

The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the men in my life. A feminist, I have often overlooked the importance of wonderful, supportive, insightful, and patient men who coexist with strong women. You surprise me, encourage me, embrace me.

To my father, who knew long before I did that I would be a doctor—for your stories that founded my understanding and creative spirit and for your wisdom, I am grateful beyond measure. You may not be here to celebrate this day with me, but you are in my heart. This degree is for you.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model

Career counseling traditionally is a short-term intervention and, as viewed by many counselors, is something different from personal counseling (Manuele-Adkins, 1992). Manuele-Adkins (1992) suggested that counselors often limit intervention strategies to interest testing, exploratory activities, and exposure to career resource materials, which leaves little time to focus on the psychological aspects of career indecision and conflict. Further, frequently ignoring interrelationships between the personal and career domains, career counselors have a tendency to be myopic in focus (Brown, 1986).

This study explored the experiences of clients in metropolitan Washington, DC, who experienced one of two approaches to career counseling. One counselor utilized methods that are more traditional, whereas the other counselor implemented an integrative approach, blending career counseling and mental health counseling. Career counseling clients seeing one of the two career counselors participated in semi-structured interviews and two written self-report measures between February 2013 and April 2013. Themes emerged from the data, and these findings have implications for future study of client experiences in integrative career counseling approaches.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Career counseling is a foundation of the counseling profession and focuses on matters of work and career choices (Gladding, 2011). “Career counseling primarily involves career planning and decision making while encompassing many other matters, such as integrating life, work, family and social roles, discrimination, stress, sexual harassment, bias, stereotyping, pay inequities, and ‘*tokenism*’” (Engels, Minor, & Sampson, 1995, p. 134). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of career counseling clients being counseled by two career counselors in Washington, DC, using their individual approaches. One approach utilized methods that are more traditional, whereas the other implemented an integrative approach, blending career counseling and mental health counseling.

Conceptual Framework

Fundamental to the career counseling field is the work of Frank Parsons. His book *Choosing a Vocation* (Parsons, 1909) was transformational for the burgeoning vocational guidance field, and in it, he discussed a three-step model: evaluating individuals’ interests, abilities, values, and skills; identifying the requirements of various occupations; and matching individuals to suitable occupations via true reasoning. From Parsons’ contributions emerged many individuals who pursued the development of theories, techniques, and organizations (Savickas, 2009). An influential pioneer who immediately followed Frank Parsons is Meyer Bloomfield, and he is credited with progress such as working to develop organizations that supported vocational counseling, publishing on

topics of vocational guidance, and training guidance and counseling professionals (Savickas, 2009). Although many other innovators came later in the 20th century, these two men enabled opportunities for the beginnings of the career counseling field. In particular, current theories stem from their contributions, most notably trait and factor theories, which resulted from the work of Parsons (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2012).

Counselors use many theories to help their clients initiate change in their lives, such as trait and factor theories; developmental theories; cognitive learning theories and approaches; and contextual, ecological, and sociological theories (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2012). The two licensed practicing career counselors whose clients' experiences were explored in this study worked from their own theoretical orientations learned through their graduate training and professional continuing education, with one using a more traditional approach to career counseling and one using a new approach, integrative career counseling (ICC). ICC (Chopra, 2012) is rooted in the idea that career counselors can help clients achieve their career goals despite life complications, such as depression, trauma, addiction, divorce, chronic illness, and ailing family members. "The career counseling work floats on top of this mental health . . . framework" (Chopra, 2012). As an example of the difference between the two approaches, as described by one of the career counselors in this study, a career counselor using a traditional approach would not "start with the mental health assessment, but rather with the career work and address the issues that inevitably emerge as needed. . . . I go looking for mental health issues." When this description was presented to the other career counselor in this study, she reported, "Well put and accurate" (personal communication, 2013). She added, "An integrative approach leads to more sessions and more in-depth sessions."

To consider the importance of new approaches, such as ICC (Chopra, 2012), in the field of career counseling, it is imperative to turn to current scholars and leaders in the field of career counseling. Mark Savickas (2003) wrote: “Career development theories must be renovated with new propositions and augmented by innovative models that accommodate the realities of working and living in postindustrial societies” (p. 89). It has been recommended that the career counseling profession should expand its focus and incorporate greater awareness of race, sex, and culture (Savickas, 2003). Additionally and more importantly, it has been suggested that the field promote a holistic view of life roles and that it integrate career development theories, making them more coherent and comprehensive (Savickas, 2003).

Career counseling traditionally is a short-term intervention and, as viewed by many counselors, is somewhat different from personal counseling (Manuele-Adkins, 1992). Manuele-Adkins (1992) noted that career counselors often limit intervention strategies to interest testing, exploratory activities, and exposure to career resource materials. This leaves little time to focus on the psychological aspects of career indecision and conflict. Further, frequently ignoring interrelationships between the personal and career domains, career counselors have a tendency to be myopic in focus (Brown, 1986). As another consideration in this discussion, Rochlen, Milburn, and Hill (2004) purported that distressed career counseling clients may seek out career counseling instead of personal counseling because it is easier and more socially acceptable to ask for help with career problems than it is to ask for help with personal problems. Resulting, then, are instances of client needs not being met in career counseling, if career counselors are unwilling to explore personal concerns (Rochlen et al., 2004).

Blustein and Spengler (1995) proffered that there is growing recognition in the literature that an important factor to consider in career counseling is client psychological distress. Anderson and Niles (1995) examined career and noncareer concerns presented throughout career counseling by clients with only career concerns as the presenting problems. Over one third of their concerns were noncareer concerns as counseling ensued (Anderson & Niles, 1995). Moreover, their results suggest that clients chose to address both career and noncareer concerns even when initially presenting as clients with career concerns (Anderson & Niles, 1995). In another study conducted by Niles, Anderson, and Cover (2000) that examined intake session concerns and goals in career counseling, the researchers found that clients discussed more noncareer content during counseling sessions than at intake sessions, providing a less than clear indication of what clients will discuss in career counseling sessions. Noting the seriousness of psychological distress, Kates, Greiff, and Hagen (1993) wrote how psychological distress can “accentuate the underlying symptoms and may lead to more pronounced psychiatric syndromes” (p. 164). As a result, this researcher suggests that the career counseling environment and counseling relationship should provide a format for addressing all life concerns, even if they are not specifically career related, and a qualitative study of the experiences of career counseling clients may provide support for this view.

Statement of the Problem

As stated by O’Brien (1997), “The conceptualization of career counseling has evolved beyond the original perception of matching individuals and environments advanced by Parsons early in the 20th century” (p. 21). Living in postindustrial societies demands changes to career development theories and models (Savickas, 2009). Although

there is literature endorsing integrative approaches to career counseling, there is a paucity of research that demonstrates specifically whether integrative approaches, whereby career counseling and mental health counseling are integrated, are helpful to career counseling clients. Exploring the experiences of career counseling clients in practices with varying approaches to career counseling is one way to understand what it is like to be in career counseling, and it is through this exploration that better understanding of career counseling clients' needs may continue to emerge.

Herr (1989) offered a poignant comment on the role of mental health and career counseling:

If one considers work and mental health to be linked . . . and career counseling to be an effective process for helping persons choose work wisely and improve their adjustment to it, then, logic would argue for career counseling to be a useful process in the service of mental health. (p. 13)

Yet more often than not, career counseling focuses on career outcomes for clients with little focus on mental health or psychological distress (Multon, Heppner, Gysbers, Zook, & Ellis-Kalton, 2001). Further, as a result of nonexistent investigations into client mental health or psychological distress, career counselors know very little about the mental health of their clients upon the onset of career counseling (Multon et al., 2001).

Considering the impact that career stress may have on clients' lives, it is entirely possible that clients may experience and show evidence of mood issues like depression and anxiety and may even become less certain of personal and/or career goals (Multon et al., 2001), all of which can be treated in career counseling.

In their meta-analysis, Whiston, Brecheisen, and Stephens (2003) indicated that there has been little empirical study of some career modalities and that there is an overall decreased interest in career outcome research. In the career counseling field, there

continues to be a focus on providing empirically validated counseling to clients, but without a renewed interest in career outcome research, “career counseling might not be considered an empirically supported psychological intervention” (Whiston et al., 2003, p. 402). This study aimed to explore the experiences of career counseling clients in two approaches to career counseling, with a secondary goal being to continue building a bridge between career counseling and mental health counseling. Moreover, recognizing that there can be lost opportunities for clients to get valuable help with career and mental health issues, this study pursued researching career counseling specifically from qualitative means to obtain an understanding of the experiences of clients in a traditional approach to career counseling and an integrated approach to career counseling.

Exploratory Question

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of clients in career counseling with two career counselors using their own career counseling approaches in their respective private practices. Using the process of qualitative research, the study was guided by one central exploratory question: What is the experience like for clients in career counseling? The overarching objective of this qualitative study was to generate information that may lead to continued study.

Methods

This study sought to explore the experiences of career counseling clients, and more specifically to look at the experiences of more traditional career counseling clients (where the counselor does not use an integrated approach) and the experiences of clients receiving an integrated approach to career counseling. Semistructured interviews and two

self-report instruments were used to explore experiences of the participants in the two approaches to career counseling.

The study participants were the clients attending treatment with the two career counselors, both of whom had private practices in Washington, DC. The two career counselors had similar training and licensing. Recruitment of participants was facilitated through advertisement of this study at new client intake by the respective career counselors from October 2012 through March 2013. Seventeen individuals initially agreed to participate in the study, and 14 completed the interviews. Among those 14 participants, eight completed the two administrations of the two self-report instruments.

The informed consent process was facilitated by the researcher. Risks involved in this study were no more harmful than participants encountered in their everyday lives. Participation in this study was voluntary and did not influence treatment with the respective counselors. Aside from knowing which clients participated in this study, the counselors were not privy to any of the study data or analysis, thereby maintaining participant confidentiality, even with respective counselors.

Approval from The George Washington University institutional review board was obtained for this study on October 23, 2012. Ethical standards were implemented in facilitating the study to maintain the integrity of the research and to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Data collection was conducted during February, March, and April 2013. Due to the nature of basic interpretive research, the interviews were semistructured with the researcher probing and asking questions. The researcher also obtained demographic

information from participants, including age, race, current work role(s), and if career counseling had been used at a prior time.

Data analysis included transcription of audio-recorded participant interviews and the establishment of themes through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. No variables were manipulated in this study—instead, just the qualitative review of data was facilitated. Trustworthiness of the study was established by triangulating sources of data (interviews and self-report instruments), member checking, and peer review. The ethical standards of the American Counseling Association (2005) pertaining to research were maintained throughout this study.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms were used in this research. These definitions are provided to ensure a complete understanding of the study.

Career counseling: Career counseling is a foundation of the counseling profession and focuses on matters of work and career choices (Gladding, 2011). The relationship between vocational development over the life span and client needs is of special interest (Gladding, 2011). As noted in an article by current leaders, Engels et al. (1995), in the career counseling field,

While career counseling is sometimes narrowly perceived as helping people match their characteristics with job requirements, it can be more broadly viewed as a series of general and specific interventions throughout the life span, dealing with such concerns as self-understanding; broadening one's horizons; work selection, challenge, satisfaction, and other intrapersonal matters; work site behavior, communication, and other interpersonal phenomena; and lifestyle issues, such as balancing work, family, and leisure. Thus, career counseling primarily involves career planning and decision making while encompassing many other matters, such as integrating life, work, family and social roles, discrimination, stress, sexual harassment, bias, stereotyping, pay inequities, and 'tokenism.' (p. 134)

Career thought: Based on the Career Thoughts Inventory (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1994, 1996), career thought pertains to cognitions focused on work/educational concepts, decisions, and pursuits.

Closing or termination: Termination is defined as a transition event that ends one set of conditions so other experiences can begin (Gladding, 2011). In counseling, it is used to help clients transition out of the counseling relationship.

Coding: Three types of coding are commonly used in qualitative research: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Merriam, 2002). Open coding refers to the process of deconstructing a line, sentence, or paragraph of transcription and assigning a name or code word (Merriam, 2002). Axial coding refers to the reassembly of the data in new ways by making connections, developing categories and subcategories (Merriam, 2002). Selective coding refers to integrating the categories (Merriam, 2002). These coding types are known as categorizing strategies in qualitative data analysis (Maxwell, 2013).

Counseling outcomes: Counseling outcomes are the results of counseling and are usually linked to treatment plans (Gladding, 2011).

Counselor education: Counselor education refers to the department where counseling is taught (Gladding, 2011).

Credibility: In qualitative research, credibility is the concept that refers to the results being believable or credible to the participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Data management: Data management encompasses “the operations needed for a systematic, coherent process of data collection, storage, and retrieval” (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 428).

Intake: Intake is the process by which a client begins counseling and usually involves the counselor gathering history on the client (Gladding, 2011). Often a diagnosis is assigned and a treatment plan created to assist the counseling process.

Integrative career counseling: Integrative career counseling is a model of counseling created by Karen James Chopra that uses four levels: (a) Level 1, career counseling; (b) Level 2, emotionally focused career counseling; (c) Level 3, therapeutic career counseling; and (d) Level 4, therapy with a career focus (Chopra, 2012). In this approach, the counselor works at any of the four levels in a session, based on the presentation of client needs.

Member checks: Member checking is the process whereby the researcher provides the transcription or preliminary findings to the participants in the study so that they may reflect on the accuracy of the material (Merriam, 2002).

Mental health: “Mental Health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being component. . . . It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders” (World Health Organization, 2013).

Mental health counseling: Mental health counseling is community based and comprehensive and includes an emphasis on development, environment, prevention, and treatment issues (Gladding, 2011). According to the American Mental Health Counselors Association (2012), mental health counseling is an “interdisciplinary, multifaceted, holistic process of 1) the promotion of healthy lifestyles; 2) identification of individual stressors and personal levels of functioning; and 3) the preservation or restoration of mental health” (p. 2).

Professional association: Professional association refers to a membership organization of qualified professionals who focus on matters of educating the public, advocacy, maintaining ethical standards, and promoting the generation of a body of scholarly literature (Gladding, 2011).

Transferability: In qualitative research, transferability is the concept that refers to the generalizability of the findings to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Triangulation: Possibly the best known strategy to support internal validity in qualitative research is triangulation (Merriam, 2002). It is the process by which the researcher uses more than one source of data to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 2002). This can be done using multiple sources of data, multiple methods, or multiple investigators (Merriam, 2002).

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on career counseling and related concepts. Specifically, four sections illustrate facets of career counseling, including (a) career counseling and its history; (b) career counseling theories; (c) mental health counseling; and (d) the integration of career counseling and mental health counseling, including a discussion of integrative career counseling (ICC) (Chopra, 2012). Building conceptually, this review is designed to illustrate the need for this study.

Career Counseling and Its History

The study focuses on experiences in career counseling, so it is necessary to start the discussion by explaining this form of counseling. Career counseling is defined as “counseling that focuses on matters dealing with work and career choices, especially the relationships between the needs of clients and their vocational development over the life span” (Gladding, 2011, p. 25). Pope (2003) described the strengths of career counseling: (a) it has a relatively long history as a profession; (b) it is very practical and can be lucrative; (c) it is very positive—using and building upon the strengths of the clients; (d) there is little shame in seeking career counseling and clients actively do so; (e) career counselors have many positive attributes including being strength-oriented; and (f) it has applicability to many cultures and groups worldwide.

Pope (2003) discussed the six stages in the development of career counseling in the U.S., noting first that from 1890 to 1919, urban and industrial society were offered services. During 1920 to 1939, educational guidance in elementary and secondary

schools came into focus. The third stage, from 1940 to 1959, included a shift to colleges and universities and the training of counselors. The next stage, from 1960 to 1979, housed the concept that work could be meaningful, and organizational career development began. The fifth stage from 1980 to 1989 brought the departure from the industrial age and the entrance into the information age, where independent practices of career counseling and outplacement counseling ensued. And lastly, the sixth stage, from 1990 to the present, has seen changes such as the use of technology, the internationalization of career counseling, the onset of multicultural career counseling, and a focus on school-to-job transitions (Pope, 2003).

Dorn (1992) highlighted how career and vocational counseling is the cornerstone from which the counseling field has been built. Herr (1997) wrote:

Until the last quarter-century or so in the United States, career counselling and vocational or career guidance were rarely differentiated: the two tended to blur into one, or they were treated as equal or competing processes. Thus terms that gave equal attention to career guidance and counselling by joining them with 'and' began to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s, suggesting the growing importance of career counselling as an intervention in its own right. In the past two decades, increased attention to how career counselling is changing in definition, either in relation to current definitions of career guidance or independent of this association, has become increasingly evident in the professional literature of the United States. (p. 83)

Further, Herr (1997) discussed two sets of factors influencing the growing attention to the function and scope of career counseling. They included a need for mechanisms that can facilitate the need for greater efficiency and social equity in the distribution of human capital among the changing training schemes and workplaces responding to the demands of international economic competitiveness. Herr (1997) further stated:

Theoretical perspectives . . . have begun to recognize that career counseling must be seen as more than the interaction of the counselor and the client to clarify and

reality test one's anticipation of an initial job choice during adolescence or early adulthood. These recent perspectives have identified the need for career counseling to be applied to a broad range of adult problems, particularly those associated with concerns related to work adjustment, mobility, and mid-career change. (p. 84)

Career Counseling Theories

Trait and Factor Theories

Career theory constructs explanations for career development and behavior (Schoffner Creager & Deacon, 2012). Parsons (1909) was the first to develop a way to apply career theory, implementing a system whereby personal traits can be matched to employment factors, later to be known as a trait and factor approach. Another trait and factor approach is that of John Holland's (1959) personality types. He offered the theory of career choice whereby individuals choose environments (like work) and other situations that match personality traits. As a result, he proposed that there are combinations of six personality orientations for individuals that influence work satisfaction (Holland, 1959). Once the traits and behaviors are identified, a pairing of individuals and environments can occur (Holland, 1997).

Developmental Theories

A discussion on career counseling would not be complete without mentioning Donald Super, who formulated a developmental approach across the life span that ties into a client's career (Gladding, 2011). Even over 50 years ago, the concept of using the personal life facets of clients in career counseling was embraced through Super's (1957) publication *The Psychology of Careers*. In it, he discussed reasons for work, including recognition, status, and expression as individuals; to provide income for a living; to meet

current needs; and to provide security for future needs. Expression of self-concept was paramount in Super's work, and whereas earlier theorists purported matching personality facets to work, Super suggested that work satisfaction was reached when individuals were able to experience personal meaning (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Important to his work, Super's life space and life span theory became represented by the life career rainbow (Super, 1980) that demonstrated the six roles traversed over a life span in stages.

Another interesting and influential developmental theory is Linda Gottfredson's (1981, 1996) theory of circumscription and compromise. Gottfredson (1981) offered the idea that vocational self-concept begins early in life and developed developmental stages starting in early childhood that showed the four orientations to work. They include size and power; gender roles; prestige and social valuation; and unique self (Gottfredson, 1981). Based on this theory, children limit or circumscribe occupations and occupational space as they work through developmental stages and grow up (Gottfredson, 1981).

Social and Cognitive Learning Theories

Social learning theories also play an important role in career counseling and career development. One in particular is social learning theory of career decision making, offered back in the 1970s (Krumboltz, 1979; Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976), which suggests that cognitive processes and behavior are paramount to career decision making and that career development will be best supported through learning and reinforcement. Krumboltz continued refining this theory in the 1990s, generating a focus on cognitive-behavioral interventions (Krumboltz, 1996; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). Fundamental to this theory, the four factors are genetics, environment, learning experiences, and task-

approach skills; the latter two are considered to be learned factors with which career counselors can assist (Krumboltz, 1994).

Another important contribution to career counseling work is planned happenstance theory (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999), which emerged from earlier social learning theory. This model uses interventions that have been designed to utilize chance in individuals' everyday lives (Mitchell et al., 1999). Career counselors implement this model with clients by helping them recognize and incorporate chance events occurring in their everyday lives into their career development (Mitchell et al., 1999).

Cognitive information processing is another approach that supports career decision making and career development (Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 2008). This approach has four assumptions: that thoughts and emotions are inseparable in career decision making; that career problems are addressed through knowledge; that informed choices stem from individuals using career resources; and that information processing skills can be learned and improved (Peterson et al., 2008).

Contextual, Ecological, and Social Theories

Operating from ongoing, dynamic, and reciprocal interaction between individuals and their respective environments and rooted in the perceptions and personal meanings that individuals experience, contextual theories in career counseling are yet another group to highlight. A prominent figure in career counseling today, Savickas (2005), created career construction theory. This theory purports that work is a context for human development (Gladding, 2011) and that it is through narratives of clients that understanding of the how, what, and why of career construction emerges (Savickas,

2005). Personality traits, developmental tasks, and life themes are all integrated into this theory and especially into its application (Gladding, 2011; Savickas, 2005). About this theory, Del Corso and Rehfuss (2010) wrote:

In theory, CCT [career construction theory] is able to divide vocational personality, career adaptability, and life themes as what, how, and why, but in practice the three are inextricably related through narrative. What individuals do is based in part upon their (why) life themes as well as their (how) adapt-“abilities.” Therefore, narratives help reflect the nuances in all three areas without divorcing them from one another. Through narratives, counselors can help individuals identify their vocational personality, career adaptability obstacles, and life themes that drive behavior. First, however, it is helpful to explain how individuals form their identity through story, become the main protagonist in their life story, and how they can construct their lives in a meaningful way based on the life themes that permeate their story. (p. 335)

In contextual, ecological, and social theories, clients are urged to engage in work activities that matter to them personally and to their communities (Gladding, 2011; Savickas, 2005). Meaning is especially important (Savickas, 2005). Highlighting career construction theory, Savickas (2005) further posited that personal meaning from past memories, present experiences, and future aspirations are all fused into a life theme that enables clients to adapt to and persevere in the social changes in their experience with work, but this, too, applies to ecological and social theories. Unique to the ecological and sociological theories, there is an examination of environmental factors that affect career development (Cook, Heppner, & O’Brien, 2005).

Theories Used in Traditional Career Counseling

Career counseling traditionally is a short-term intervention using strategies to test interests and expose clients to career resource materials (Manuele-Adkins, 1992), excluding exploration and issues of a more personal nature. As one career counselor in

this study stated, in traditional career counseling, the counselor will “leave behind the therapeutic lens” when working with clients. According to the two counselors in this study, among the theories that support the work of career counselors, Holland’s career development theory and planned happenstance theory are fundamental. The work of John Holland (1997) remains very popular because it is practical and easy to implement, and planned happenstance theory prepares clients for the many opportunities that may come along (Mitchell et al., 1999).

Mental Health Counseling

The 1986 Board of Directors of the American Mental Health Counselors Association provided a formal definition of personal counseling (known also as mental health counseling and clinical mental health counseling) in 1986, and there has been no known revision since that date:

Clinical mental health counseling is the provision of professional counseling services involving the application of principles of psychotherapy, human development, learning theory, group dynamics, and the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families, and groups for the purpose of promoting optimal mental health, dealing with normal problems of living and treating psychopathology. (American Mental Health Counselors Association, 2012, p. 2)

The practice of mental health counseling includes

diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, psycho-educational techniques designed to prevent mental and emotional disorders, consultations to individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities, and clinical research into more effective psychotherapeutic treatment modalities. (American Mental Health Counselors Association, 2012, p. 2)

According to Corey (2005), counseling is an intimate form of learning that demands that the counselor shed stereotyped roles and be real in the counseling relationship. Clients expect unbiased genuineness from their counselor as they reveal personal information.

The bedrock of both career counseling approaches in this study and important to highlight in the discussion of mental health counseling is person-centered counseling, also known as Rogerian therapy, developed by Carl Rogers. It emphasizes the importance of the client (Gladding, 2011). From Rogers' perspective, people tend to develop in a positive direction and, sans impediments, they will fulfill their potential (Friedman & Schustack, 2012). A basis of this theory is that the client, and not the counselor, should drive the counseling process (Gladding, 2011). To support this, Rogers offered three core qualities of the counselor: congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Sue & Sue, 2008). Congruence allows the counselor to be genuine and authentic because the counselor is integrated, self-accepting, self-aware, and whole (Sue & Sue, 2008). Sue and Sue (2008) defined unconditional positive regard as nonjudgmental caring and acceptance of clients regardless of actions or beliefs. They indicated that empathy is showing the understanding of the subjective experience of the client (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Another foundational theory of both career counseling approaches is cognitive-behavioral theory. It has been noted that most cognitive approaches utilize behavioral techniques and behavioral approaches include cognitive elements (Emmelkamp, 2004). The cognitive approach emphasizes change through influencing thinking (Hollon & Beck, 2004), while corrective learning experiences like learning to break maladaptive habits and improve communication comprise the behavioral approach (Wilson, 2000). The interventions of the cognitive and cognitive-behavioral therapies provide relief from

distress by changing maladaptive beliefs and providing new information-processing skills (Hollon & Beck, 2004). Underpinning cognitive-behavioral theory are Albert Ellis's rational emotive behavioral therapy and Aaron Beck's cognitive therapy (Wilson, 2000). Further, it is important to note that the underlying factors in common mental health disorders are schemas, automatic thoughts, and cognitive distortions according to cognitive theory (Beck, Freeman, & Associates, 1990).

Integration of Career Counseling and Mental Health Counseling

Highlighting career counseling and mental health counseling individually provides the opportunity to examine their integration. A good place to start discussing integration is by reviewing counselor education. From there, literature supporting integration is provided. Both theories and practical applications of the traditional approach to career counseling and of ICC are discussed.

Counselor Education

A foundation of the practice of counseling is counselor education. Counselor education is the theoretical and applied training that students acquire to become counselors; without such education, there is no professional unity or professional identity among the counselors. Counselor education is extremely important to counseling. In considering this, there is merit in reviewing some of the literature written about this foundation as it pertains to career counseling, mental health counseling, and the integration of the two.

Savickas (2003) commented about the specialty of career counseling within the greater scope of counselor education: "The specialty [career counseling] that originated

the modern field of counseling by differentiating itself from social work is now marginalized as ‘ex-centric’” (p. 92). Whether or not this marginalization occurred as a result of disinterest among faculty and students, the issue remains that there is a weakness in the training of career counseling among the counselor education departments across the United States (2003). As an example, the 2001 edition of *The Handbook of Counseling* (Locke, Myers, & Herr, 2001) did not include “career counseling” in any of the 44 chapter titles, and the term was mentioned only scarcely in the index. Just over a century has passed, and career counseling has almost been eliminated from the field it founded.

Niles and Pate (1989) suggested that counseling programs should foster a sense of enthusiasm about career counseling; help students understand that counselors in all settings need to recognize the role of work and career when facilitating case conceptualization and treatment strategies; encourage student and faculty contributions to research and professional presentations on the topic of the integration of career counseling and mental health counseling; and assist practicing counselors who do not possess the competencies needed for the effective integration of career counseling and mental health counseling.

A Literature-Generated Basis for Integrative Approaches

Turning more to the integration of career counseling and mental health counseling, the idea of an integration approach or model is grounded in the literature. Niles and Pate (1989) discussed how perplexing it is that there has been a distinction between career counseling and mental health counseling on the part of both counselors and clients, given the relationship between work and mental health. They proposed that

counseling interventions should be multidimensional to effectively address the multiple problems that may be affecting the clients (Niles & Pate, 1989). Further, in a content analysis study, Anderson and Niles (1995) examined a section of counselor case notes titled “core client concerns.” In this section, counselors identified the most important issues expressed by their clients in each counseling session. Thirty-one individuals participated in this study, including 8 men and 23 women. As noted by the researchers in their discussion,

Perhaps the most fundamental implication of this study is that noncareer concerns may be an important component of career counseling if the counseling format allows for it. In this study, we included as participants only those clients with a focus on career concerns, yet, over one third of their counseling concerns were noncareer ones. (Anderson & Niles, 1995, p. 244)

Ultimately, individuals come for counseling because at some level, they are having difficulty with interpersonal relationships (Yalom, 2002), and both career and noncareer counseling clients experience the same kind of personal problems (Lucas, 1992).

In another study, it was noted that during career counseling, a focus on personal issues such as the role of personality contributed to the resolution of the career concern (Kirschner, Hoffman, & Hill, 1994). Specifically, the process and outcome of a career counseling case was studied using a case study method. Among the participants was a 43-year-old divorced white woman with two teenaged children who had never received career counseling, even though she had been in psychotherapy in the past. Across the course of the seven sessions, this woman attained her career goals and increased both her career exploration and her exploration stress. She decreased exploration stress, maintained other changes, and crystallized her career goals by the 18-month follow-up. According to Kirschner et al. (1994),

The most often identified helpful components in this career case were insight and challenge, indicating that the client benefited from learning about herself and shaking up her perceptual world. . . . Also helpful were information-giving, support, clarification, focus on feelings, focus on change, and focus on the relationship. (pp. 223-224)

As discussed by the researchers, the interface of career and personal counseling is an “exciting area for future research.” They noted that “in this study, the focus on career was a content focus within highly effective insight-oriented counseling” (Kirschner et al., 1994, p. 225).

Continuing discussion on supporting research, in a study by Nevo (1990), 79 college student counsees evaluated the effectiveness of their career counseling. The results showed that clients who sought career counseling were more satisfied with the experience when both personal and career issues were addressed. In addition, 75% of the respondents rated the career counseling they received as satisfactory and were more positive concerning their gains in self-understanding than about the help they felt they were given in arriving at a career decision (Nevo, 1990). Often in career counseling, there are elements of assisting the client in knowing himself or herself (similar to personal counseling), gaining knowledge of the world of work, and integrating the information about self and occupations. Utilizing an integrative approach is essential because personal issues are sometimes presented as career problems (Manuele-Adkins, 1992).

Swanson (1995) paraphrased well the focus on this topic by Manuele-Adkins (1992) by writing:

Manuele-Adkins (1992) described elements of a stereotypic view of career counseling that discredit the psychological component and affect the quality and delivery of career counseling services. In this stereotypic view, career counseling is a rational process, with an emphasis on information-giving, testing, and computer-based systems; it is short-term, thus limiting the range of possible intervention strategies and obscuring psychological processes such as indecision;

and it is different from personal counseling, thus lowering the perceived value of career counseling and increasing a false separation between work and nonwork. (p. 222)

An existing viewpoint in the greater profession is that counselors who facilitate career counseling are active and directive through the use of assessments and information, whereas counselors who facilitate personal counseling are more exploratory because of the focus on psychological processes involving client-counselor interactions (Imbimbo, 1994). Because clients at times are dealing simultaneously with multiple career problems and personal problems, it isn't ideal for career counseling to remain segregated in practice (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003; Phillips, Christopher-Sisk, & Gravino, 2001). Very often, the problems that clients present at the outset of counseling are only a beginning point, and many other problems emerge (Gysbers et al., 2003). Emotional issues and family issues often emerge either as a result of career issues or alongside career issues (Gysbers et al., 2003). It has been suggested that career counseling and personal counseling remain as the titles for administering counseling with clients, but not as ways to limit our view of clients, our view of working with clients, or our willingness to help clients overcome whatever problems inherently exist for them (Gysbers et al., 2003). To that end, Hackett (1993) stated, "I see our most pressing tasks as determining how to more effectively integrate or coordinate career counseling and therapy without losing sight of vocational issues and concerns" (p. 112).

In another study by Anderson and Niles (2000) where participants were counselors (n = 33) and clients (n = 43) at a community counseling center sponsored by a counselor education program, emotional support by career counselors to their clients was one of the most important aspects of the counseling relationship. Further, the results of

this study revealed that clients found self-exploration, support, and educating/suggesting most helpful (Anderson & Niles, 2000). The results also indicated that career counselors can help clients by using traditional counseling interventions, especially when offering support (Anderson & Niles, 2000). Indicating a future direction of special interest, Anderson and Niles (2000) wrote, “Client and counselor participants identified the same aspects of counseling as most important and helpful. Future studies should investigate the significance of this result for counselor training and practice” (p. 261). Recognizing that emotional support is of great importance to both counselor and client and that there is symmetry in what is perceived as most important and helpful, yet another case is made for integrative career counseling.

Imbimbo (1994) proposed a model that requires that the counselor have the ability to move back and forth between the active and directive role of the career counselor and the facilitative and exploratory role of the personal counselor. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that career interventions that do not involve counseling are not as effective as career interventions that have a counseling component (Whiston et al., 2003). This meta-analysis study involved the direct comparison of treatment modalities used in career interventions through an extensive search of research published between 1975 and 2000. According to Whiston et al. (2003), “Those participants who received computer alone interventions had outcomes almost a third of a standard deviation lower than those who used a career computer system accompanied with counseling” (p. 404). Particularly when helping clients make a career decision or choice, Brown and Krane (2000) found that career counseling was most effective when it contained (a) individualized interpretation and feedback, (b) occupational information, (c) modeling opportunities,

(d) attention to building support of choices with one's social network, and (e) written exercises.

Integrative Career Counseling

ICC (Chopra, 2012) does not require clients to have resolved all their mental health problems or be free from mental health difficulty before commencing counseling. In particular, it does not try to separate career issues from other life issues. Instead, it assumes that career work is just one piece of an integrated life. Furthermore, the ICC approach is a dynamic process that uses movement through the four levels, as the client presents the need for the counselor to do so. ICC helps the counselor identify what the client needs at any given moment of a counseling session and then select an intervention that addresses that need. In a single session, a client may move through all four levels of the ICC approach multiple times. More typically, the movement is between just two or three levels.

The four levels of ICC (Chopra, 2012) are as follows: (a) Level 1, career counseling; (b) Level 2, emotionally focused career counseling; (c) Level 3, therapeutic career counseling; and (d) Level 4, therapy with a career focus. There are three components to Level 1: job search, career exploration, and career management (Chopra, 2012). Level 1 is where the career counselor facilitates the intake and gathers ample information about the life of the client (Chopra, 2012). This is also the level that supports clients' developing skills or technical understanding through participation in the career counseling process (Chopra, 2012). In Level 2, the career counselor continues working on technical career-focused pieces, but focuses awareness on any emotion that is exhibited by the client (Chopra, 2012). This is the level where emotional processing can

be done in the beginning—to notice a client’s emotions, or the lack thereof—when a client is revealing information that would likely generate an emotional response (Chopra, 2012). This emotional processing can be brief. However, this level serves to help the client become aware and understand how helpful it can be to acknowledge her or his emotions during the career counseling process (Chopra, 2012). In Level 3, mental health issues or unconscious defense mechanisms are interfering with progress on career goals (Chopra, 2012). Most likely, these issues have been managed so that they do not interfere with the daily life of the client, but they would need to be addressed to progress in career counseling (Chopra, 2012). Psychoeducation is a tool that can be helpful to use in Level 3. The client may have never really explored or challenged these deeper issues that have emerged as forefront issues in career counseling (Chopra, 2012). Level 4 houses therapy with a focus on career (Chopra, 2012). More specifically, this level recognizes that career-focused work will not be completed until more serious issues are either managed or resolved. In this level, a client is in need of outpatient mental health counseling and sometimes crisis management (Chopra, 2012). Career work is not completely absent in this level, but instead takes a back seat (Chopra, 2012).

As reported by Chopra (2012) in an interview on the formation of the ICC, this model began intuitively based on client information and the client counseling process observed through facilitating counseling sessions. ICC originated from Chopra’s awareness that for clients to be successful in their career counseling work, they needed to be successful in resolving psychological issues as they existed or emerged. Chopra (2012) noted that not all clients demonstrate a need to move into Levels 2, 3, or 4 while in counseling with her, but many do because of the nature of life and how interwoven

personal and professional facets become. Chopra (2012) made a poignant comment about the nature of clients and the focus she offered to them: she said that she helps clients to “not make feelings facts.” She explained that what clients experience emotionally when the brain is emotionally activated can feel factual as a result of the limbic system (emotion regulation center) overriding the prefrontal cortex (decision-making center), and when emotions are stimulated to that degree, work at the emotional level is needed above all else. Techniques like normalizing the emotion and experience and the use of breathing techniques are often helpful (Chopra, 2012).

Daniel Siegel’s (2010, 2012a, 2012b) published work connects the biological sciences to ICC methods with clients in sessions. Siegel’s focus on neurobiology and emotional content and how it ties to the interpersonal processes of individuals is paramount as a theoretical foundation for the ICC approach (Siegel, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). In *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology: An Integrative Handbook of the Mind*, Siegel (2012a) wrote:

Our mental lives are profoundly relational. The interactions we have with each other shape our mental world. Yet as any neuroscientist will tell you, the mind is shaped by the firing patterns in the brain. And so how can we reconcile this apparent paradox—that the mind is *both* embodied and relational? Shouldn’t something like “a mind” be located in one place, come from one source, be owned by one person? . . . You can state that the mind is both embodied in an internal physiological context and embedded in an external relational context. *Embodied and embedded is the fundamental nature of the mind.* (p. 44)

Acknowledging principles like this one presented by Siegel (2012a), in which the mind relates to both internal and external processes, the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012) integrates the demonstrated needs of each client, even if they stem from beyond a career focus.

Foundational to the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012) is unconditional positive regard, taken from person-centered counseling by Carl Rogers (Sue & Sue, 2008). Although unconditional positive regard may be a technique in part, it is also a therapeutic quality espoused and prioritized by the career counselor (Chopra, 2012). Primary to using ICC is “meeting the client where he/she is,” and the premise for this is unconditional positive regard (Chopra, 2012). Also essential to the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012) is cognitive-behavioral therapy, which focuses on present issues and influences on behavior instead of past issues (Sue & Sue, 2008). A strength of ICC (Chopra, 2012) is the career counselor’s active involvement with the client through practicing skills learned during counseling (Sue & Sue, 2008). In particular, tools like psychoeducation, skills training, assertiveness training, and script writing are used frequently in ICC (Chopra, 2012). Tools like the aforementioned easily work with both the superficial and the structural facets of the human experience, both in career counseling and in mental health counseling, and they work especially well when the two modalities are integrated (Chopra, 2012).

As an outsider to this model, the researcher recognized the applicability of eclecticism and integration when considering grounding the approach in theory. As discussed by Lambert, Garfield, and Bergin (2004), integration is preferred over eclecticism, as integration “implies a more systematic use of concepts and techniques from different approaches” (p. 806). ICC (Chopra, 2012) integrates the modalities of career counseling and mental health counseling with an integration of theories and techniques. Fundamentally, though, and aside from the science-based research on the brain (which clearly has merit with ICC), a theoretical basis for the ICC exists in

humanistic theories such as person-centered theory, existential theory, and gestalt theory (Chopra, 2012). These theories espouse the importance of the whole and unified person as the client (Sue & Sue, 2008). Striving to make sense of their experiences, being free to consider life circumstances and choose new directions, and being willing to become more self-aware (Sue & Sue, 2008) are principals in the human experience.

Summary

A primary focus of this literature review was to examine career counseling and notable characteristics of the two career counseling approaches selected for this study: a traditional approach and ICC. The literature supports the implementation of both career counseling approaches. Highlighted were the topics of career counseling, mental health counseling, the integration of career counseling and mental health counseling, counselor education, traditional career counseling, and ICC (Chopra, 2012).

CHAPTER 3:

METHODS

This chapter discusses the methodology of this qualitative study, including the exploratory question, research design, data collection and analysis procedures, and validity and ethics precautions.

Exploratory question

What is the experience like for clients in career counseling?

The study examined career counseling experiences of traditional career counseling clients and integrative career counseling clients (ICC) (Chopra, 2012) career counseling clients. ICC originated from the awareness that for clients to be successful in their career counseling, they also needed to be successful in resolving psychological issues as they exist or emerge (Chopra, 2012). Based on literature about the need for integrative models, traditional career counseling possibly does not provide all facets needed for career counseling clients. In recognizing the value that integrative models may hold not only for the clients in ICC (Chopra, 2012), but for the greater counseling community, this study looked at the career counseling experiences of traditional career counseling clients and ICC (Chopra, 2012) career counseling clients.

Further, underpinning the methodology of this study is the awareness that research on ICC (Chopra, 2012) has not yet been conducted and that qualitative research informs the direction of future qualitative and especially quantitative research on topics like new approaches and models of counseling. There is ample research to support integration of traditional career counseling approaches (Anderson & Niles, 1995, 2000; Kirschner et al., 1994; Nevo, 1990; Whiston et al., 2003), but no research has yet been

published on the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012) or another integrative approach or model. In addition, there continues to be a focus on providing empirically validated counseling to clients, and without a renewed interest in career outcome research, “career counseling might not be considered an empirically supported psychological intervention” (Whiston et al., 2003, p. 402). Although the present study was limited to an exploration of experiences of clients in career counseling practices utilizing a traditional career counseling approach and the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012), it serves as the beginning of a possible change in how career counseling is viewed and used by counseling professionals. Based on the reported client experiences in this study, it is intended that this study add to the bridge already begun between career counseling and mental health counseling literature.

Qualitative Research Design

This was a basic interpretive qualitative study. Basic interpretive qualitative research is focused on understanding how individuals “make meaning of a situation or phenomenon. This meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive” (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). Research implementing basic interpretative qualitative design often borrows analytic processes from other qualitative designs (Merriam, 2002). This type of research is facilitated through interviews, observations, and/or document analysis (Merriam, 2002). As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, “The interview is the favorite methodological tool of the qualitative researcher” (p. 353). They explained that “the interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 353) and added that the interview is not a neutral tool, being influenced

by the personal characteristics of the interviewer and by the situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is through the experience shared between interviewer and participant that a rich understanding of the phenomenon can be revealed.

The basis for using this design was to view the reality individuals construct in their social worlds—in particular, in the process of career counseling (Merriam, 2002)—so that the researcher could explore the reported experience of the clients interviewed. Specifically, semistructured interviews utilizing open-ended questions with the career counseling clients were used to provide a rich description of their experiences. In addition to the interviews, two short self-report instruments were used to obtain more descriptive information on the participants' experience of career counseling. Answers to items on these instruments were used with member checking combined with data from the interviews to triangulate the data, providing a description of the experiences of career counseling for these participants. Demographic information was also obtained, including gender, race, age, and aspects of career counseling and employment.

Constructivist Epistemology

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as “multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (p. 2). Bringing meaning to phenomena through a wide range of methods is paramount to qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Important to this study is the philosophical concept of constructivism in qualitative research.

Constructivism espouses that the world of meaning must be interpreted to be understood (Schwandt, 1994). Further, it is in the act of developing concepts, models, and schemas that we make sense of experiences (Schwandt, 1994). The meaning from these

experiences is modified as new experiences occur throughout the lifespan (Schwandt, 1994). Applicable to this study, Guba and Lincoln (1985) provided an especially useful framework of constructivism. What is assumed from this framework is that “what is real is a construction in the minds of the individuals” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 83). While all constructions are meaningful, there can be multiple and even conflicting constructions in the minds of individuals and, as such, it is important to value and incorporate the individuals when exploring the constructions that emerge (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). These constructions are the individuals’ attempts to make sense of or interpret experiences and are often challenged when individuals become aware of new and conflicting information (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Recognizing the value of constructivist principles, the present study is theoretically based in constructivism through use of a qualitative methodology with a basic interpretive design to explore the experiences of career counseling clients in metropolitan Washington, DC, and make sense of these experiences.

Counselor Recruitment

A traditional and ICC career counselor were recruited through telephone and email correspondence between the prospective career counselors, the researcher, the principal investigator of this study, and the National Career Development Association. The career counselor for Approach A was contacted first by the researcher via email. The researcher had become aware of this career counselor’s approach through participation at national and state conferences and in discussion with colleagues, including the principal investigator and other career counselors. She was invited to participate in the study and agreed.

The researcher then reached out to the National Career Development Association to join the LinkedIn group to invite a traditional career counselor to participate. This effort did not produce any prospective counselors. The researcher, in communication with the principal investigator and the Approach A career counselor, also reached out via email to local career counselors, and through these communications the second career counselor volunteered and was selected.¹

Though the researcher had no personal relationship with the career counselors participating in this study, the researcher was aware of the integrative approach that Approach A career counselor was using for several years before the onset of the study, and it was interest in this integrative approach combined with a review of the literature that provided the impetus for the study.

Counselor Characteristics

Both counselors were licensed professional counselors in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and were credentialed as a master career counselor, a designation of the National Career Development Association, and a national certified counselor, a designation of the National Board of Certified Counselors. The license and credentials required the completion of a graduate degree, which both counselors held. The Approach A career counselor reported counseling career clients in private practice since 1999, and the Approach B career counselor reported over 30 years of experience helping individuals pursue, change, and manage careers. Both career counselors reported having worked with clients from many levels of government and private-sector industries and from diverse

¹ Both counselors provided signed and dated documents stating that “I grant permission to Dr. Pat Schwallie-Giddis and Karen F. Griner to conduct research with the clients who begin and continue career counseling with me.”

racial and cultural backgrounds. They both were very accessible to clients, having offices near metro stations and on bus routes. Besides their different tenure, another significant facet to consider is that the two career counselors knew one another and were professionally interconnected in professional groups, which may lead to a confluence of ideas. The benefit in both career counselors being licensed professional counselors with similar training is that it grounds the study with a similar starting point with which the researcher can explore the participant experiences.

Recognizing the importance of validating the differences of models or approaches in research, the researcher reviewed the framework of the two career counseling methods at the outset of the study by looking at the websites of both career counselors and by speaking with each career counselor directly about the career counseling she provided to her clients. As discussed, the career counselor espousing the ICC (Chopra, 2012) reportedly used a four-level approach to career counseling that, as needed by the client based on the career counselor's knowledge of counseling, integrated mental health counseling with career counseling. The traditional approach was described by the practicing career counselor as a comprehensive career counseling process, recognizing that family issues, economic issues, social issues, and emotional issues can impact career and career development. Beyond this initial difference, there were inherent differences between the models, such as the ICC using established levels to navigate the integration of career counseling and mental health counseling. The traditional approach does not incorporate mental health counseling into the process. Also, the theoretical orientations of each career counselor are not the same which, when applied, utilize different interventions and impact clients' process differently (career counselor, 2013; career

counselor, 2013). To note one important similarity in this discussion, the benefit in both career counselors being licensed professional counselors with similar training is that it grounds the study with a similar start point with which the researcher can explore the participant experiences.

Expanding further, there were similarities and differences between the theoretical orientations of the two career counselors. Career Counselor A reported that theories underpinning her career counseling included Mark Savickas's career construction theory, John Krumboltz's happenstance learning theory, Jim Bright's chaos theory of careers, Daniel Siegel's mindsight approach, and John Holland's work on vocational choice. In practice, Career Counselor A assumed that mental health issues were present and assessed for the full range of issues from the first session using a full clinical history, an assessment of potential trauma impacts, an assessment of substance abuse in the client and in the family, and an assessment of mental health issues in the family. Theories underpinning Career Counselor B's career counseling included Vance Peavy's constructivist career counseling, John Holland's theory of careers and vocational choice, Jungian theory connected to use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Robert Heday's whole psychiatry theory, and John Krumboltz's happenstance learning theory. In practice, Career Counselor B started with a career-centered assessment rather than a full clinical history, focusing on career-related items and incorporating other life characteristics such as family as they emerged and were relevant to the career counseling. Both career counselors reported using cognitive behavioral theory and person-centered theory with clients. Career Counselor B reported using genograms with her clients to assess family histories. Career Counselor B also shared that she had over a decade of

experience in working with bereavement issues with clients, which impacted her career counseling work.

Participant Recruitment

The study utilized voluntary individuals pursuing career counseling in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The following criteria were developed to guide recruitment of the sample:

1. Respondents were adults attending career counseling in the private practices of either of the recruited career counselors.
2. Respondents were to begin career counseling upon or after the onset of this study with either career counselor.

Ideally, respondents would be able to finish their career counseling prior to the end of this study, but that was not a requirement. Respondents were not excluded if they had attended career counseling previously. They could be of any race, gender, age (above 18 years old), physical capability, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation or preference, and they could be either employed or unemployed. Individuals were excluded from participation if they had begun their current career counseling prior to the onset of this study. The intent was to bring consistency to the sample based on the onset of treatment.

Recruitment of participants was facilitated through an announcement at the intake session by the respective career counselors to prospective participants during the months of late October 2012 through March 2013. An information sheet for the study was provided by the researcher to the career counselors, which was to be provided to all incoming clients. If clients reported an interest in participation, the career counselor

provided their name and contact information to the researcher. Participation in this study was voluntary, and as an incentive to participate, all participants were entered into a lottery for one new iPad. The winner of the lottery was selected and notified. In addition, the results of the study were provided to participants who requested them.

Risks involved in this study were no more harmful than encounters in the participants' everyday lives. However, the researcher had professional counseling referrals available for participants in the event that any of the interview dialogue created discomfort or disruptions in typical everyday functioning. Participants were informed of the opportunity to request referrals during the informed consent process.

Participant Characteristics

Seventeen individuals volunteered for the study. Of those 17, 14 individuals scheduled and participated in the interviews: seven from Approach A career counseling and seven from Approach B career counseling. Of those 14, eight individuals completed both sets of instruments. The three individuals who volunteered but did not participate in the study include 1 man and 2 women. Their age and race were unknown, as was the reason they did not participate in the study after initially volunteering.

The demographic characteristics of the 14 participants are summarized in Table 3.1. All of the participants were women, and their mean age was 39.4 years ($SD = 7.54$). The group was homogenous, with most participants identifying as racially White and as ethnically non-Hispanic. Gender selection was not a component of this study's method, and it is unclear why only women participated.

Table 3.1
Demographic Characteristics of the 14 Study Participants

Gender/Racial/Ethnic/Identity	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	0	0
Female	14	100
Racial identity		
White, non-Hispanic	11	79
Black/African American	2	14
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0
Two or more races	1	7
Ethnic Identity		
Hispanic	1	7
Other	13	93

Note: Demographic information was obtained during interviews with participants.

As shown in Table 3.2, most participants were currently employed and had been employed when career counseling began. In addition, most had not completed career counseling at the time of the interview, and nearly a third had used career counseling on other occasions.

Table 3.2
Employment and Career Counseling Characteristics of the 14 Study Participants

Question	Yes	No
Employed now	13 (93%)	1 (7%)
Employed at onset of counseling	14 (100%)	0
Career counseling complete	2 (14%)	12 (86%)
Prior experience with career counseling	10 (71%)	4 (29%)

Note: Information was obtained during interviews with participants.

In Approach A career counseling, the seven participants had one to seven sessions, conducted between October 4, 2012, and March 13, 2013. Interviews for these participants were facilitated on March 26 to March 31, 2013. In Approach B career counseling, the seven participants had one to seven sessions, conducted between October 3, 2012, and March 25, 2013. Interviews for these participants were facilitated between March 25 and April 3, 2013. Table 3.3 provides details for each participant.

Table 3.3
Career Counseling Dates and Sessions

Participants	Begin date	End date	# of sessions
Approach A			
Participant 1A	10/13/12	ongoing	7
Participant 2A	12/11/12	ongoing	4
Participant 3A	11/27/12	ongoing	1
Participant 4A	10/4/12	1/22/13	6
Participant 5A	1/29/13	ongoing	2
Participant 6A	1/8/13	ongoing	5
Participant 7A	3/13/13	ongoing	1
Approach B			
Participant 1B	10/3/12	ongoing	5
Participant 2B	10/8/12	ongoing	7
Participant 3B	12/4/12	3/19/13	5
Participant 4B	2/6/13	ongoing	5
Participant 5B	2/20/13	ongoing	3
Participant 6B	2/12/13	ongoing	3
Participant 7B	3/25/13	ongoing	1

Note: Sessions for Approach A lasted an hour. Sessions for Approach B lasted 1.5 hours.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures began in February 2013 and ended in early April 2013. The study was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) in October 2012 and approved by the Graduate School of Education and Human Development on January 29, 2013. Data were collected in three stages: a survey packet, an interview, and a follow-up survey packet. The interviews were conducted by telephone. They were recorded and later transcribed. The researcher additionally took notes during the interviews.

As clients volunteered for the study and as name and contact information was provided by the career counselor with the permission of the clients, the researcher contacted the individuals to obtain physical addresses. Packets, mailed to participants using the U.S. Postal Service, included an informed consent form (see Appendix A); client instructions (see Appendix B); a survey instrument that incorporated the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI) (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996) and the Outcome Questionnaire 10.2 (OQ™) (Lambert, Lunnen, Umphress, Hansen, & Burlingame, 1994); and a self-

addressed stamped envelope for return mailing. All first mailings went out starting the beginning of February and continuing until the last respondent was provided with a packet in late March. Interviews were then conducted between March 25, 2013, and April 3, 2013. The second mailing with the survey instrument and self-addressed stamped envelope was sent in April, upon completion of the interview. Details on the interviews and the survey instrument are provided in the following sections.

Semistructured Interviews

The interviews with participants were scheduled via telephone, email, and text messages, and 14 interviews were facilitated by telephone between March 25, 2013, and April 3, 2013. The interviews lasted from 25 minutes to an hour and 28 minutes and were digitally recorded. All participants answered all questions asked. The primary questions used during the interviews are shown in Appendix C. As is common in semistructured interviews, based on the dialogue between the researcher and each participant, additional questions were used to supplement the information gathered in order to gain further knowledge of the participant's experience with career counseling. The interview closed by collecting demographic information. Participants were invited to report age, gender, race, if currently employed, if employed at the onset of career counseling, and prior career counseling experience.

Survey Instruments

The use of survey instruments, in conjunction with the semistructured interview, was intended to provide the researcher with descriptive data for each participant at the outset of counseling and at the end of counseling or the end of the study, whichever came

first. The instrument used in this study consisted of two parts: the OQ™ and the CTI. (The OQ™ as administered is reproduced in Appendix D; the CTI could not be reproduced in the dissertation due to copyright restrictions.) Two email reminders were sent to participants who had not submitted their instruments prior to the semistructured interviews, and one email reminder was sent for the second set of instruments. As indicated, only eight participants returned both sets of instruments. All informed consent forms were received prior to administering the interviews.

The self-reported OQ™ and CTI were selected based on the ease with which participants could complete them, in conjunction with the data they provided when completed. The OQ™ was used in the present study specifically to contribute to knowledge about participant experiences in career counseling. Even though this instrument is usually used in personal counseling, it is applicable to career counseling. The career counselors were licensed mental health professionals practicing career counseling from a counseling framework. The purpose of using the CTI for this study was to assess the quality of decisions in clients and the quality of career services delivered to clients, to demonstrate the experiences of the career counseling of the participants. As the focus of this study was participants' experiences with two approaches of career counseling, this instrument was also well suited to provide descriptive data about the participants' experiences in their respective career counseling approaches. Specifically, the participants' thoughts and decision-making, in addition to the emotive experiences and outcomes, were intended to describe their experiences through questions not asked during interviews.

The Outcome Questionnaire 10.2. The OQ™, also known as Mini OQ, is derived from The Outcome Questionnaire 45 (OQ-45), a symptom and distress inventory developed by Lambert et al. (1994) that has been found to be useful for examining the effectiveness of psychotherapy and counseling over time. The OQ™ consists of 10 items—each associated with a five-point Likert scale that includes responses ranging from *never* to *almost always*. The OQ™ does not diagnose clients. It does, however, indicate if further attention and support might be necessary in counseling.

This screening tool has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of psychological distress with Hispanic, African American, and Caucasian racial groups. The OQ™ is self-administered and written at the sixth-grade level. It can be read or translated to the participant without skewing the results. The OQ™ is also available in a Spanish version, although the researcher offered the English version. The purpose of using this brief instrument instead of the full version (OQ-45) was to capture the outcome of career counseling experienced by the participants without overwhelming them with too many questions to answer. All 10 items from this instrument were used in this study. This questionnaire was expected to take the participant approximately 1 minute to complete. The researcher obtained permission to use this instrument. The standard individual license was purchased, and the instrument and manual were sent to the researcher to use.

Career Thoughts Inventory. The second instrument utilized in this study was the CTI, which is a theory-based assessment and intervention resource intended to improve the quality of career decisions in clients and the quality of career services delivered to clients (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996). CTI is self-administered, and clients complete the 48 items using a four-point rating scale that includes responses ranging

from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996). In addition to providing a raw score, the CTI provides information using factors, or subscales, that are grounded in the underpinnings of the CTI, cognitive information processing (CIP) (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996). CIP is the theoretical approach to career development and career services using a cognitive therapy theoretical approach based on the work by Peterson (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996). These factors are decision-making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996). Decision-making confusion “refers to the inability to initiate or sustain the decision making process as a result of disabling emotions and/or lack of understanding about the decision making process itself” (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996, p. 28). Commitment anxiety “reflects the inability to make a commitment to a specific career choice, accompanied by generalized anxiety about the outcome of the decision making process” (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996, p. 28). External conflict “reflects the inability to balance the importance of one’s own self-perceptions with the importance of input from significant others, resulting in a reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making” (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996, p. 29). The scales of the CTI are internally consistent and stable, and the instrument exhibits reasonable content, convergent, criterion-related, and construct validity (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996).

All 48 items of the CTI were used for this study. The questionnaire was expected to take the participant 5 minutes or less to complete. Permission was granted by the developer of CTI to use this instrument for the study, and copies of the instrument and the manual were sent to the researcher to use.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using qualitative means for the transcripts from interviews, notes from interviews, member checking from interviews, and self-report instruments after all interviews had been completed. Several tools were used to analyze the data from the interviews, including data management, coding, and triangulation.

Data management is essential to effective data analysis, specifically considering how data are stored and retrieved (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Successful data management occurs when data are organized and easy to follow (Merriam, 2002). Such management enables the researcher to have easy access to the data—which in qualitative studies is imperative due to often dense amounts of data (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Beyond the storage and retrieval of the interview and self-report instrument content, the researcher utilized categorizing strategies (Maxwell, 2013), including open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), then axial coding (Merriam, 2002), and then selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Specifically, the researcher reviewed the transcripts and instrument items line by line and assigned code words to each line, starting with Approach B transcripts and instruments and notes, and then reviewing Approach A transcripts and instruments and notes. Upon completion, the researcher observed connections and developed categories from the data. From there, data were triangulated to allow themes to emerge.

Validity

Transparency of methods is especially important in qualitative studies to ensure credibility. Transparency is facilitated by several means. This researcher sought an experienced qualitative researcher in the greater counselor education community and

utilized this professional to broadly audit the data analysis—to essentially peer review it. Member checks were used in this study, whereby transcripts were sent to participants with an invitation for them to review and offer comments. For the 14 transcripts distributed, two participants responded with comments.

Bias, Reactivity, and Reflexivity

Additionally, credibility was observed through the researcher continually checking biases and discussing them with peers and another qualitative researcher. According to Maxwell (2013), bias and reactivity are two specific validity threats to the process of qualitative research, bias referring to researcher bias and reactivity referring to effects that researchers may have on the individuals studied. In addition, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) used the concept of reflexivity, which was also discussed in Maxwell's (2013) publication, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, reflecting the idea that the researcher, being a part of the world studied, influences and is influenced by it. There is an interconnectedness between the researcher and the data stemming from the data collection process.

Though no relationships existed prior to the onset of the study between the researcher and the career counselors and participants, in hearing about the experiences and in learning about the career counseling approaches, the researcher was affected. Clients in both practices were greatly impacted by the career counselors they worked with, and in hearing their stories, the researcher was impacted. Equally, being a licensed professional counselor, the researcher felt an emotional connection to the career counselors and the work they were doing to support and enrich the lives of their clients. Further contact with study participants was not planned since the study is complete;

contact with the study career counselors, however, is probable for the purpose of future research and/or scholarship opportunities such as conference presentations.

Human Participants and Ethics Precautions

Documents were submitted for review and approval to The George Washington University IRB in mid-September 2012. On September 20, 2012, the office requested changes to the synopsis form, several minor structural changes to the consent form, additional documents including written permission from the two sites to conduct research there and the verbal scripts/text to be used by the career counselors, and completion of the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative trainings. The requested alterations were made, and IRB approval was obtained on October 23, 2012 (see Appendix E).

The American Counseling Association (2005) provides a Code of Ethics containing the standards of behavior all counselors and counselor researchers are expected to practice. Considerations for ethics were implemented during this research study. No discrimination occurred in the recruitment of the sample source for this study, nor during the administration of the interviews. Confidentiality was maintained during and after the data collection process, ensuring the privacy of the participants by keeping the study materials containing personal data in a lockbox. Anonymity was ensured by using a numbering system for participant names; the legend for this system was stored in a separate location from the measures. Both a lockbox and a fireproof safe were used to house all materials with personal information. Electronic personal information was stored on two different memory sticks, one to remain in the lockbox when not in use, and the other to remain in the fireproof safe when not in use. These two containers for data were in the home of the researcher, and only persons working on this study (not the

participants) knew of this location. Lastly, given that the researcher is a licensed counselor and has worked in the District of Columbia, precautions were implemented in the event that a participant was known by the researcher in contexts other than this research.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results from the study. It begins with a description of the two career counselors' offices where clients attended career counseling sessions. The chapter then reports on the first administration of the two instruments and on the themes that emerged from the interviews and the second administration of the two instruments. The chapter closes with a comparative analysis and summary. Throughout, excerpts from client interviews and instrument results are provided to support the results.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of clients in career counseling with two career counselors. Important to the experience of clients in career counseling are the offices where they attend sessions and even more important are the career counselors who facilitate their counseling. Career Counselor A is a thin, medium-height Caucasian woman with an extremely friendly face. She is very easy to talk to and demonstrates a supportive and empathetic demeanor. She seems very interested when listening and responds in kind to what is said. Career Counselor B is a very small, thin Caucasian woman also with an extremely friendly face. She demonstrates an interest when listening and also shares her own thoughts readily. She seems to be a supportive person by nature.

The office for Career Counselor B is in her private residence and has a large desk as the main feature in the room with a computer and printer to the far left of it. The right-hand side of the desk is used by clients during their sessions. There is an open closet with the doors removed on one side of the room, filled with resources and books relevant to the career counselor's work. There is also a floor-to-ceiling bookshelf with more

resources for career counseling. Clients are advised to wait in her living room if they arrive early to sessions. Both the living room and the office are on the first floor. The space is prepared for clients to be a welcoming and warm environment. Although the office is in a private residence, it remains confidential; having no receptionist, the career counselor is the only person who sees clients.

The office for Career Counselor A is located in a tall building where clients check in with a security guard before using the elevator to reach the office floor. A typical office hallway is used to reach the career counselor's small office waiting room, which has magazines and books on tables and wall racks, and clients can be seated on one of the chairs. Within the career counselor's office are what appears to be two areas, one for the career counselor to work independently of clients with a small desk and chair and one where clients and the counselor sit together facing one another on an upholstered couch and upholstered chair. There is colorful art on the walls and two tall bookshelves with books against one of the walls. There is no receptionist, and the career counselor is the only person to see clients once they are in the career counselor's space in the building. The space appears typical for an office setting, but seems organized for clients to have access to information and the career counselor when in sessions.

Results from the First Survey Administration

Participants were provided with the two self-report instruments in addition to the informed consent when they volunteered for the study, and this became the first administration of the instruments. Participants were instructed to mail back the completed form to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Eight participants chose to do so, four from each approach. The purpose of the first administration of the two self-

report instruments versus the second administration was to triangulate the data in conjunction with the interview data and member checking. The following discussion notes a few prominent items from each approach from the participants' thoughts coming into career counseling using the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI). Using the Outcome Questionnaire 10.2 (OQ™) measure, it was possible to observe participants' feelings, even though outcomes couldn't be observed at the outset of career counseling. Similar to observing key statements in semistructured interviews, the researcher noted items from the instruments that stood out, including them in data analysis to support emergent themes. Themes emerged from the data and from the researcher's prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Approach A

A prominent item on the CTI to note for both approaches was item 24, "People like counselors or teachers are better suited to solve my career problems." Among the four respondents for Approach A, two participants noted disagreement and two noted strong disagreement. Another conspicuous item was item 32, "I can't be satisfied unless I can find the perfect occupation for me." One participant strongly agreed with this statement. Item 41, "My achievements must surpass my mother's or father's or brother's or sister's," elicited one participant reporting *strongly agree*. Finally, item 10, "There are few jobs that have real meaning," elicited a response of *strongly agree* by one participant.

From the OQ™ 10.2, only one participant's answers appeared remarkable, and several of the items are worth noting. She selected *rarely* for item 2, "I am satisfied with my life"; item 3, "I am satisfied with my relationships with others"; and item 5, "I feel my love relationships are full and complete." In addition, for items 6, 7, and 8, "I am

fearful,” “I feel something is wrong with my mind,” and “I feel blue,” she selected *sometimes*. For item 9, “I feel lonely,” she selected *frequently*.

Approach B

For CTI item 24, “People like counselors or teachers are better suited to solve my career problems,” two participants noted disagreement; one, strong disagreement; and one, agreement. Item 35, “I worry a great deal about choosing the right field of study or occupation,” elicited a response of *strongly agree* by one participant. Item 48, “I can’t trust that my career decisions will turn out well for me,” elicited a response of *agree* from one participant. From the OQ™ 10.2, the only prominent item was item 10, “I feel stressed at work/school.” Among the four participants, two selected *frequently* and two selected *sometimes*, indicating at least moderate stress.

Results from Interviews, the Second Survey Administration, and Researcher Notes

Participants continued their participation in the study by engaging in telephone interviews with the researcher. The researcher recorded the interviews, took notes during the interviews, and later transcribed the interviews. Once interviews were complete, the second administration of the instruments occurred. Participants were instructed to mail back completed forms to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Eight participants chose to do so, four from each approach. The following discussion reviews the resulting themes and the respective data that emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts, researcher notes, second administration of the self-report instruments, and member check responses.

Approach A

Five themes emerged from the data with Approach A participants. These themes were as follows: (1) Career Counselor A was very good at career counseling; (2) Career Counselor A's approach was effective; (3) There were personal elements to career counseling with Career Counselor A; (4) All participants were employed but experienced something unsettling in the career domain; and (5) Whether large-scale changes were made or not, the participants were changed as a result of the career counseling with Career Counselor A.

Theme 1. Career Counselor A was very good at career counseling. Some participants spoke about Career Counselor A's skills and style:

- "Career Counselor A is very good at career counseling."
- "Career Counselor A's approach is a good one."
- "I really liked Career Counselor A's style and ability to connect well and motivate me."
- "Career Counselor A is great."

Some participants commented on how perceptive and helpful she was and how she was able to draw people out:

- "Career Counselor A listens carefully and then gives sound, objective advice."
- "Career Counselor A is very perceptive."
- "Career Counselor A asks probing questions that get me thinking."
- "Career counseling was more open and exploring than I had expected."

- “Career Counselor A is not locked into predetermined formulas. Career Counselor A does not give typical career counselor responses, which is refreshing.”
- “Professionals helping me with my resume previously didn’t get it. Career Counselor A does and is not judgmental.”
- “Career Counselor A helps me with thinking, searching, and networking.”
- “Career Counselor A helps the client draw oneself out.”
- “Career Counselor A picked out themes and made suggestions.”
- “When I present concerns to Career Counselor A, Career Counselor A always has suggestions.”
- “Career Counselor A is very insightful.”
- “Career Counselor A explores why clients are interested in certain things.”

Some comments related to her reassuring and compassionate approach:

- “Career Counselor A is reassuring in a way that I need it, giving me honest feedback.”
- “Career Counselor A is very professional but also very warm and open and understanding.”
- “Career Counselor A is reassuring.”

Others commented on her organization, efficiency, and use of tools:

- “Career Counselor A makes efficient use of the time, and I feel we cover a lot of ground.”
- “Career Counselor A is extremely organized, is a good listener, and gives suggestions and pitfalls to watch out for.”

- “Career Counselor A is very thorough; she wants to give all the tools the client would need.”
- “Career Counselor A has a wealth of resources and is compassionate and intuitive.”

One participant commented on her ability to help with noncareer issues:

- “Career Counselor A helped pull me through my depression.”

Theme 2. Career Counselor A’s approach was effective. A variety of quotes supported this theme, some of which were also included in Theme 1. Some of the more general quotes were as follows:

- “Career counseling is useful.”
- “My career counseling was effective.”
- “Career Counselor A’s approach is a good one.”
- “Career counseling is insightful.”
- “My career counseling is effective.”
- “There are no negative outcomes with my career counseling.”
- “My career counseling has only been positive.”
- “So far, the career counseling is effective, though I’m unsure of the direction I’ll go with jobs.”

Some statements referred to specific aspects of the approach that had been helpful:

- “Career Counselor A is such a cheerleader and points out new perspectives.”
- “Career Counselor A sees me differently than I see myself.”

- “Career counseling is good for searching and clarifying what is in my head and heart.”
- “Career Counselor A asks probing questions that get me thinking.”
- “Career Counselor A helps me with thinking, searching, and networking.”
- “Career Counselor A is extremely organized, is a good listener, and offers suggestions and pitfalls to watch out for.”
- “When I present concerns to Career Counselor A, Career Counselor A always has suggestions.”
- “I leave feeling like I know what to work on.”

Some quotes contrasted Career Counselor A’s approach with what participants expected or had experienced with others:

- “Some career counselors rely too much on instruments, and Career Counselor A doesn’t favor that.”
- “Career Counselor A is not locked into predetermined formulas. Career Counselor A does not give typical career counselor responses, which is refreshing.”
- “Professionals helping me with my resume previously didn’t get it. Career Counselor A does and is not judgmental.”
- “The career counseling title is limiting to what Career Counselor A does; it is more life counseling.”

Finally, one participant commented, “There seems to be a formula to career counseling.”

Theme 3. There were personal elements to career counseling with Career Counselor A. Some indicated this personal aspect by describing the counseling as

holistic: “Career counseling with Career Counselor A is holistic”; “Career Counselor A looks at things holistically”; “Career Counselor A’s approach is holistic.” Some compared it specifically to counseling sessions:

- “I felt like I walked out of a therapy session, which I didn’t expect.”
- “The career counseling title is limiting to what Career Counselor A does; it is more life counseling.”
- “The counseling became more personal than only on career. It was a mix of personal and career counseling, which I liked.”

While one participant indicated that “career counseling is different than I expected,” other statements showed the positive difference:

- “Traditional career counseling wouldn’t have worked for me, I now know.”
- “I really prefer Career Counselor A’s personal counseling approach in career counseling because it gets to the heart of the matter.”
- “I like Career Counselor A’s approach.”
- “The personal pieces are more on the margins in career counseling with Career Counselor A, but Career Counselor A gets it.”
- “Career counseling was different than what I was expecting and it wasn’t as focused on very specific job stuff; it has gotten more personal than I expected, which I like.”
- “Previous personal counselors that I saw didn’t get it. Career Counselor A does, and it leads me to be more honest.”

Others addressed specific aspects of the counseling, such as the inclusion of family issues.

- “Career Counselor A focused on my family and my childhood in my career counseling.”
 - “Career Counselor A pointed out and focused on my parents’ work choices, which turns out is very significant and is affecting my career.”
 - “Career Counselor A wants to find out about you, explored a lot about my family.”
 - “Career Counselor A takes a full life history.”
- Another specific aspect participants discussed was anxiety.
- “Career Counselor A addresses anxiety related to the financial security piece I’m worried about.”
 - “Career Counselor A is helping me think through the mechanics of knowing where anxiety is coming from.”
 - “I’m not fearful of the parts of career counseling that includes working with Career Counselor A but instead the part about where I’m headed with my career.”
 - “Career counseling is a little scary.”
 - “I felt a little overwhelmed. I was unsure which direction to take with my career.”
 - “I was overwhelmed but also excited to start career counseling.”

Participants referred to process aspects relating to the personal elements that were discussed:

- “She is very perceptive.”
- “Career Counselor A was very exploratory in the first three sessions.”
- “Career Counselor A took a lifespan history to get to know me fully.”

- “Career Counselor A’s suggestions were very personal and individualized, giving me confidence.”
- “Career Counselor A is good at narrowing down certain personality aspects.”
- “Career counseling is interesting because Career Counselor A probed my non-work history first.”
- “Career Counselor A has a very honest approach.”

One individual reported that the counselor “helped pull me through my depression.” Another noted that the counselor “has helped a lot with feelings but I still need help with the ‘how-to’s.’” Finally, one participant pointed out that “Career Counselor A and I talked about meditation, which I wouldn’t have expected.”

Theme 4. All participants were employed but experienced something unsettling in the career domain. Participants brought up specific issues in their work:

- “I recently had a really bad manager that I didn’t click with and I’m not progressing at work because of it.”
- “I was relocated to Virginia because of a bad manager. I’m embarrassed and am having a really hard time getting over it.”
- “I’m fairly comfortable at work, but I feel like I’m treading water.”
- “There are a lot of things I do like and I don’t like.”
- “I detached from helping humans in my work.”
- “Job security isn’t what it was for my parents.”

Some were preparing for “what’s next” or changing fields:

- “I got a new job with Career Counselor A’s help in the past and now I’m interested in looking for what’s next.”

- “I have a great job but I’m feeling restless. I want to see what’s next.”
- “I want to leave my field.”
- “I’m taking a leave of absence to travel. While I’m away, I want to decide whether to leave my company, but I’m afraid that after I return home, I’ll be stuck with the same questions.”
- “I know I am going to have to take a risk to advance my career.”

The survey questions also showed areas where the participants were unsettled:

- “My achievements must surpass my mother’s or father’s or brother’s or sister’s.”
- “I can’t be satisfied unless I can find the perfect occupation for me.”
- “There are few jobs that have real meaning.”

Theme 5. Whether large-scale changes were made or not, the participants were changed as a result of the career counseling with Career Counselor A. Excerpts from the interviews that demonstrate this theme include “In my career counseling, I dealt with questions I knew I had and that I needed to address”; “It was helpful to have assistance with helping decide how to think about things [through career counseling]”; “Because of my work in career counseling, I am taking steps”; “This counseling is a process that I think will help me solve my existential crisis”; “Career counseling legitimizes the questions that we have”; “I felt like I walked out of a therapy session after my first session, which I didn’t expect”; and “I really prefer Career Counselor A’s personal counseling approach in career counseling because it gets to the heart of the matter.”

Approach B

Six themes emerged from the data with Approach B participants. These themes were as follows: (1) Career counseling with Career Counselor B was effective; (2) Career Counselor B was a supportive and good career counselor; (3) Materials such as books and activities were important to career counseling with Career Counselor B; (4) Regarding work environments and/or career, overall clients in Approach B experienced unhappiness and discontentment; (5) There was difficulty integrating personal interests with professional pursuits; and (6) There were positive outcomes to participating in career counseling with Career Counselor B.

Theme 1. Career counseling with Career Counselor B was effective. Some participants specifically used the term “effective” in their descriptions: “My career counseling was effective”; “I feel like my career counseling was effective”; “Career counseling was effective.” Others discussed its effectiveness in general terms:

- “It was a very positive experience.”
- “Very positive, very productive.”
- “I would get a nugget out of every session.”
- “I’m satisfied with my career counseling.”
- “I’ve been able to integrate into my new job role.”
- “Career counseling has been great.”
- “Career counseling has been an eye-opening experience.”
- “This helped me develop a vision of what I wanted.”
- “Career issues have been resolved through career counseling.”

- “98% of my issues have been resolved from my career counseling with Career Counselor B.”

One participant reflected:

I think, sometimes, it is like, you know, did I ‘is this really working?’ and then I would read the stuff and go back, and I would be a little more focused next time. . . . As I got more focused, there was no question. So I feel like some of it had to do with where I was, but she was kind of bringing me along.

Another commented that “career counseling is a way to help educate people on the lower totem pole who don’t have the same resources as people like CEOs.” A participant commented on the counselor being “very knowledgeable about the field” and giving her “a lot of great advice.” A further comment was that ‘it was a very individual-tailored approach.’ Finally, one participant noted that “career counseling is productive in healing.”

Theme 2. Career Counselor B was a supportive and good career counselor. In support of this theme, some commented on her personal traits:

- “Career Counselor B is a good listener.”
- “Career Counselor B works to really understand.”
- “Career Counselor B reflects.”
- “Career Counselor B seems to empower and inspire.”
- “Career Counselor B is very direct.”
- “Career Counselor B is very conscious of how work impacts personal life.”
- “Career Counselor B is a good person with good experience and perspective.”
- “Career Counselor B was easy to talk to.”

Some commented on the process:

- “Career Counselor B asks for details about a scenario or new roles and takes notes while asking for clarity and then reflects back what I said.”
- “Career Counselor B helped peel away what change could look like for me.”
- “Career Counselor B is so knowledgeable about different resources. She recommended books for me.”
- “I would bounce ideas off of Career Counselor B regarding my job.”
- “Career counseling helped me to figure it all out and to figure out how to discuss things with key employment people.”
- “Career Counselor B brings comfort to sessions by embracing client questions.”
- “Career Counselor B really listens.”
- “Career Counselor B pointed me in the right direction using different evaluations and exercises.”
- “I weighed my strengths and weaknesses with Career Counselor B.”
- “Where a friend or family member would have fueled the fire, Career Counselor B went another direction and gave alternatives.”
- “My experiences in career counseling felt vindicating because Career Counselor B reflected back what I’d said and discussed the situation with me. It wasn’t my fault.”
- “The sessions were very comfortable.”
- “I felt supported.”
- “Career Counselor B is very knowledgeable about the field and has given a lot of great advice.”

- “Career Counselor B helped me to work through some political issues so no problems arose in transition.”
- “Career counseling helps with developing a professional self, not simply how to write a resume.”
- “It is more like: How are you going to manage your career? What are you going to do with yourself professionally? How are you going to develop yourself professionally?—that type of thing.”

Some noted how personal the process was:

- “It’s a very individual-tailored approach.”
- “My career counseling crossed over into personal counseling.”
- “Career Counselor B could find overlap between the personal and career pieces.”

The process itself could be challenging. One commented that “I became emotional in the first session” and another noted, “Career Counselor B is lovely but the process is stressful.”

Theme 3. Materials such as books and activities were important to career counseling with Career Counselor B. Excerpts from the interviews that demonstrate this theme discussed books, homework, inventories, and other activities. In terms of books:

- “Career Counselor B recommended books.”
- “Career Counselor B has recommended books to read.”
- “Career Counselor B is so knowledgeable about different resources; she would recommend books.”

In terms of evaluations and exercises:

- “Career Counselor B pointed me in the right direction using different evaluations and exercises.”
- “Career Counselor B used the Strong Interest Inventory, values list, role model lists, and childhood interest.”
- “Career Counselor B’s use of tools like the Strong helped me feel justified.”
- “Sessions were filled with talking, reflecting, and use of instruments.”
- “Career Counselor B uses instruments.”
- “Career Counselor B uses assessments.”

In terms of homework:

- “She used homework.”
- “Homework was reviewed in the following sessions.”
- “I received books or articles from Career Counselor B and was assigned homework.”
- “Career Counselor B provides literary recommendations and gives homework.”
- “Career Counselor B gives homework.”

As a result of some of these activities, one participant said that “career counseling has helped with my resume, networking, and interviews.”

Theme 4. Regarding work environments and/or career, overall clients in Approach B experienced unhappiness and discontentment. In support of this theme, some expressed their anxiety in their current work situation:

- “I worry a great deal about choosing the right field of study or occupation.”
- “I’m anxious about changes coming at work.”
- “I feel anxious regarding the uncertainty and a loss of control.”

Some noted specific problems or issues they wanted to address:

- “I’m not satisfied in my current work.”
- “I’m frustrated in my career.”
- “I want to advance professionally.”
- “I’m changing from being a lawyer to something more creative.”
- “My work ebbs and flows.”
- “I’m in my first ‘real job’ by society standards and I’m miserable in it.”
- “The job changed soon after I began.”
- “My position is demanding and I’m on call all of the time.”
- “I didn’t plan on working in this field when in college. I just worked up the ladder in the company.”
- “I’ve lost my passion for my career, and I’m wondering what else there could be.”
- “I’m having difficulty at work.”
- “I needed help with being assertive at work.”
- “My husband suggested quitting the job I hate and starting with career counseling.”
- “I started career counseling after I got in trouble at work and it clicked in my head to figure out why I wasn’t fitting in in the corporate world.”
- “There are changes coming in the company, and I need to work on networking skills, resume, interviewing.”
- “I need help to explore resources and how to network.”
- “I want coaching.”
- “My peers were advancing and I was stuck.”

- “The distinction between work and home life blurred and it is hard to manage now.”
- “I travel on short notice.”
- “I have long hours at work.”
- “I’ve had a mid life or mid career crisis.”
- “I felt confused by my manager’s termination of me. I had had great reviews.”
- “I’ve been wondering what I would have done differently if I wasn’t locked in engineering and computer science in college.”
- “I’ve disassociated myself from work when outside of work now.”
- “Even though I’m not clinically depressed, the job stuff is taking a toll on me.”
- “I feel unhappy in my career.”
- “I can’t trust that my career decisions will turn out well for me.”

Others commented on major changes they faced:

- “Changing careers is a lot to deal with.”
- “I’m changing careers.”
- “I’m doing a total 180.”

Some reflected on negative feelings:

- “I’ve experienced feelings of guilt as I haven’t been there for my family.”
- “I feel lost and unfocused.”
- “I’m at a low point.”
- “I’m feeling dragged down.”

Other comments included the following:

- “Whenever I’ve become interested in something, important people in my life disapprove.”
- “My achievements must surpass my mother’s or father’s or brother’s or sister’s.”

Theme 5. There was difficulty integrating personal interests with professional pursuits. Excerpts from the interviews that demonstrated this theme included “I wasn’t sure how to make a living at what I personally enjoy”; “I don’t know how to integrate what I’ve done with other careers and the interests I have”; and “I knew I needed to make a change and I needed someone to help me focus.”

Theme 6. There were positive outcomes to participating in career counseling with Career Counselor B. Participant discussed these outcomes in both general and specific terms. They reported the following more general outcomes:

- “I’m exploring new possibilities.”
- “I’m hopeful.”
- “I want a better fit in my career.”
- “I was reminded of my personality traits and it awakened them.”
- “It was refreshing.”
- “Educational.”
- “I feel satisfied with career counseling.”
- “Career counseling has been an eye-opening experience.”
- “It helped me develop a vision of what I really want.”
- “I needed to know it was okay to be who I am and to make a living at it.”
- “I learned about myself.”
- “I learned that I like to work alone.”

- “I learned that I am not a leader.”
- “I changed my perspective on how I think of career.”
- “Career counseling opened the door for me.”
- “I feel better because I know the direction I’m going.”
- “I have a better understanding of who I am.”
- “I don’t feel lost.”
- “I feel like it’s a whole new world.”
- “I have new awareness on jobs using creativity.”
- “I gained confidence.”
- “I’ve a new focus and my next step is resolved.”
- “I feel like I expanded my horizons.”

They also reported specific outcomes:

- “I was able to discuss how to integrate into new job role.”
- “I figured out my limits and what I don’t enjoy, which were brought out through the exercises and evaluations Career Counselor B did.”
- “I figured out why I wasn’t doing well in my career.”
- “I’m now doing research on career ideas.”
- “I know now that my next step is to explore jobs in a creative field.”
- “I signed up for a class.”
- “I applied to school and to new jobs, and I was accepted to a master’s program.”
- “I realized that I’m not being unrealistic in what I want from my career.”
- “I see a need for understanding my own boundaries with work now.”

- “I understand now that just because I’m paid a large salary it doesn’t mean they own my life.”
- “I’ve learned that I’m impatient with people, which causes problems for me, and Career Counselor B even mentioned that that might be depression related.”
- “I’ve learned how to handle interpersonal situations better.”
- “I’m quitting my job.”
- “I changed to the type of position I want.”
- “I made changes at the same workplace with Career Counselor B’s help.”
- “I’ve become aware of certain things, like my ineffective approaches and behaviors.”
- “Career counseling got rid of my fear to take a step in a new direction even if it lacks financial security.”

Comparative Analysis

There are areas where the data interface and areas where they seem more segregated based on the reported experiences of the participants. Participants from both approaches viewed their career counselors as good at conducting career counseling and indicated that they felt supported. They viewed the experience of career counseling as helpful and effective. In addition, they spoke with fondness of their counselor, seeming to really like and respond well to her. Participants in both approaches were employed at the time of the study but experiencing unsettling thoughts and/or feelings of discontentment in the career domain.

An area of contrast between the two approaches related to how personal elements were integrated into the career counseling. As expected from the ICC approach, personal

elements were very present in the career counseling of Approach A. Further, the opportunity to delve into personal facets seems to have led to a greater impact on the experiences of the clients in Approach A, as many of the participants seemed significantly moved by the career counseling they experienced. Examples of this are found in statements from participants from Approach A: “Career counseling was more open and exploring than I’d expected”; “Career Counselor A looked at both personal and professional pieces of the person”; “The counseling became more personal than only on career; it was a mix of personal and career counseling, which I liked”; and “Career Counselor A helped pull me through my depression.” This comparison is not meant to indicate that the career counseling experiences in Approach B were not helpful to clients, but whereas Approach B participants were supported and helped and embraced with affection by their career counselor, Approach A participants seemed to have experienced something greater. The word “holistic” was reported by several Approach A participants, and it is speculated that this holistic focus may have a larger impact on the career counseling.

Another area of contrast related to the use of materials such as testing, homework, and literature. These aspects were more frequently reported by participants in Approach B than by participants in Approach A. To that end, it is interesting to consider the physical space designed and used by the two career counselors, one whose office had many more books than the other’s office and whose office space had been designed with a desk to be used by clients in session, as needed. Two lines of thought emerge about this dissimilarity. It is possible that Career Counselor A did not use materials as often as

Career Counselor B. It is also possible that the participants did not report use of materials from sessions with Career Counselor A even though materials were used.

Two other areas of contrast between these two approaches related to in the outcomes of participation in career counseling and to integrating personal interests with professional pursuits. Although both approaches appear to provide effective career counseling, the outcomes for the participants experiencing them seem to differ to some extent. It is worth mentioning that it seems like Approach B participants experienced more task-oriented things, whereas Approach A participants experienced more life-changing-type things. Examples of these comments by Approach B participants include “Career Counselor B provides literary recommendations and gives homework”; “Career Counselor B uses instruments”; “Career Counselor B uses assessments”; “Career Counselor B gives homework”; and “Career counseling has helped with my resume, networking, and interviews.” A theme of difficulty integrating personal interests with professional pursuits only emerged from the data in Approach B participant experiences. It is possible that Approach A participants experienced analogous issues integrating these facets and simply didn’t report them, or it is also possible that the participants did not experience these issues.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed and discussed the data resulting from this study and the themes that emerged. Specifically, information on the characteristics of the two career counselors and their offices was highlighted. Significant and notable thoughts and outcomes were reported on the first administrations of the instruments, followed by discussion of codes and themes from the interviews, second administration of the two

instruments, and researcher notes. Excerpts from client interviews and instruments were provided in great detail to support the results. Comparative analysis of emerging themes was also presented. The next chapter discusses these findings in light of the literature and provides conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with a discussion of the similarities and differences of the approaches and implications for the field. From there, the limitations on the study are explored. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

Similarities and Differences in the Career Counseling Approaches

There are similarities and differences between the experiences of career counseling clients in the two approaches presented in this study. First, as discussed in chapter 4, all of the participants reported experiencing effective career counseling with support by their respective career counselor. The outcomes varied, though.

Although both approaches appear to provide effective career counseling, the outcomes for the participants experiencing them seem to differ. While the differences are not abundant, it is worth mentioning that it seems as if Approach B participants had more task-oriented experiences and Approach A participants had more life-changing experiences.

Connected to the idea of outcomes is another area of difference: the extent of personal elements integrated into the career counseling. More specifically, it was reported thematically that personal elements were strongly present in the career counseling of Approach A. Further, the opportunity to delve into personal facets seems to have led to a greater impact on the experiences of the clients in Approach A, as many of the participants seemed significantly moved by the career counseling they experienced. That is not to indicate that the career counseling experiences in Approach B were not helpful

to these clients, but whereas Approach B participants were supported and helped, embracing their career counselor with affection, Approach A participants seem to have experienced something greater. The word “holistic” was reported by several Approach A participants about the approach used, and it is speculated that this holistic focus may have a larger impact on the career counseling.

Considering that the approach described as holistic has an integrative focus, literature affirms a sort of continuity here. Further affirming this finding is the idea presented by Savickas (2003), “Career development theories must be renovated with new propositions and augmented by innovative models that accommodate the realities of working and living in postindustrial societies” (p. 89). Additionally and more importantly, it has been suggested that the counseling field promote a holistic view of life roles and that it integrate career development theories, making them more coherent and comprehensive (Savickas, 2003). Bridging the gap between literature and the experiences of career counseling clients provides the first future direction for study, exploring the possible need for career counseling to be holistic.

Reflecting again on the literature, career counseling traditionally is a short-term intervention, and many counselors believe it differs from personal counseling (Manuele-Adkins, 1992). Counselors often limit intervention strategies to interest testing, exploratory activities, and exposure to career resource materials (Manuele-Adkins, 1992). This leaves little time to focus on the psychological aspects of career indecision and conflict, and though many counselors are trained to deal with the emotional factors involved in career choice, it continues to be perceived that career counseling is something different from personal counseling (Savickas, 2003). Further, frequently ignoring

interrelationships between the personal and career domains, career counselors have a tendency to be myopic in focus (Brown, 1986). Consequently, while both approaches of career counseling were experienced as helpful, the holistic, integrative approach may have had a greater impact on clients.

In review of the similarities and differences presented by the data, qualitative research appears to have been a good fit for exploring the experiences of career counseling clients. The semistructured interviews provided rich information that may have been overlooked in a study using quantitative methodology. Open-ended questions about the clients' lived experiences not only provided content for understanding their respective experiences in career counseling, but also may have provided information for future directions of research, such as looking further at the idea of how career counseling is holistic.

Implications for the Field of Career Counseling

As discussed earlier, there is literature supporting a need for more research in the career counseling field, and this study represents a step in that direction, providing initial data related to a shift in the way that some professionals are thinking about the implementation of career counseling with clients. If further research demonstrates a need for a change in how career counseling is implemented, then this study may offer support for that effort. Regardless of whether an integrative approach becomes more popular or the traditional approach remains in place for counseling career clients, there is a paucity of research in the career counseling field at present.

Speculating that an integrative approach is what the field may be seeking, again based on literature discussed earlier, this study provides information from clients who

have utilized two approaches in the career counseling field. That is significant because it provides fundamental experiences from individuals whose lives have been changed as a result of using career counseling. Further, recognizing that a more holistic approach may be warranted in career counseling based on the literature review, the collected data in this study reinforce the further exploration of integration concepts for client psychological wellness.

Limitations

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of clients in career counseling with two career counselors, one who practices ICC (Chopra, 2012) and the other who practices a traditional career counseling approach. Qualitative research often contributes to literature and to practice by informing new directions for research. Using the process of qualitative research, the study was guided by one central exploratory question: What is the experience like for clients in career counseling? Rich data were obtained through semistructured interviews and two self-report instruments, the Career Thoughts Inventory (Sampson et al., 1994, 1996) and the Outcome Questionnaire 10.2 (OQ Measures, LLC, 2005).

The researcher planned into the research design tools to triangulate the data through two written assessments. As a result of participants not completing the written assessments as readily as they participated in the interviews, the triangulation for this study was partially incomplete. Another direction by which this study could have been facilitated was to use a second interview with the participants and eliminate the written assessments altogether. Yet another option would have been to introduce a peer researcher to act as observer in interviews and then use those observation notes in lieu of

the written assessments. Finally, missing in this study's analysis was interrater reliability, so that should be built into future studies regardless of research method.

Reflecting on another area of the study, packets with the instruments were mailed using the U.S. Postal Service. It was originally proposed that the two career counselors would distribute the packets to the participants, with the researcher then following up with the participants, but upon institutional review board review, that option was eliminated and the researcher was directed to find a way to provide the materials to the clients directly. The limitation here related not only to the delay in time for mailing the packets, but also the uncertainty of them reaching the participants and/or being returned to the researcher. In hindsight, computer-based instruments may be a better choice in the absence of in-person research. For example, the use of computer-based software like Survey Monkey could be utilized for a future study.

Member checking was also designed into this study for triangulation. Participants did not respond readily to the researcher's invitations to review data from the interviews via transcripts, though. Other than observations by the researcher, there was little that could take the place of this very important tool. Reminders were sent via email, but given the importance of member checking, more reminders may have been warranted.

Another issue in the study related to participant number. The recruitment of a large amount of participants may have been inappropriate for this study. In qualitative research, large sample size does not always prove to give a richer understanding of the phenomenon being researched. The researcher wanted to achieve a rich sense of the experience of career counseling for clients, and larger quantity does not necessarily

provide better quality. Thus, a goal of recruiting very interested participants who would have completed all components of the study may have proved better for this study.

The study was limited by its inclusion of participants with similar demographic characteristics. First, only women volunteered to participate in this study; thus, the experiences of male career counseling clients were not included. Of the 17 participants originally recruited, only one was male, and he did not follow through with participation. Reaching more men may require using a different recruitment technique or utilizing counselors with a larger population of male clients. Assuming that the two career counselors in this study had a fair representation of male clients in their practices, the researcher speculates that men may not have wanted to talk openly about their career counseling with others. Thus, in future research, it may be important to offer virtual or telephone interviews instead of in-person interviews to provide distance in the interaction.

As another demographic aspect, all study participants were well educated, holding at minimum a college degree. To better understand the demographics of career counseling practices in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, it may be worth querying the education levels of clients seen in the last 3 to 5 years by career counselors whose practices may be used in future research. Having an understanding of the typical education level of clients in this geographic area may eliminate selection of a nonrepresentative study population in terms of education level.

Selection bias may be at play, in that participants for this study may have been motivated to participate because they had experienced or were experiencing success with their career counseling. Although participants were recruited upon intake, data collection

for some participants began after career counseling had been ongoing. Clients whose experience was mediocre or less than effective may have been less likely to participate, or to complete their participation after volunteering, as would clients who did not favor the approach or the career counselor. Additionally, less motivated clients in general, whether they had a good experience with career counseling or not, would likely not opt to participate in a study such as this. The perspectives of more motivated clients likely differ from those of less motivated clients, and therefore, the result of a client's understanding of the experience of career counseling could be very different.

The interviews were facilitated by telephone in this study. Other options for facilitating interviews are in person and via the Internet, using media such as Skype. As a result of using the phone, there was an absence of nonverbal communication, which can be used to triangulate data during analysis. Additionally, the interviews were shorter than the researcher expected them to be. A supposition by the researcher is that the shorter duration may relate to the interviews being held over the telephone.

The validation of the two approaches of career counseling is another area of reflection in this study. It is important that differences be demonstrated between the two approaches when exploring the experiences of career counseling clients from two different approaches of career counseling. Though the researcher examined the approaches that the two career counselors espoused and reportedly used, the results of the study may have been different had the approaches been more different from one another. It is the belief of the researcher that as a result of the two career counselors knowing one another and being professionally interconnected in professional groups, there has been a confluence of ideas. This can be effective in generating better career counseling for

clients, but for research such as in the present study, it may confound results. Conversely, exploring the experiences of clients with two similar career counselors may also be of merit. Regardless, though, of a confluence of ideas in the practices of career counselors in this study, the experiences of the participants remain the focal point.

One final limitation stemming from validation of the career counseling approaches is the uncertainty about whether approaches were studied. The intent of this study was to look at the experiences of clients in the career counseling approaches selected for this study. It is possible, though, that the researcher may have been provided with data about the career counselors or the counseling settings and less about the career counseling approaches specifically.

Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher is interested in continuing to examine the experience of career counseling clients, particularly in integrative approaches. Considering the instruments used in this study, it may be worth examining differences between those participants who completed the instruments and those participants who did not. Using a larger amount of participants while investigating career thoughts and outcomes would be of merit if considering a quantitative study. Using a larger sample size would provide the opportunity to run more analyses. Yet another direction for continued investigation is to look very critically at individual outcomes from a qualitative vantage point using the Outcome Questionnaire 10.2 or another measure.

From a phenomenological qualitative focus, implementing longer-duration interviews with an increased quantity of interviews with each participant may be of use to obtain richer data for a future study. Another important direction to pursue is to

investigate the perspectives of clients from either approach (but not from two approaches in the same study) on the approach they are experiencing. And, examining perspectives held about the ICC (Chopra, 2012) approach by career counseling professionals using either qualitative or quantitative methods is essential to gather knowledge about professionals in the field. A final consideration for future research is to survey career counselors and counselor educators about their attitudes toward the ICC approach (Chopra, 2012) and the possible need for a shift in how career counseling is approached in counseling programs. As discussed, many leaders in the field are proposing changes, but exploring other professionals' beliefs and attitudes can prove helpful, too.

Approaching the data analysis from a different means is another suggestion for future research. Though laborious with 14 participants in a qualitative study, implementing analysis as individual case studies is an option that may provide differently rich results. The researcher is considering reviewing the data again and using a case study to describe the results from this study. Case study can also be used when obtaining new data in new studies on the experiences of individuals.

Summary

Chapter 5 reviewed the purpose and findings from this study, specifically highlighting the similarities and differences of the data that emerged and implications for the field. This chapter also presented limitations of the study and concluded with a discussion of future areas of research.

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APPENDIX A:

CLIENT INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model
IRB# 091218

Hello!

Your name and contact information were provided to us via your career counselor. Thank you for choosing to participate in this important study! We wanted to offer easy instructions in writing since we are not meeting face-to-face; however, if any questions arise, please either email or phone Karen and she will respond within 24 hours. ALL questions are welcome!

Step 1. Please look over all materials in this packet. Enclosed:

- Informed Consent Form
- Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI) Test Booklet
- The Outcome Questionnaire (OQ™-10.2 Form)
- A stamped and addressed envelope (to Karen)

Step 2. Please read the **Informed Consent Form** and then print your name, sign your name, and date this form. Place it in the stamped, addressed envelope.

Step 3. Please read the directions on the **Career Thoughts Inventory** (CTI) Test Booklet cover and then answer all of the questions. It is invalid if you leave any answers unanswered, so please make sure to answer all questions. Place it in the stamped, addressed envelope.

Step 4. Please read the directions on **The Outcome Questionnaire** (OQ™-10.2 Form) and then answer all of the questions. It is invalid if you leave any answers unanswered, so please make sure to answer all questions. Place it in the stamped, addressed envelope.

Step 5. Please then seal the envelope tightly and return to me by dropping it in the mail.

When you are either close to finishing or finished with counseling, your counselor will contact me to let me know so that I can complete the interview portion of the study with you. The interview is the most important piece of the study and it'll be conducted by phone. The interview is just between me and you; your counselor will know nothing of its content. Once I hear from your counselor, I'll be in touch, most likely via email, and we can schedule a time that suits you best.

Thanks again for your participation, and I look forward to receiving back your completed packet!

Subinvestigator & Research Coordinator Karen F. Griner, Ph.D. Candidate, LMHC, NCC
Contact information kfgriner@gmail.com; 571-213-8734

APPENDIX B:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Department of Counseling / Human and Organizational Studies

Informed Consent Form
The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model
IRB# 091218

Investigator	Dr. Pat Schwallie-Giddis, Ph.D.
Telephone Number	202-994-6856
Subinvestigator/Research Coordinator	Karen F. Griner, Ph.D. Candidate, LMHC, NCC
Telephone Number	571-213-8734

I. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to be a part of this study, you need to understand the risks and benefits. This consent form provides information about the research study. A staff member of the research study will be available to answer your questions and provide further explanations by phone. If you agree to take part in the research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. This process is known as informed consent.

Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose whether or not you will take part in the study. Your participation will not affect your counseling in any way.

II. PURPOSE

The Department of Counseling of The George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development is carrying out a research study to explore the effectiveness of a model known as Integrative Career Counseling developed by Karen James Chopra, LPC, MCC, NCC, through exploring the experiences of career counseling clients. More specifically, the investigators want to better understand what it is like to be a career counseling client. The investigator is Dr. Pat Schwallie-Giddis with Karen F. Griner.

There is no funding for this study. It is being used to fulfill doctoral degree requirements.

III. PROCEDURES

The research will be conducted at [counselor site]. You will attend your career counseling sessions regularly and will only need to come one other time during the study for an interview with Karen Griner. Your counselor will not be present for this interview and will be provided with no identifying information about anything that you share in this interview. The one visit with the researcher will take approximately 45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. The other component to this research is the administration of two questionnaires, one at the beginning of your counseling and one at the end of your counseling. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately 2 hours, to take place while you are in your counseling and as your counseling has ended.

IV. POSSIBLE RISKS

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life. Although we have made every effort to minimize this, you may find some questions we ask you to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can tell you about some people who may be able to help you with these feelings. Referrals to qualified counselors are available.

V. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

VI. COSTS

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

VII. COMPENSATION

You will not receive compensation for participating in this study. However, all participants who complete the study in full with the questionnaires and interview will be entered into a drawing at the end of the study for one iPad. The one winner will be notified at the contact information provided to your counselor before May 31, 2013.

VIII. RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may decide not to begin or to stop this study at any time. You will be told of any new information about the research study that may cause you to change your mind about participation.

IX. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH RECORDS

Your records will be confidential. You will not be identified (e.g., name, Social Security number) in any reports or publications of this study. Your records for this study may be reviewed by departments of the University responsible for overseeing research safety and compliance. Except for these entities, research study records will be kept confidential unless you authorize their release or if the records are required by law (i.e., through a court subpoena).

X. QUESTIONS

If you have questions about the procedures of this research study, please contact Karen F. Griner by telephoning 571-213-8734 during the workday or evening up to 9:00 PM EST. If you have any questions about the informed consent process or any other rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Human Research at The George Washington University, at 202-994-2715 or ohrirb@gwu.edu.

XI. SIGNATURES

By signing this consent form, you affirm that you have read this informed consent form, the study has been explained to you, your questions have been answered, and you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Participant (Print Name)

Signature

Date

XIII. INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the research study has been explained to the above individual by me or my research staff including the purpose, the procedures, the possible risks, and the potential benefits associated with participation in this research study. Any questions raised have been answered to the individual's satisfaction.

Investigator (Print or type name)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model

Investigator: Dr. Pat Schwallie-Giddis, Ph.D.
Subinvestigator: Karen F. Griner, Ph.D. Candidate, LMHC, NCC

Main interview question:

- Tell me about what it has been like being a client in career counseling.

Probing interview questions to use during interview:

- How did you decide to come to career counseling?
- What concerns in your life did you experience at the beginning of career counseling?
- Did any new concerns emerge as you participated in career counseling sessions here? What were they?
- Has career counseling helped resolve all of your concerns? If only some of your concerns were resolved, which are left and how will you resolve those?
- What career are you in? How did you decide upon that career?
- What was a typical day like for you before you started career counseling? What is a typical day like for you now?
- What is your personal (non-work-related) life like? Has that changed in any way since being in career counseling?
- How would you describe your career counseling experience here? Has it had any negative outcomes on your life? Please describe, if so. Has it had any positive outcomes on your life? Please describe, if so.
- Would you describe your career counseling here as effective? If not, what would have helped to make it so?
- Please take a moment to reflect on our time together. What information have I neglected to ask about that would offer me insight into your experience in career counseling here?

“Please assist me in knowing you a little better as we close our time together.”

Demographic information:

- Age:
- Gender:
- Ethnicity:

- Are you currently employed?
- Were you employed when you began career counseling?
- Have you participated in career counseling prior to this?

APPENDIX D:

OUTCOME QUESTIONNAIRE 10.2 AS PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS

Name: _____

Counselor: _____ Date of session: ____/____/____

Below you will read over a set of statements to which you will answer based on what you think or feel. This information will be kept confidential among the research team, and your counselor will not know how you have responded on this form. She will only know *that* you completed it. Thank you for completing this form. Your participation means a lot!

INSTRUCTIONS for items 1-10: Looking back over the last week, including today, help us understand how you have been feeling. Please read each item carefully and circle the number under the category which best describes your current situation.

				Almost	
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1 I am a happy person.	4	3	2	1	0
2 I am satisfied with my life.	4	3	2	1	0
3 I am satisfied with my relationships with others.	4	3	2	1	0
4 I feel loved and wanted.	4	3	2	1	0
5 I feel my love relationships are full and complete.	4	3	2	1	0
6 I feel fearful.	0	1	2	3	4
7 I feel something is wrong with my mind.	0	1	2	3	4
8 I feel blue.	0	1	2	3	4
9 I feel lonely.	0	1	2	3	4
10 I feel stressed at work/school.	0	1	2	3	4

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Developed by Michael J. Lambert, Ph.D., Art E. Finch, John Okishi & Curtis W. Reisinger, Ph.D.

APPENDIX E:

IRB APPROVAL FROM THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

Date: October 23, 2012
To: Pat Schwallie-Giddis, PhD

From: The George Washington University Committee on Human Research,
Institutional Review Board (IRB), FWA00005945

Re: Correspondence dated 09/12/2012
Subject: **IRB#091218** -- *The Effectiveness of the Integrative Career Counseling Model*
Sponsor: None
Risk Level: **Minimal** **Status:** Active **Expiration date:** 10/22/2013

This is to certify that the Institutional Review Board has **fully approved** the above referenced protocol via expedited review procedure under categories # **6 & 7** of 45 CFR 46.110.

The expiration date of this project is **10/22/2013**. HHS regulations at 45 CFR 46.109(e) require that **continuing review** of research be conducted by the IRB at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk and **not less than once per year**. The regulations make **no provision for any grace period extending the conduct of the research beyond the expiration date of IRB approval**. **When your protocol expires all research activities must stop**. Please mark your calendar now to insure that the IRB receives a renewal request 30 days before the anniversary date of the project, if this study is expected to extend beyond one year.

This protocol has been approved for a **maximum number of 30 subjects** to be enrolled under the auspices of George Washington University. If you wish to increase enrollment beyond this number, you must submit a modification request to the IRB and obtain approval before exceeding this number.

Please note that the IRB must be notified if the project is altered in any way (change in location, personnel, number of subjects, age of subjects, or any change in research protocol). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Human Research either by email at ohrirb@gwu.edu or via phone at 202-994-2715.

MPB/dba