

# Curriculum for Career Counsellors

## Unit J: Networking for inclusion



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# Content:



**Group work: Reflecting on preconceptions – what do (we think) we know?**



**Lecture: What is a mental health condition – common disorders encountered in career counselling – implications and support**



**Individual reflection: Exploring individual experience and thinking about implications for career counselling and job placement**



# Networking – why?

“Isn’t it the career counsellor’s task to find solutions with the client on a one-to-one basis. As a result the client should be clear about options, have a plan and be activated to sort out things...”

**HOWEVER:**

**Mental health conditions affect all areas of life, not just education, training and career. Unresolved problems in the family, regarding housing, therapeutic progress etc. can impact, complicate and disrupt developing career trajectories.**

**In addition, systems of support (personal, social, financial), tend to be complex and need to be coordinated.**

**All this on top of the fact that in the contemporary world of work orientation and decision-making has become more demanding as the amount of possible career paths increases and their security and clarity decreases.**

**Neither the young person themselves nor a single counsellor or carer can possibly handle all this on their own!**



# Networking – issues

**Finding the right career (not just the right job for now!). This may require involving occupational psychologists, employers providing internships, facilities providing vocational orientation programmes etc.**

**Finding an employer for training and/or work – which may require supporting the client in negotiating conditions, backing them up with funding, tapping into existing industry networks etc.**

**Maintaining support during training and employment. Making sure the work environment remains suitable. Having contacts ready in case problems occur, e.g. a relapse causing unexplained absence from work..**

**Making sure the wider social context is supportive. Will there be therapeutic back-up (or continued therapy)? Are there informal carers providing for stability outside work?**

**Securing material conditions. Is the housing situation sorted out (e.g. if work is in another town)? Can the client afford the commute before receiving the first pay slip? Do they need top-up benefits?**



# Networking partners

**The young person with mental health condition** – sounds obvious, but there always is the temptation to assume a guiding-parent position vis-à-vis a younger person and an authority-of-the-able position vis-à-vis a person with a disability. The client needs to be the centre of the network!

**Informal carers** – are not always available, and some may come across as less than helpful. But to the extent that they are trusted by and important for the client they need to be on board. They often do a lot of day-to-day support and they can provide important perspective in addition to the client's own account

**Mental health professionals.** Even if career counsellors may not directly be in touch – the therapist of the client is part of the network and contributes (via the client) important feedback in addition to therapy itself. Social workers will be helpful in stabilising the situation, specialised job coaches may be needed to stabilise employment ...

**Educational and training institutions and employers.** The, too, will be more than just receiving end-points of the process but have to be informed, be in the conversation, may need (financial or professional) support etc.

**Authorities, agencies organisations – governmental and non-governmental** In most cases a multi-agency approach is needed to ensure a smooth process. Often voluntary organisations can also provide resources (material and immaterial) and support

# Networking processes

**Needs assessment** – what are the concrete tasks for which the network will be needed? (e.g. housing benefits, working time adjustments, disability allowance) – it may be necessary to already draw on existing networking partners to help with this (e.g. informal carer, social worker at former school etc.)

**Planning** – drawing on/connecting to existing planning (e.g. from the therapeutic process), in what order are problems to be tackled and what kind of network partner could help with specific tasks. Plans are constantly to be adjusted as opportunities and challenges arise.

**Mapping existing networks** – What networks do already exist for the client? What networks are ready at hand to those involved (including the professional networks of the career counsellor) – and how do they correspond to the plan? What kind of networks are they and how are they to be navigated?.

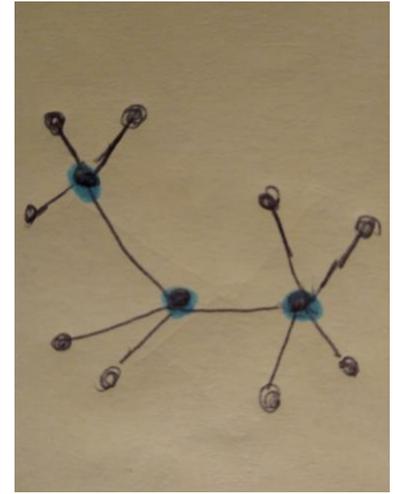
**Navigating, fortifying and extending networks.** – are the existing networks sufficient or do you build new connections? How are existing and future network partners to be approached and by whom? Who will act as network pilot (and what can be done to help the client to grow into that role themselves?)



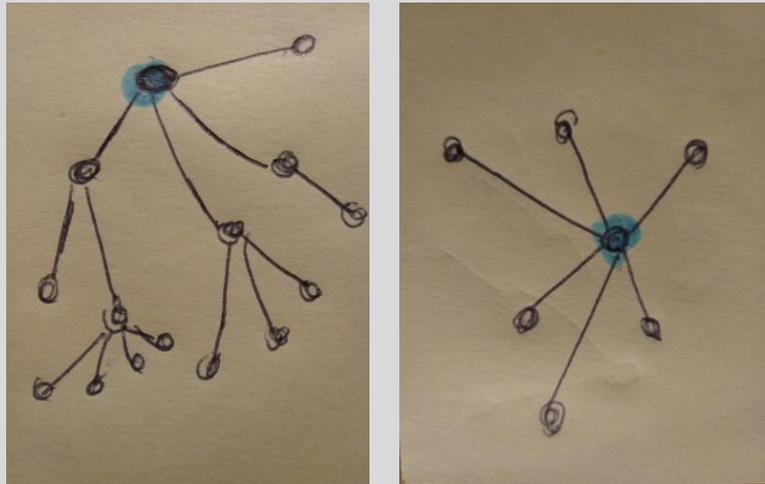
What kind of networks are you dealing with?

What kind of network do you want to build?

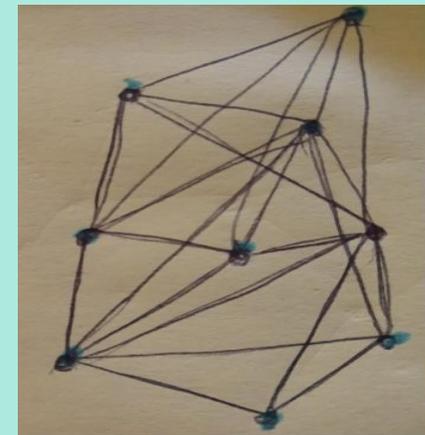
Decentralised networks



Centralised networks



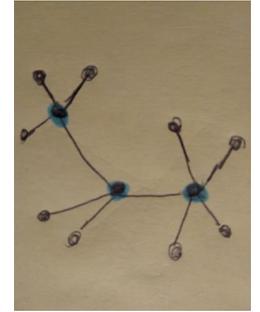
Distributed networks



What kind of networks are you dealing with?

What kind of network do you want to build?

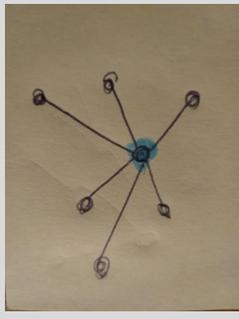
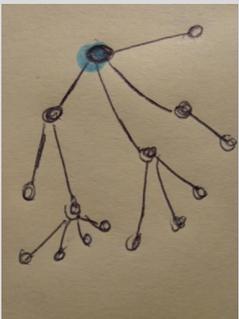
## Decentralised networks



e.g. partnerships between organisations and institutions. Higher degree of flexibility, but also more need for finding working agreements and some “politics” between partners.

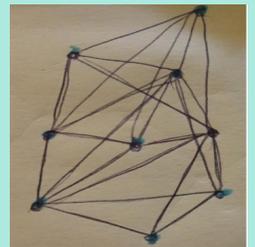
## Centralised networks

e.g. government administration. Can be cumbersome and inflexible. On the other hand there tend to be clear rules and reliable (if slow) reactions.



## Distributed networks

E.g. professional network of social workers and third-sector organisations in an area. Highly flexible and adaptable – but reliant on good personal connections and due to informality requiring good “local knowledge”



# Networking skills for career counsellors

**Career counsellors need networking skills** In a more complex world of work, particularly when working with groups with complex needs requiring interdisciplinary approaches.

**Career counsellors need to be familiar with relevant local networks** – This includes relevant support services, charities, business associations, local authorities, contacts within own organisation.

**Career counsellors need to be engaged in (inter)professional networks.** They need to have visibility so that others know they can refer clients to them where appropriate – and so that they themselves can easily turn to others with relevant issues.

**Career counsellors need to be able to centre networking activities on their clients.** Networking is one thing, making it work for the client is another. It is all too easy in routines of networking for networking's sake





Check out the  
Work4Psy Toolkit  
on netWorking  
with the labour  
market (part B,  
chapter 2)



# Taking the client perspective

**Re-visit your notes from Session C and re-enter that persona.**

**Imagine you are being asked by your career counsellor to draw up a network map.**

**Using the material supplied, complete Activity \_\_\_ “Who Supports You in Your Network”**

**What kind support would you expect from your own personal context – and what gaps would you (with the help of a counsellor) need to fill in?**

**How would you expect the network card to be different for a young person with mental health condition (given that they have little or no employment history and possibly of biographical disruptions...)**



Thank you for  
your attention.  
Any questions?

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