

Careers

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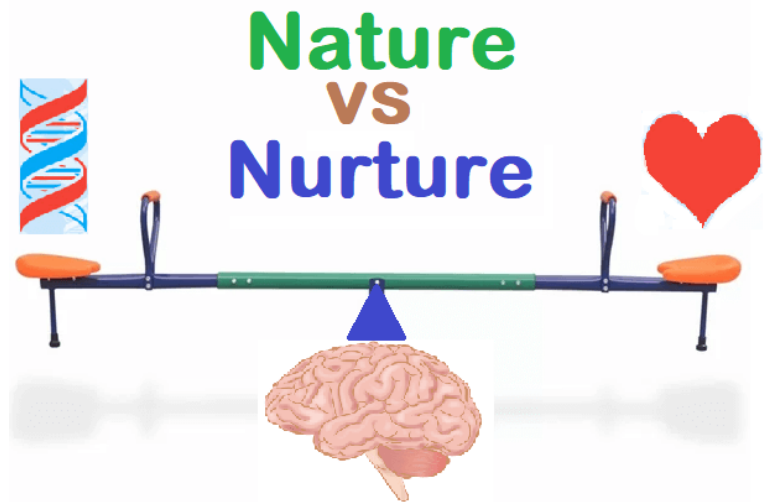
The Team

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Careers Today

I remember once speaking with a friend (David) who does not work in guidance. Dave said to me that he has always been interested in the idea of careers counselling as a career but felt like he was not one of 'those people' who knows how to help others.

I thought about the message underlying his comment: that some people are inherently born knowing how to counsel and guide people. These people are 'old souls' who are 'wise beyond their years' and have an enviable and innate ability to always know the right thing to say when someone needs help. To be honest, I think this is absolute baloney. Alright, okay, before you have a go at me, some people might have a natural ability to be calm during crisis and are able to see the forest for the trees. However, the reality is that career coaches/leads/counsellors need to develop skills integral to the supportive relationship.



It is one thing to offer advice and give your perspective on what you think a person should do when you hear their circumstance, but that is not a careers or counselling model of helping. The task of a careers lead is to empower their trainees not by giving them advice, but by helping them to find their own answers based on a combination of understanding their scenario, knowing what solutions will work for them, and recognising and building upon strengths that they already possess.

The ability to communicate in such a way is a skill. It is a way of practicing that you must work hard at learning and developing just like baking or writing a good report.

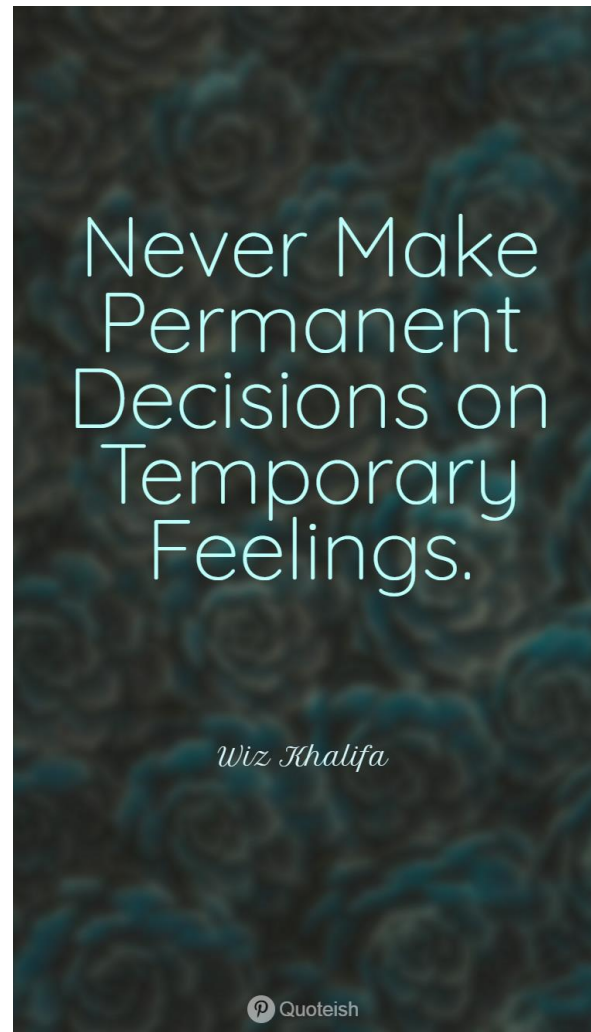
Decision Making

Many bad decisions can be remedied, however, the more people the decision impacts, the more difficult it will be to remedy the situation. Hence the importance of making sure that decisions are well informed.

So hence we looked at self-awareness in the last issue. The tools and activities on there should bring a lot of qualitative data together for the trainees which should help them in making a well-informed decision.

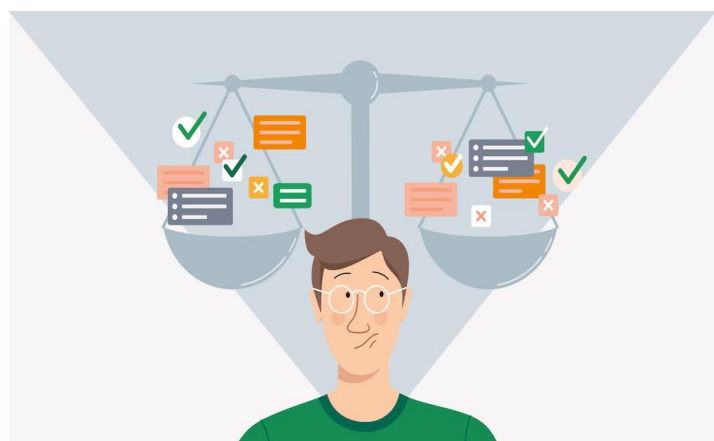
Making choices and decisions is a part of life. Simply put, the way life unfolds—with its twists and turns, starts and stops—requires us to make choices every step of the way. I find it fascinating that by the time trainees have reached the point where they must decide on a speciality, many have not yet understood the art of decision-making. Yes, that is right, well spotted there's decision making and making choices that will potentially determine what their lives could potentially look like for at least the next 10 years.

So big decisions require an awareness of how one decides. Furthermore, it requires an understanding of what type of decision making has worked for them and what has not in the past. To help with making decisions we have designed a few tried and tested tools that can be used with trainees to help them make a well-informed decision.



Pros and Cons

Another simple but effective tool to evaluate a specialty. On one side they write down all the things they like about the role and on the other side they write down all the things they do not. Add up all the pros and cons, if the pro column scores higher than the cons column they have a good indication that this may be a good option. However, if it is the other way round it would be advisable to discount and move on. The tool should give them clarity as to what they can expect in the role. Once they have done this with all the specialties on their seed list they can reflect and decide on what they would like to pursue.



https://nwpqmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/pros_and_cons_exercise.pdf

Competition Ratios

Labour market information is a key component in making career decisions. An awareness of what is happening in each sector and what opportunities that are out there are key fundamentals that one needs to be aware of.

As you know the future doctor Programme is a vision that the NHS is working towards, and this has and will influence what opportunities are available within the NHS.

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Future%20Doctor%20Co-Created%20Vision%20-%20FINAL%20%28typo%20corrected%29.pdf>



The Collins Report which reviewed the Foundation Programme highlighted the importance of workforce statistics in medical career planning and noted:

“The challenge which remains is how best to help trainees to manage their career expectations against realistic opportunities and the needs of the service, while at the same time encouraging them in their overall aspirations. Guidance is required in defining best practice in the provision of careers information and advice, and obtaining key workforce data collated to help trainees to make early and wise decisions regarding their long-term careers”

Competition ratios should be reviewed by trainees to help them understand what opportunities and demands there are in each specialty. Competition ratios give valuable trend information about areas of medicine that are growing, contracting or remaining stable.

<https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/Competition-Ratios>

SWOT Analysis

This exercise is not focused on comparing specialties but thinking through one option and looking at it from different perspectives.

The method is particularly useful for matching a particular specialty against the key criteria they have clarified through self-assessment and how this might change over time.

Trainees may find that the strengths and weaknesses are mainly internal and opportunities and threats mainly external.

They need to look at each section in turn and think of as many aspects as they can. Are there particular threats that they can avoid by making small changes? By being clear of the internal and external aspects of their choice they can assess if it is worth the risk for them or if they need to adjust their plan to make it a better choice.

SWOT Analysis



<https://nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/SWOT%20Analysis.pdf>

SCAN stage 3 (arriving at your decision)

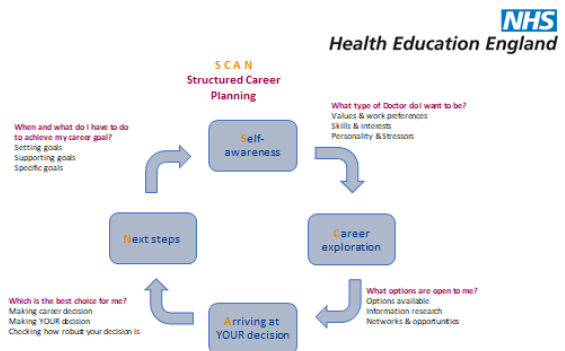
Stage 3 will introduce trainees to information covering a range of decision-making styles and suggested tools that they can use to help them consider their own decisions. This stage will demonstrate how the tools can be used using worked examples to illustrate this. By the end of this stage, they should have a series of personal reflections about their own decision making so far, and the process they have used for this decision and a checklist for them to check how robust their decision is.

The assumption is made that they have worked through the previous stages:

- Self-awareness
- Career Exploration

They should understand therefore what is important to them in their career and what the options are which they have open to them.

https://london.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/scan_stage_3_-_arriving_at_your_decision_workbook.pdf



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 career exploration.

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