

THE CAREER COUNSELLOR

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CAMCRY Outcomes: Broadening The Scope In Evaluation

As CAMCRY projects near their final stages of completion, it is clear that innovation is extending beyond program development to other aspects of counselling. The close scrutiny which has been part of the formative evaluation of all CAMCRY programs has led many researchers and counsellors to discover new ways of thinking about the sorts of factors that legitimately can be considered part of outcome evaluation. Many of these insights connect the counselling intervention with socio-economic or psychological factors. Some examples of these factors are described below. They represent the success stories that often go unnoticed, or are dismissed as "only testimonials", but which in the final analysis may provide more convincing evidence of client change than more traditional data.

In reading these illustrations, it is especially important to remember that about half of the CAMCRY projects have been field tested with youth in high risk situations: those destined to drop out of school and/or continue the cycle of social assistance, unemployment, or incarceration. This makes client change even more noteworthy.

For example, students in over a dozen separate field tests have reported that participation in one of the CAMCRY programs has given them increased satisfaction with school, pride in self, self-acceptance and personal growth. Participants report experiencing their school environment as more supportive, increased peer support, and an increased capacity to see school as relevant to their lives. In a similar vein, teachers report increased attendance on days when the various programs were being offered. Not surprisingly, CAMCRY career development programs appear to influence school retention in general.

The effects have not been confined to students and schools. In some projects students began sharing their

career development activities with their parents, and the parents began accessing the field test materials at the school to assist in their own career planning. This sort of parent involvement is likely to have a positive impact on school retention. Given the fact that unemployment rates decrease by 25 - 30% when youth complete high school and that each year of high school completed increases earning power substantially, factors that promote school retention have a direct economic payoff to society.

*"This is the first time in my life
that I have felt proud of myself."*

(Youth Participant - CAMCRY Project)

There have also been several other outcomes affecting direct socio-economic results. For example, in approximately 10 field tests involving street kids, young offenders, and social assistance recipients, the number of participants finding jobs, returning to school, or beginning a training program has ranged from 35 to 100%,

with most programs providing results in the 75% range. One participant who found employment was the first person in three generations of her family to find work. The reduced time on unemployment insurance alone makes these programs very cost effective.

The results from programs aimed at young offenders provide similar impressive results. One program reports more than a 50% job placement rate within 6 months of release from detention, and no recidivism for participants. There is also evidence of change in outlook on the part of participants. One person stated "when people are passive about their problems the problems don't go away and when they are aggressive they just create more problems for themselves. Approaching a problem assertively helps you deal with it." Another participant removed his tattoos, because it would increase his chances of getting and keeping a job.

To make the economic link more explicit, it would be easy to compare the length of time taken to find

CAMCRY Outcomes (con't)

employment for program participants and non-participants and translate that into additional dollars earned. For repeat offenders the comparison would be even more dramatic, for it would compare dollars earned versus cost to society of reincarceration. Similar calculations could be made for street kids or social assistance recipients and the resultant savings in unemployment insurance and welfare payments.

Some novel outcomes pertinent to career exploration are being discovered in CAMCRY projects. In the computer-driven exploration programs, it has been possible to track the number of different career paths explored by participants. Observations suggest that one way to document the cost effectiveness of career exploration programs is to calculate cost of the initiative, track number of participants and number of fields explored, and produce a unit cost per exploration.

The main reason for describing the above examples has been to suggest that counsellors expand the boundaries of what constitutes legitimate outcome data in career counselling. Even though the sorts of observations reported above might not typically be part of the evaluation of a career intervention, they provide valuable information on program effectiveness. This is not to say that traditional ways of evaluating counselling are not important, but to emphasize that there is a far broader range of outcomes that, in the past, may have been dismissed as being too fuzzy or too difficult to quantify to be used as outcome measures.

Many CAMCRY researchers are finding that some of these outcomes are very powerful in illustrating the effectiveness of the interventions. Collectively, when we look at such data across all CAMCRY projects, we get a rich flavour of the impact of the CAMCRY initiative as a whole. When combined with the traditional measure of effectiveness, we have extensive data on the effectiveness of counselling and compelling evidence of the difference that counselling can make in the lives of clients. As we expand the limits attached to counselling evaluation and give ourselves permission to entertain a wider range of criteria and potential effects with which to evaluate counselling outcomes, then we will begin to develop more precise and more efficient ways of documenting change in these areas.

Bryan Hiebert, President
Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation

The Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation is grateful to Employment and Immigration Canada for its support

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

- **B.C. School Counsellors Association, "Enhancing Esteem"** - Merville, British Columbia, April 23-24, 1993. Contact: Olive Scott, (604) 337-5180
- **Canadian Association for Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment (CAVEWA)** - Vancouver, British Columbia, April 23-24, 1993. Contact: Karen Nielson, (604) 279-9799
- **Canadian Association for Adult Education, "Citizenship Training"** - Montreal, Quebec, May 26-29, 1993. Contact: Steve Gruber, (514) 547-2010
- **Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)** - St. Catharines, Ontario, June 13-16, 1993. Contact: David Jordan, (416) 688-5550
- **Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE)** - Sudbury, Ontario, June 21-22, 1993. Contact: Monica Collins, (705) 673-6569

JOURNALS TO NOTE

The most recent special issue of the Canadian Journal of Counselling, October, 1992, Vol.26:4 is devoted exclusively to discussing various projects being developed under the Creation and Mobilization of Counselling Resources for Youth (CAMCRY) Program. Results of field tests are included from projects at the University of Calgary, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Université de Sherbrooke, Université Laval, and Queen's University.

Similarly, the Guidance and Counselling Journal, January, 1993, Vol.8:3 is dedicated solely to highlighting various CAMCRY projects. This issue was edited by Dave Studd, member of the CAMCRY National Advisory Committee on Career Counselling in collaboration with guest editor, Bryan Hiebert, President of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation.

ABOUT YOU: THE NATIONAL TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

In preparation for the development of a training program for counsellors everywhere who are helping Canadians with career preparation and transition, the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation recently conducted a National Training and Professional Development Survey. Sent to over 2,000 French and English speaking counsellors across the country, the survey invited respondents to provide information about matters such as: their primary populations served, their work settings, the types of training they have received, the types of training they need and would like to pursue, and the time available to them for training. The CAMCRY Advisory Committee collaborated with the Foundation by providing mailing lists of their memberships so that the survey could reach as broad a sample of counsellors as possible.

In total, 500 surveys were returned to the Foundation, giving a very high response rate of 24%. Results generally confirmed that counsellors across Canada are eager to continue training and professional development. Over 58% of counsellors surveyed have completed some continuing education/training (course, seminar or workshop) in the past 24 months. Counsellors were given a list of training opportunities and asked to indicate which they would be interested in taking. Over 94% of counsellors surveyed checked off at least one area of interest. Over 44% of counsellors indicated an ability to participate in training during the work week after normal office hours (i.e. after 5:00 pm), while 42% indicated a willingness to participate in training on weekends.

Eighty-five percent of counsellors who responded to the survey expressed a readiness to learn through new, innovative delivery methods. Of those surveyed, 66% had never participated in a training course delivered by distance. When asked, however, if they would be willing to participate in such a course, of the 66% who had never been involved in distance programs, 54% said Yes.

The main client group served by counsellors surveyed were Secondary School Youth - General Population (19.6%), closely followed by Adults/Young Adults Unemployed or in Transition (19.2%). Counsellors surveyed work mainly in Elementary or Secondary Schools (26.8%) and Community Agencies (23.8%). When asked how much time is spent in career counselling, the largest group (25.6%) of counsellors said they spend 90% - 100% of their time doing career

counselling; the second largest group (13.6%), 70% - 79% of their time. In addition, 84.4% of counsellors surveyed belong to at least one professional association.

The survey also invited counsellors to rate general counsellor training they have already received on a scale from 1 = Not At All Adequate to 6 = Very Adequate. Many indicated that they had not received training in the following areas: Cross Cultural Counselling, Program Development, Information Systems and Supervised Counselling Placement/Practicum. When asked to indicate their ratings for career counsellor training using the same scale, many counsellors indicated that training in several different areas was not received. Training opportunities rated most frequently by counsellors as Not Received were:

- Human Resources/Personnel Management (37.8%)
- Career Counselling with Special Populations (35%)
- Employment Counselling (28.8%)
- Program Design and Implementation (28.4%).

In addition to requesting information about counsellor training and work environments, we asked counsellors to indicate if the prospect of certification by a national organization would increase their interests in pursuing training in career counselling. Over 77% said Yes.

Finally, general comments from some of the counsellors we surveyed help to underscore the importance of continuing counsellor training. Counsellors indicated that opportunities in certain areas of general and career counsellor training were just not available when they were taking their training.

From this brief overview, you can see that the survey has generated extensive, and very important, information. Upon full analysis of the data, we will have a greater understanding of what is important to counsellors in terms of their work environments, their availability to take training, and the type of training they would find most useful. These results will be used to help tailor the development of a continuing education program in career counselling to meet the training needs of Canadian counsellors in this discipline.

Liz Hong-Farrell,
Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation

WHAT IS QUALITY SERVICE?

How do agencies and practitioners ensure that they are delivering quality career counselling services? How do clients and funders know what career counselling services are reasonable to expect and where to find high quality services? How can career counsellors themselves engage in career development while meeting increased demands for their services?

To help address these questions, CGCF has commissioned Dr. Dorothy Riddle, President of Service-Growth Consultants to prepare a manual titled "QUALITY CAREER COUNSELLING - A POLICY WORKBOOK". The workbook is a resource tool designed to assist organizations and/or individuals to examine quality service issues in relation to the delivery of career services. Quality of service is directly linked to how well the service provided meets the client expectations, and managing clients expectations is one of the areas which users of the workbook are guided to examine.

The workbook focuses on two major issues: policies for the delivery of career services, and policies for staff career development. The discussions for the first issue are organized around eight key discussion topics, with thought-provoking questions and a practical structure to help guide the formulation of an appropriate policy position. Discussions begin with a quick assessment of present policies (if they exist) and then provide an opportunity to address the issue in more detail if necessary. Each discussion can be completed in less than one hour, usually less than 30 minutes. Topics covered include: mandate statements, clients and their needs, the range of services provided, standards for service delivery, client access to information on services available, standards for professional conduct, management practices and accountability mechanisms.

Discussions around policies for staff career development reflect four topic areas: strategic human resource planning, career development planning for supervisors, career development planning for counsellors, and career development planning for support staff. Again, users are first given an opportunity to assess the adequacy of their present system and then provided with tools for enhancing their professional development planning process.

Policies, standards, and professional development planning are essential components of quality service. "Policy" is however often seen as intimidating and policy formulation left to senior management. This workbook helps to demystify the policy formulation process and provides a mechanism for staff at all levels of an organization to be involved in articulating standards

that contribute to enhancing service quality for clients. The first portion of the workbook has been field-tested in nine different jurisdictions by members of the CAMCRY National Advisory Committee. The final workbook is expected to be ready by April, 1993 following additional field testing. The reviews received to date make us confident in predicting that this will become a valued and much used resource for career counselling service planners, practitioners, supervisors and managers.

Dorothy Riddle, President, Service Growth Consultants
Lynne Bezanson, Director, CAMCRY

CAMCRY TRANSITIONS

CAMCRY is now in its seventh year - four in the planning; three in the realization. When planning, the dominant role of CGCF was the pursuit of funds to support innovation. Once successful, the role changed to providing support and consultation to the 41 innovative research and development projects underway at educational institutions across Canada. Now, as the CAMCRY projects come to successful conclusion, the Foundation's role will change again: to promoting the publication, adoption and implementation of CAMCRY products.

Two current initiatives may be the harbingers of the future:

1. an agreement with Alberta Education to provide a continuing education program in career development for counsellors and teachers; and,
2. an arrangement with a consortium of 23 school boards in Eastern Ontario to train counsellors and teachers in selected CAMCRY projects, and as trainers to help others implement the methods.

These programs suggest that CGCF may become very active as a national career development training agency.

What about CAMCRY's continuing role in supporting research and development? As this issue of the Career Counsellor goes to press it appears that one of the greatest needs is career development methods and programs for middle-aged and older workers. This may well be the focus of the future.

TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE CAMCRY INITIATIVES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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