HOW TO MAKE A CAREER CHOICE!

Since it’s difficult to research every existing career when you are undecided about a career goal, the following process is designed to narrow down the choices to those that fit your interests, values, and capabilities.

Stage 1: Discover Your Natural Inclinations

Determine your interests, values, abilities, achievements, work motivations, etc. using various exercises.

- Take career inventories online (e.g., FOCUS 2) or administered by MCCC Career Coaches.
- Analyze your achievements or examples of times when you felt particularly competent.
- Look for recurring “life themes” (e.g., are you always designing things, volunteering to help others, etc.).
- Consider how you spend your free time, as well as your “career fantasies.”

Stage 2: Develop a List of Potential Careers

At the same time, start listing careers which sound appealing to you without regard for practical considerations (your abilities, required education, salary, etc.) As you learn more about yourself, continue to expand the list by:

- Adding jobs suggested in your completed career exploration exercises.
- Getting others (who know you well) to make suggestions. Keep in mind their motivations, though (parents may want you to have job security, friends may recognize and want you to use your natural talents).
- Looking through want ads, library career resources, or the MCCC Career Services website.

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Stage 3: Become Practical and Narrow Your Selections
(When your list has grown, become practical and delete some careers based on:
  o Your abilities (e.g., it’s difficult to become an engineer without advanced math skills).
  o Need for advanced degrees you are unwilling or unable to obtain (e.g., a Ph.D. is normally required to teach at a university).
  o Need for geographical moves (e.g., New York or LA are key sites for acting careers) or odd hours (e.g., retail management may require evening and/or weekend work).

Substitute related careers more in line with your abilities, family responsibilities, etc. Use the online Occupational Outlook handbook (Dept. of Labor) or other resources to generate additional career alternatives if necessary.

When the list is sufficiently narrowed, interview people who actually do the work you might want to do. Try volunteering in your field of interest. Ask someone if you may Shadow them while they do a typical day’s work. You can also take a college course in a topic of interest (e.g., accounting).

Stage 4: Make a Choice and Develop a Plan
Make your final choice by weighing and considering the pros and cons of each career possibility, and develop a plan to achieve your goal. A Career Coach can be a big help here, too.

To get help with this process, make an appointment with a member of the Career Services Team.