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How to manual The co-creation counselling model & co-creation dialogue cards

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1. Introduction.

Welcome to the "How to Manual – The co-creation counselling model", a comprehensive guide designed to enhance your understanding and implementation of the co-creation counselling model & co-creation counselling cards. This manual is crafted to support counsellors in facilitating reflective and impactful counselling sessions, focusing on gender influences on career choices.

The co-creation counselling model is structured around eight (8) key fields that both counsellor and counselee engage with throughout the counselling process. Central to this model is the continuous reflection and evaluation of the counselling journey, promoting a collaborative environment where both parties actively contribute to developing new insights and making educated career decisions.

In addition to the co-creation model, we have developed eight (8) co-creation dialogue cards helping counsellors and counsees to focus on gender influences on career choices during the counselling process.

By utilising this model, counsellors can provide a clear and structured process that encourages self-awareness and personal growth in counsees. The co-creation counselling model is versatile and can be adapted to various counselling contexts, ensuring it meets the unique needs of each individual. This manual not only outlines the steps to effectively use the model but also introduces the co-creation dialogue cards, which offer thematic questions to stimulate deep reflections on gender-related aspects of career development.

We hope this manual serves as a valuable resource in your counselling practice, fostering a co-creative approach that empowers counsees to navigate their career paths with greater clarity and confidence.

2. Career decision making.

In counselling, focusing on developing counsees decision-making styles is more crucial than merely recognizing their current styles. Firstly, while understanding a counselee's existing decision-making tendency can provide insights, it does not necessarily lead to improvement. Developing counsees use of effective decision-making equips them with the skills needed to approach future decisions with greater confidence and competence. This proactive approach fosters long-term growth and resilience, empowering counsees to handle diverse challenges independently.

Moreover, developing an educated decision-making style promotes self-awareness and critical thinking. Counsees learn to assess situations more comprehensively, weighing pros and cons, and considering potential outcomes. This enhanced decision-making capability leads to more thoughtful and informed choices, reducing the likelihood of impulsive or non-constructive decisions or decisions influenced by gender.

Focusing on cultivating these skills also aligns with the ultimate goal of counselling: to foster personal development and autonomy.

2.1 Career decision making styles.

Career decision-making styles are important because they influence how people choose their education, jobs, and career paths. There are different styles and understanding them can help make better decisions.

One effective style is the educated decision-maker. This person gathers all the necessary information, research options, and thinks carefully about the short-term and long-term effects before making a choice. They seek advice from mentors and use facts to guide their decisions. This approach reduces the risk of bad choices and increases the chances of career success and satisfaction.

Other decision-making styles include the intuitive decision-maker, who relies on gut feelings and instincts, and the spontaneous decision-maker, who makes quick decisions without much planning. There is also the dependent decision-maker, who heavily relies on others' opinions and advice when making career choices. This decision-making style can be influenced by gendered jobs, where traditional views of "appropriate" jobs for men and women lead individuals to seek advice from people who may unconsciously reinforce these stereotypical career paths. Furthermore, there is the avoidant decision-maker, who tends to procrastinate and delay making decisions.

Focusing on becoming an educated decision-maker can help people navigate the complex job market, adapt to changes, and find fulfilling careers. This style offers a clear, informed path to making better career choices.

The counsees should primarily use the educated decision-making style. Along the way, they should seek advice, guidance, and feedback from career counsellors, professionals in their areas of interest, and other respected individuals (Dependent Decision-Making). Working with the co-creation model also supports this element of the career decision-making process - but without depriving the

counselees of their decision-making competence.

After thoroughly completing their self-assessment and career exploration, counselees should incorporate the Intuitive Decision-Making style to consider their feelings and intuition. Intuition can be a reliable guide, especially when all the factors have been carefully considered (Penn State Career Services 2024).

2.2 How gender influences career choices.

Gender significantly influences career choices, shaping individuals' decisions through a combination of societal expectations, cultural norms, and personal experiences. From an early age, boys and girls are often subtly guided towards different fields of study and career paths. Stereotypes about "appropriate" jobs for men and women can limit the perceived opportunities available to every gender. For example, women might be encouraged to pursue careers in education or healthcare, while men might be steered towards engineering or technology.

Additionally, workplace cultures and policies can either reinforce or challenge these gender norms. Industries dominated by one gender may inadvertently create environments that are less welcoming to the others, affecting job satisfaction and career advancement. Gender biases in hiring and promotion processes further influence career trajectories, often creating barriers for marginalized genders, such as women, in leadership roles.

However, awareness and active efforts to promote gender equality are gradually changing these dynamics. Encouraging individuals to explore a wide range of interests and providing supportive environments for all genders in various fields can help mitigate the influence of gender on career choices, leading to more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Counselling can play a crucial role in addressing the influence of gender norms in career decision-making processes. By challenging traditional gender stereotypes and encouraging counselees to explore a wide range of career options, counsellors can help individuals make choices based on their interests and strengths rather than societal expectations.

Addressing the influence of gender norms and gendered jobs in counselling requires the counsellors to be aware of their own perspectives on gender and career paths. By recognizing and reflecting on their biases, counsellors can provide more inclusive and supportive guidance to counselees, fostering an environment where individuals feel empowered to explore diverse career paths without undue influence from stereotypes or societal norms.

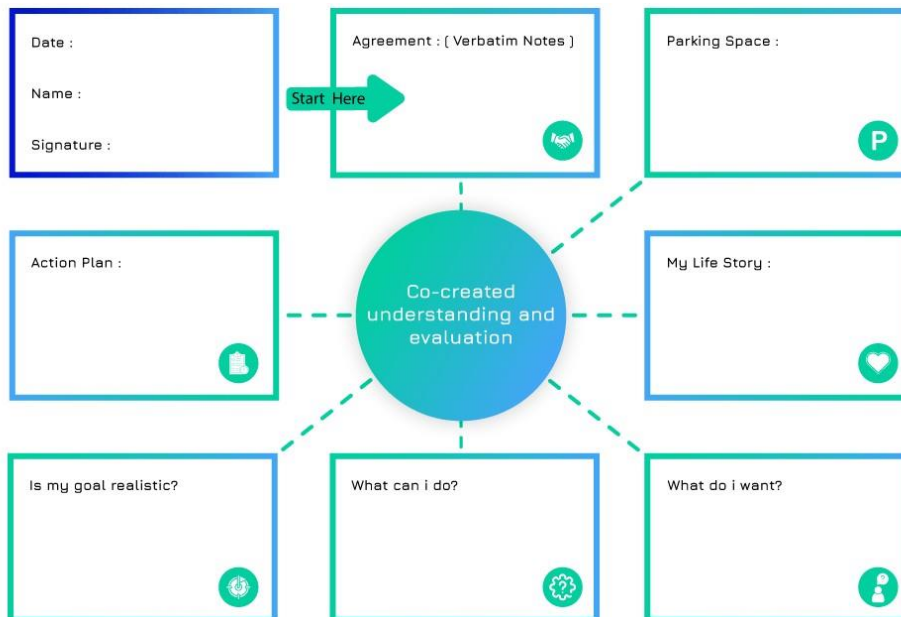
3. Career decision making tools.

The tool aims to assist professionals with career guidance responsibilities in helping individuals become educated decision-makers. Additionally, the tool seeks to raise awareness and promote reflection on the influence of gender on career choices, benefiting both the counselee and the counsellor.

3.1 The co-creation counselling model.

From a social constructionist perspective, the model encourages counselees to reflect on how gender influences their career choices. In addition, it helps counsellors address gender-related concerns in the context of the counselling process. It therefore supports the Education Decision- Maker style, where the self-assessment process and reflection is essential.

From a critical perspective, the process provides an opportunity to raise awareness of how gender perceptions influence individuals' career choices. The goal is to help the counselee understand the factors that shape career decisions, potentially leading them to reconsider and make new career choices.



3.2 Introduction to the co-creation counselling model.

The co-creation counselling model has been designed to support co-creative counselling, ensuring transparency for all participants, and maintaining continuous written notes for a comprehensive overview of developments and decisions. The model emphasises reflection processes across all eight (8) fields included in the co-creation model and aims to promote changes in behaviours or understandings.

In the counselling field, there is no tradition of using models that focus solely on the counselling process itself. However, we frequently employ various models to support reflection and decision-making. By making the process clear and visible, we establish a strong foundation for co-creation, ensuring that both the counsellor and the counselee are fully aware of the guidance process.

The co-creation counselling model includes eight (8) fields where the counsellor and counselee can make notes throughout the counselling process. One field, called the Parking Place, differs from the others. It is used to "park" themes, questions, reminders, and other important items. (More details on this will follow.)

You must begin with the Agreement field, and afterward, you are free to explore any field that interests you. You should conclude at the evaluation circle in the middle of the model.

The fields are:

- Agreement

In this field, agreements are made regarding the goals of the specific guidance. It is important that the counselees wish for the counselling to be addressed. If you, as the counselor, also have a goal, all goals must be mutually agreed upon.

- Parking place

The Parking Field serves as a facilitation tool. If something important arises that doesn't align with the current focus, it can be "parked" in this field. Before concluding the guidance session, you must review and address the items noted there. This field can also be used to jot down reminders and points that come up during the session.

- My life story

In this field, you focus on the aspects of the counselee's history that are relevant to your current co-creative process. This field serves both as information for the counsellor and as a reflection space for the counselee. It explores what experiences the counselees bring with them and how these experiences influence them.

- What do I want?

In this field, efforts are made to establish concrete goals that must be worked towards. If someone has already guided a target this can be reflected upon here.

- What can I do?

In this field, the counselees' strengths and weaknesses must be identified and carefully considered.

- Is my goal realistic?

In this field, a critical examination is conducted on the set goals: Are they realistic? Can they be achieved?

- Action plan.

Here, a specific action plan is formulated, detailing activities and timelines.

- Co-created understanding and evaluation.

After completing a field, you proceed to the middle circle to summarise your agreements, which are documented in the field you just visited. You discuss which field will be the next logical step to take.

The middle circle is used for ongoing reflection throughout the process. The goal is to engage in reflective processes across all fields, facilitating collaborative changes in behaviours or understandings between the counsellor and counselee.

The model is NOT linear, as the different fields can be accessed as desired and fit into the individual guidance, just as you can skip fields. However, there is one field that must ALWAYS be the starting field and that is the "Agreement" field. The model supports co-creation by always starting in the Agreement field, where the counselee's need for guidance is articulated.

There is also one field that must ALWAYS be visited before the guidance ends, no matter how many fields you have visited during the guidance process. This is the "Co-created understanding and evaluation" middle field. By focusing on evaluation at the end of the guidance the content and process is summarised, and agreements are made about the continued guidance and/or work process. This way of concluding is very important when co-creation needs to be supported.

3.3 What is the co-creation counselling suitable for?

The focus is not so much on who can benefit from the model, but rather on the types of counselling it can be applied to. This general process model can be utilised by counselees of any age. Whenever there is a need to reflect on something one wishes to develop or change during counselling, this model can be effective. It has been tested with both young people and adults, proving suitable for both groups.

The model is not useful for more linear approaches to guidance. It has been tested at admission interviews, where counsellors had to place counselees in specific classes. Here, the model was too comprehensive, as the content of the counselling was more about clarification and placement than reflection. However, when it comes to personal competence development the model works well. The model allows you to differentiate the inclusion of methods in the fields. In this way, you can adapt the counselling to specific needs that different target groups may have. For example, some counsellors may need to work on developing motivation to work with set goals, while others may need more help to reality check their goals.

People from different parts of the world and various counselling cultures might find it challenging to understand the value of reflecting on their lives. They often prefer straightforward information about their options, favouring a more linear approach to counselling. For these groups, it is necessary to explain the concept and benefits of co-creative counselling.

3.4 How to use the co-creation counselling.

The short version: How to use the co-creation model:

- Begin by working with the Agreement field. (set your goals – both the counsellor and the counselee).
- Next, move to any field that is relevant to the counselling session.
- When transitioning from one field to another, visit the centre circle, "Co-created Understanding and Evaluation," which serves as the formative evaluation field for ongoing reflection on the process.
- From there, proceed to the field that best fits the specific needs of the session.
- Use the "Parking Space" field to temporarily set aside any issues that arise during counselling

and need to be addressed later.

- Conclude the counselling with an evaluation by revisiting the centre field, "Co-created Understanding and Evaluation."

How to use the co-creation model:

The model is structured as a process model that clarifies the elements to be worked on during the counselling process. It is recommended that the model is copied in A3 format and placed on the table between counsellor and counselee. In this way it will be visible to both parties. The counsellor has an overview of the guidance process and can therefore better relate to it and enter into a dialogue about it.

The model is designed to be written in. You can either choose to write continuously or summarise when you have finished working with a field. If you choose the latter option, you will need to do the process writing elsewhere. This could be on a whiteboard, paper or on another copy of the model. If the counselees are comfortable writing themselves, this is preferable, as it allows their own words to be recorded in the model. Alternatively, as a counsellor, you can write down exactly what the counselee says. You can also co-create by both taking turns writing. Writing introduces natural pauses, which can be invaluable for the counselling process. You don't need to write extensively in the fields, but just enough to aid your memory when revisiting the field, both during and after the counselling session.

Placing a physical object in the field you are currently working on can be helpful. It could be a small car, a stone, or any other item. This makes it clear to everyone where you are in the process. You can move the object when you shift the focus to another field.

The amount of time available for counselling sessions and the number of sessions you have with each individual can vary greatly. The co-creation counselling model is flexible and can be used in many ways. You don't need to cover all the fields in a single session; instead, you can spread them across multiple sessions. Writing helps support the process by allowing you to easily summarise the progress you have been through. Sometimes, in the first session, counsellors only get through the "Agreement" field and the "My Life Story" field.

3.5 Working with gender-related reflections in counselling.

As previously mentioned, the co-creation counselling model does not specify the topics to be addressed during counselling. It can be used for a wide range of subjects.

In this project, we are interested in investigating the influence of gender on career choices. Our aim is to understand how gender stereotypes, social expectations and personal experiences shape the career decisions of individuals of different genders, influencing their choices in various professional fields. Through this research, we aim to offer insights that promote greater gender awareness and equality in professional career guidance.

During testing of the tools with 14-15-year-old primary school students, upper secondary school students, international students with special needs, and adult immigrant women, it was observed, across all groups, that awareness of the influence of gender on career choices was non-existent.

Especially among the primary school students, using the co-creation dialogue cards sparked reflections that otherwise would not have occurred. The counsellor also found inspiration in working with the themes, realising the gender stereotypes that influenced his own counselling approach.

To prompt reflection on gender, we have created eight (8) co-creation dialogue cards, each focusing on a specific theme. Each card includes questions designed to initiate reflection. The themes include:

1. Inspiration.
2. Motivation
3. Barriers
4. Sociality
5. A sense of belonging
6. Personal values
7. Self-perception and
8. Prejudice

Analytically:

1. Inspiration:

Gender can affect which career models are available or visible to an individual.

For example, a young girl may be inspired by female scientists or engineers if she sees them in the media or in her personal life. If she does not see women represented in these fields, she may become less likely to consider these career paths.

2. Motivation:

Motivation may be influenced by society's expectations of what constitutes "appropriate" work for dominant genders.

For example, women may be motivated to pursue careers perceived as "caring" (such as nursing or teaching) because these roles are often socially recognized and valued for women.

3. Barriers:

Barriers may include discrimination or challenges which are gender specific.

Women, for example, may face gender bias in recruitment or promotion processes, which may make it more difficult for them to break through in certain industries or obtain senior positions. These gender-specific challenges can cause women to opt out of certain career opportunities.

4. Sociality:

How a person wants to contribute to society may be influenced by normative gender roles.

For example, men may feel greater pressure to choose careers that are financially lucrative and prestigious, while women may feel a stronger call to careers that involve direct help to others, because of social expectations in relation to their natural roles as caregivers.

5. As sense of belonging:

A sense of belonging in a certain workplace or in a certain industry can be influenced by how gender-inclusive the environment is.

For example. Men and women may feel more or less welcome in workplaces dominated by the

opposite sex, which can influence their choice of career.

6. Personal values:

A person's values, which may be shaped by their gender identity and social norms, can influence their career choices.

For example, a woman who values family life and flexibility may choose a career that enables a reasonable work-life balance, while a man who values status and financial security may choose a more competitive career.

7. Self-perception:

The self-perception of one's own abilities and interests can be gendered.

For example, girls may be socialised to underestimate their abilities in mathematics and science, which may lead to lower self-confidence and less likelihood of pursuing careers in these fields.

8. Prejudice:

Stereotypes and prejudices about gender can shape both one's own and others' perceptions of appropriate career choices.

For example, a prejudice that men are generally better at technical skills and STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) than women can affect girls' and women's career choices in several ways. Girls and women who are interested in technology or science may find themselves met with skepticism or a lack of support from teachers, parents and peers. This can reduce their confidence and motivation to pursue careers in these fields.

3.6 Working with gender-related reflections in counselling.

As mentioned earlier, the co-creation dialogue cards are categorised into (eight) 8 themes, each featuring 2-4 questions, some with examples. The cards are intended to facilitate reflective processes during counselling sessions. By applying these themes in practice with the co-creation dialogue cards, counsellors can support counsees in reflecting on how gender perspectives influence various aspects of career decision-making. This process helps in addressing the challenges and opportunities that counsees encounter in their professional lives. Below, you will find the questions corresponding to each of the (eight) 8 themes covered in the co-creation dialogue cards.

1. INSPIRATION

1a. What inspires your vocational choice?

- Groups
- Contemporary trends
- Social media influencers
- Other things

1b. Can you name three people who inspire you?

1c. Does the gender of the people who inspire your choice of vocation matter?

1d. How did your gender identity influence or shape the way you were inspired in your choice of vocation?

2. MOTIVATION

2a. What motivates your choice of vocation?

- Prestige
- Salary
- Job security
- Image
- Other

2b. How do you think your motivation correlates with your gender perception?

3. BARRIERS

3a. What kind of challenges do you experience related to your vocational choice?

- Entry requirements
- Physical challenges
- Educational opportunities
- Logistical challenges
- Cultural barriers
- Gender inequality in the workplace

3b. How do you feel that gender has an impact on your challenges?

4. SOCIALITY

4a. How would you like to be able to make a difference to others?

- Caring
- Inspiring
- Influencing
- Entertaining
- Creating hope and joy
- Solving problems

4b. How does the way you would like to be able to make a difference to others correlate with your gender perception?

5. A SENSE OF BELONGING

5a. In which environments do you feel comfortable?

5b. With whom do you feel comfortable?

5c. How does your sense of belonging correlate with your gender perception?

6. PERSONAL VALUES

6a. What are the most important values in your life and work?

6b. How do these values relate to your vocational choice?

6c. Would you say that your values are gender-specific?

7. SELF-PERCEPTION

7a. What are your strengths and how have you developed these strengths?

7b. What are your weaknesses and why have you developed these weaknesses?

7c. Do you feel that your strengths and weaknesses are gender-specific?

8. VOCATIONAL PREJUDICE

- 8a. Do you have preconceived notions about specific gendered occupations? Give examples!
- 8b. Where did you get these preconceived notions about gendered jobs from?
- 8c. What significance do these preconceived notions about gendered jobs have for your vocational choice?

There are various ways to work with the questions, similar to the flexibility of the co-creation counselling model. You do not have to cover all eight (8) themes; instead, select those that are relevant to the counselling session or suitable for the counselee.

3.7 Working with the co-creation dialogue cards.

You can use the co-creation dialogue cards with or without the co-creation model format.

3.7.1 Working with the co-creation dialogue cards together with the model.

We have provided recommendations on how to integrate the eight (8) themes with the fields in the co-creation counselling model (refer to the co-creation counselling model in section 3.1). The model illustrates our suggested placements for each theme. However, there are multiple possibilities, allowing the counsellor and the counselee to decide when and where to incorporate the themes within the framework of the co-creation counselling model.

The co-creation cards can be positioned near the corresponding fields on the table. During counselling sessions, the co-creation cards can be utilised. The counsellor may propose working with a card when a relevant theme emerges in conversation. This requires the counsellor to be acquainted with the themes and questions on the co-creation dialogue cards.

After reflecting on a theme, notes are written in the appropriate field on the co-creation counselling model.

3.7.2 Working with the co-creation dialogue cards without the model.

You can use the co-creation dialogue cards independently of the co-creation counselling model when gender is the primary focus of counselling.

Place the co-creation dialogue cards on the table. Select a card, reflect on it, take notes, and then move on to another card.

Once you have worked through all the co-creation dialogue cards, you can ask the counselee to arrange them in a pattern that illustrates their relationships. Which card is most crucial? Are some more interconnected than others?

You can also use the cards in group settings. As a counsellor, you can participate in the group discussions, or you can manage multiple groups simultaneously, such as in classroom settings.

3.7.3 Working with the questions on the co-creation dialogue cards online.

The counselee can engage with the questions before the counselling session. Counselees can choose to send their answers to the counsellor ahead of time, or they can be incorporated into the counselling process as appropriate.

3.8 Conclusion.

In conclusion, the co-creation counselling model, coupled with the use of co-creation dialogue cards, represents a significant advancement in career counselling, particularly in addressing gender influences on career choices. By fostering a collaborative environment between counsellors and counselees, this approach encourages deep reflection on how societal norms and personal experiences shape career decisions.

It emphasises the importance of counsellors being mindful of their own biases regarding gender, thus promoting a more inclusive and empowering counselling experience.

Ultimately, this framework equips counselees with the tools to navigate career decisions authentically and confidently, contributing to more diverse and fulfilling career paths



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