

## MODULE #2: Career Decision-Making

### Objectives:

- Participants will learn about the importance of goal setting in career development
- Participants will learn how their values and career choice relate
- Participants will learn to apply their decision-making skills to career selection.

### Context



*In the career decision making process it is important to start planning as early as possible in order to be better prepared with ideas, course work and know the varied options. This is important regardless if the student plans to attend college following high school or not. For example, it is suggested that if possible take college preparatory courses even if students are not planning to attend college. The decision making process will be facilitated if the student explore as many possibilities.*

### Handouts & Resources Needed:

Handout 2.1: Esther's Story

Handout 2.2: Career Decision-Making Model

Pens/pencils

Sheet of paper- one for each participant

Journals

### Activity #1: Icebreaker-introduction (20 min)

- Remind students about the importance of goal setting in career development. They need to have a plan before they can attempt to reach a goal. For example, if they would like to become a lawyer, a doctor or a teacher, they need to create a plan. A plan includes the steps needed to be followed in order to reach the goal. It is important to consider as many aspects as possible in the plan such as finances and course preparation. Once a plan is put in place, they can engage in pursuing the steps, including career exploration. In many occasions, we are unsure about what we want and that is okay as long as they have a goal, which may be to attend college and have a job that they would enjoy.
- Summarize what this module will cover and how it will help them.

Activity #2: Values in Career Decision-Making (35 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- It is important for participants to understand that their personal or cultural values may interfere in their career selection process. Thus, they need to be prepared by conducting research about careers choices that may be of their interest. This is the best way to avoid accepting stereotypes related to career choice. For example, some men make career choices based on society expectations as it relates to gender, ethnicity, etc.
- In small groups of 4 or 5, have participants read and discuss Handout 2.2: Esther's Story to understand her values and career choices (Refer to Handout 2.2 for suggested discussion questions).
- Debriefing

Activity #3: Career Decision-Making (30 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Explain to participants that during this session they will learn about the Career Decision-Making Model, which is helpful in the career decision making process. Provide Handout 2.3: Career Decision-Making Model and review all the steps listed.
- Debriefing

## Handout 2.1

### Esther's Story

Esther always assumed that she would become a nurse. Her mother was a nurse, and Esther grew up respecting the nursing profession. She was good at math and science, and had no trouble getting into nursing school.

Working in a hospital, though, made her unhappy. Esther enjoyed working alone, and the hospital was crowded and noisy, with half a dozen things going on at any given time in many of the rooms. Esther loved being outdoors, and hated the way her job kept her inside all day. At the end of the shift, she was too exhausted to do anything else.

Esther decided to make a change. The fact that she was good at her job, she discovered, did not automatically mean that she was happy or satisfied with it. She had to consider her values, as well as her skills. What could she do, she wondered, that would make use of her math and science skills, while allowing her to be on her own and outdoors much of the time? After some searching, Esther had an answer: She decided to combine her math and science skills with her love of the outdoors by becoming a surveyor for the country. She has been much happier since.

Had Esther taken the time to consider her values before she made her initial career choice, she might easily have seen that nursing was not the best career for her. It's important for you to examine your values, too. Your values are reflected in the kinds of people you like and respect, your favorite activities, the places in which you feel most comfortable-in short, in how you react to the many different aspects of your life. There are no right or wrong values when it comes to making a decision about a future career. You just need to be sure that they are yours, not those of your best friend, or the star of your favorite TV show.

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did Esther enter nursing?
2. How did Esther's interests, conflict with her job?
3. What factors should an individual consider in making a career decision?

## **Handout 2.2**

### **Career Decision-Making Model**

#### **Step One: Identify the Decision to be Made**

Before you begin gathering information, it is important that you have a clear understanding of what it is you are trying to decide. Some decisions you might be facing could include:

1. What will I choose for a college major?
2. What do I want to do after graduation?

#### **Step 2: Know Yourself (Self Assessment)**

Before you begin exploring college majors and careers which will prove satisfying, you must first develop a true understanding of yourself: your skills, interests, values, and personality characteristics. Questions you may want to ask yourself are:

Skills:

1. What are my strengths and weaknesses?
2. What skills do I need to acquire?

Interests:

1. What am I interested in doing?
2. What activities have I enjoyed the most?

Values:

1. What is important to me in a career?
2. In what ways must I be challenged and rewarded?

Personality:

1. What personal qualities do I possess that will help me in the classroom?
2. How will my personal style influence my career choice?

We encourage you to meet with a career counselor to further explore these dimensions and how they relate to your academic and career plans.

#### **Step 3: Begin Identifying Options (Career Exploration)**

To continue gathering information and researching careers, you will need to start identifying options. Questions you might ask yourself are:

1. At this point in time, what college majors and career paths am I considering?
2. What other types of options am I considering?

#### **Step 4: Gather Information and Data**

If you completed the first three steps, you should have a list of majors and careers that you plan to explore and research in more depth. You will now:

1. Examine the information and resources you already have.
2. Seek out and utilize new information.

#### **Step 5: Evaluate Options**

If you have completed your career research, you are now ready to evaluate each of the options you have identified:

1. Identify the pros and cons of each college major or career.
2. Explore how each major or career relates to your interests, skills, and values.
3. Project the probable future consequences of each major or career choice.

#### **Step 6: Select One of the Options**

Based on the information you have gathered and analyzed, you should now be able to choose one of the options.

1. Do you have enough information to choose one option over another? If not, you might need to do more research.

#### **Step 7: Make a Plan and Implement the Decision**

Having chosen one of the options, you can begin developing and implementing a plan of action. Ask yourself:

1. What information or resources do you need to follow through on your decision?
2. What are the obstacles to implementing your decision and how can you overcome them?

Remember to monitor your decision so that you can assess whether you are achieving your goals.

Adapted from Rutgers University: Career Services.