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## ***What is Career Counseling for the Undecided Student?***

Students meet one-on-one with a career counselor to discuss their academic and career options and explore their career-related values, interests, and abilities. Sessions last up to 50 minutes.

### **What will happen during the first appointment?**

When you arrive at Career Services for the first session, you will be asked to complete a form to provide information about yourself and to inform you about our policies and procedures. After the career counselor reviews your paperwork, the two of you will:

- Clarify the concerns you would like to address
- Identify your interests, work values, academic strengths and weaknesses, work-related skills, and personal goals.
- Determine the best course of action to help you achieve your goals
- Discuss what you can do on your own to resolve your concerns
- Introduce you to useful resources related to your concerns
- Give you information about other NIU resources that might be helpful
- Determine if further appointments are necessary

### **What kind of activities will I do during career counseling?**

During the first and/or additional career counseling sessions, you will work with your counselor to achieve your goals in many ways:

- Complete career-related exercises and assignments (during or between appointments).
- Take interest and/or personality tests.
- Utilize resources available at the Career Resource Center or via the Internet.
- Conduct research using the Horizons, NIU Major WebLinks, or other computerized career programs.
- Arrange appointments to speak with people knowledgeable about majors or careers.
- You and your counselor may identify additional ways for you to achieve your goals!

### **How can I help myself during the career counseling process?**

Like any other form of counseling, career counseling will only be successful if you commit to the process by:

- Attending all appointments that you and your counselor decide are necessary
- Being open about issues that are relevant to your career concerns
- Conducting career research and completing other career-related tasks between appointments
- Giving honest feedback to your career counselor about what is helpful and what is not helpful

### **How do I arrange an appointment and how long will career counseling take?**

Call Career Services at 753-1641 to schedule an appointment. Some students require two or three sessions, others require more.

### **Who are the career counselors?**

Career Services' career counselors are professionally trained counselors who are aware of the concerns that students face as they explore the future. They are aware of the most useful resources to inform your academic and career decision-making in order to help you make a decision that is in your best interests. Our career counselors currently possess an advanced degree in psychology or counseling or are receiving supervision to earn an advanced degree.

### **Are our discussions confidential?**

Yes. This will be explained in the form you'll complete prior to your first appointment. If you wish to discuss concerns of a more personal nature, we'll help you contact the Counseling & Student Development Center or another appropriate agency.

### **How much does career counseling cost?**

While there is no charge for appointments, there is a charge for career tests. Please discuss this with your counselor.

### **Will you help with course selection?**

Although we may discuss majors, minors and NIU courses, we will refer you to an NIU academic advisor for course selection.

### **Clarifying common misperceptions about career counseling.**

- Career counseling is not simply taking "tests" that will "tell you what to do".
- Not all students need to take a career test. Your counselor will discuss this option with you, and the two of you will decide if a career test is in your best interest.
- Career counseling is not an "expert" telling you what to major in or what career to pursue.
- Career counseling is not the same for all students. It varies according to your needs and individual situation.
- Individual career counseling might not be your best option. You may find group career counseling to be more helpful.

# Obstacles To Career Decision Making

## PERSONAL CONCERNS

- Low self-esteem, self-doubt, lack of motivation, interfering personal problems, avoidance of assuming "adult" roles and responsibilities, identity confusion, fear of failure, fear of success.

## LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT CAREER SERVICES AVAILABLE AT NIU

- Do you know about?:
  - Career counseling available at Career Services?
  - The Career Resource Center, SIGI 3, and NIU Major Web-Links?
  - Additional services at Career Services, such as help with finding an internship or searching for a job?
  - The career planning class, CAHC 211?
  - Departmental academic and professional organizations?

## LACK OF SELF-AWARENESS

- What are your work-related interests, values and satisfactions, academic and work-related strengths and weaknesses, work-related experiences, career fantasies, and personal/professional expectations?

## LACK OF INFORMATION or MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK

- How many occupations can you describe in detail?
- Do you have enough career information to make an "informed choice"?

## CAREER AND ACADEMIC MYTHS

- Do you believe any of the following?
  - Only business majors get jobs in the business world.
  - Your major dictates what you'll do for the rest of your life.
  - A college degree and good grades guarantee you a good job.
  - High salaried persons always have greater work satisfaction than lower salaried workers.

## DECISION MAKING DIFFICULTIES

Procrastination	Obsessing over decisions
Making decisions to please others	Relying exclusively on others' opinions & advice
Making decisions impulsively	Repeatedly changing your mind

## INACCURATE OR IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

- Do you ever think:
  - I must graduate in four years.
  - My first job has to be high paying and prestigious.
  - I have to be 100% sure that my career choice is right before I make a decision.
  - It would be disastrous to change majors or career plans mid-way in my education.
  - There is only one career that is right for me, and if I don't obtain it, I'm doomed.
  - It seems like I'm the only one who doesn't know what I'm going to do.
  - There's a test or person who can tell me what major or career to choose.

## EXTERNALLY IMPOSED PRESSURE TO SELECT A GIVEN MAJOR OR CAREER

- Do you ever worry about:
  - What your friends or family will think about your career plans.
  - Feeling uncomfortable pursuing a career that is dominated by members of the opposite sex.
  - Selecting a major or career that will impress others.
  - Having to be a "success" because you are the first college student in the family. Or because your parents are making a great financial sacrifice to send you to school? Or because someone in your family is a "success."

## PRACTICAL AND TANGIBLE OBSTACLES

Financial pressures or restrictions.	Physical, emotional or academic disabilities.
Geographic limitations.	Time constraints (i.e., too busy)
Family responsibilities	