

Careers

Autumn 2021, Issue 5



Meet the Team

- The Careers Team

Page 2

Careers Today

- The person-centred approach
- Impartiality in a partial world
- Becoming a reflective practitioner

Page 2-5

The Team

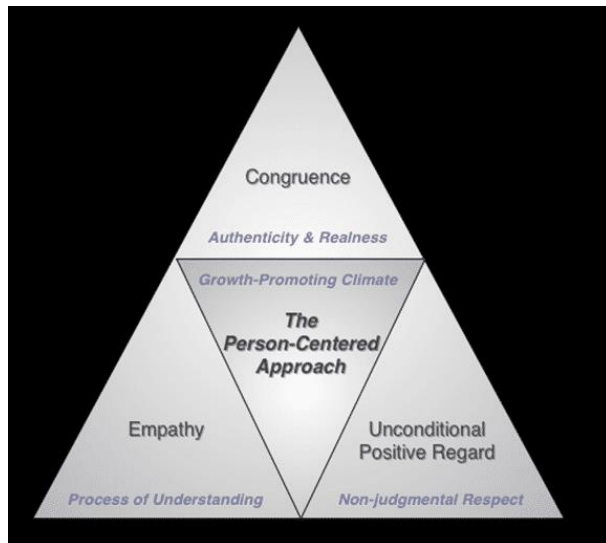
Dr Shirley Remington Deputy Dean, Dr Fiona Clarke Associate Dean, Shah Rahman Senior Careers Adviser

Reminders

Reminder its that time of year when we should be looking at Self-awareness with F1 trainees and working with them to create a career development plan.

F2 trainees should be Introduced to website for competition ratios, person specifications etc. and looking at the applicant's handbook and all the details of the process of recruitment. They should also be Introduced to the oriel system and preparing for MSRA.

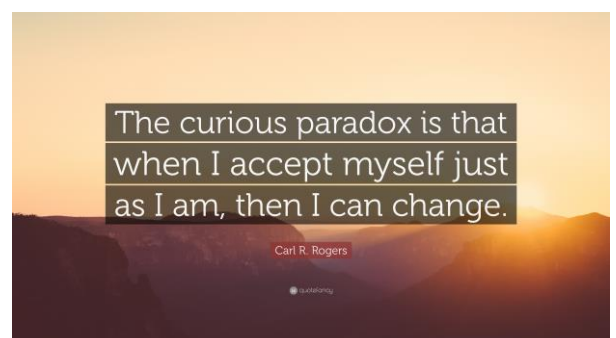
The Person-Centred Approach



The person-centred approach is one of the easiest approaches to understand. The approach in its essence puts the customers need in front of all else. It does not require the focus on theory and constructs as much as other therapeutic approaches, so it is very attractive to many. However, in practice it is not as easy a task as many would think.

When I attended my own training in the person-centred approach, I found that over 60% of the attendees did not make it past the 1st year and then there was a high percentage of people that still had not grasped the true essence of the approach by the time the course had reached its conclusion.

So why is something so easy in essence so hard in practice. The fact is we are all conditioned and have automatic responses to certain situations that we ourselves are not aware of and this has positive and negative biases that affect a careers session. I am not advocating that we all must be self-aware to be able to serve as a guidance adviser or career lead. I just want us all to accept that we do have biases and they can affect the support we give to others. Being aware of this and being conscious of this fact within a guidance session is all that I ask. As this will allow you to



keep yourself in check and realise when you are putting your own ideas and suggestions into the mix.

A career practitioner should be someone that is willing to walk the walk with the trainee. Advising them of what they should consider, informing them of where they could find relevant information and in a lot of cases provide unbiased impartial guidance. We should not decide for them or influence them to go for a certain option. The decision must be theirs as they need to be able to take ownership of their own decision. We should not be taking the burden of any decisions on our shoulders.

In my time as a career's counsellor, I have found many examples of how others have made decisions for people.

A fellow careers counsellor who was also a musician in his early years and had toured Europe in his earlier years had advised his son not to follow his band to America and instead pursue a career in law. His son now a solicitor will not speak to him as he frames it "you crushed my dreams". His band did make it big in the music world which further rubbed salt into the wounds. I suppose as a father he did not want his son to face the hardships that he went through as a young man trying to make it in music, but he also admitted to me that his son was a better musician than he ever was. He was telling a few of us of how proud he was of his son now that he was a solicitor and could not see what his problem was. I looked around at others in the room and everyone thought he did the right thing. I was like "wow" how are all these guidance advisers in agreement. The fact is that they were all focusing on hardship and welfare and he was a solicitor (a success) now however begrudgingly.

As a guidance professional it is important to make trainees aware of competition ratios and labour market trends but that should not be the reason for us to say that dermatology is competitive so instead you should become a GP for example.

An HR graduate came to see me a few years ago and was struggling to get a job. I reviewed her applications and could see that she was not putting her full effort into the applications. I focused on this and before I knew it, she was telling me how she wanted to be a teacher, but her parents would not approve. They were both teachers and did not enjoy the marking of assignments in the evening and all the other work that goes into teaching. They did not think she had the resilience to cope. We managed to get her onto a pathway into teaching as she could not continue in HR and teaching was her true calling. Fortunately, she had not moved back to the family home after her graduation which made the whole process easier. She is now very happy as a primary school teacher. Her parents have since commented on how happy she is and how sorry they were for forcing her to pursue a career outside of teaching.

I have come across a lot of cases where people made decisions for others. Many found their way onto the path that makes them happy, others were not so fortunate or are still working their way to get there. People will manage and cope in every given situation that they find themselves in. But they will always remember that individual who made that decision for them however well intended.

Impartiality in a partial world

Impartiality is one of the main pillars that careers guidance sits on. Where a person is partial knowing or unknowingly then the session is limited in its capacity to freely explore. Having a bias to medicine is one thing but a preference or not for a specialty can influence the careers guidance session which may not necessarily be a good thing for the person receiving guidance.



Good training and simple adjustments to our approach implies that impartiality could be a straightforward process of application in practice. Unfortunately, we do not operate in a vacuum and therefore need to come to terms with the factors that impact on our delivery. Factors such as socio-economic, political, structural, and interpersonal forces have an impact, and we need to be aware of this in our practice.

How does one provide impartial guidance in a partial world?

We need to be reflective in our practice and become aware of our behaviours, cognitions and emotions during a session to keep ourselves in check.

Unconditional positive regard (UPR) is the key to being impartial. As you will be aware UPR is not the easiest of things to offer and apply to the trainee, specialty or an alternative career. To be truly impartial we need to offer UPR unreservedly and be aware of the times when we are not.



"Just remember, son, it doesn't matter whether you win or lose—unless you want Daddy's love."

The New Yorker Collection, 2001. Pat Byrnes, from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.

Becoming a reflective practitioner

Reflective practice is, in its simplest form, thinking about or reflecting on what you do. It is closely linked to the concept of learning from experience, in that you think about what you did, and what happened, and decide from that what you would do differently next time.



Thinking about what has happened is part of being human. However, the difference between casual 'thinking' and 'reflective practice' is that reflective practice requires a conscious effort to

think about events and develop insights into them. Once you get into the habit of using reflective practice, you will probably find it useful both at work and at home. Reflective practice has huge benefits in increasing self-awareness, which is a key component of emotional intelligence, and in developing a better understanding of others. Reflective practice can also help you to develop creative thinking skills and encourages active engagement in work processes.

In work situations, keeping a diary and regularly using reflective practice, will support more meaningful discussions about career development, and your personal development, including at appraisal time. It will also help to provide you with examples to use in competency-based interview situations.

Some simple steps to becoming a reflective practitioner.

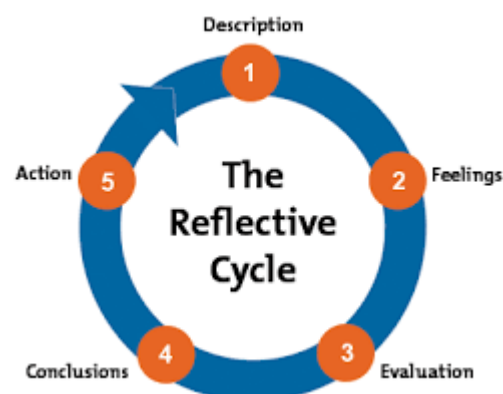
The Process

Identify a situation you encountered in the guidance session that you believe could have been dealt with more effectively. Describe the experience.

- What happened?
- When and where did the situation occur?
- Any other thoughts you have about the situation?

Reflection

- How did you behave?
- What thoughts did you have?
- How did it make you feel?
- Were there other factors that influenced the situation?
- What have you learned from the experience?



Theorising

- How did the experience match with your preconceived ideas, i.e.
- Was the outcome expected or unexpected?
- What behaviours do you think might have changed the outcome?

Experimentation

- Is there anything you could do or say now to change the outcome?
- What action(s) can you take to change similar reactions in the future?
- What behaviours might you try out?

“Reflective practice is an active, dynamic action-based and ethical set of skills, placed in real time and dealing with real, complex and difficult situations.”

(Moon, 1999)

“Reflection should be limited to practice if you want to limit yourself as an individual.”

I'm sure that is one thing you don't want to do!

Think of the possibilities for yourself and the people around you. Reflective individuals can reflect on where they live, who they spend their life with, what they want in life, reflect on their career and develop emotional intelligence (EI). Managing your career as we grow as individuals is key to ensuring our goals are in line with what we want from a career. Through self-reflection we can accurately gauge what we truly want and develop a plan to manage our career to ensure that our goals align with our career.

EI is the key to having better relationships both in work and at home. A reflective individual can remove those blockers that stop them having more meaningful relationships and conversations. Individuals with EI are usually central in a network of friends or family. They are the person that everyone gravitates to. This may not be the goal but rather the by-product of having self-awareness.

It's entirely up to you as to how you go about developing as an individual. Coming from a culture that has shaykhs and gurus and spiritual healers. I know the value of having access to them, and the value of growing through reflections. But we live in the UK and the western world isn't geared towards that type of development. In the US people go to counsellors for self-development, living in the UK this is also a taboo subject for many and counsellors are only accessed for mental health related issues. So, what are we left with? Self-reflection, surely, we can't ignore the calling to becoming more aware of ourselves than we currently are.

Recommended reading

Developing Reflective Practice: A Guide for Medical Students, Doctors and Teachers-Grant et Al

[The reflective practitioner - guidance for doctors and medical students - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\), Reflective Practice Toolkit AoMRC CoPMED 0818.pdf](#)

Works Cited

Moon, J. (1999). *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Kogan Page.

Contact

We hope you have found this useful. We are happy for you to contact us via email if you have any queries or if you want to suggest topics you would like us to cover in future issues.

Shah.rahman@hee.nhs.uk