

Career visioning

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Purpose

This strategy creates a vision for what a client's future, particularly their career, may look like and identifies actions needed in the short, medium and long term to realize it.

Description

Taking control is an empowering state to be in. This exercise enables the client to take control of their career and make a plan for the future. It will prompt them to think about their ideal career future and from there they can identify short-, medium- and long-term goals.

Process

- 1 Create a template using a piece of A4 paper or bigger, turned so the longest edge is at the bottom. Divide the page into four by folding the page into half then half again. This will create four columns. Write the headings 'next year', '2 years', '5 years' and '10 years', one to each column, as shown in Figure 5.

Invite the client to put themselves in a relaxed state (for example, take a few deep breaths, sit comfortably, etc.) and imagine their life stretching out before them. Start by gathering personal information about their life in the future, for example where do they want to be living, and then add in career-related information. *Reassure them that*

Next year	2 years	5 years	10 years

Figure 5 Career visioning exercise

while you are going to be asking them questions about their future, they can choose what they write down and they can share with you only what they feel comfortable doing.

It is unlikely that all clients will be able to project out to 10 years for all or some of the visioning questions but encourage them to fill in what they can and invite them to keep adding to it over time. They may need to go away and do some additional thinking on some categories (for example how much income they want/need) but you can still complete the majority of the exercise.

2 Fill in their template using the following personal questions:

- How old will you be next year, in two years' time etc.?
- What will be your expected/hoped for relationship/

family status in the next year, two years' time, etc.? (e.g. children, preschool, married, divorced, etc.)

- What will be your expected/hoped for living status in a year's time, two years' time, etc.? (e.g. in the same accommodation; if not, what will it be)
- What will be your expected/hoped for location next year, in two years' time, etc.? (e.g. same area)
- What will be your expected/hoped for income next year, in two years' time, etc.?
- What physical shape do you want/hope to have next year, in two years' time, etc.?

3 Next, invite them to add career information to each of the defined categories. Example questions include the following (choose ones that will be most relevant to your client):

- What type of employment would you like to have next year, in two years' time, etc.? (full-time, part-time, consultancy)
- Would you like it to be the same or different from now? How will it change over the years?
- What type of company/industry would you like to be working for next year, in two years' time, etc.? Would you like it to be the same or different from now?
- What size of company would you like to be working in the next year, in two years' time, etc.?
- What type of work will you be doing next year, in two years' time, etc.?
- What level will you be working at next year, in two years' time, etc.? (e.g. manager, board member, advisor, etc.)
- What location would you like to be working from next year, in two years' time, etc.? Would you like it to be the same or different from now?
- What type of people would you like to be working with next year, in two years' time, etc.?
- How many jobs/roles do you think you will have had in the next year, in two years, etc.?
- What type of environment will you be working in next year, in two years' time, etc.? (e.g. office based, home worker, mobile)

- What hours will you be working next year, in two years' time, etc.?
 - What will you be known for at your work?
 - What skills will you be utilizing next year, in two years' time, etc.? (e.g. specific skills or more generally; existing skills or new skills, etc.)
 - What behaviours will you be demonstrating in the next year, in two years' time, etc. that will be most effective in helping you to achieve what you want?
 - What will you have achieved from a career next year, in two years' time, etc.?
 - What skills will you be developing in the next year, in two years' time, etc.?
- 4 Once completed, invite the client to reflect on what comes to mind when they review their career future – discuss, add, edit information, etc. Identify short-, medium- and long-term actions to help them achieve their career life stage aspirations. The client will feel empowered. They can be proactive in managing their career and create opportunities.

Pitfalls

A client may not want to or be able to think ahead to what they are going to do in the future, preferring instead to work with opportunities as they come up.

Bibliography

- Bergman Fortgang, L. (2005) *Take Yourself to the Top*, New York, NY: Tarcher-Penguin.
- Martin, C. (2001) *The Life Coaching Handbook: Everything You Need to Be an Effective Life Coach*, Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing.