

Career Exploration and Development Group Proposal

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Need for the Program

A focus group conducted at Eastern Michigan University in the fall of 2012 by master's students yielded data suggesting a lack of support as female first-generation students select career goals and begin the career planning process. Reasons for this include a lack of role models, a lack of ability to envision oneself as a leader (and therefore capable of achieving their goals), and inability to look for parents and peers for guidance. Mehta et al. (2011) echoed this process, noting that the intersectionality of being a woman and being a first-generation college student often means that there are few role models to be identified in either life or in media representation.

Only one student reported that their family or their peers had been openly negative about their goals; however, all students unanimously reported that they had nevertheless undergone a process of compromise when shaping their goals. For many, this process was unconscious, and all students agreed that had they identified resources to help navigate them through this transition, they may have gotten involved earlier in on-campus leadership opportunities and felt more empowered when experiencing developmental milestones such as declaring a major, applying for internships, or becoming active in student organizations.

The literature echoes this lack of touchstones felt by female first-generation students. Through their research, Ward et al. (2009) found that females self-reported being able to take leadership positions due to the support of their families – however, many of our students reported hearing messages from home that it was more important to work off campus, or spend time with family. They did not hear opposing voices suggesting that it might be worthwhile to spend time on campus developing their leadership skills, so they consciously chose not to. This lack of encouragement to become enmeshed in the University community can ultimately impact first-

generation college student retention rates (Mehta et al., 2011). Meanwhile, Creamer and Laughlin (2005) conducted research showing that female students' career decision making was impacted by parents. It seems clear, then, that when students cannot rely on their families for *specific, targeted* support – “Yes, it seems like a good idea to join that student organization rather than coming home one day early each week,” for example – retention suffers, and students lose out on prime opportunities to network, assume leadership roles, and develop their career ambitions.

Students participating in the focus group reported a desire to participate in events that would allow them to network with other students experiencing similar issues specific to first-generation students, as well as events that offered them a chance to meet other professional women who had succeeded in the fields in which they were interested. Many students struggled with issues of isolation, shame, or simply a lack of information and sense of where to go to ask questions. This is also borne out in the literature: Pizzolato (2006) also noted that the process of developing self-authorship further progressed when students had mentors who helped them reflect, define their own goals, and develop strategies for attaining them, which intensifies the link between this theory and our exploration of leadership development.

This group addresses all of these requests, as well as beginning to intentionally address the leadership development of the students participating. The group will operate from a theoretical base using Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship, which highlights the process a by which a student learns to “choose one's beliefs and stand up for them in the face of conflicting external viewpoints” (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

Purpose & Goals

My program takes the form of a Career Exploration & Support group for female first-generation students; the group will be open to students from all years in school. The group is comprised of four 90-minute sessions to be held weekly, to allow time for deeper reflection as well as research and networking between sessions. Our topics will encompass both general career counseling resources as well as resources aimed specifically at women and/or first-generation students. Time will also be built into each session for the women to reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply what they have learned to their major selection and career exploration. By opening the group to new students up through graduating seniors, the group dynamics will lead to forming a sub-network of peers and mentors between women.

My vision for the group is that it will take place in the Winter semester. This will give the facilitators all of the Fall semester to advertise the group and to complete screening processes for interested members. Targeted outreach populations include the MacNair Scholars program, PASS students, and UNIV students. Should EMU's University College initiative go forward, that population of undeclared students would also be recruited. Facilitators of the group will collaborate and partner with the Women's Resource Center and the University Advising and Career Development Center for resources and to ensure that their information is accurate and up-to-date. Ideally, the program would be certified as "LBC-eligible" to encourage participation.

As a capstone activity, each participant will create a "career development" plan for themselves that will incorporate all of the work that we do around identifying work- and

achievement-oriented values, as well as strategies to utilize the network that they create by participating in the group.

Goals:

1. During the Winter semester, a four-session Career Exploration group of approximately 12 students will be run, targeted toward female first-generation college students and recruiting heavily from populations on campus that are often marginalized.
2. During these sessions, a safe, supportive space will be provided for students to unpack and process the values that have been imparted to them by their parents, families, and peers, and will consider whether these values match their own.
3. Students who participated as “undeclared” majors will declare a major within one semester after completing the group.
4. Students who participated in the group will set up at least one meeting within one semester after completing the group with a faculty advisor, a faculty mentor, or a student organization advisor to discuss their career goals and career plans.
5. Students who participated in the group will set up at least one meeting within one semester after completing the group with a career advisor from the University Advising & Career Development Center to review their resume and discuss their career goals and career plans.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to articulate the impact that family experiences as well as gender-based circumscription (Gottfredson) have had on their educational and career goals.

2. Students will clarify personal values embedded within their career goals and contrast these values with messages they have received from family, peer, or media systems that may conflict with these.
3. After participating in the group, students will form at least three networks with peers and mentors inside and outside of the group, which will lead to both an increased connection with EMU as well as enduring resources they can use throughout their career development.
4. Before finishing the group, students will construct a “career development plan” that includes utilizing and taking advantage of the networks they have formed.

Logistical Arrangements & Budget

A secure room in which privacy and confidentiality can be ensured is essential. Reserving this room at the EMU Student Center (my preferred venue as it is integrated into student life) would be free of charge for a staff member – however, we can assume \$100 to be generous. This brings us to \$400 for the entire series. Other costs include materials, which we will estimate at \$60, assuming a department would need to purchase all materials new. There is no fee to participate in the group, and therefore no revenue associated with the program.

My preference would be to have a licensed mental health professional (psychologist, counselor, or social worker) from CAPS leading the group, along with a co-facilitator who could be a graduate assistant or an intern in a related field. Alternately, the co-facilitator could be a student organization advisor, a faculty member, a UACDC staff member, or another mental health professional.

A budget breakdown is provided below:

Item	Cost
Materials, Session 1	\$0
Materials, Session 2 (specified in facilitation guide)	\$10
Materials, Session 3 (specified in facilitation guide)	\$50
Materials, Session 4	\$0
Room Reservation Fee	\$100/session x 4 sessions = \$400
Staffing Needs (2 facilitators)	Flex-time for pro-staff (see paragraph)
Advertising (posters, flyers, Pipeline, digital boards, etc)	\$100
Printing materials (forms, papers, etc)	\$30
One binder per student	\$50
Total:	\$640

Materials needed are specified at the top of each session's facilitation guide (provided in Appendix), and include estimates of costs if new purchase is required. I have not budgeted any money for the cost of the staff member facilitating the group, as it is commonly an expectation at university CAPS centers that therapists will lead groups as part of their professional duties.

The total cost of \$640 is relatively low, considering the high impact that the program will have on a number of students. My thought is that this would be best absorbed by splitting the total cost of the program in half and absorbing each half into programming line items within the designated funds of Counseling And Psychological Services (CAPS) and the University

Advising and Career Development Center. It is also worth noting that the majority of the total cost comes from the cost of a room reservation (\$400), which would almost certainly be waived at EMU if the reservation is made by a professional staff member, bringing the total to \$240. If this is impossible, it is also plausible that the event could happen in a room space within the counseling center (on this campus, within Snow Health Center). This is another way to save money.

Below are detailed Facilitation Guides for each session of the group. Again, a licensed mental health professional would ideally co-facilitate each session; however, emergencies such as illness or transportation failures do arise. The therapist's supervisor (i.e., the CAPS director) would typically decide whether a group can run in the absence of a licensed professional facilitating. The facilitation guides attempt to be as detailed as possible in case a facilitator is precluded at the last minute from leading the group.

In case a mental health professional is not able to be at the session, but it is decided to move ahead anyway, here are a few things to keep in mind when leading groups:

- Content is important, but so is process. Be sure to pay attention to the tone of the group, and comment on it if it seems to impede the group. For example: "Sounds like this is a hard topic for many of you."
- Relatedly, especially with a group like this, the most important thing is linking the experiences of the participants, particularly given this group's focus on networking. "How many of you have had an experience that sounds like that?" "Looks like that's resonating with a lot of you, I'm seeing a lot of nods." "That sounds a lot like what Ashley was describing earlier." These are all examples of ways you can link what is

being said in ways that facilitate future dialogue and that build connections between participants.

- As a facilitator, always listen more than you speak. Much of what the participants say might resonate with you as the facilitator, but it is paramount that the participants are allowed to process their own experience through their own lens. You should of course feel free to speak up if it promotes keeping members on track, or challenging them to go deeper, but in general it is best to keep self-disclosure to a minimum.
- Icebreakers and closers are usually left undefined because each facilitator warms up and closes groups a little differently. Just be sure to keep your icebreakers focused on sharing as a group and on reflection, and keep your closers strengths-based and empowering.

Structured Facilitation Guide: Session 1**Materials Needed:**

- Group Confidentiality form agreements (1 for each member)
- Career Development Action Plan form (1 for each member)
- One large sheet of paper

Total Cost: \$0

Goals for the session:

- Orient students to group, and set norms of respect and confidentiality.
- Begin the process of career reflection.
- Begin the process of defining leadership.

10 minutes – Welcome, and explanation of confidentiality.

- Explain that while the group leader(s) can guarantee confidentiality of what is said in group, no one can guarantee member confidentiality.
 - Exceptions to confidentiality: Suicidality, intent to harm self or someone else, reported child abuse or elder abuse/neglect.
- Encourage members to adopt confidentiality as a norm: “What is said in group, stays in group”. Encourage members that they can always feel free to discuss with the group leaders if anything bothers them about what has been said in group.
 - Collect signed confidentiality agreements from each member.

10 minutes – Formation of group norms. What should this group look like? What will we do, and how will we communicate? Is anything off-limits? Scribe this brainstorm onto a large sheet of paper, and bring it back to every meeting. Remind members that confidentiality and group norms are an ongoing conversation, and that it is okay to come back with questions or edits throughout this session and others.

20 minutes – Icebreaker: What was the first thing you can remember wanting to be when you grew up? Discuss in dyads, and then report out to the group.

25 minutes – Discussion. Potential topics:

- What changed from childhood to now? Is there anything you’ve ruled out?
- Are there any themes from childhood to now? For example, you might have moved from teacher to doctor to social worker, but those are all human service fields.
- Are there any campus experiences that have contributed to your career goals?

15 minutes – Introducing Career Development Action Plan. Explain that over the course of the group, we will complete the entire plan. Students should bring the CDAP to each session.

10 minutes – Close group.

Homework: Fill out the “Self-Assessment Summary Statements” in the first section of the Career Development Action Plan.

Structured Facilitation Guide: Session 2**Materials Needed:**

- Paper for timeline activity
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc. (\$10)

Total Cost: \$10

Goals for the session:

- Pulling out patterns and themes that began in childhood.
- Identifying major decision-making mentors in childhood.
- Identifying current major decision-making mentors.
- Beginning to think about future career options.

5 Minutes – Welcome, reminders of confidentiality, and addressing any questions that linger from last week.

10 Minutes – Processing homework from last week. What was filling out the form like?

10 Minutes – Discussion on career decision-making and what that looks like. Leader should share an example of what that might have looked like for her. (Example: “I failed math in tenth grade, and this made me stay away from math-oriented career goals.”)

10 minutes – Building your Career Decision timeline. Break members into pairs, and instruct participants to create a timeline, starting with what they discussed last time as their first-ever career ambition, up to today. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible.

30 minutes – Processing the timeline. Sample questions:

- Are there any themes to decisions you’ve made?
- Was it difficult to come up with decision points?
- Who was guiding you or mentoring you during these decision points? How much of these decisions came from you?
- Who is guiding you or mentoring you now? If the answer is different, what does that mean for your goal-setting?
- What was it like to see the timeline written out?
- As you look back at your timeline, are there any decisions you wish you could take back, or undo?

Take care to focus on action steps here. For example, if a student connects that all of their decision points have been pointing in a direction, ask how their current major, activities, and career activity support that. If a student mentions that they wish they could take back giving up art, brainstorm ways they could integrate that into their lives.

20 minutes – Imagining the rest of the timeline. If you had to extend it out, what could that look like?

Homework: Fill out “Career Goals” section of the Career Development Action Plan.

Structured Facilitation Guide: Session 3**Materials Needed:**

- Pens, paper, etc
- Career Planning Guide
- Values Card Sort sets (\$5/participant)

Total Cost: \$50 (estimating ten participants & no already-owned sets of Card Sorts)

Goals for the session:

- Pulling out personal values and contrasting with family values.
- Integrating values into the world of work.
- Introducing the concept of networking and building relationships with mentors and advisors.

10 minutes – Icebreaker

10 minutes – Processing homework from last week. Was it difficult to articulate career goals?

30 minutes – Values Card sort.

- Have students complete card sort individually, identifying values from least important to most important.
- Instruct students to close their eyes and imagine that the bottom (least important) value has disappeared from their potential job. What is that like?
- Continue removing values until students are only left with the six values that they have identified as most important. What is that like?

30 minutes – Discussion & Processing. Sample questions for discussion:

- What was it like to watch your values “disappear”? Did that change how you felt about your rankings?
- Are there networks in your life that you feel more or less comfortable sharing your values? Students may, for example, feel very comfortable sharing career values with roommates or professors, but not parents. What are the implications of this?

10 minutes – Closing the group.

Homework: Begin to brainstorm potential networking partners. These can be group members, faculty members, advisors, or alumni of their academic program.

Structured Facilitation Guide: Session Four**Materials Needed:**

- Paper (1 sheet of cardstock or construction paper for each person)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils

Total Cost: \$0

Goals for the Session:

- Encouraging action steps after the group closes
- Underscoring the importance of networking

10 minutes – Icebreaker

30 minutes – Sharing Career Development Plans and a-ha moments. Make sure to focus on resources (on- and off-campus) that students can take advantage of.

20 minutes – Focus on next steps. Refer to the “Development Activities & Experiences” and “Resources Needed” boxes on the Career Development Action Plan. Where will you go from here? **How can the group help you accomplish this?**

20 minutes – Close the group.

Activity: Observing each others’ strengths. Each person takes a sheet of construction paper and writes their name at the top. Then, pass the paper around the circle and have each student write something that they’ve observed about the person whose paper they have that relates to either their career skills or their leadership strengths. When the papers have gone around and each person has received their own sheet back, report out. What surprises you about your paper?

“Homework”: Encourage students to visit UACDC to learn more about informational interviewing, job-searching, and resume-building. Underscore the importance of building relationships with career advisors, academic advisors, and faculty advisors (as well as other faculty members). Remind students that their networking & career development journey has just begun, and that *it is okay to change their career plan upon further reflection*. Career development is a process and a journey.

Assessment & Evaluation

Because this program addresses both short-term goals (for example: declaring a major if currently undeclared) and long-term goals (beginning to build a network of professional women), the assessment will also be multi-pronged.

In the short-term, students will complete a form (Form D: Student Satisfaction) approximately two weeks after the group closes which measures the extent to which the program met their goals (can refer back to Form A: Needs Assessment) when they came into the group. This assessment is largely quantitative, although there is space provided for qualitative feedback after several items if students score an item negatively. There is also space for overall additional comments to be provided if students wish.

In the long-term, my goal would be to, at approximately one year out, follow up with students through a personal meeting, face-to-face if possible and over the phone if not. Because the group will ideally be a catalyst for a process that will ultimately be life-long, my concern is not necessarily with whether students “stuck to the plan” – indeed, deviating from the plan may be a sign of increasing self-authorship – but with whether the group helped them with resources, connections, and networking, and integrating values that are truly theirs into their career paths. This feedback is entirely qualitative, with the questions referring back to the learning outcomes set at the beginning of the project and attempting to discern the extent to which our program assisted the students in achieving those learning outcomes. A guide for this process is provided as Form E: Student Learning Application form.

Appendix – Forms Library

Table of Contents

Form A: Needs Assessment form (to be completed as part of the screening process)

Form B: Confidentiality & Informed Consent form – Adapted from Dr. Perry Francis in the
Eastern Michigan University College of Education Clinical Suite.

Form C: Career Development Action Plan – Adapted from the University of California Berkeley
Career Development Action Plan, 2010.

Form D: Student Satisfaction form (to be completed two weeks after the group closes, but within
the same semester)

Form E: Student Learning Application form (to be completed at least two semesters after the
group closes)

Form A: Needs Assessment form

1. Have you currently declared a major?
 - a. If yes, how satisfied are you with the major?
 - b. If no, what are some interests or possible majors you are considering?
2. Do you live on campus?
 - a. If not, where do you currently live?
3. Please list any leadership activities you have been involved in on campus.
4. What do you hope to gain from participating in this group?
5. Were you referred to participate in this group? If so, by whom?

Form B: Confidentiality & Informed Consent form
Adapted from Dr. Perry Francis' Group Disclosure Form
(when printing this form, print on EMU/office-specific letterhead)

INFORMED CONSENT & DISCLOSURE

Counseling Exploration & Support Group

Counseling & Psychological Services, collaborating with WRC & UACDC

Welcome to the Counseling Exploration & Support group! Your group counselors are a Michigan- licensed professional counselor, as well as a student affairs professional working in the University Advising & Career Development Center.

THE GROUP COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

Group Counseling involves the sharing of personal problems, concerns, and stories in a group setting with a professional who is skilled at helping the client. The members of the group also interact with you and each other as part of the counseling process. Counseling is a relatively short-term, interpersonal, and theory based professional activity guided by ethical and legal standards that focuses on helping persons resolve developmental issues, situational problems, and more complex personal diagnoses.

The general goals for the client are that he or she can identify the issues, develop a plan of action, and then implement that plan. This is a very personal process. It is educational and developmental by nature.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Department of Leadership & Counseling requires our counselors to adhere to a specific Code of Ethical Conduct that is determined by the American Counseling Association. Should you have a questions or concern about your counselor's conduct, please feel free to contact CAPS to report the issue.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We place a high value on the confidentiality of information that you share with your counselor. Your right to privacy is governed by legal and ethical guidelines. Generally, the information you share with your counselor is not shared with anyone else without your expressed written permission. Confidentiality may be broken when you are a threat to yourself (suicide) or another (assault/murder) or when your counselor is made aware of child or elder abuse. Your counselor can discuss these instances in detail at your request or you may contact the CAPS director.

Group counseling requires that each member support the other by committing to keeping information shared in the group confidential. The motto “What is said in group stays in group” is one way to remember our commitment to each other to maintain the confidentiality of the group.

At times a court of law may order disclosure of confidential information. In such a case your counselor would either request your permission or request that the court not require the information as it would damage the counselor/client relationship and impede your healing. If required, only minimal information is disclosed.

Other instances where your counselor would need to share information with others will be discussed with you in session (e.g., insurance forms, school conferences, etc.). Do not hesitate to ask your counselor questions about confidentiality at any time throughout the counseling process.

LENGTH, FREQUENCY, & RISKS

We will meet four times over the course of the semester, for 90-minute sessions. If you require further assistance, you are welcome to set up a meeting with a counselor at CAPS, an advisor at the UACDC, or a staff member at the WRC, depending on the issue that arises. The facilitators of the group will be happy to assist you in identifying these resources.

As a result of counseling you may realize that there are additional issues that did not surface prior to the onset of counseling. This is an inherent risk in any counseling relationship. Also, couples, marriage, and family counseling may involve certain risks. As one person changes in any relationship, stresses and strains are created. This is a part of the counseling process and is dealt with within the counseling relationship.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for your work here to be productive, it is important that you attend counseling sessions and make an effort to work on the issues being addressed. If for some reason you cannot attend a scheduled session, please call in advance and leave a message with the secretary. You may be able to reschedule at that time; otherwise, your counselor will contact you to reschedule.

FEES

This group is funded through student fees paid at the outset of the semester. No additional fee is required.

CONTACTING YOUR COUNSELOR

If you need to contact your counselor, leave a message with the clinic staff at (734) 487-4410 and (s)he will give the message to your counselor. If your call is an emergency, contact one of the following:

Local Emergency Services: 911

U-M Psychiatric Emergency Services: (734) 996-4747

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Emergency Room: (734) 712-3000

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any concerns or questions now, or at any point during your counseling, feel free to let your counselor know. You will receive a copy of this and have a chance to ask questions. You should keep your copy and refer to it throughout your counseling. Please sign below to indicate that you have read this and have had a chance to ask questions.

I have read this document, understand the information contained in it, and agree to participate in counseling under the conditions described.

Client/Legal Guardian Signature Date

Client/Legal Guardian Signature Date

Group Facilitator Date

Form C: Career Development Action Plan
Adapted from University of California, Berkeley
Original Document Accessed 02/22/2014

Self-Assessment Summary Statements

Career motivators in my current position:
Skills & competencies to be developed:
Vision of future career directions:
The most important work values to me:

Career Goals

Short-term (within this academic year):
Medium-term (2-5 years):
Long-term (5+ years):

Development Activities & Experiences

(These can be a combination of what you have already done, and what you are hoping to do in the future)

Activity	Action Steps	Milestones/Success Measures	Target Completion Date

Resources Needed

Individuals to Contact for Networking/Support	Time Needed and/or Financial Costs	Notes

Form D: Student Satisfaction

I got what I wanted out of participating in this group.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

If no, what could we have done better?

The frequency of meetings worked for me.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

If no, what would have worked better?

The duration of meetings worked for me.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

If no, what would have worked better?

The meeting room was adequate.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

Completing the Career Development Plan will be helpful to me as I move forward.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

Building the network as part of the group will be helpful to me as I move forward.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 – Strongly Agree

Additional comments/feedback:

Form E: Long-Term Assessment

Use this form two semesters (or more) after the group has concluded. My vision for this form is not to have the students fill it out, but for the facilitator to interview students who have participated about their experience, and then crystallize the qualitative data onto this form. For some students, this may look like an on-campus meeting; for other students, such as those who have graduated, you could also conduct this assessment as a conversation over-the-phone.

Did you find that the reflection process continued after the program? In what ways?

Was it helpful in your major coursework, internship placement, and/or job search to have intentionally explored your values?

Was it helpful in your major coursework, internship placement, and/or job search to have intentionally explored the concept of leadership?

Do you keep in touch with the networks you identified over the course of the program? Has that been helpful as you develop your career and your career goals?

How helpful was the group in building a network of resources as you forged your career path?

Did the group empower you to consider a career path outside of what you had considered before participating?

Would you recommend participating in this group to other first-generation women?

As an alum of the program, are there changes you would recommend as the group moves forward into next year – anything we should include, remove, or spend more or less time on?

References

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