

TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of placing clients into a job. It has become an intricate art of helping clients navigate workplace complexities and interweaving that closely with an individual's beliefs, values and principles. As a career professional, you are tasked with the all-important role of helping one find meaning and fulfilment in their job. You are instrumental in their search for a purpose-driven life; for their TRUE NORTH.

HYBRID APPROACH OF BLENDED LEARNING!



We are pleased to announce that with effect from 1 April 2021, all the courses offered under WSG's Career Development Framework will be delivered in the form of blended learning. Besides the e-learning content and the classroom training, there will be two webinars for participants to check in with the trainers on their e-learning progress. The learning will continue to be supplemented by self-check exercises with answers in the Learner's Guide.

DURATION COMPARISON	Current (Facilitated Training) Before 1 April 2021	New (Blended Learning) 1 April 2021 onward
Career Advisory Programme (CAP)	3 Days of training	1 Day training + e-learning
Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)	15 Days of training	8 Days of training + e-learning
Career Supervision Programme (CSP)	–	3 Days of training + e-learning
Entry Requirement	Unchanged	Unchanged
Learning Outcome	Unchanged	Unchanged
Eligible for Credential?	Yes	Yes

FROM THE CASE CHEST

Having taken four years off to guide her son during his O-levels and help her daughter adjust to Primary 1, Janice was set to return to the workforce. However, she was not prepared for the unprecedented changes in the socio-economic landscape wrought by COVID-19.

Janice, formerly a Program Manager at an institute of higher learning (IHL), had an attractive offer rescinded with the sudden advent of the pandemic. Overnight, Janice was one of many jobseekers left bereft of opportunities as the world came to a standstill.

As Singapore was adjusting to COVID-19 during phase 2, Janice reached out to Workforce Singapore (WSG) for help and was assigned to MAXIMUS, one of four Career Centres under the Career Matching Program. Raphael, her personal Career Consultant, was on hand to help her identify the challenges and navigate the new normal.

Firstly, being absent from the "market" for some time, Janice needed guidance and direction. She did not plan out her job goals and was unsure of latest hiring trends.

IN THE PIPELINE

Career Advisory Programme (CAP)

May Intake: 20 May | 27 May 2021
(Application closes: 7 Apr | 14 Apr 2021)

Jun Intake: 24 Jun 2021
(Application closes: 12 May 2021)

Jul Intake: 29 Jul 2021
(Application closes: 16 Jun 2021)

Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)

Jul Intake: 19 Jul – 14 Sep 2021
(Application closes: 10 May 2021)

Sep Intake: 6 Sep – 1 Nov 2021
(Application closes: 16 Jul 2021)

Career Supervision Programme (CSP)

Jun Intake: 21 – 23 Jun 2021
(Application closes: 28 Apr 2021)

Career Advisory Programme Assessment Pathway (CAP AOP)

Aug Intake: 6 Aug 2021
(Application closes: 30 Jun 2021)

Career Facilitation Programme Assessment Pathway (CFP AOP)

Jul Intake: 23 Jul 2021
(Application closes: 28 Jun 2021)

Secondly, her resume was overly broad and failed to give a concise snapshot of her knowledge, experience, and skillset to the employer.

Her resume gave a detailed account of what she had done, not what she could do, if given an opportunity.

Thirdly, her penchant for taking on new challenges and wear multiple hats had unfortunately left Janice with a big problem. She had held appointments ranging across Business Development, Project Management, Relationship and Event Management with each constituting a short period of time. This afforded her breadth but robbed her body of work of depth. Janice had a distinct disadvantage and was often overlooked vis-à-vis other candidates with a more focused body of work.

Together, Raphael and Janice started by discussing and defining her job goals. They had to meet her needs while remaining attainable and realistic. The onset of COVID19 did lead to a tumble in the number of jobs and forced everyone to reconsider their priorities.

Next, Raphael coached Janice on the latest hiring trends. Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), Zoom interviews and SG United Skills Programmes were the new buzzwords.

To give her resume a makeover, Janice took part in a bite-sized MAXIMUS workshop where the resident trainer, Azizah Ishak, taught participants how to craft a more compelling narrative to convince employers and ATS alike of what they can offer.

Less than two weeks into the program, Raphael brought something to Janice's attention. A world renowned Institute of Higher Learning, an ongoing MAXIMUS partner, was looking for a Fundraising Manager. MAXIMUS often partnered with a comprehensive network of appreciative employers to match them with their job-ready talents.

Given her lack of experience, Janice was skeptical if she was suitable for the role. Raphael explained how her diverse skillset was surprisingly a good fit. The role called for a keen eye to recognize opportunities, organizational skills in managing budgets and schedules, abilities in building strong partnerships and experience in organizing large-scale events.

For three months, Raphael guided Janice through the interviewing process and was always on hand with words of encouragement and targeted advice. Three interviews and a written assessment later, Janice had secured the job through a successful demonstration of her abilities!



Contributed by **Raphael See**
Career Consultant
MAXIMUS

CASE CONCEPTUALISATIONS: THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

A good case conceptualisation should effectively link a client's presenting problem to a treatment plan as well as provide the basis for tailoring treatment to clients' needs and expectations.

Case conceptualisation can also provide a tangible marker of a trainee's capacity to link or integrate theory and practice. Unfortunately, family therapy has been notably silent about case conceptualisations and either of these links, despite the fact that case conceptualisation is probably indispensable when health issues impact couples or family dynamics.

This article discusses these considerations, and describes pattern analysis, a clinically useful strategy for case conceptualisation and sequencing treatment for individuals, couples, and families and applies it to the impact of health issues on family dynamics.



CASE CONCEPTUALISATION: DIAGNOSTIC, CLINICAL, AND TREATMENT FORMULATIONS

Essentially, a case conceptualisation consists of three components: a diagnostic formulation, a clinical formulation, and a treatment formulation (Sperry, Blackwell, Gudeman, & Faulkner, 1992)

- 1) A diagnostic formulation is a descriptive statement about the nature and severity of the individual's psychological presentation. They are descriptive, phenomenological, and cross-sectional in nature and answer the "What happened?" question.
- 2) A clinical formulation is more explanatory and longitudinal in nature and attempts to offer a rationale for the development and maintenance of symptoms and dysfunctional life patterns. It articulates and integrates the intrapsychic, interpersonal, and systemic dynamics to provide a clinically meaningful explanation of the client's pattern (i.e., the predictable style of thinking, feeling, acting, and coping in stressful circumstances) and a statement of the causality of their behaviour.
- 3) A treatment formulation is derived from a diagnostic and clinical formulation and serves as an explicit blueprint governing treatment interventions. Informed by both the answers to the "What happened?" and the "Why did it happen?" questions, the answer to the "What can be done about it and how?" question is the treatment formulation. A well-articulated treatment formulation provides treatment goals, a treatment plan, treatment interventions, and predictions about the treatment course and its outcomes.

CASE CONCEPTUALISATION AS A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

The task of synthesizing disparate pieces of data into a meaningful and clinically useful case conceptualisation is one that often seems beyond the capacity of many beginning counsellors and therapists.

Although it is true that individuals with a talent for analytic thinking and synthesis tend to approach the case conceptualisation process with ease, ability, while necessary, is not sufficient. Training in case conceptualisation is essential.

Case conceptualisation, particularly clinical formulation, is the requisite skill for effective treatment planning (Eells & Lombart, 2003). This skill can only be acquired through didactic instruction, supervision, and continued practice. If training programs fail to provide opportunities for learning to conceptualise cases, and if faculty do not teach and model effective case conceptualisation, trainees are less likely to develop effective treatment plans and interventions.

The end result is that even though they might achieve some positive treatment outcomes with some clients, these outcomes will not be as great, nor will as many clients profit from their therapeutic encounters with such trainees and therapists. Excellence in teaching case conceptualisation is a major challenge for training programs.

Trainees who have developed some competency in case conceptualisation have developed one of the most valuable clinical competencies necessary for effective counselling practice (Falvey, 2001). In addition, they demonstrate the capacity to integrate theory and practice tangibly, which is the most elusive of all programmatic goals in graduate counselling training.



PATTERN ANALYSIS AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CASE CONCEPTUALISATION

Pattern analysis, including its intervention planning and sequencing strategies, provides a critical “missing link” between theory and practice. Pattern is described as the predictable and consistent style or manner of thinking, feeling, acting, coping, and defending self in stressful and non-stressful circumstances (Sperry et al., 1992).

Pattern analysis is the process of examining the interrelationship among four elements or factors including relational response factors.

- Precipitant - The triggers or stressors that activate the pattern.
- Presentation - The client's characteristic response to precipitants. The type and severity of symptoms, history, course of illness, diagnosis, and individual, relational, and systemic behaviours including collusion, coalitions, communications, and level of well-being.
- Perpetuants - Processes by which a client's pattern is reinforced and confirmed by both the client and the client environment.
- Predisposition - All the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and systemic factors, including attachment style and trauma, that render a client vulnerable to maladaptive functioning.



CONCLUDING NOTE

This article has been a reflection on the most elusive of all training goals of a graduate counselling program: integrating theory and practice. It made the case that case conceptualisation is a tangible marker of a trainee's capacity to integrate theory and practice. More specifically, it focused on a theoretical framework, pattern analysis, that can provide trainees and therapists a strategy for the case conceptualisation treatment planning process.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Is your case conceptualisation effective in linking the client's presenting problem to a treatment plan? Do you also provide the basis for tailoring treatment to clients' needs and expectations?

SOURCE: Sperry, L. (2005). *Case Conceptualizations: The Missing Link Between Theory and Practice*. *The Family Journal*, 13(1), 71–76.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480704270104>

FURTHER READINGS



Case
Conceptualizations:
The Missing Link
Between Theory
and Practice

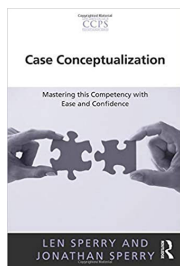


Case
Conceptualization:
Key to Highly
Effective
Counselling



Clinical Thinking
Skills Diagnosis, Case
Conceptualization, and
Treatment Planning

3 Case Conceptualisation Books for Further Reading



CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION: MASTERING THIS COMPETENCY WITH EASE AND CONFIDENCE

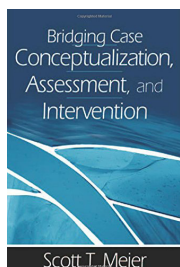
This book is available exclusively for WSG CDF credential holders to borrow online. Details will be shared with the credential holders soon.

Author: Len Sperry, Jon Sperry

This book presents an integrative model for conceptualising cases, dispels common myths about case conceptualisation, and provides straightforward guidelines and strategies for mastering this essential competency.

Five detailed clinical case studies are referred to throughout the book, and exercises are presented at the end of the last five chapters to help readers in deriving Cognitive-Behavioural, Dynamic, Solution-Focused, Biopsychosocial, and Adlerian case conceptualisations from an integrative assessment. It also address cultural sensitivity and offer guidelines for developing cultural conceptualisations and selecting culturally-sensitive treatments.

All techniques are easy to understand and use, ensuring that readers will master this competency and feel confident applying it to difficult cases.



BRIDGING CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION, ASSESSMENT, AND INTERVENTION

Author: Scott T. Meier

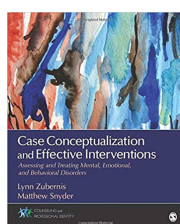
This book presents a new approach to the integration of science and practice in clinical work. It systematically connects case conceptualisation, assessment, and analysis of intervention effects. This integrative approach differs from traditional methods of teaching counselling in its emphasis on the inclusion of assessment data in the intervention process.

This innovative, transtheoretical volume examines

- Key elements of conceptualisation, assessment, and analysis
- The role of structured feedback in the clinical process
- Outcome elements for multiple and selected problems
- Assessment methods and psychometric principles
- Graphical, qualitative, and quantitative analytic techniques
- Numerous case studies
- Possible future directions for science-practice efforts.

The book provides an effective method for thinking about, organizing, and focusing on the key elements of counselling processes and outcomes. By integrating case conceptualisation and assessment data into intervention decisions, students and clinicians will understand when and why counselling is ineffective and have a basis for adjusting treatment to improve clinical outcomes.

With its emphasis on concepts and procedure, the book is intended as a manual for students in psychology, psychiatry, social work, or counselling and practising psychotherapists, psychiatrists, or counsellors.



CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS: ASSESSING AND TREATING MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

Author: Lynn Zubernis, Matthew J. Snyder

With fully integrated DSM-5 criteria and current CACREP standards, the book examines case conceptualisation and effective treatments across the most common disorders encountered in counselling.

The comprehensive approach helps readers develop their professional identities as well as their case conceptualisation and intervention skills. Each chapter blends current theory and research with case illustrations and guided practice exercises to anchor the material in real-world application.

Using an innovative new Temporal/Contextual (T/C) Model, the book provides an easy-to-apply and practical framework for developing accurate and effective case conceptualisations and treatment plans. Case Conceptualisation and Effective Interventions is part of the SAGE Counselling and Professional Identity Series, which targets specific competencies identified by CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs).

TELL US YOUR STORY



WSG is looking for interesting case studies from career professionals showcasing useful learning points, career development practices, etc. that fellow professionals too can adopt in the course of their practice. Your story will also go a long way in encouraging the career professionals community in their journey of providing career advisory to their clients.

If you are a career professional and wish to share your story, please visit our website for details on how you can contribute:

bit.ly/case_study_contribution

We look forward to your valued contributions!

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

As part of WSG's effort to improve and better contribute to the career development community, we continuously seek feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the e-newsletter and explore areas of improvement.

We seek your help to share your views by participating in our short survey. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated!

Do the survey here:
go.gov.sg/true-north-survey



SCAN HERE



Brought to you by:
Career Practitioners Division (CPD)
Careers Connect Group