

The Emergence of Career Development Facilitators

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Abstract

This article describes the collaborative efforts of the National Career Development Association (NCDA), National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) and Career Development Training Institute (CDTI) at Oakland University which resulted in the emergence and recognition of the important role of Career Development Facilitators (CDFs). The development of the CDF competencies, curriculum and certification is summarized, and examples of counselor-facilitator collaboration are provided.

The Emergence of Career Development Facilitators Over the past decade, we have seen a dramatic increase in the need for more and better career development services. This need was expressed by workers who were experiencing career and job transitions, unemployed persons and students who were preparing to become a part of this changing world of work (Hoyt & Lester, 1995). One response to this need was the emergence of the Career Development Facilitator (CDF). The significance of CDF contributions has been recognized by Mariani (1998).

A CDF is a trained provider of career development services who has an appropriate educational and experiential background in this field and is proficient in the twelve CDF competencies. CDFs have expertise in working with their customers in the competency areas of helping skills, labor market information and resources, assessment, diverse populations, ethical and legal issues, career development models, employability skills, training clients and peers, program management/implementation promotion and public relations, technology and consultation! supervision.

CDFs hold various titles, such as career advisors, case managers, job search trainers, placement specialists, intake interviewers, school-to-work coordinators and career resource center managers. Even though they don't have master's degrees in career counseling, they do facilitate the career development of people in virtually every setting, from one-stop career centers to high schools.

Major questions have been asked about the role, standards and qualifications of the CDF and how that person works as part of a team of career development specialists. Based on ongoing experiences in the field and revisions to the training curriculum, these questions are being verified by the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), the National Career Development Association (NCDA) and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC).

A review of the past provision of career development services is helpful in looking at the development of the CDF. Career development services, such as interviewing; assessing skills, interests, aptitudes and personalities; counseling persons in career decision making and transition strategies; job placement, and workplace adjustment aid were supplied by a variety of persons in a variety of settings. These service providers include nationally certified career counselors (NCCCs), professionally licensed career counselors, employment officials, career resource center coordinators, educational advisors and human resources personnel. The educational preparation, training and experience of these providers were diverse.

These providers have been supported by various organizations who have promoted standards for training and credentialing career development staff members. These groups included the National Career Development Association (NCDA), the National Employment Counseling Association (NECA), the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Additionally, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) had recognized the need to promote excellent training and resource materials to meet the career

development needs of the U.S. population (Lester, 1992). The majority of efforts in promoting this training and recognition of career development providers came from collaborative efforts of NCD A and NOICC.

NCD A, through the work of its professional standards committee, has continuously researched the preparation needs of career counselors. Through committee efforts, career counseling competencies were defined and revised (NCD A) (Engels, 1994b). Attaining these competencies as part of a counselor's role has been required by the Council for Accrediting of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as part of the 48 graduate semester hour master's programs. CACREP has also established a specialty preparation for career counseling at the master's level (CACREP) (Engels, 1994a). Also recognizing this preparation, the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) provides voluntary credentialing of

- Nationally certified career counselors (NCCCs) who meet CACREP or equivalent standards.

While much attention has been given to master's and advanced educationally prepared career counselors, less had been done in the way of preparing and also recognizing non-master's level career development professionals. NCD A recognized this need and through its professional standards committee, began informally surveying the competencies and services needed in a variety of settings.

NOICC Involvement

In August 1992, funds were provided by NOICC to Oakland University, a partner in the National Career Development Training Institute (CDTI), to conduct a national survey of training needs of career development service providers. The term facilitator was used to include persons with various backgrounds, education and job functions.

Researchers conducting this needs assessment determined that a survey to identify the skills and training needed by career development facilitators (particularly those who work with adults) would be helpful in the development of both in-service and preservice training as well as contribute information for the creation of a national career development training agenda (Hoppin & Splete, 1994).

The survey asked what practitioners thought they needed to know or do (competencies) to effectively provide career development services. Surveys were sent to members of the American Society for Training and Development, National Career Development Association, National Employment Counseling Association, National Rehabilitation Association, Military Education Counselor Association, and the Career Planning and Adult Development Network. Also receiving surveys were Job Training Placement Act personnel and Nationally Certified Career Counselors.

Survey items were based on the NCD A career competencies (e.g. knowledge of employment information and career planning resources). Other items relevant to the work of CDFs were added (e.g. developing strong presentation skills).

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each survey item to their job and then indicate the items in which they would like to improve their skills or knowledge. Eighty-Two items were included over the following ten survey categories:

1. Career Counseling/Career Consulting Skills
2. Information and Resources

3. Assessment
4. Special Populations
5. Ethical and Legal Issues
6. Career Development Theory
7. Job Search Training and Placement
8. Training Clients and Other Career Development Facilitators
9. Program Management and Implementation
10. Promotion, Marketing and Public Relations

The intent of the project was to survey a wide range of practitioners, counselors as well as non-counselors, who provided career development services to adults in major work settings. These settings were identified as adult education, business and industry, colleges and universities, community agencies, community colleges (2 year), employment security commissions, job training and partnership act agencies (JTPA), military, private practice, trade or technical schools, and vocational rehabilitation.

Results of the survey indicated more training for career development providers was needed. Recommendations based on the survey results included:

1. Focused training is needed for facilitators to help them work effectively with special populations.
2. A clearinghouse for current information regarding the labor market and assessment instruments is needed.
3. When teaching training and presentation skills, experienced trainers should serve as role models.
4. Pre-service and in-service training should emphasize the need for collaboration and sharing between agencies and institutions.
5. Program management and implementation should be included in training programs at both levels.
6. Knowledge and use of assessment techniques, formal and informal, is essential at both levels of training, with emphasis placed on relating appropriate assessments to the population served.
7. Ethical and legal issues need to be included in both preservice and in-service training programs.
8. Attention should be given to training career development facilitators in the promotion and marketing of their programs.
9. A specific training should be provided in job search strategies and techniques, especially for those working with displaced workers.

Based on the results of this survey, NOICC decided to provide funding support for the development of a curriculum to better prepare non-master's level career development facilitators.

Curriculum for Career Development Facilitators Continuing the efforts to develop some basic standards for career development facilitators, NCDA and NOICC through the CDTI at Oakland University promoted the establishment of this curriculum (Hoppin & Splete, 1996).

CDF competencies were identified to provide reference points for the development of a training curriculum. These competencies were based not only on the results of the CDTI survey but also on several discussions with members of the survey project resource team, including counselor supervisors of career development staff, directors of community and government agencies and business and industry personnel. National career development experts were also asked for their opinions.

After using these initial competencies as a basis for developing the CDF curriculum and CDF certification for two years, further discussion was held between the collaborating groups (NCDA, NOICC and CCE) in November, 1998. The competencies were then revised as follow:

1. Helping Skills - Be proficient in the basic career facilitating process while including productive interpersonal relationships.
2. Labor Market Information and Resources - Understand labor market and occupational information and trends. Be able to use current resources.
3. Assessment - Comprehend and use (under supervision) both formal and informal career development assessments with emphasis on relating appropriate career development assessments to the population served.
4. Diverse Populations - Recognize special needs of various groups and adapt services to meet their needs.
5. Ethical and Legal Issues - Follow CDF Code of Ethics and know current legislative regulations.
6. Career Development Models - Understand career development theories, models and techniques as they apply to life-long development, gender, age and ethnic background.
7. Employability Skills - Know job search strategies, and placement techniques, especially in work with specific groups.
8. Training Clients and Peers - Prepare and develop materials for training programs and presentations.
9. Program Management/Implementation - Understand programs and their implementation, and work as a liaison in collaborative relationships.
10. Promotion and Public Relations - Market and promote career development programs with staff and supervisors.
11. Technology - Comprehend and use career development computer applications.
12. Consultation/Supervision - Accept suggestions for performance improvement from consultants or supervisor.

The CDF curriculum is divided into 4 modules, each of 30 clock hours. The contents are:

1. Module 1 - Career Development Overview, Theory and Information

Topics in this module are:

Introductions, Course Overview and Mechanics

The Role of the Career Development Facilitator

Career Development--Definitions and Models

Career Development in Programs

Case Management Skills

Career Development Theory

Adult Development Issues

Ethical/Legal Issues

Specific Populations

2. Module 2- Helping and Assessment Skills Topics in this module are:

Overview of the Five-Step Helping Process

Reflecting & Questioning Skills

Applied Helping Skills

The Helping Process-Assessment/Appraisal in Action

The Helping Process-Empowerment and Goal-Setting

The Helping Process-Interventions and Termination

The Helping Process-Follow-up and Reinforcement

Overview of the Assessment Process in Career Guidance

The Major Types of Assessments

Selecting the Appropriate Instrument

Technical Considerations

Administering Formal Instruments

Assessment Interpretation

Assessment Instrument Presentations and Conclusions

3. Module 3 - Career Information, Resources and Program Design

Topics in this module are:

Introduction to Career and Labor Market Information

Basics of Labor Market Information

Using the Dictionary of Occupational Titles

Discovering How Occupations Are Classified (GOE)

Understanding Classifications by Industry (SIC)

Gathering Information About Occupations

Labor Market Trends

Education and Training

Computerized Career Information Delivery Systems

The Career Resource Center (CRC)

Designing Career Development Programs

Developing Training Skills

4. Module 4- Reality Checks, Goal Setting and Action Plans Topics in this module are:

Client Assessment: Reality Checks, Obstacles and

Opportunities

Assessment Is On-Going

Assisting Clients in the Career Decision-Making Process

Assisting Clients in the Goal Setting and Planning Process

The Portfolio

Job Search Training

Electronic Job Search

Job Retention and Client Follow-Up

Promotions and Public Relations

CDF Next Steps

The curriculum format consists of lecturettes and related learning activities (e.g. keeping a journal and using the internet for career and labor market information) and allows for the students to share related experiences (e.g. how to set up a career resource center, what software they are using, and how they publicize their services).

To date, 198 instructors of the CDF curriculum have been trained in workshops so they may teach potential career development facilitators.

The CDF curriculum was presented to various groups for their endorsement. Endorsements were given by boards and officials of NCDA, NECA, NOICC, and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NA WDP).

Credentialing of CDFs

Throughout the development of the CDF curriculum, it was always the intent of NCDA and NOICC to establish a national certification to recognize the training and background of CDFs. The CDF credential was developed to provide standards, training specifications and credentials to formally recognize those career providers who do not meet the professional counseling requirements.

Representatives of NCDA took the lead in meeting with the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) to request a certification for CDFs which would be a similar process to that for NCCs and NCCCs. NBCC felt its obligation was to credential only master's level counselors and explored the possibility of a sub organization to credential non-master's persons. The Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE) was established as a separate body from NBCC. It then met with a national CDF curriculum task force to discuss credentialing. The task force, chaired by Judy Hoppin, included representatives from NCDA, NOICC, NECA, CDTh NAWDP, and the California Career Development Association. After several meetings, it was agreed that CCE would establish a credentialing process based on the recommendations of the task force. In July of 1997, a formal application for credentialing career development facilitators was finalized. Certification requirements included a combination of education and experience, completion of the 120 hour CDF curriculum or its equivalent, and an agreement to follow CDF ethical procedures.

The role of a Career Development Facilitator (CDF) is described in the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE)'s application for certification as a CDF. This description designates individuals working in a variety of career development settings who have met the requirements as set forth by the CCE. It also states that Career Development Facilitators serve as career group facilitators, job search trainers, career resource center coordinators, career coaches, career development case managers, intake interviewers, occupational and labor market information resource persons, human resource career development coordinators, employment/placement specialists and workforce development personnel (CCE, 1998). The application indicates that the CDF is expected to have knowledge and experience to work in the previously mentioned 12 competencies.

The counseling profession has made much progress in defining professional counseling and the career counseling specialty through the development of NCDA's career counseling competencies and code of ethics, the NBCC National Certified Career Counselor credential, and state licensing and registry requirements. NCCCs must hold a graduate degree in counseling with specific graduate credit courses and a career-related internship plus work experience after the graduate degree has been completed.

Certified CDFs and Nationally Certified Career Counselors (NCCCs) complement each other as they each perform job functions appropriate to their level of training and expertise. Both CDFs and NCCCs are bound by separate but closely related codes of ethics.

Counselor-Facilitator Collaboration

As CDFs have worked with counselors in career development programs, various roles of collaboration have been identified. The following is an example of counselor-facilitator collaboration in a high school setting. The CDF is the Career Resource Center Coordinator, who works closely with the counseling staff and is supervised by the Counseling Department Chair. As part of the school's career development program, tenth and eleventh grade pupils work in small groups or individually with the CDF in the Career Resource Center. The CDF helps them access career and educational information through the use of computer programs such as Career Explorer, MOIS and College View. The CDF informs the counselors of the students' progress and makes referrals of individual students as appropriate.

At the twelfth grade level, the counselors and the CDF co facilitate small student groups as they make college, career and employment choices. In this school, it is evident that the CDF is considered an integral part of the high school career development program and works collaboratively with the counselors.

A second example of counselor-facilitator collaboration is seen in a community career center. The CDF, who was hired because of his CDF training, and a limited-licensed counselor work together as co facilitators in a Welfare to Work Career Development Program. Both the CDF and the counselor are supervised by the Welfare to Work Program Coordinator, who is a licensed counselor.

The program is geared for non-custodial parents on welfare and is based on the Life Work Portfolio materials. Both the CDF and counselor work with the same group of parents until they find a job. The CDF trains the group members in employability skills and the counselor focuses on learning life skills and the peer support process.

The third example is in a high school setting. The CDF, as Career Center Director, works collaboratively with the school counselor who is most involved with college and career information. Both the counselor and CDF are supervised by the counseling department head. The CDF and the counselor together present information to tenth grade students in English and business classes. Daily, the CDF works with students, parents, staff and the business community promoting career awareness. Additionally, the CDF coordinates the annual Career Night Program, with the support and involvement of the counseling staff.

The fourth example of collaboration is seen at the K-12 school district level. In this situation, the CDF, who had previously coordinated a vocational career resource center, was appointed Career Development Coordinator for the district.

In the role of the coordinator, the CDF worked with counselors from two high schools in planning and implementing a district wide career expo. The CDF also serves on the K-12 district counseling committee, which includes counselors, social workers and psychologists. The CDF is involved in career development programs, not crisis or personal counseling issues. As district Career Development Coordinator, the CDF has worked with the local community college counselors, middle and high school counselors and outside consultants to develop a county wide web site which provides career information to students.

The CDF has recently hired two more CDFs to work with herself and the school counselors in career development activities. In this district, the CDFs and counseling staffs work under the direction of the Director of Secondary Education.

Current Developments

In sum, the basic intent in recognizing certified CDFs and NCCCs is to provide standards and guidelines to help insure that quality career development services are provided to those seeking them.

As of January, 1998, NCDA has established a national registry of CDF approved instructors and is promoting further CDF instructor training, training of CDF instructor trainers, and the provision of CDF courses. For more information, contact the CDF Project Director at NCDA, 4700 Reed Road, Suite M, Columbus, OH 43220 or by telephone at (888) 325-1750.

NOICC continues to support the CDF movement by funding NCDA activities, such as CDF curriculum updating and revisions and by promoting CDF curriculum offerings through State Occupational Coordinating Committees and supporting the CDF credentialing process. For more information, contact the CDF Liaison at NOICC, 2100 M. Street, NW, Suite 156, Washington, DC 20037 or by telephone at (202) 653-2123.

CCE administers the CDF certification process, including setting standards for certification. It disseminates applications and materials and maintains the CDF database and registry. For more information, contact the Council for Credentialing and Education at 3 Terrace Way, Suite A, Greensboro, NC 27403-3660 or by telephone at (888) 335-9233.

The collaboration and cooperation of many groups have made this movement successful. It is significant that the CDF role and certification is not tied to one body or organization. Granted that NCDA and CCE coordinate national CDF projects, members of various organizations and associations have received certification as CDFs. This is an example of how various career development service providers can work together to provide effective help to those in need.

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