Sample Career Counseling Interview Questions

**Leigh Mundhenk, Ph.D. presented the initial questions for discussion at the MCDA 2011 Fall Workshop, titled “Please just tell me what to do! Using Cognitive Stage Development Theory to help us customize career counseling approaches to meet our clients’ needs.”**

(As promised at the workshop, Leigh has shared her original questions and those generated by participants at the workshop. Questions added during the workshop are noted in red)

**Decision-making Questions:**

1. How do you feel about making a decision about your career? What would you need now in order to make a decision about your career? And what could get in the way of that?

2. How have you made other important decisions in the past? Is there a particular process that you like to use?

3. What has been the biggest and hardest decision that you have ever had to make? What made it hard for you? What were the specific situations, actions, and results? Were you satisfied with the results? What strategies did you apply? What happened? What would you do differently?

4. When making decisions do you tend to solicit input from others? How much do you rely upon them to help you make decisions? Do you tend to follow their advice or take it into consideration? Ask for examples. What advice have you received from others (unsolicited)? What feedback have you received?

5. Based on prior experiences, how would you evaluate your decision-making ability?

6. When you have trouble making a decision, do you think it is more often because you need more information or because it is difficult to make the decision? Can you give an example?

7. What sort of process did you pursue to choose your college?

8. Describe a decision you have made. What were you looking for? How did you go about it?

9. How did you make your choice to attend this college? What steps did you go through in reaching your decision?

10. How would you go about helping a friend make a decision?

11. What are your responsibilities in life right now? Family? Community? How will your career decision fit into this picture?

12. What does this decision mean to you?

13. After you make a decision, are you able to stick with it?

14. Where would you like to be geographically located?

15. What successes have helped to build decision-making confidence?

16. Give an example of a decision you have made and the process you used to make it.
17. Give some examples of decisions you have made today and how you made them- a financial decision, and interpersonal decision, what you decided to wear today.

18. What is your decision-making style?

19. How do you prioritize?

20. How do you feel when you’ve made a decision and someone disagrees with it? What would you do?

21. What brought you in to see me today? How can I help you?

22. What challenges do you see between you and your career goal?

23. How would you feel if I made your career decision for you?

24. How do you feel about leaving your last career? (to get at self-identity, perhaps)

25. What do you need to change in your life to get you to your goal?

26. What brings you here today?

27. On a scale of one – 10 (10 being the most ready) how ready are you to make a change/decision?

Knowledge Gathering Questions:

1. When you need information to make a decision, how do you go about getting it?

2. How do you know if the information you get is valid or accurate? How do you know the information is valid or accurate? Who did you ask? What was your thought process? How do you validate the information you obtained?

3. What people do you trust the most to give you accurate and helpful information?

4. How often do you disagree with information you are given? Can you think of an example?

5. What experience have you had to support this career choice?

6. What did you like and dislike from your career related experiences?

7. Where do you go for information beyond consulting people? What is the way you gather information? Research? Interviews? Experiences?

8. How do you keep track of information or not?

9. What ideas do you have around employment and how did you arrive at these ideas?

10. What resources are you currently using? Are your resources paper? Computer? Online? People? Other?

11. How do you know when you have enough information?

12. How would you recognize when our work in career counseling together is done?

13. How do you know when you’ve reached the right decision for you?
14. Give examples of situations to help people tell a story of a decision they made

15. What do you already know and what research have you done?

16. What do you think your next steps should be?

Tolerance for Ambiguity Questions

1. What is it like for you when you get conflicting information from different sources? How you deal with the differences?

2. Do you prefer to have one clear perspective or multiple, sometimes contradictory, perspectives when making a decision?

3. Do multiple perspectives tend to confuse you or frustrate you, or do they give you a welcome opportunity to explore lots of possibilities?

4. How do you resolve the ambiguity resulting from conflicting information?

5. Do you prefer to work out details in advance or do you like to see what opportunities pop up?

6. Think of an experience/task/project that you handled that you consider successful/ unsuccessful. What are the factors that made it successful/unsuccessful? (This question may help to facilitate a discussion about what values were important to the individual).

7. How do you deal with stress? How have you dealt with stressful situations in the past?

8. What has been your favorite work environment and your least favorite environment?

9. What unexpected events or people have influenced your past decisions?

10. How open are you to unexpected opportunities?

11. Do you believe this process will result in a positive outcome? How?

12. Are you optimistic that you will find an occupation you are interested in? Why or why not?

13. Are you comfortable taking risks? (Or) What is a comfortable risk for you take?

14. If you’re facing a deadline, is that more pressure or do you love it?

External Influences Questions

1. Who is influencing your decisions?

2. What is influencing your decisions?

Values Questions

1. What are the important values in your life today?

2. Who have you talked to about your situation?

3. Tell me about yourself (to disclose barriers disclosed)
4. Do you make your decisions based on circumstances or values?

5. Do you make decisions based on what’s in your heart or in your head?

Motivation

This topic was suggested but not yet developed.