

CAREER PATHWAYS

Quick Trip

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2nd Ed

Discover and explore new career pathways:

- get ready to explore new occupations,
- learn some of the myths of career choice,
- discover your career potential,
- generate a list of potential career options,
- make realistic career goals, and
- make concrete plans to follow through on your occupational decisions.



Are you ready?

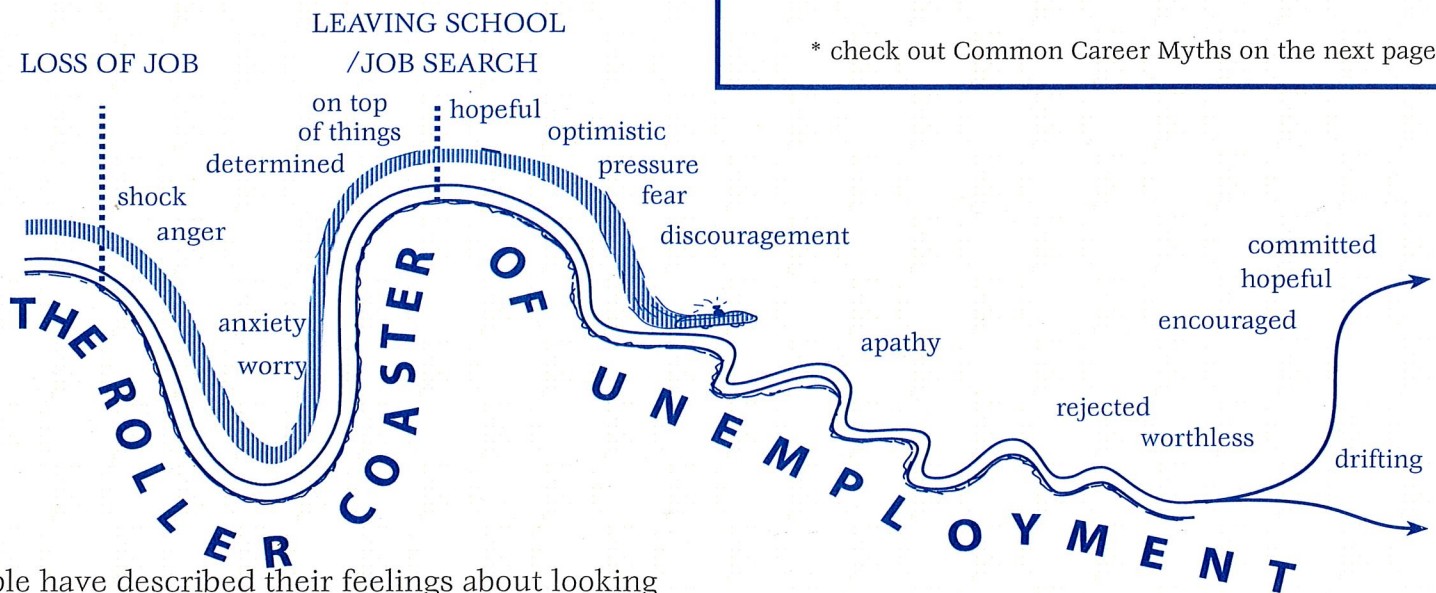
As you start looking for new career pathways, start by sorting out your feelings and thoughts about career exploration and job search.

- Have you ever looked for work or thought about looking for work? What is it like for you to look for work? How do you feel when you think about it?
- What do you feel like when you can't find a job for a long time?
- Circle the words below on the roller coaster of unemployment that fit with the feelings you have had.
- Do you feel like you are now on the roller coaster of unemployment described before. If so, mark an "X" where you think you are now.

DO YOU AGREE? with these common beliefs

1. You must be very careful about making a job choice, because you will likely have this job for many years.
2. You can only be happy in life if you find the right job.
3. If you can find a job at a large, secure company, then you will be set for life.
4. People only look at your past jobs and education when they evaluate you.
5. There are short courses which set people up for great jobs.
6. There are no jobs out there.
7. Sending out hundreds of résumés is the way to begin your job search.
8. Employment counsellors can tell you exactly what you should be doing.
9. Career assessment and planning is something that can be done in one or two brief sessions.

* check out Common Career Myths on the next page



People have described their feelings about looking for work as an "emotional roller coaster." This roller coaster of emotions kept them off balance so that they felt out of control. If you have such feelings, don't worry; you're normal; most people have them.

The good news is that you can get off the roller coaster and take control of your career explorations that have proven to be effective in today's labour market.

COMMON CAREER "MYTH" TAKES

1. Lifelong employment is no longer common. Expect several moves in your working life.
2. Careers can't provide total life fulfillment; they are just one area among many where fulfillment can happen.
3. In the past, the right education often led to a job with a guaranteed future. This is no longer realistic. Look for the schooling and work which reflect who you are.
4. Don't "sell yourself short" by looking at your past experiences and future opportunities too narrowly. Evaluate them from all perspectives. Learn to make your strengths known to others.
5. There is no quick fix that will give you all you need for that well-paying job. Be realistic and be prepared to put time into career development.
6. Some may think that the work situation is hopeless, but people are still finding work as they try new approaches. Think positively and creatively.
7. Résumés are important; however, it is better to be focused: meet people, research options, and pursue the most promising opportunities.
8. Trust yourself! You are the best person to evaluate your options. **Counsellors cannot make decisions for you.** Consult a variety of sources.
9. To reach your dreams you will have to put in effort. There are no "free lunches".

CAREER PATHWAYS QT 2 Who are you?

MINE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For each accomplishment, ask yourself questions, such as:

What did you actually do? What made it successful?
 How did you do it? What happened after it?
 Why did you do it? What aspects of your life?
 Were others involved? In what way?
 What prepared you for this accomplishment?
 Can the personal characteristics you used in this accomplishment be transferred into any careers?

Don't be limited by thinking of yourself too narrowly (e.g. by a title, as only a "carpenter" or only a "secretary"). People who are satisfied and successful tend to have specific combinations of characteristics suited to their occupations. By identifying your unique characteristics (your "portfolio of marketable assets"), you will be able to see and evaluate possible career options that would suit you.

Accomplishments tell a lot about who you are.

What are some of your accomplishments, past experiences from different areas of your life (leisure, educational, volunteer or employment activities) in which you have done well? Write down several:

THE WHEEL

provides a framework for understanding your work assets. You can use it to generate career options, to organize information about these options, to evaluate these options and to establish career goals.

The Wheel presented here has the various factors divided into equal sections. Different people may give more emphasis to some factors. One person may consider skills to be very significant, while another might stress values. You may wish to construct a wheel which reflects your unique situation.

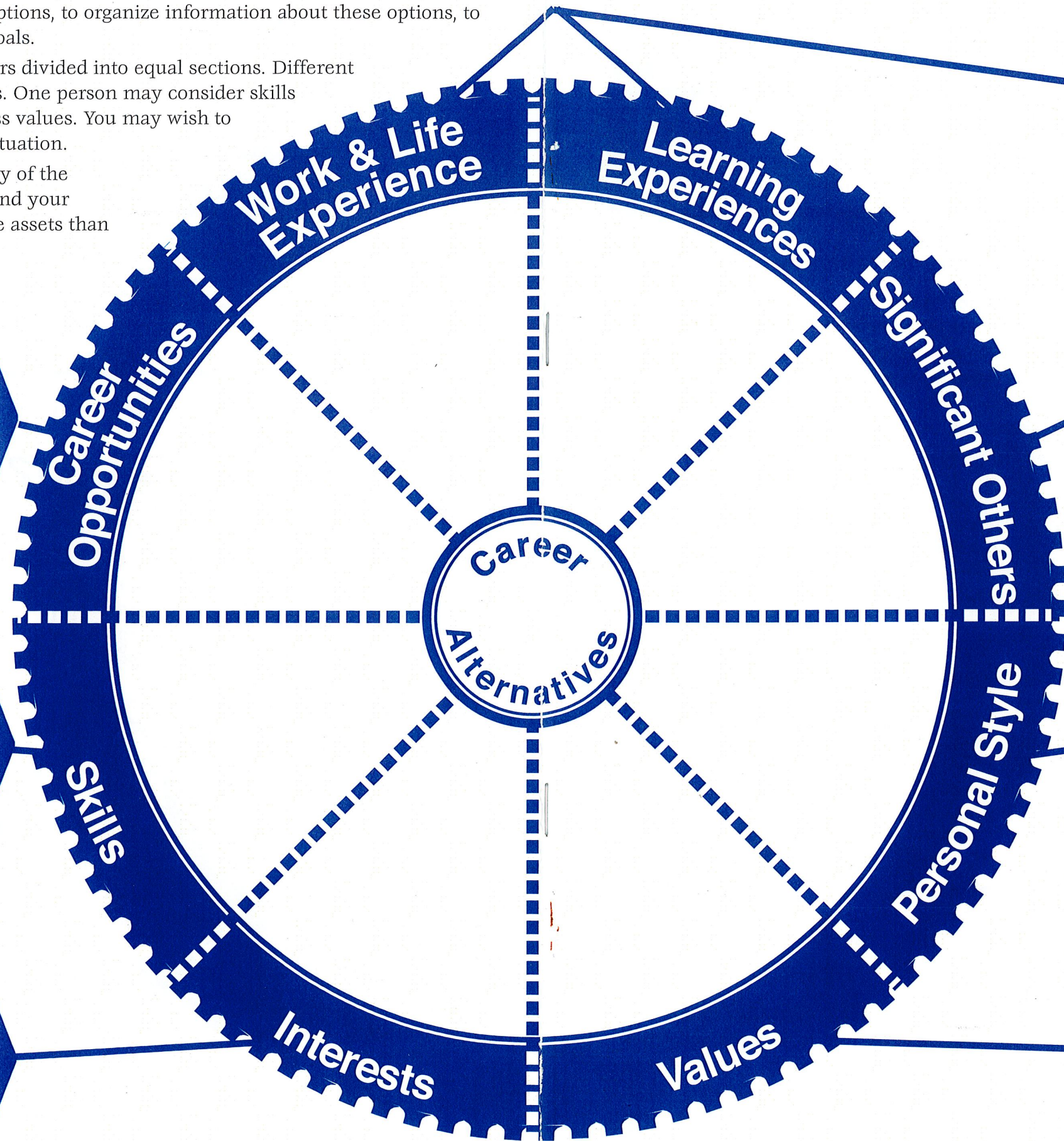
Fill in each section of the wheel with a summary of the information you have gathered about yourself and your situation. Do you find that you have many more assets than you previously thought?

The labour market has undergone some significant changes since the mid 80's, so you may need to change your career goals and the methods you use to market yourself.

Career Opportunities refer to those learning and career possibilities that are available to you.

"Skills" are learned abilities to do something well. You can use them in many different work and life situations. Think through your past experiences and accomplishments. Write down the verbs (e.g. teach, type, sell, ...) which describe what you do well. Don't be modest; most people underestimate the number of skills they actually have.

Interests refer to what you like or dislike. (e.g. types of people you want to work with, working conditions, rewards, future possibilities). Examine all of your life not just your previous work: non-work activities (volunteer work, homemaking, leisure activities), schooling, and "ideal dream jobs". Write down your top interests.



Explore all your past work/leisure and learning experiences; in addition to learning at school or full-time jobs, look at any volunteer work, housekeeping, rearing children, part-time jobs, hobbies, sports, etc. Look at them for patterns. Did certain skills, interests, values or personal characteristics come up again and again? Have they changed over the years?

Significant others are the people who play or have played a significant role in your life (e.g. family, friends, co-workers or employers). They know you well and influence your life in some way. They can give you the insight and support you need during career exploration and job search. Who are the important people in your life? What insights do they have for you?

Your personal style describes how you go about doing things (e.g., are you punctual, enthusiastic, patient, energetic, sincere?) Reflect again upon your experiences and accomplishments; think about how you do things. Write down the personal characteristics which helped you succeed in the past.

Values refer to beliefs and feelings which guide a person's actions. Ask yourself what is really important to you and what you really want in a career or a job (e.g. family, money, success, serving others).

10 THINGS I WANT IN MY NEXT JOB:

Review your findings from the various sections of the wheel and identify the ten things which you consider to be the most important for your career exploration.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

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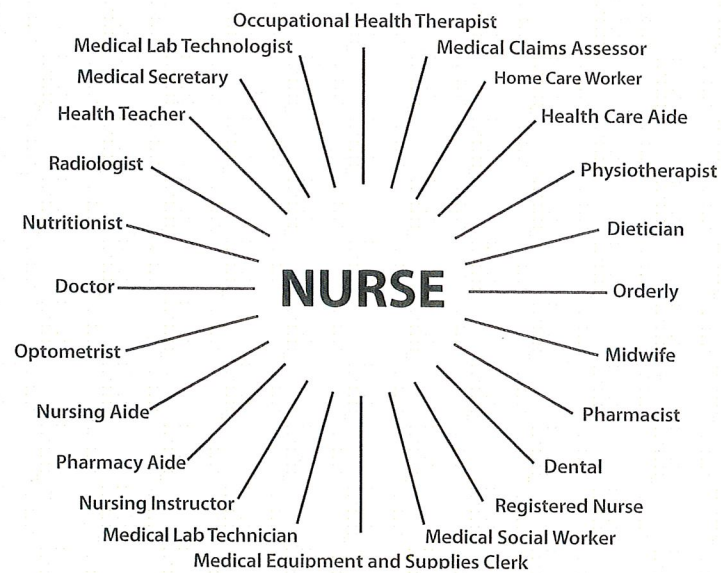
What can you do?

Who you are points to what you can do. The Wheel shows you that you have many more assets than you previously realized. You likely have many more possible career options than you think as well.

1. Generate as many career options as possible

Review your own wheel. Make a list of all your potential career options. There are many ways to find possible career options. For example, through talking to people, through career books at a local library, or through formal vocational testing.

One way to generate an explosion of new options is to brainstorm on all jobs related to a particular occupation; one job can point you to many other jobs, one of which may be the right one for you.



3. Select a few careers to focus on

Review all you know about the various career options you have found.

Compare what you have found out about these career options with the information on your wheel. Narrow down your list of possible options to the top three you would like to target at this time. List them in the activity box at the bottom of the next page.

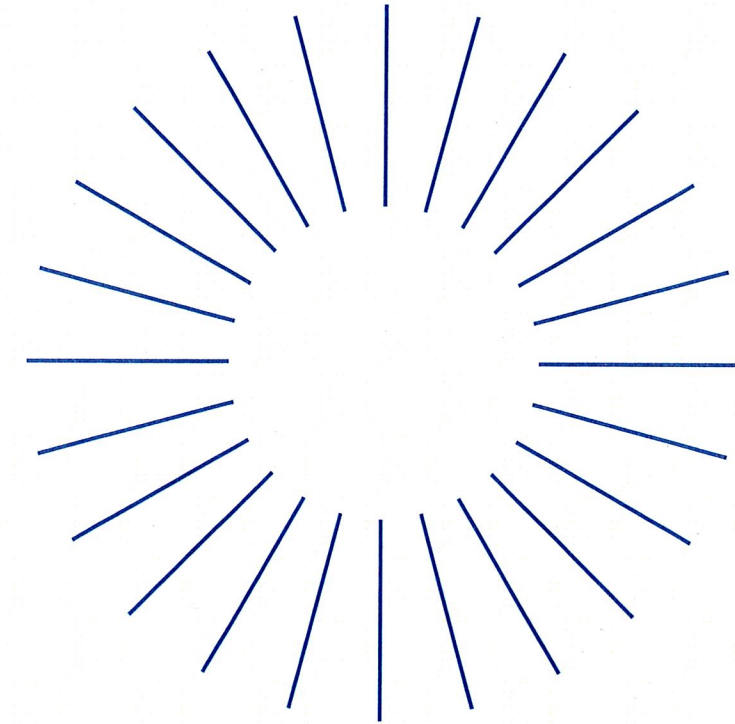
2. Find out all you can about these options

Get into the labour market. Gather current information... about your career options. Build a network of contacts, people who have important information or the power to make hiring decisions.

Where can you find information about the careers you are considering? Try books and files in local libraries, the yellow pages, career centres, employment counsellors, and people who have done the job.

CAREER EXPLOSION

Using the career option "nurse" as an example, write the career you would like most at this time in the centre. Then around it write all the jobs which are related to it. As necessary, repeat with your other top choices. You may find it helpful to do this with someone else who can help you brainstorm.



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What careers should you go after?

What do you do with all you found so far (your marketable assets, the 10 things you want in a job, your career options, what you have learned about these options)? You use it to help you choose the best career to look for at this time.

List below your top three options in order of preference and then note their advantages and disadvantages. Discuss what you have written with a counsellor, friend or family member.

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Option #1:		
Option #2:		
Option #3:		

What to do now?

Imagine that you have reached your career goal. Take time to look ahead into the future. Picture in your mind that everything has worked out for you and you have become satisfied and successful in this career. How would you describe this potential future scene?

Now look back at the things that happened to make your dream come true. List the steps that you need to take to reach your goal. Be realistic and concrete. Write the date or time period when you will take each step. Finally, expand what you will do as your next step.

My Career Goal

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Step 6:

BEATING BARRIERS

As you think steps toward a career, you will probably also think of problems which might get in the way.

Obstacles are a fact of life. They can be overcome. Learn how to overcome them.

1. identify the problems
2. imagine possible solutions
3. choose the solutions that seem best for you
4. take action
5. evaluate the results

THE NEXT STEP

My career goal at this time is

1. What specifically do I need to do now?
2. What can I do as a first step?
3. When will I take this first step? (Set a date and start immediately if at all possible).
4. What roadblocks might lie ahead?
5. How will I handle these roadblocks?

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