

Career Chats – A Group Career Advising Model

OVERVIEW

Program Summary

Career Chats are small-group, discussion-based sessions that bring together current students and/or recent alumni, a Career Educator and Peer Career Advisor to unpack and reflect on experiences, challenges, and questions related to career exploration and job searching. Using a flexible structure, participants set the agenda for the conversation, so that they can collaboratively share, and develop strategies to navigate the current career questions. These hour-long sessions are held weekly, on the following topics:

- Exploring Career Options
- Exploring Further Education
- Job Search Motivation
- Networking

Program Goals

- Create consistently welcoming space for students to drop in and explore their career exploration, and planning questions
- Facilitate a discussion-based learning experience that emphasizes peer-to-peer interaction, reflection, and fosters hope, perseverance, and optimism.

Student Learning Goals

- Further clarify and articulate personal values, strengths, skills, and interest in relation to their self, academic, and career identity
- Develop strategies to navigate the sometimes ambiguous and challenging nature of career exploration and job search processes.

Theoretical Foundation

A brief review of the literature demonstrates that much has been written about the positive nature of group-based interventions. In particular, Richard Light (2001) writes that 'to learn from one another, students with different backgrounds and from different racial and ethnic groups must interact' (p. 190). Therefore, group advising represents an opportunity to normalize students' perceptions and experiences of career exploration. Elsewhere King (2000) has confirmed this normative role of group advising, writing "students who participate in group advising appreciate the opportunity to interact with peers as well as with an advisor. The feeling of not being alone is a powerful by-product of the group experience" (p. 236).

Specific Approaches:

- Appreciative Advising - an intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students reflect on their experiences, and engage in goal setting to achieve their goals
- Solutions Focused Coaching - employs questions that focus and refocus the session on solutions based on the individual's strengths and maintains a future-focus orientation
- Heron's Six Categories of Intervention – a conceptual framework for understanding interpersonal relationships within a "helping relationship" context, where the service provider can take either an 'Authoritative' or 'facilitative' role

References:

- King, Nancy. (2000). Advising students in groups. In V.N. Gordon, W.R. Habley, and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A Comprehensive handbook*. (p. 236). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Light, R.J. (2001). *Making the most of college: Students speak their minds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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Time	Learning Objectives (core skill/competency/knowledge)	Content & Process (activities)
10mins	<p>Welcome, Introductions, and Group Guidelines</p> <p>DISARM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects students as peers asking the same questions • Normalizes experiences • Data gathering and group assessment 	<p>Welcome: Facilitator welcomes group and begins to build trust and rapport by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining “why” group advising • Clarifying Career Educator and participants roles • Provide permission to be frustrated, confused, and honest • Facilitate a conversation about confidentiality and discretion • Introduce topic frame of the conversation <p>Student Introductions (e.g. snowball)</p> <p>Flipchart the questions that students are curious to explore</p>
5mins	<p>Agenda Setting</p> <p>DISCOVER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies the “It” of the topic being discussed • Connects students as peers asking the same questions • Gets the agenda items heard and organized 	<p>Validate student input</p> <p>Co-create an agenda, by inviting students to organize questions into thematic areas, and suggesting a flow to the conversation.</p>
25-30mins	<p>Facilitated Discussion</p> <p>DREAM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive discussion that moves topic from individual’s to the group’s experiences. • Asks students to actively note next steps, thoughts, ideas, resources 	<p>Facilitated Discussion using student questions and co-created agenda.</p> <p>As conversation flows Career Educator engages by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirming or reframing mindsets, attitudes, experiences, and advice • Leveraging solutions-focused (including scaling) questions where appropriate. • Introducing career concepts, strategies, and resources – and follow up with questions that invite discussion and allow participants to make personal meaning. • Actively invite students to answer each other’s questions, and respond to behaviour or physical cues (e.g. nodding) as prompts for further inquiry. <p>Peer Advisors can support discussion by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sharing</u> their own questions, insights, advice, stories • <u>Asking</u> the above prompting questions to either generate conversation, or as follow up questions to others • Introducing how learning about certain career concepts and strategies have support their own thinking, and questions

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5mins	<p>Revisiting Agenda</p> <p>RE-DISCOVER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-clarifies the “It” of the topic being discussed • More clarity may change the agenda 	<p>Revisit Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these still important? • Rescale student understanding/clarity • Invite modifications
5mins	<p>Creating Next Steps</p> <p>DESIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop next-steps based on discussion 	<p>Quiet Reflection: Based on our conversation and generation of ideas, consider what your next steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a STAR beside ideas that make you happy • Include a ! beside items that have a specific timeline (and write it down) • Include a ? beside need for more information • If it sounds vague, then clarify • List items in order of priority
5mins	<p>Sharing Next Steps</p> <p>DELIVER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to own goals and actions to be taken 	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go-around – one next step you are planning on taking and when you do, put it into your schedule. • Invite others to also note ideas that they like.
5mins	<p>Transitioning Out of Discussion</p> <p>STEPPING OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with commitment to continued support • Final reflection on hour of learning and change • Assessment data collection 	<p>Check-out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share any relevant upcoming Career Exploration & Education, Student Life, or U of T Event • Re-identify key resources for next steps • Exit Activity (many options possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-Word check-out ○ Select item from basket to describe where you are at now with your question

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