TRAINING OF CAREER PROFESSIONALS IN SINGAPORE

Ms Sing Chee Wong
Career Success Consulting
Singapore
Career Guidance or career advisory is a relatively new service in Singapore. Changing economy, and social and socio-economic values gave impetus for its growth and development.
Singapore Economic Development

- Pre-independent Singapore’s economy depended on entrepot trade and small businesses
- Economy flourished after independence in 1964
- Manufacturing industry gave way to knowledge-based industry like Research and Development
- Banking and Finance hub for the region
Changing Socio-economic Values

- Businesses and nature of work are more specialized and demanding
- Globalization and technology advances require workers to keep abreast with the development – continuous upgrading required
- Workers must be competent in their work
- Lifelong employment is no longer a norm
Economic restructuring is on-going
Shrinking population size necessitates workers to work beyond retirement age of 62 years old
Call for diverse groups of population to return to workforce
Changing Social Values

- Traditionally, children are expected to follow parents’ trade or businesses
- Currently, workers are better educated, and want careers that match their interests and talents, and are fulfilling
- Work-life balance, good income and prestige are important
Problem!

Job Seekers:
- Lack self-knowledge, uncertain of what career they want to pursue
- Lack Labour Market Information and range of occupations available
- Lack job search/employability skills
- Need to come out of comfort zone
Career guidance and counseling are required, and career professionals need to be trained to provide the service.
Training Resources for Career Professionals

- Mainly on-the-job training
- Three Institutions of Higher Learning offer career counseling as an elective in the counseling programme
- Ad-hoc courses
Career Professionals’ Assistance is Required

- Help Job seekers to acquire better self-knowledge for identification of possible careers, using various career development theories and tools
- Coach Employability/Job search skills, e.g. resume writing skills, interview skills and networking skills
- Provide information on labour market and training resources
- Bring diverse groups back into the workforce, e.g., retirees, back-to-work housewives, disabled, ex-offenders, etc.
- Use of technology to complement career guidance where possible.
- Promote and market career services to inform and reach out to more job seekers and employers.
Understanding Self for Career Planning

- Popular to use career assessment tools for self-understanding, but...
  - cultural bias
  - older workers may not be fluent in English language to use tools beneficially
- Narrative techniques preferred to gain insight into their career aspirations – Narrate what they liked/disliked about previous jobs and voluntary work; discuss vocational daydreams, etc
- Exercises like Super’s Life Career Rainbow, Singapore Occupational Card Sort, etc
Knowledge of career development theories are crucial as they provide the framework for self-understanding – Holland, Super, Krumboltz, Hansen, and Schlossberg

Good attending skills are important – listening, paraphrasing, summarizing, etc
The competencies required by the Career Professionals in Singapore are similar to those advocated in the Career Development Facilitator (CDF) course accredited by the American National Career Development Association.
Career Development Facilitators (CDF) Course

- 120–hour course, following the curriculum in the CDF Training Manual
- 14 full-day, face-to-face sessions, rest of time spent in meeting clients and preparing 2 case studies for presentation and discussion, and 2 team presentations on diverse groups
- Case consultation and observation
- Effort made to contextualize the training materials to local situation as far as possible
CDF in Singapore

Two trained Career Development Facilitator Instructors in Singapore

Personally, I have conducted seven CDF courses for 105 participants from the Singapore Workforce Development Agency and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Integrated Unit of the Ministry of Social and Family Development

Also conducted numerous workshops on the administration of the “Singapore Occupational Card Sort” for teachers and career professionals
What some of the participants said about the CDF course...
The course has provided me insights, and different career guidance techniques and tools that can benefit clients from all walks of life.

I am now more confident to assist clients who are “lost” and don’t know about themselves (their skills, interests, values and strengths).
Very enriching and insightful into the career planning process, and tools used.

Good course, wide coverage. I appreciate the sharing of cases as it helped me to understand how others apply the various tools.

The CDF course is very useful in equipping me with the necessary skills to engage Job Seekers. I will strive to read the CDF manual and notes again till I have fully internalized them.
THANK YOU!