

JANE L. SWANSON • NADYA A. FOUAD

Career Theory & Practice

Learning Through Case Studies



4 edition



Career Theory and Practice

Fourth Edition

To our families for their love and support
Bill, Robert, Merit, Bo, and Siena (JS)
Bob, Nick, Erin, Andrew, Delia, Patrick, Katie, and,
most especially, Nolan and Elisabeth (NF)

Career Theory and Practice

Learning Through Case Studies

Fourth Edition

Jane L. Swanson

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Nadya A. Fouad

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



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FOR INFORMATION:

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FOUNDATIONS

PART ONE

1

CAREER COUNSELING

An Overview

Ruth has been out of the paid workforce for 8 years. Her youngest son recently started public school, and she would like to find a job. Ruth has a degree in medical technology and worked in a hospital lab for 5 years before her first child was born. In her geographic area, the job market for medical technologists is poor, so she'd like to consider some other job possibilities. She doesn't know what other options are available.

Harry has worked in the human resources department of a large company for over 20 years. He had been satisfied with his job and had received good performance evaluations. However, he was recently assigned new job responsibilities that he doesn't feel adequately trained to do. Last week, he received a negative report from his supervisor, and he's worried that he might lose his job. Harry has been depressed and angry, and his wife is concerned that he's drinking too much.

Joel is a high school junior who doesn't have any idea what he will do after graduating. His parents want him to go to college, believing that a college education will provide him with opportunities they did not have. However, Joel's grades have been mediocre, and he really doesn't want to go to college anyway. His guidance counselor tells him that he needs to make a decision soon.

Each of these situations represents a struggle with some work- or career-related concern. Because work plays a central role in most people's lives, successful pursuit of work activities is crucial to psychological well-being. Furthermore, vocational issues and mental health issues affect one another in individuals' lives, and work is an important component of overall well-being (Blustein, 2017; Juntunen, 2006; Swanson, 2012; Whiston, Fouad, & Juntunen, 2016). It is important for counselors to understand the crucial impact of vocational issues and to assist individuals in the choice and implementation of their career-related goals so that people's lives are enriched.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is to provide the reader with an understanding of elements of career counseling; hands-on, practical examples of how to apply career development theories to career counseling clients; career interventions in a variety of settings; and an appreciation of the overall importance of work in people's lives. We view the book as a bridge between career theory and career practice. We included chapters to help orient students to the interplay of work and mental health, the importance of incorporating a perspective about work in counseling, and as a primer to career counseling. We added material in this fourth edition to enhance the discussion of ethics in career counseling, and to highlight the role of the economy and the changing nature of the workforce that influence the career and work decisions individuals make, initially here in Chapter 1 and then throughout the book.

The book is organized to facilitate the integration of theory and practice. In Part I, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 present foundational material related to ethics, professional settings, and cultural contexts that underlie career counseling. Chapter 5 introduces "Leslie," the primary case example used throughout the book, and we apply a model of culturally appropriate counseling to Leslie's case. We then discuss the use of assessment in career counseling in Chapter 6, including results from Leslie's assessment instruments.

In Part II, we consider Leslie from new perspectives in Chapters 7 through 13 to demonstrate how theories can inform the way in which counselors view and work with their clients. In addition to Leslie, a secondary case with an extended analysis is presented in these chapters. Three additional brief cases in each chapter offer the reader more opportunities to practice the application of theory and interventions to individual clients. Because many of the theories have unique definitions and constructs, each theory chapter in Part II also contains three pedagogical tools: a set of questions inviting readers to engage in personal reflection, a summary of the key theoretical constructs, and a sample of possible counselor's cognitions from that theoretical perspective. We also include personal reflections and counselor cognitions in many of the chapters of the book, to invite readers to reflect on their own experiences and to guide counselors in deliberately attending to specific aspects of counseling.

We brought our own experiences as practitioners, researchers, and teachers to bear on our approach to writing this book. As practitioners, we believe that the theoretical orientation one adopts has a significant impact on how client issues are conceptualized

and treated. As researchers, we know that the ethical delivery of career counseling must be based on sound empirical findings; this is highlighted in the Ethical Code C.6.e of the National Career Development Association (2007), discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, as instructors, we are committed to helping students make connections between theory, research, and practice in ways that are ultimately in the service of clients. We have attempted to incorporate all our experiences into the structure of this book by choosing theories that have received empirical support, by highlighting how the theoretical propositions influence views of clients, and by providing considerable case information for analysis and discussion. We have also observed that some students learn best by applying the material to their own lives, and thus we have incorporated invitations for personal reflection.

We also wanted to incorporate our commitment to integrating contextual issues in conceptualizations of clients' concerns. We both have spent our careers conducting research and teaching students about the need to consider a client's gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and disability status when helping that client make career decisions. An individual's choices and decisions, or lack of choices, are shaped by his or her gender, family, disability, sexual orientation, social class, and culture, which in turn influence his or her schooling, access to resources, and interaction with the larger environment. Consider, for example, a Latina high school student from a traditional Mexican American family growing up in an affluent suburb of Los Angeles. Her career choices will be shaped by her gender, her family's cultural values, and their expectations of her post-high school decisions. Their expectations may be influenced by their degree of affluence, their beliefs about gender and work, and the influences of the schools in their community. Her expectations will be shaped by her acceptance of her family's expectations and her ability to navigate expectations from her peers, parents, and teachers at her school. Her parents may feel that her post-high school choices are limited to options of which they approve, while she has been encouraged to "dream big" by her counselor. All these factors will influence her decisions.

Change the example above to an African American heterosexual male student in rural Georgia, or a White gay male in rural South Dakota, or a White heterosexual female in an inner-city high school in Boston. While all these individuals may choose to go to college after high school, the contexts for those decisions are shaped by their gender, family, race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, schooling, and interactions with the mainstream culture in the United States. Fundamental to ethical practice is the consideration of clients' contextual factors, particularly gender and race/ethnicity. Readers will note the emphasis on the importance of context in several ways: Considerations of various contextual factors are integrated into each chapter, a specific chapter is devoted to cultural context in career counseling, and cases are included to represent the diversity of clients who seek counseling.

We wrote the book with two types of readers in mind. The first type is a student in a graduate-level course, such as theories of vocational psychology, foundations of career counseling, or practicum in career counseling, who is learning about theories of career development and how to apply these theories to clients. The second type of reader is an established counseling practitioner who wants additional resources to strengthen his or her delivery of career services or who is expanding the focus of his or her work to include career issues.