# 1 HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR CAREER AND ORGANISE YOUR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

Graduating from a counselling or psychotherapy training is a significant achievement. The nature of knowledge, skills and competencies may vary between the professions and professional bodies which confer formal registration but whatever the training body, graduation represents an official endorsement that an individual is appropriately qualified to offer therapeutic services to the public, and that these services have the potential to facilitate constructive change. However, as Schön (1987) observed, it is doubtful whether any professional training can create a curriculum that is capable of addressing the complex world of practice in any definitive or enduring sense.

A similar dilemma has been identified in relation to continuing professional development (CPD). As Guest (2000) notes, it was once possible to obtain an initial qualification and be reasonably confident about keeping well-informed. Attending courses and conferences and reading journals was deemed to be sufficient to ensure that one's knowledge remained up to date (Lane, 1991). However, this is no longer the case. Today's rapidly evolving professional, social and economic climate and the increased emphasis on CPD as a requirement for on-going registration means that we need to think increasingly about embedding our professional development within a specific learning journey and career development plan.

In this chapter, we offer the reader some hints and guidance on how to approach career planning and CPD. We start by offering a definition of career development which provides a backdrop to the discussion that follows. We then consider career development at three separate but inter-related levels: the individual, the organisational and the societal levels. Finally, we identify some general themes which we see as essential to effective career planning.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CAREER' DEVELOPMENT? TOWARDS A HOLISTIC DEFINITION

There are currently many ways of providing a service as a counsellor or psychotherapist. We see this diversity as a strength of the therapy professions, leading to what Lane and Corrie (2006) describe as a rich tapestry of creative and informed models of practice that can benefit an increasingly wide range of clients.

However, in the context of career planning and CPD, such diversity poses a number of challenges. For example, there are now a multitude of career paths we might carve out for ourselves stemming from the vast range of settings in which therapists offer their services. These include (but are by no means restricted to) the public sector, the voluntary sector, private sector services, private practice, academic and training institutions and commercial organisations. Other therapists will have portfolio or peripatetic careers rather than seeing themselves embedded within any particular organisational context. Therapists may also play out a variety of roles at work – working as a generic or specialist practitioner, researcher, supervisor, trainer or manager – and will combine these with other life roles such as parenting, and positions in the family and community.

How then, can we define career development in a way that takes account of this diversity and that empowers us to make informed and rewarding choices in this era of change?

Bezanson (2003) has defined career development as 'the lifelong process of managing learning and work in order to live and work with purpose and create a quality life' (p.9). We find this a useful and appealing definition for several reasons. First, by viewing career development as a lifelong process, we can reflect upon how our career concerns may change over time (e.g. according to our 'life stage' or 'career stage'). Second, this definition invites us to reflect on our careers from a personal and subjective perspective (e.g. in relation to our interests, values and personal meanings/interpretations) and also in relation to the contexts in which we work and live (e.g. organisations and families). Third, this definition views us as actively managing and constructing our own careers and learning, and managing transitions between (and within) the two. This is very much in accordance with today's emphasis on sustaining employability and employment through lifelong learning and career-management skills, and with this chapter's commensurate focus on managing one's own career and CPD.

We further believe that Bezanson's definition encourages us to take an 'holistic' view of our career development, which may resonate with many

therapists and counsellors. That is, it encourages us to reflect on our career development in a way that integrates work life and non-work life, and in ways that make these feel more 'purposeful, energized and connected' (Bezanson, 2003, p.10).

Taking account of Bezanson's notion of career development as a lifelong and holistic process, we have found it relevant and useful to explore career planning and CPD at three interacting levels:

1. **The individual level** – our interests, values, 'career anchors' and life/career stage.
2. **The organisational level** – the institutions which shape how we practice and confer on-going registration, the organisations in which we are embedded and the CPD requirements that might be specified by both.
3. **The societal level** – national and global influences such as trends in employability, social and cultural diversity and advances in knowledge and technology.

Each of these levels of influence is considered in turn.

## THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL: WHO AM I?

When considering career planning and CPD, an essential starting point is having a good idea of one's motivations, interests and career/life-stage needs, as well as one's strengths and limitations. There are several career theories that may serve as useful frameworks for reflecting on these areas.

Holland's theory of vocational/occupational choices is based on the assumption that we are most likely to succeed and be satisfied in work that is congruent with our interests. According to Holland, people, careers and work environments can be characterised by six 'types', or combinations of types. The assumption is that 'congruence of person and job environment leads to job satisfaction, stability of career path, and achievement. Conversely, in-congruence (i.e. person and job are mismatched) leads to dissatisfaction, instability of career path, and low performance' (Holland, 1996; p.397).

For those readers who are interested in reflecting on their personality type and how this may relate to preferred occupational activities and environments, we have some summarised the six personality types below (adapted from Holland, 1996):

1. **Realistic:** sees self as practical and having manual and mechanical skills. Values material rewards for tangible accomplishments. Prefers activities and occupations involving manipulation of machines, tools and things.

2. **Investigative:** sees self as analytical, intelligent, sceptical and academically talented. Values development or acquisition of knowledge. Prefers activities and occupations involving exploration, and understanding and prediction or control of natural and social phenomena.
3. **Artistic:** sees self as innovative and intellectual. Values creative expression of ideas, emotions and sentiments. Prefers activities and occupations involving literary, musical or artistic activities.
4. **Social:** sees self as empathic, patient and having interpersonal skills. Values fostering the welfare of others and social service. Prefers activities and occupations involving helping, teaching, treating, counselling or serving others through interpersonal interaction.
5. **Enterprising:** sees self as having sales and persuasive ability. Values material accomplishment and social status. Prefers activities and occupations that involve persuading, manipulating or directing others.
6. **Conventional:** sees self as having technical skills in business or production. Values material or financial accomplishment and power in social, business or political arenas. Prefers activities and occupations that involve establishing or maintaining orderly routines, and the application of standards.

Although some interests and values may be obvious to us from the outset of our careers, others evolve or only become apparent to us after a period of time. Schein (1980) proposes that as a person's career and life unfolds, there is a gradual clarification of self-image around needs and motives; and talents and values. He conceptualises this as a process of finding a 'career anchor', where the anchor is that set of needs, values, and talents which the person is least willing to give up if forced to make a choice.

Schein (1990) has identified eight career anchors: technical/functional competence; general managerial competence; autonomy/independence; security/stability; entrepreneurial creativity; service/dedication to a cause; pure challenge and lifestyle integration. Being able to identify one's anchor is helpful in that it enables us to plan and choose wisely when choices have to be made. To guide you in this process, we have provided descriptions of each anchor below (adapted from Schein, 1990). You may feel that several or even all of these anchors are important, but which one would you prioritise if you *had* to choose?

1. **Technical/functional competence**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to apply, and continue to develop, skills and knowledge in your area of expertise. You derive your sense of identity from the exercise of your skills and are most happy when your work permits you to be challenged in your specialist area.

2. **General managerial competence**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to climb to a level high enough in an organisation to enable you to integrate others' efforts across functions and to be responsible for the output of a particular unit of the organisation.

3. **Autonomy/independence**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to define your own work in your own way. If you are in an organisation, you want to remain in positions that allow you flexibility regarding when and how to work. You may even seek to have a business of your own in order to achieve a sense of autonomy.

4. **Security/stability**: what you would not give up is employment security or tenure in a job or organisation. Your main concern is to achieve a sense of having succeeded so that you can relax. The anchor also shows up in concern for financial security (such as pensions).

5. **Entrepreneurial creativity**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to create an organisation on your own initiative, built on your own abilities and your willingness to take risks and to overcome obstacles.

6. **Service/dedication to a cause**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to pursue work that achieves something of value, such as making the world a better place, solving environmental problems or helping others.

7. **Pure challenge**: what you would not give up is the opportunity to work on solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, to win over tough opponents, or to overcome difficult obstacles.

8. **Lifestyle integration**: what you would not give up is a situation that permits you to balance your personal needs, your family needs, and the requirements of your career. You need a career situation that provides enough flexibility to achieve such integration.

In thinking about lifelong career development, several writers (e.g. Erikson, 1959; Levinson *et al*., 1978; Super, 1957) have also found it useful to think about various stages of development. For example, Super (1957) suggested that individuals pass through four stages of vocational development (exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement), involving different developmental tasks at each stage. Life-stage theories can help us to reflect on where we are in our career development, and suggest appropriate stage-related goals and activities. As Super (1980) has also noted, at any given age or life stage our career development needs to be examined in the context of the multiple roles we might occupy (e.g. worker, spouse, parent or homemaker).

Although these are just three of many possible frameworks drawn from the career theory literature they enable us to identify questions relevant to the individual level that can enhance effective career planning. In particular,

questions arising from a consideration of these models might include the following:

- When have I felt most and least fulfilled at work? What does this tell me about my personality/interests, values and career anchors?
- How might I need to take account of these interests and career anchors in the future (for example, through reading, courses, supervision, networks of colleagues, job/role/project changes and non-work roles and hobbies)?
- What is my current stage of career development? What are the primary goals, activities and learning targets for me, given my career and life stage?
- What opportunities does my career stage present for me to learn and to prepare for the future (e.g. the next stage)?
- What are the various life and career roles I occupy? Which ones have greatest psychological value? How might I blend these roles successfully?
- What types of activity and context would best support the development and expression of my interests and abilities in the present and future? How can I create congruent opportunities?

## THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL: WHAT IS MY PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT?

Being aware of our abilities, interests and values is not in itself sufficient for effective career and professional development. Professional practice is embedded in a range of contexts which influence, or may even determine, how our careers unfold. As such, these contexts represent a network of potential opportunities and constraints that we must negotiate in order to arrive at a specific career development plan. So what are some of the opportunities and constraints at this level?

As noted earlier, therapists work in a diverse range of contexts, even so, our collective behaviours are shaped, and largely determined, by the professional associations that we belong to, and have been trained by. In this sense, we would view our profession/occupation as our primary organisation/institution (also see Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989). Similarly, Kanter (1989) has noted that professional careers 'are not automatically based in a single organisation' (p. 511), and are mainly defined by skill, monopolisation of socially valued knowledge and reputation, with the latter being largely conferred by fellow professionals. These perspectives could lead us to consider career development as a series of projects (e.g. professional opportunities that involve growth in

transferable knowledge, skills and competencies). Such projects may occur within, or across, organisational or occupational contexts. Furthermore, the professional community is an important organising factor in this development (e.g. we need to comply with certain CPD and conduct standards to maintain and enhance our reputation).

We could conceptualise a project-based career as a 'boundaryless career' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). A boundaryless career is defined as 'a sequence of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting' (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1996, p.116). Building on the idea of boundaryless careers, it has been suggested (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994; Arthur *et al.*, 1995) that there are three interdependent types of competencies that individuals need to develop to navigate employment settings:

- **Knowing why**: knowing one's overall work motivation, beliefs and values, and the nature and extent of one's identification with a given employment context.
- **Knowing how**: knowing the skills and knowledge one brings to employment settings. The ability to use employment contexts to apply and enlarge the skills and knowledge one has to offer.
- **Knowing whom**: knowing career relevant networks of interpersonal relationships (e.g. clients, other professionals, previous employers, mentors, family and friends); maintaining and investing in these networks to provide career support, promote reputation and learning, and to generate business.

The above analysis – thinking about why, how and whom – can encourage us to think about features of ourselves (such as those discussed in the 'individual level' section) in relation to our context, and the things we can do to emphasise learning and mobility/employability. This context is primarily an occupational context, and so we have chosen to devote the remainder of this section to consideration of how our 'knowing' activities may serve as a basis for the attainment of important professional credentials.

Within our professional bodies, there is increasing emphasis on compulsory re-accreditation and compulsory CPD. For example, The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy has an annual review of accreditation in which evidence of CPD must be presented, alongside a development plan established with the support of a CPD advisor. The British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, which reaccredits its therapists every five years, similarly links re-accreditation to evidence of ongoing CPD.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) (2004) has also developed an explicit policy on CPD which makes this mandatory for professional

psychologists who wish to retain their chartered status. The policy states that CPD must cover at least some aspect of each of the following:

1. developing, implementing and maintaining personal and professional standards and ethical practice;
2. applying psychological and related methods, concepts, models and knowledge derived from reproducible research findings;
3. researching and developing new and existing psychological methods, models, theories and instruments;
4. communicating psychological knowledge, principles, methods and policy requirements.

For a long time, the therapy field has emphasised the importance of a commitment to CPD in the field of personal, as well as professional, development. This reflects a broader philosophical commitment to intersubjective experience and the use of self-knowledge as part of the shared enterprise with the client. The BPS' CPD policy has now adopted a similar approach, requiring psychologists to demonstrate that they have identified personal development needs, planned appropriate development activities to meet these identified needs and reflected upon learning and its application to practice. However, the specific forms that such personal development might usefully and appropriately take are yet to be substantively explored (see Lane and Corrie, 2006, for a more detailed exploration of this issue).

In considering CPD more broadly, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The first is that we are witnessing a growing trend towards viewing CPD as an activity that is individually-tailored, according to the stage of professional development and working context of an individual. The second is that as learners, we are all different, possibly as a function of our individual learning styles, vocational interests and career anchors as well as the multitude of work settings in which we might find ourselves. A third conclusion is that we are all lifelong learners. The guidelines of our professional bodies highlight that we can never fully 'arrive' at mastery but spend out careers working towards it. CPD becomes a means of maintaining growth in our thinking and practice, providing opportunities for transformational rather than accumulative learning. A fourth implication we shall mention briefly here, is how professional development might also be supported through work-based learning as a means of improving and critically challenging practice.

As a rapidly developing discipline, work-based learning is not about the location of learning but rather about forms of learning specific to practice and how they may be developed and applied. Experience from organisations such as the National Centre for Work Based Learning

Partnerships (Middlesex University) and the Professional Development Foundation has led to the development of ways in which practitioners can share learning, and research about learning, from analysis of their practice. Tools that have added value to a consideration of how to tailor CPD to the needs of both the organisation and the individual include:

1. A 'learning review' – including a personal knowledge and skills audit in order to establish what knowledge and skills the practitioner has acquired to be applied to future learning.
2. Programme planning – to create learning that aligns service focus, client and personal need, stakeholder commitment and access to related structural capital.
3. Work-based research – addressing the forms of analysis applicable to the issues that the practitioner faces in order to capture, use and enhance the capital of the organisation.

A work-based learning model of CPD and career development represents a commitment to address the needs of the organisation and the clients the organisation aims to serve. It moves closer to the idea of CPD as part of developing a knowledge culture framework of systems, values and behaviours (Lane and Rajan, 2005). It also ensures that the work setting can become a context for lifelong and transformational learning.

Recognising how our learning is embedded within specific contexts enables us to become more aware of and think creatively around the opportunities and dilemmas to which different working contexts give rise. One critical question might be the extent to which our individual interests and values are congruent with the organisations in which we find ourselves. For example, if our 'career anchor' is security/stability but the organisation in which we work emphasises entrepreneurial creativity, how can we resolve this incongruence? How much room do we have to negotiate and what is the point at which we seek an alternative context in which to offer our services?

Thus, when considering the impact of organisational factors, important questions become:

• How might I obtain information about job opportunities? How might I negotiate a mutually agreeable contract with the organisation, taking into my account my development needs, career stage and life circumstances?
• How might I best use and expand my professional/organisational networks to realise my goals? Who are the most important people within and outside my organisational network (e.g. support systems, mentors, managers)?

- How do the different contexts in which I am embedded enable and constrain my choices around career development and CPD?
- What would a personal knowledge and skills audit reveal about what I bring to my work setting/s and how can I ensure I apply this knowledge to my future learning?
- What forms of CPD are most important for my current learning journey? How do these 'fit' with my own personality type and anchor groups?
- What do I want the outcome of my CPD to be? What do I hope to achieve for myself, my clients and my organisational setting/s? How will I take this new learning back into my work setting/s?

## THE SOCIETAL LEVEL: WHAT IS MY GLOBAL CONTEXT?

Current thinking around career development and the guidelines laid down by our professional bodies and employing organisations are clearly also occurring in a specific context. We can negotiate this context more effectively if we appreciate some of the issues at a national and global level that are shaping organisational decisions about who we are and what we offer.

One obvious (and contentious) example of change in global thinking about therapeutic practice is the emphasis on 'empirically-supported interventions' stemming from growing pressures to provide cost-effective services. This is readily apparent within the National Health Service in the UK, in which evidence, quality control and standards have been publicly endorsed (see for example, Department of Health, 1996, 1997; 2001). However, there can be little doubt that these values are shared in other countries, by other sectors (including industry, education and private practice) as well as shaping the expectations of those who use our services (Corrie, 2003).

Thus, in some service settings, certain types of therapy service may be favoured over others, with potentially significant implications for our identities, activities and roles. For example, we may need to consider how we respond when our service offer appears to be different from apparently neat prescriptions pertaining to the 'treatment of choice'. Should we prioritise such approaches in our career and professional development? When and why should we surrender our own values to 'what works best'? How do we justify our choices?

In an increasingly diverse society, therapists are also expected to be able to work in effective and empowering ways with clients whose abilities and racial, cultural and sexual identities differ radically from our own (see for example, Disability Discrimination Act, 1995). However,

as noted by Corrie and Supple (2004), the ability to respond effectively to diversity requires skills in innovation which are rarely prioritised in basic therapy trainings. Moreover, such flexibility of approach does not necessarily fit comfortably with the growing trend to offer 'empirically-supported' interventions. We are, therefore, presented with the potential paradox of having to combine knowledge of 'best practice' with an inventive approach that takes account of the needs of individual clients.

In addition to these therapy-specific dilemmas, is the need to negotiate a professional climate that favours employability over employment. Major changes to the workplace in the UK in the 1990s (see Lane and Corrie, 2006) heralded the end of the job-for-life culture and a move towards inter-industry and transferable skills. As a result, career development is now less organised around progressing through an organisational hierarchy and more oriented towards individuals taking control of their own careers, including their own 'marketability'.

For many therapists, taking control of their employability, whether in the context of an organisational, peripatetic or portfolio career, may seem very familiar. However, when reviewed in the light of the rapid pace of technological change, we can see many potential challenges. An obvious example of this is the multitude of therapists now listed, or advertising on, the internet. The internet will likely become a major source of self-referring clients, and if we do not advertise in this competitive market, we run the danger of losing out. Moreover, these technological developments may also become a source of clients in their own right (e.g. those seeking help with 'internet addiction').

Reports in journal articles already hint at the ways in which therapists are engaging with technology (see for example, Kaltenthaler, Parry and Beverley's (2004) review of computerised cognitive behaviour therapy). In addition, there is now a *Journal of Technology in Counseling* (http://jtc.colstate.edu). A brief look through its table of contents reveals many ways in which therapists can, and may be required to, keep up with technological developments to advance their practice. Examples include counselling over the internet (by email), computer assisted instruction in counsellor education, virtual reality therapy for treatment of phobias and computer based supervision. These developments also highlight the prospect of new career opportunities, such as the potential to develop a 'global practice', offering therapy services, training or supervision to an international clientele through the gateway of technology.

We must, therefore, develop a means of ensuring that our knowledge remains current, even when information is proliferating at an exponential rate. We must also consider the kinds of innovations in knowledge and technology that we might be facing in the next decade and how we

can maintain an approach to learning that will enable us to acquire new skills with optimum effectiveness. In a sense, then, we need to develop our own individual approach to 'knowledge management'. Questions that can guide an informed approach to career planning in this context include the following:

- In the context of my particular specialty, what national and global factors are likely to shape my clients' and referrers' expectations of what I can provide? What opportunities and constraints might this create for me, now and in the future?
- What is my own personal 'knowledge management' strategy? What methods will I use to update my knowledge and technology skills (e.g. courses, private study, reading, supervision, seminars, IT support and building networks with like-minded practitioners)?
- How will I establish the effectiveness of my efforts to keep my learning up to date?
- How do I manage the tension that comes from having to be inventive in order to meet the needs of individual clients and needing to be responsive to changing ideas about what the literature suggests 'works best'? How will I explain my choices to referrers and clients?
- What do I offer that is unique? How do I 'market' myself and my services?
- Based on current trends in my sphere of practice, what changes do I anticipate in the next ten years? How can I prepare for these (e.g. what knowledge and technology might I need? What types of personal learning and self-promotion will enable me to respond to this need)?

## BUILDING ON MY CHOICES: HOW WILL I GET THERE?

What emerges from the themes discussed so far is the need for every individual to take charge of their own learning, professional development needs and career planning. This may seem neither strange nor unreasonable to many therapists. Indeed, it could be argued that with the emphasis our professions places on developing self-awareness and reflective practice alongside our technical expertise, we are well-placed to respond to these challenges.

However, what is perhaps different is that we are no longer dealing with relatively straightforward questions about a commitment to best practice but rather how – in a climate in which we are exposed to a proliferation of social groups, knowledge and technology – we must make explicit how we are taking control of our careers. Now more than ever, skills must be revised

and knowledge updated, with evidence of this becoming a prerequisite for on-going registration by our professional bodies.

So how can you integrate individual, organisational and more global influences into a coherent strategy for professional development and career planning?

If you engaged with the questions identified in the previous sections, you may well have an emerging sense of where your career might be headed. For example, your values and interests may lead you to suspect that an enterprising career will be the most personally rewarding career trajectory, offering high prestige roles and ways that enable you to develop your natural leadership and strong interpersonal skills. Alternatively, your career anchor may highlight a desire for autonomy and independence. The sense of reward that comes from selecting projects that stimulate your interest and the freedom to establish your own working patterns will perhaps point you towards seeking out networks of likeminded colleagues, rather than organisational embeddedness. And of course, at least some of these influences will be filtered through a range of organisational and global influences as well as priorities stemming from career and life stage issues.

Given that the choices facing us are likely to be complex and multifactorial, we see career planning and CPD essentially as an on-going process rather than a specific task. Managing this process will require self-awareness, a reflective approach to enquiry and an openness to changing priorities and needs that will enable new opportunities to be embraced and old ones to be discarded.

As a starting point, therefore, we would advise you to conduct a regular skills and knowledge audit, to help you identify the learning journey you have undertaken so far and its implications for your subsequent learning and career choices. We would see a consideration of influences at the individual, organisational and societal levels as essential to this type of review, as well as the opportunity to share your reflections with others (whether managers, supervisors, mentors or colleagues).

To guide your reflections in the first instance, however, we offer the following questions as a useful aid for supporting the development of your individual approach to career planning and CPD (see Box 1.1).

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

In today's rapidly evolving world it can no longer be assumed that the knowledge gained in an initial training is sufficient to guarantee effective practice in the longer-term. However, given the diversity of settings in which therapists now practice, there can be no single, correct approach to career planning or CPD. In this chapter we have, therefore, avoided any attempt to

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### BOX 1.1  REFLECTIVE CAREER PLANNING: SOME SUGGESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING

- Looking at my career to date, which aspects of my work have I enjoyed most and least? What might this tell me about my career aspirations?
- Do I have a robust understanding of my values/priorities and interests at this time? Do I know what my strengths and limits are? How can I accommodate these in my career planning and CPD?
- What skills do I currently lack that are central to the development of my practice and career? How would my needs be most effectively met (e.g. through acquiring new knowledge, new technology, a different type of supervision, creating new networks of colleagues, attending a course/conference, or reading)?
- How will I monitor the impact of my learning on an on-going basis to ensure that it meets my needs, as well as the needs of my clients and the requirements of my work settings?
- Can my needs be met through the organisational contexts in which I work, or will I have to look outside or even leave?
- How do the organisations and institutions in which I am embedded impact on me, my work and my choices around CPD? In what ways do they facilitate and constrain my choices? How might I capitalise on the opportunities and manage the constraints?
- What is my long-term vision of my career? To what extent might this be accomplished within the current organisations in which I am working or will a more radical change be required?
- What skills might I need to get there? What current opportunities exist and what new avenues might I need to explore to achieve my goals?

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offer prescriptive advice, favouring facilitative questions which we believe might encourage greater reflection and shared discussion around what is arguably, a neglected issue in the therapy literature.

It is still the case that many choices around career planning and CPD come down to individual preference with relatively few substantive guidelines on how to approach this task. Although we applaud the opportunities that this creates for flexibility and creativity, we believe that therapists need substantive frameworks that can guide their thinking and planning to ensure that their choices are systematic, informed and empowering for themselves, their clients and their employers.

This chapter has identified several frameworks that can help you think about the direction in which your learning and career could be headed, and why. These frameworks are clearly neither exhaustive nor definitive. We hope, however, that they might open up avenues for exploration, discussion and creative planning that you will find a useful companion on your journey as a lifelong learner.

As Rose (2001) suggests, we each have the ability to create our own futures, even if this is not always in circumstances of our own choosing. We hope that, through drawing on the issues discussed in this chapter, you might be empowered to develop a personalised career plan that reflects a broader vision of how you want to offer your services to the clients you seek to serve.

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