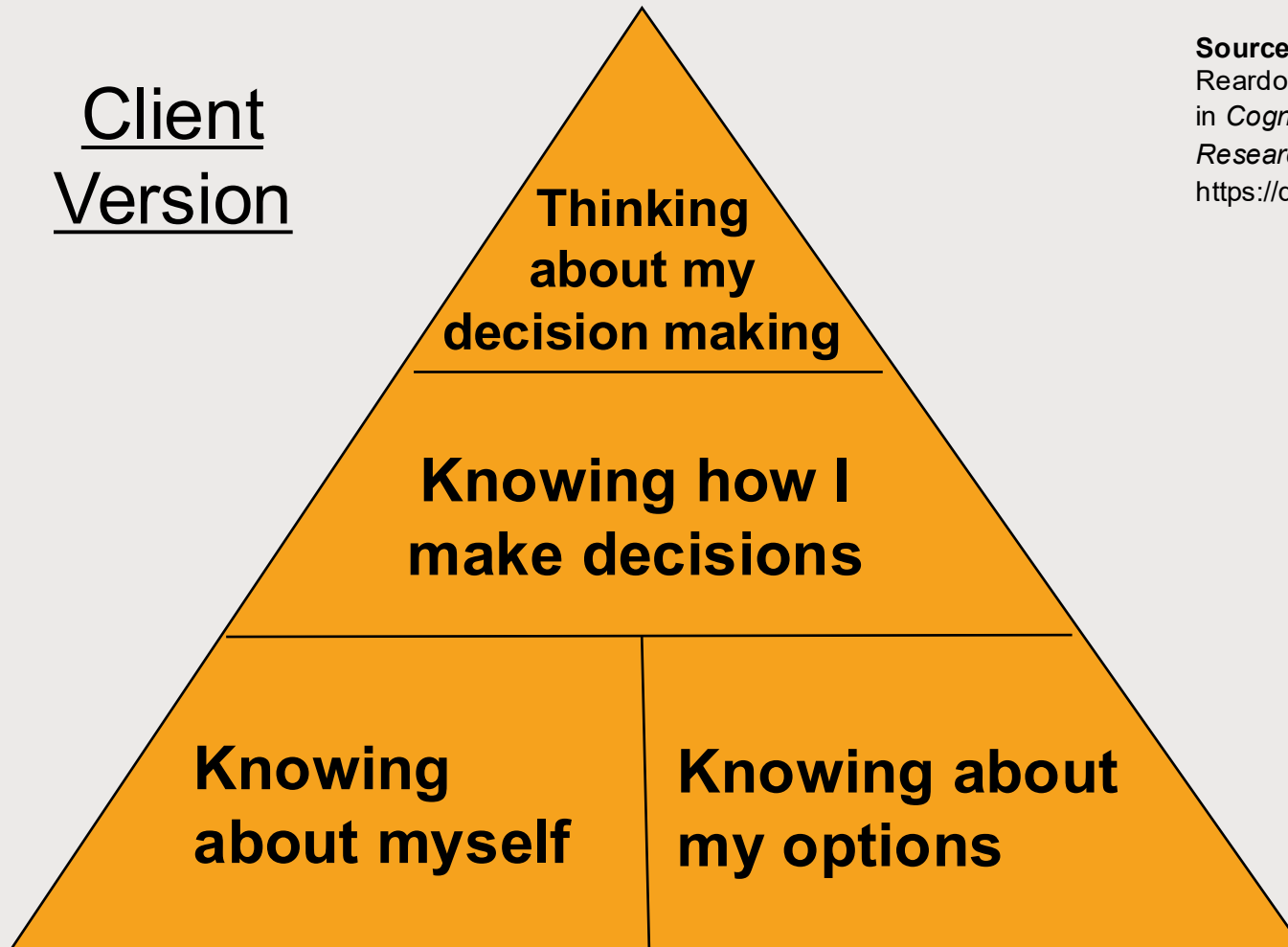
Practitioner  
Version



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# Pyramid of Information Processing Domains

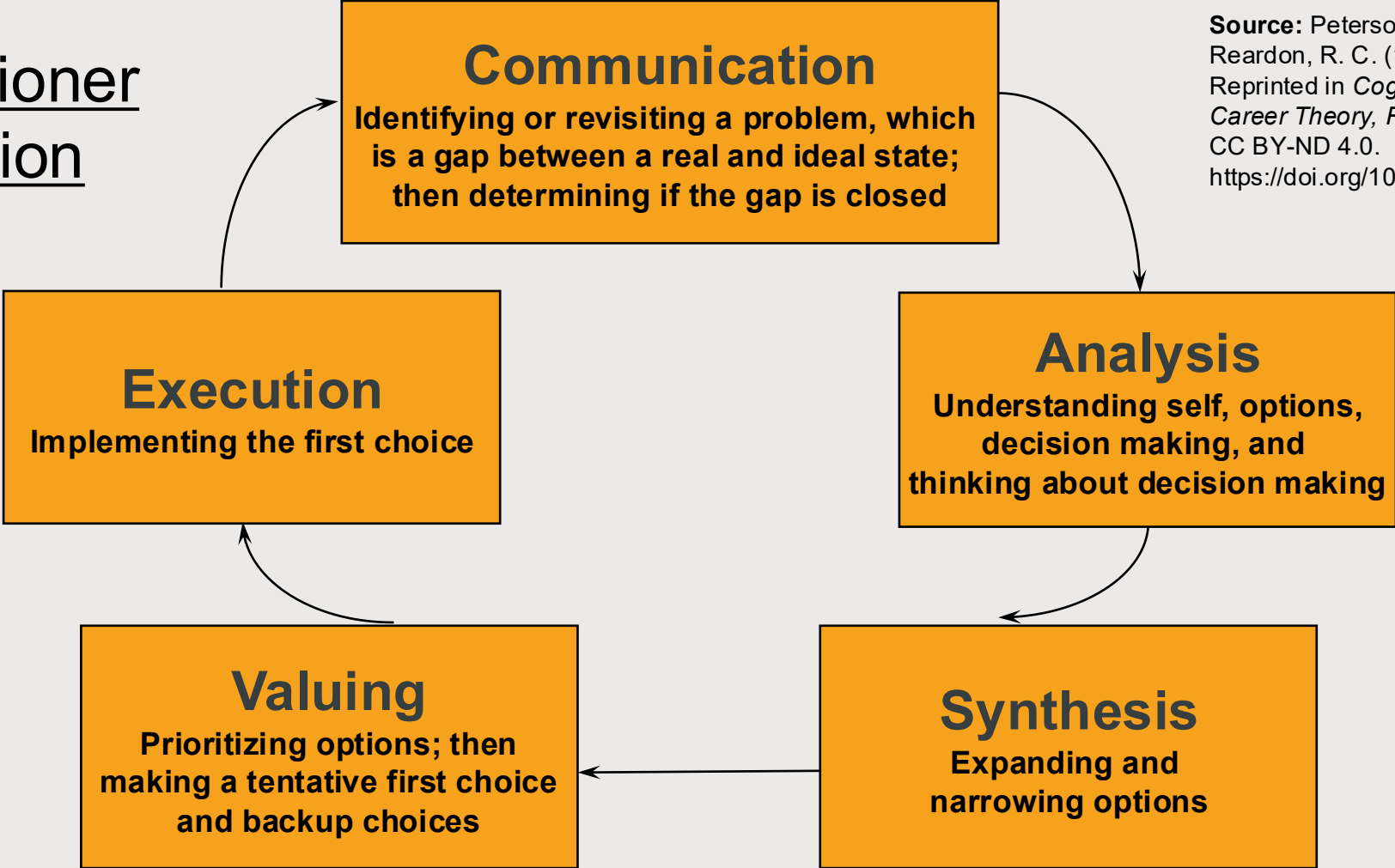
Client  
Version



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# THE CASVE CYCLE

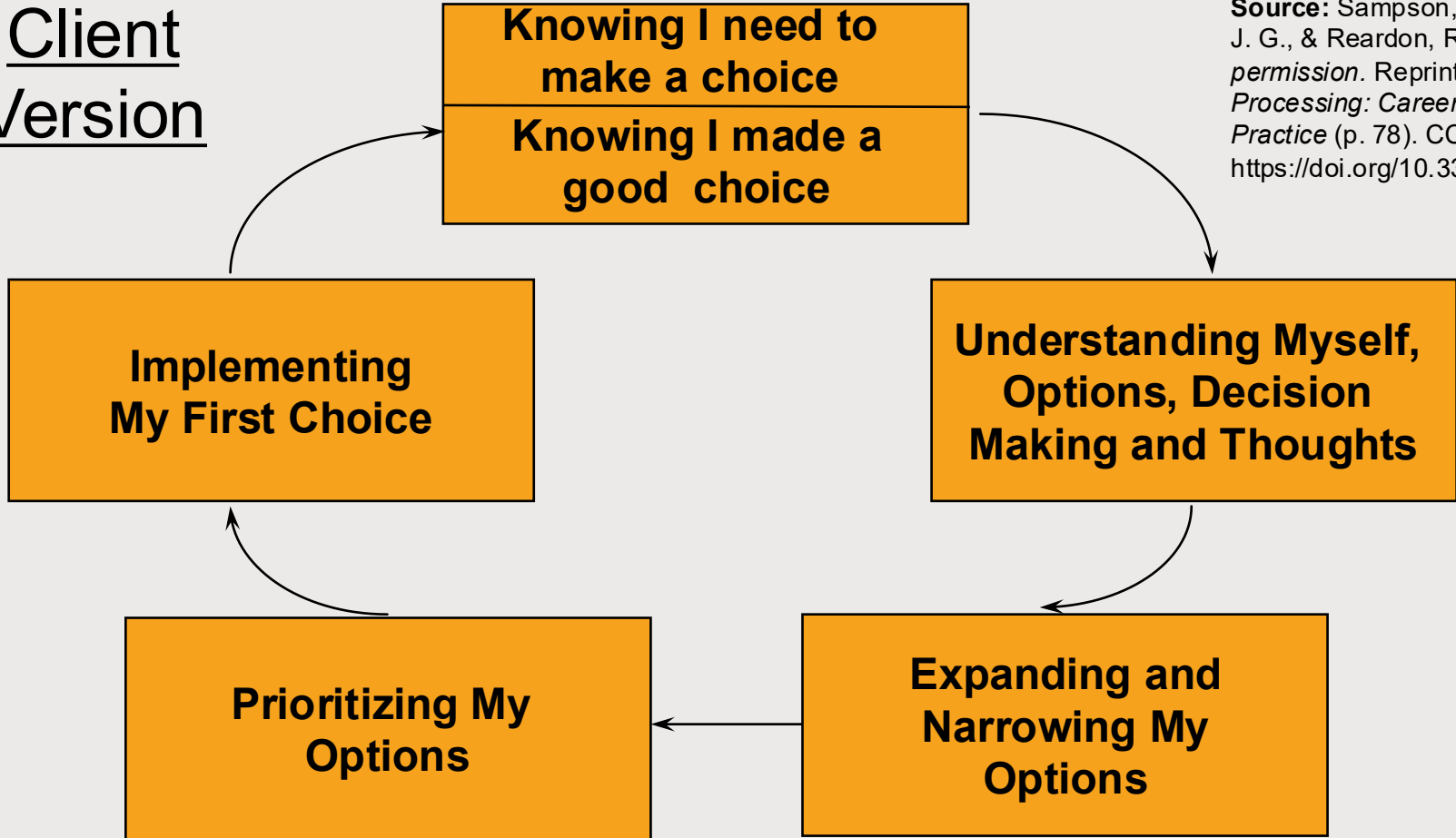
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# CASVE CYCLE

Client  
Version



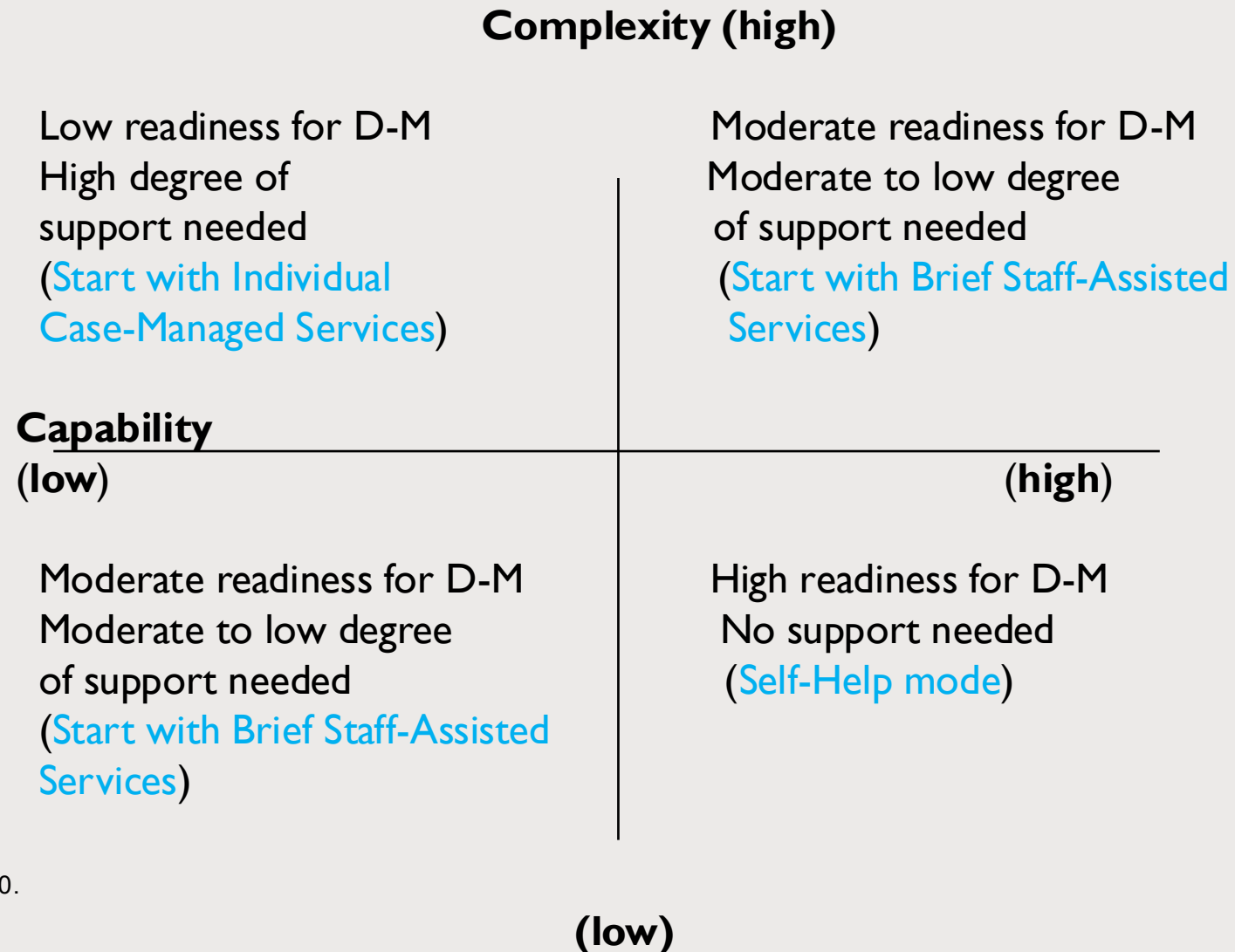
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# CIP READINESS

The capability of an individual to make appropriate career choices taking into account the complexity of family, social, economic, and organizational factors that influence career development.

Readiness also includes possessing adequate language skills and literacy skills for communication and learning.

# TWO-DIMENSIONAL READINESS MODEL



**Source:** Sampson, J. P., Peterson, G. W., Reardon, R. C., & Lenz, J. G. (2000). *Adapted with permission.* Reprinted in *Cognitive Information Processing: Career Theory, Research, and Practice* (p. 179). CC BY-ND 4.0. [https://doi.org/10.33009/fsop\\_sampson1123](https://doi.org/10.33009/fsop_sampson1123)

# RESEARCH ON OUR BRIEF-ASSISTED MODEL – WHO?

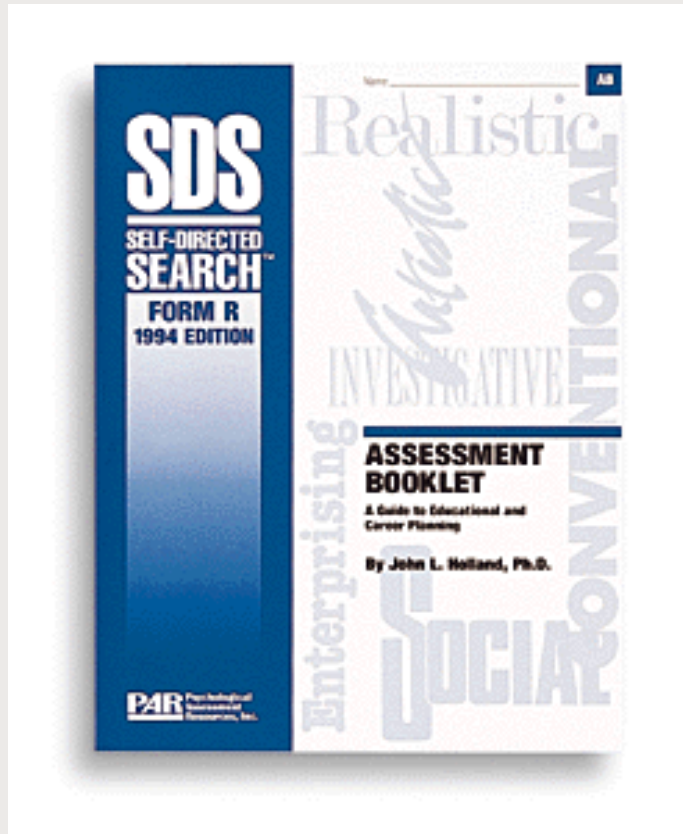
- Who: 128 drop-in volunteer clients
  - 60% female, age 17-39 years
  - 60% White, 17% Latino, 12% Black, 6% Asian, 6% Other
  - Nearly equally divided among educational status



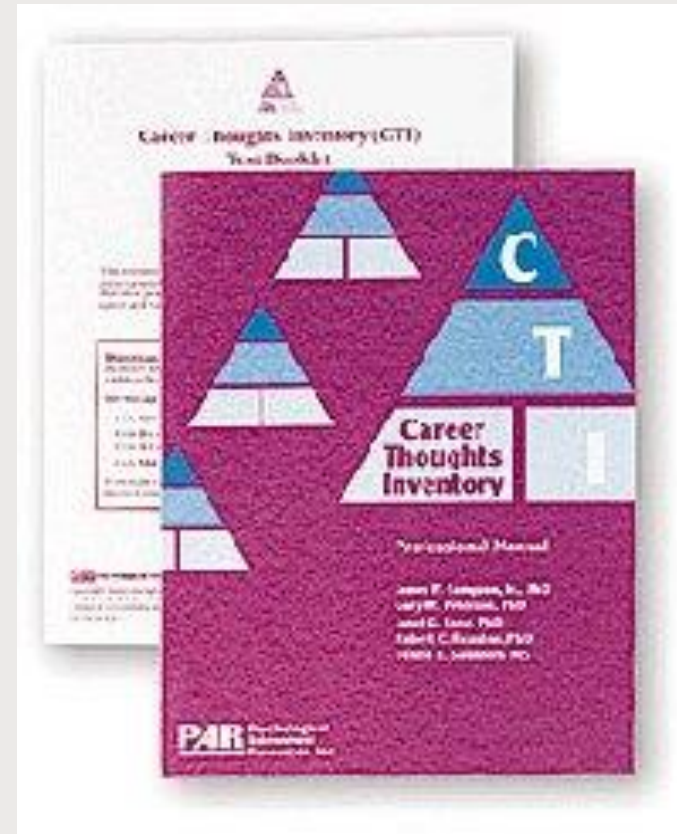
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# ASSESSMENT/INTERVENTION

- Self-Directed Search



- Career Thoughts Inventory



Download a copy of these additional resources from the OneOp Event Page!

# RESEARCH ON OUR BRIEF-ASSISTED MODEL – WHAT?



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- What is the effect of a brief-assisted career counseling model on general outcomes?
- What are the attitudes of drop-in clients regarding the effectiveness of a brief-assisted career counseling model?
- What is the relationship between process characteristics and changes in outcome variables?
  - (pre and post test scores on knowledge, confidence, anxiety; post test feelings, thoughts about counseling interactions, etc. )

# RESEARCH ON OUR BRIEF-ASSISTED MODEL – HOW?



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- Pre/Post Surveys
- Session Rating Scale
  - Cronbach's alpha: .88; this study .94
- ANOVA and Correlations

## CHANGE RESULT %

	<b>Positive</b> (posttest>pretest)	<b>Neutral</b> (posttest=pretest)	<b>Negative</b> (posttest<pretest)
Knowledge (increased)	38	56	6
Confidence (increased)	27	64	10
Anxiety (decreased)	32 (reduced anxiety)	57	11 (increased anxiety)



## INTERVENTIONS - EXECUTIVE PROCESSING

- Identifying, challenging, and altering negative self-talk with instruments such as the Career Thoughts Inventory<sup>1</sup> or the Career Thoughts Workbook<sup>2</sup>
- Attentiveness to the emotional aspect of the career concern.
- Co-create individual action plans to help manage the process<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sampson et al. (1996a)

<sup>2</sup>Sampson et al. (1996b)

<sup>3</sup>Sampson et al. (2020, 2004)

## INTERVENTIONS - EXECUTIVE PROCESSING

- Benefit in using CIP and RIASEC theories concurrently for case conceptualization and treatment planning<sup>1</sup>
- Attentiveness to the emotional aspect of the career concern.
- To address inability to identify abilities or options, use interventions that increase mastery and self-efficacy, such as a counselor-facilitated skill building exercise or the cognitive restructuring of negative thought endorsements on the CTI<sup>2</sup>
- Guide to Good Decision-Making Exercise<sup>3</sup>
- CTI workbook<sup>4</sup>

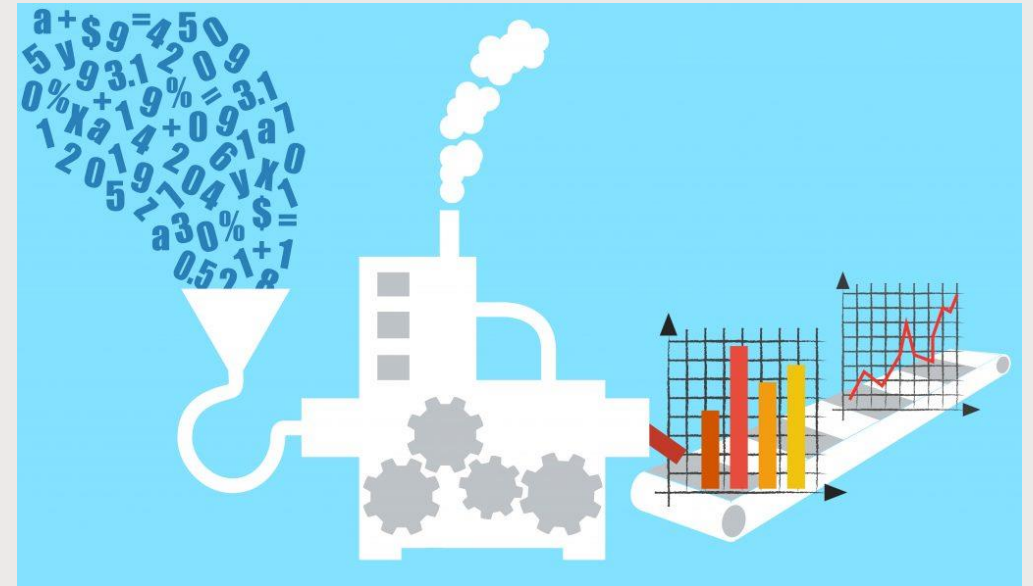


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<sup>1</sup>Reardon & Lenz (2015)

<sup>2</sup>Kronholz & Osborn (2022)

<sup>3</sup>Sampson et al. (1996b)

<sup>4</sup>Sampson et al. (1996c)

## INTERVENTIONS – CAREER READINESS

- Discussion of capability components including internal factors such as motivation, honest exploration, assuming personal responsibility, awareness of how thoughts and feelings impact decision-making
- Discussion of complexity components including external factors such as family, economy, and other social pressures that weigh on a person's decision-making process
- Exploration of issues impacting a person's career readiness through measures such as the Career Thoughts Inventory<sup>1</sup> or the Decision Space Worksheet<sup>2</sup> determine which level of support (self-help, brief-assisted, or individual-case managed) would be most appropriate given the client's readiness

<sup>1</sup>Sampson et al. (1996a)

<sup>2</sup>Peterson et al. (2010)



# INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

## Individual Learning Plan

Goal(s) #1 Clarify interests and ascertain readiness for career counseling

#2 Explore options for a graduate degree

#3 Improve peer networking skills at work

#4 Increase social interactions among family members

Activity	Purpose/Outcome	Estimated Time Commitment	Goal #	Priority
Individual career counseling to foster self exploration	Enhance knowledge of self and career options	On-going	1, 2, & 3	2
Complete the Career Thoughts Inventory	Ascertain potential dysfunctional career thoughts	15 minutes	1	1
Complete Self-Directed Search	Enhance self knowledge	45 minutes	1	3
Explore potential graduate degree programs of interest	Enhance knowledge of options	On-going	2	4
Practice interacting with other people at work and in neighborhood	Gain self-observation skills and experience in interactions with peers	On-going	3	5
Carry out referral to university counseling center for family counseling <sup>a</sup>	Improve quality of family relationships related to career choice and support	One week	4	6

Ned

Student/Client

Date

<sup>a</sup> This activity may be conducted in a career center if counselor possesses appropriate skills and training

# ASSESSMENT - INTERVENTION

## Card Sorts

- Occupational
- Values
- Leisure



## Decision Space Worksheet

**Decision Space Worksheet (DSW)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Decision you are making \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that bear on the decision you are making.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**The Decision Space**

**Directions:**

- The large circle below represents the total decision space.
- Within the large circle, draw smaller circles that represent the magnitude or the relative importance of each item listed on the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW).

## CASE STUDY

- Stephanie, a military spouse, has a significant other who is serving in the U.S. Army. As part of their experience, they have frequently moved. She has struggled with securing meaningful employment while supporting her spouses' military career and serving as the primary caregiver for their children.
- She has worked in several jobs in technological support as this aligns with her undergraduate degree in computer science. She indicated she is “really frustrated” due to her struggles to maintain consistent employment and advance in her career due to familial demands and frequent moves.
- She is interested in exploring career possibilities but is uncertain if she wants to remain in her current field or consider alternative paths.

# CASE STUDY PROCESSING QUESTIONS



What are the relevant career and mental health factors impacting Stephanie's experience?



What are the relevant elements of CIP that apply to this case?



Share your answers with us in  
the chat pod!

## CASE STUDY CALL TO ACTION

How would you utilize assessments to inform your work?

What integrated interventions would you utilize to support Stephanie?



Reflect on your answer & how you could apply this to your work.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

- Focus on connection between career development concerns and mental health as evidence supports this connection.
- Military spouses have a unique experience worthy of understanding.
- CIP provides a framework in which to address the unique needs of military spouses.
- Useful to consider ways in which to integrate elements of our work.

### Theory, Practice, and Research

- Career and mental health services would benefit from resembling the real life of those we serve.

# Any Questions?

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Share your questions  
with us in the chat pod!

# Contact Info

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## Dr. Seth Hayden



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**On X:** @SCWHayden

**On LinkedIn:** Seth Hayden

# On-Demand Webinar

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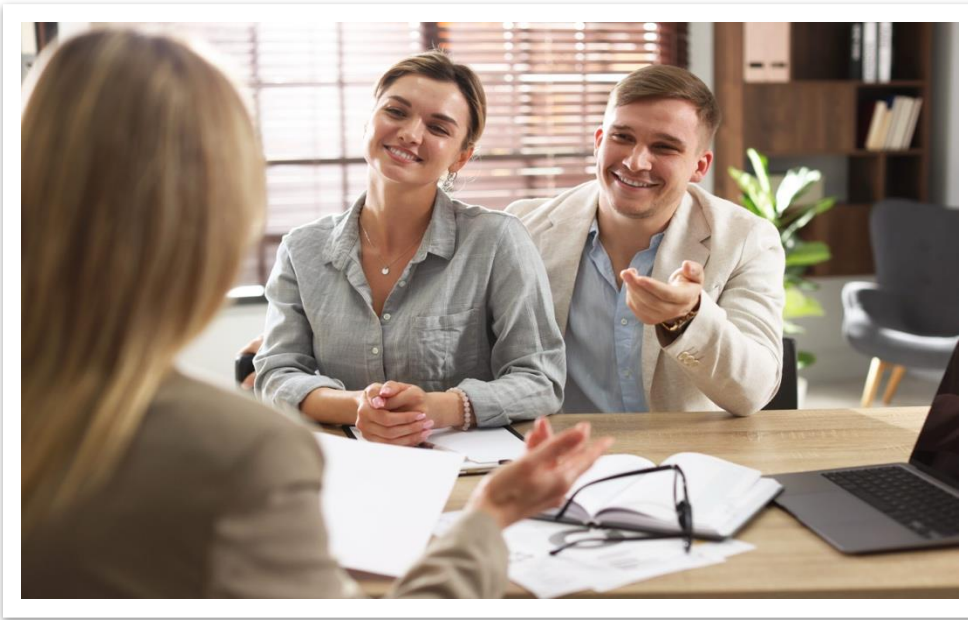
## **Creating Safe Pathways: Employment Advocacy for Military Spouses in Crisis**

<https://oneop.org/learn/160113/>

This on-demand webinar explored how employment can serve as a protective factor for military families affected by domestic abuse. Attendees took part in an engaging discussion on strengthening support for these families and helping them respond effectively during critical moments.

# Upcoming Event

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## **Supporting Military Couples Through Employment and Financial Transitions**

**Thursday, February 12, 2026**

PCS moves and other military transitions can disrupt spouse employment, leading to financial strain and stress that affect overall family well-being. This interactive webinar equips service providers with practical strategies and coordinated referral pathways—to help couples access resources to strengthen family stability and force readiness.

**Continuing education credit will be available for this session!**

# Continuing Education

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This webinar has been approved for 1.5 continuing education (CE) credits from the following organizations:

- The American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- The Board Certification for Patient Advocates (BCPA)
- The Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work (UTSW)
- Certificate of attendance

## Evaluation Link

Go to the event page for the evaluation and post-test link.

[Continuing Education](#)

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