

Careers

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The Team

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This is the 2nd in the series of 4 newsletters we are creating on the run up to the train the trainer day in Autumn. The aim is to introduce you to old reliable tools and new resources we have created which are focused on self-awareness, career exploration, arriving at a decision and the next steps. All the tools were developed following thorough research into careers in medicine and an assessment of findings from that research.

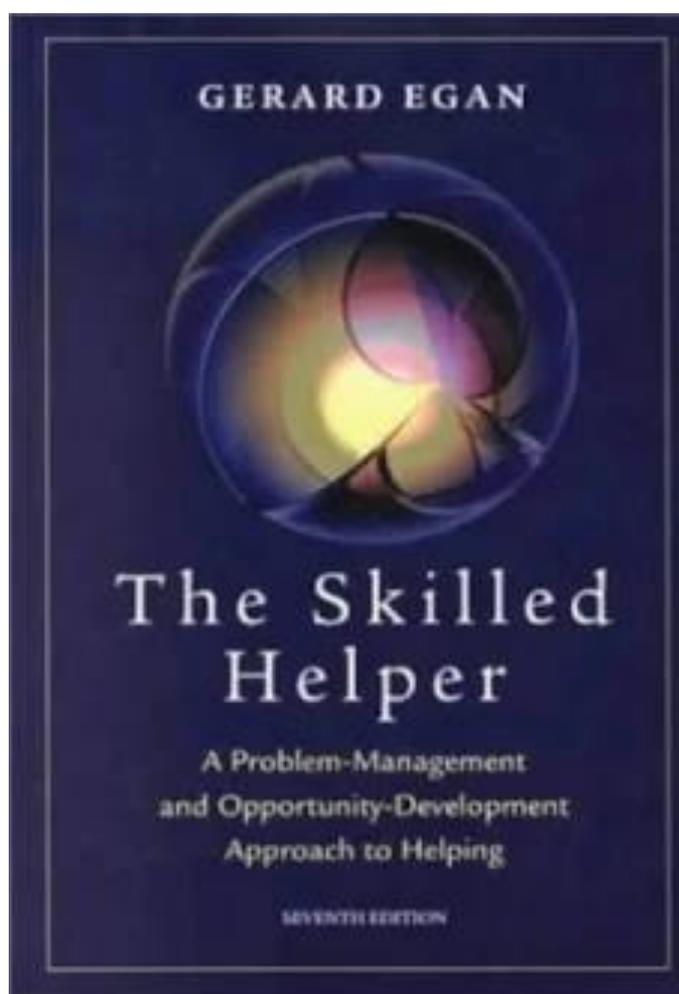
Careers Today

I get asked a lot by careers leads - what is the best book to read to develop career advisory skills? I tend to direct people to:

“Gerard Egan’s *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping.*”

This book is a bonafide standby in careers guidance practice because it is easy to understand, easy to use in combination with other models of helping and provides an effective approach to developing the communication skills necessary to help trainees manage their problems and/or develop latent opportunities. Its premise is very basic and enlightening: through a series of stages, the careers lead uses specific communication skills to aid their trainees in:

- Understanding ‘what is going on’?
- Deciding what solutions are realistic and appropriate
- Devising a plan of how to get the things they need or want



Career Exploration

Exploration is the act of searching for the purpose of discovery of information or resources. Exploration occurs in all mobile animal species, including humans. Explorers are usually defined by individuals who go beyond the comfort of their home to discover what is out there.



Self-exploration can be done from the comfort of your own home, looking inside of you. But that does not make it any easier than climbing Mount Everest or the deepest oceans of the world. In fact, a lot of people would say that it is a lot harder as the minds darkest corners has depths that the best neurologists would struggle to fathom.

Once we have **self-awareness**, we can achieve a better understanding of ourselves. We can see ourselves as unique individuals. Thus, empowering us to make changes and to build on our strength as well as identify areas we would like to make improvements in. That is why we looked at self-awareness in our last newsletter.

So, what is career exploration?

In postgraduate medical education, career exploration is the process of researching, evaluating, and learning about specialties, opportunities and how trainees can pursue the careers of their choice.

Careful research into their options is important. Trainees should not rely on preconceptions. The key is to create a well-rounded picture of the environment in which they will be working, thinking carefully about whether they can see themselves succeeding on that path.

It is quite natural to have a preconceived idea of what a certain area might be like. But trainees should not make this their basis for a decision without further research. It would be unwise to limit themselves and rule out options unnecessarily, as they might be surprised at what some areas have to offer.

Before opting for a particular job role, trainees should have knowledge not just of the work, but the environment in which they will be working and the training they will need.

In medical career exploration it is important for trainees to reflect on their foundation years to understand what they have enjoyed adding to any seed list that they may have created. A seed list is a list of career options they may have been considering. They are referred to seed lists because they are ideas which need further nourishment to become a realistic option or, as in the case of a seed, need nourishment to become a plant. As a trainee, individuals have access to consultants and medical supervisors who may have valuable information that could help in understanding what the roles involve, and we need to encourage them to engage in conversations.

The Career Rater

The Career Rater is one of the most basic tools that I have developed but it is also the most powerful of all the tools that you could use with individuals. A simple visual tool that can be used in a career's guidance session. You would start the conversation by simply asking what their dream role is. A very powerful question and one that should have been asked before they even considered medical school. It usually throws people back and gets them to talk more reflectively about what they really want. A lot of people struggle with this question due to constructs or socio-economic factors that possibly blocked their way. It is important to ask them to consider the socio-economic factors that may be blocking them in pursuing a particular role.



Once the conversation has run its course you would introduce the tool and ask them to rate the role they want to pursue. What they like and do not like about the role. If the dream role is identified as less than 8 then it would be wise to ask what would make the role a 10. This could lead to identifying another specialty. In such circumstances the idea would be to rate the other specialty in the same manner and pursue the specialty with the highest score.

<https://nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Career%20Rater.pdf>

Research interviews

Research interviews need to be encouraged as a lot of trainees rely on the experience, they had during their foundation years to decide on a specialty. As we know, interactions during placements may have been limited and what a trainee perceives to be the duties and responsibilities can be quite different to the reality. Further clarification can be key to making the right decision. Trainees may have pertinent questions based on their own needs and interests that have not been answered through whatever interaction they may have had. Plus, they may be considering specialties that were not covered during their rotations and in such cases research interviews can help them find relevant information.



Research interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews are useful when the topic of inquiry relates to issues that require complex questioning and considerable probing.

<https://nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Research%20Interviews.pdf>

Sci59

Sci59 is an online matching tool. Sci59 is based on Trait's matching theory. Many would say that the theory is outdated as it does not consider the overall nuances of career decision making. We do not recommend the use of the tool as a standalone and it needs to be used in combination with other tools. The reason for highlighting the tool is that many practitioners signpost trainees to this as it yields quick results.

The tool can be accessed at <http://sci.cenmedic.co.uk/>. It is a resource to help medical students/junior doctors in training see how their skills, attitudes, preferences and aspirations map against specialties. Sci59 lists the career choices that provide a reasonable match to the trainee's personal profile. Based on skills and attributes that consultants believe are critical to success in their field, Sci59 takes the trainee through over a hundred questions about preferred work settings, decision making styles, comfort with uncertainty and so on. The assessment takes about 15-30 minutes to complete.

Sci59 aims to provide food for thought and prompt further research – it does not tell the trainee what to do! Use Sci59 results alongside information, advice and guidance from other sources, such as Royal College websites and the Health careers website. We would also strongly recommend that, to get the most out of using this tool, trainees seek help in interpreting the results with colleagues, educational and clinical supervisors or careers advisers.

List of specialties scores

Perfect fit: 300, top 10 scores in green, bottom 10 scores in red

Specialty	Fit
Intensive Care Medicine	271
Anaesthetics	258
Otolaryngology	255
Urology	255
Gastroenterology	252
Cardiology	251
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	251
Cardiothoracic Surgery	250
Oral & Maxillo-Facial Surgery	249
Ophthalmology	247

<http://sci.cenmedic.co.uk/>

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors>

Tasters

There are over 50 medical specialties in the UK, trainees are currently exposed to a maximum of four specialties before they apply for specialty training. In order to ensure that trainees have access to a wider range of specialties in a variety of care settings prior to selecting a career path, HEENW encourages the provision of short taster sessions in other specialties for Foundation Doctors.

The purpose of a taster experience is to:

i) Give a trainee some understanding (taste) of what the specialty could offer them as a future career, including examples of research and educational academic tasters.

ii) develop their understanding of the specialty and its contribution to the care and safety of patients.



A taster offers exposure to the work and lifestyle of those involved in a speciality. This experience may have a positive effect on the trainee and confirm that a particular choice is appropriate for the individual. Conversely, a trainee may learn through this experience that the speciality is not what they had expected and may be excluded as a future career choice.

A proactive trust would be organising and providing a list of tasters for their trainees to give them an opportunity to understand the different specialities.

Career Exploration on the net

This is the most important thing a trainee can do apart from talking to any medical supervisors and reflecting on their experiences. Researching online will help the trainee get information on all the different specialties, what they involve and how to apply for them.

There are many websites which are designed to help trainees with this stage in their career exploration. In the list below there are websites specifically for explaining the application processes and career pathway details; links to career profiles and recorded interviews with specialist consultants; and links to general information.



Specialty Training

Main information portal for specialty recruitment.

<https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/>

Health Careers

Careers information, with a section specific to medicine.

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles>

Internal Medical Training (IMT) Recruitment/ Acute Care Common Stem (ACCS) Recruitment
Supporting recruitment to Internal Medical and Acute Care Common Stem training.

<https://www.imtrecruitment.org.uk/>

Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board - ST3 recruitment

Supporting recruitment to ST3 (after core medical training)

<http://www.st3recruitment.org.uk/>

Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board - ST3 recruitment

Supporting recruitment to ST3 (after core medical training)

<http://www.st3recruitment.org.uk/>

Joint Committee on Surgical Training

Supporting information for recruitment to core surgical training.

<https://www.jcst.org.uk/trainees/core-surgical-training/>

North West Post Graduate Medical & Dental Education (NWPGMDE)

Supporting information for recruitment to core psychiatry training

<https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/>

Oriel

Portal for applying to all specialties

<https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/Account/LandingPage>

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. In the next issue we will be delving into the all-encompassing subject of decision making.

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