

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO CAREER PLANNING!

This workbook is designed for and dedicated to all women who want to explore new job options. These days most people change their occupations several times during their lives.

There may be different reasons why you are thinking of a change now.

- You may have been in a job for a long time and, although you're good at it, you may be tired of it or feeling stale.
- Technological changes or job market changes may be eliminating the need for workers in your field.
- You may be facing a layoff and see this as an opportunity to take a new job direction.
- Perhaps you have experienced barriers to entering your field here in Canada and want to consider other options.
- You may have been working in the home for some time and would like or need to get back into the paid labour force and are unsure of what direction to take.
- Because of changes in your personal life, job satisfaction may be much more important to you now than in the past.

Whatever your reason for wanting a new direction, it's clear that you do. And that's where career planning comes in.

In career planning, the focus is on you. As women we are often so busy taking care of other people's needs that we may never ask, "What do I really want?"

Well, here is your chance to do so! Give yourself permission to focus on yourself. If you find satisfying work, it will benefit you and everyone around you, too.

Introduction

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THE EIGHT STEPS IN CAREER PLANNING

Section 1: Self-Assessment 1-1

You'll start with enjoyable exercises to help identify your:

- Skills
- Self-management Traits
- Work Style
- Areas of Knowledge
- Values
- Work Environment
- Level of Responsibility
- Income
- Interests

Section 2: Making Decisions 2-1

During the career planning process, you'll have to make many decisions. Improving the way you make choices will give you greater freedom and control over your life.

Section 3: The Labour Market 3-1

Learn what's happening in our economy, what to expect in the future and how to keep up with changes.

Section 4: Possible Occupations 4-1

Here you'll find useful sources to help you discover possible occupations, including some you may never have thought about.

Section 5: Researching Occupations 5-1

Learn how to do an information interview and other helpful ways of finding out about new careers.

Section 6: Choosing Your Career 6-1

Here you evaluate all the information you've collected, using a comparison chart to clarify your decision.

Section 7: Training and Education 7-1

If you need further training for your new career, this section identifies where it may be available. It also suggests how to finance it and how to deal with the challenge of going back to school.

Section 8: Action Planning 8-1

This last section shows how to develop a step-by-step action plan that will keep you on track as you work toward your new career goals.

Selected Resources 9-1

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

There are various ways of using this workbook. You can begin with Section 1 and work through the sections in order. Or, you can start from where you are at this point. For example, if you have already done a self-assessment elsewhere and want information on possible occupations, you should start at Section 4. Or you may have some ideas about which jobs interest you and need help researching them, in which case you should start with Section 5.

A section of Selected Resources is provided at the end of the workbook.

Although the sections are in order, each one is self-contained. Feel free to use the workbook in the way that best suits you. And remember — this book is for you. Don't worry about your neatness, spelling or grammar.

The Value of Working in a Group

This workbook is designed for women to use on their own. However, it's valuable to do career planning in a group with others who can provide support, ideas, insights, contacts and encouragement. The group can also provide a structure for getting the work done and can be helpful long after the actual process has finished, to keep you on track as you work towards your goals.

If you are not already part of a career planning group, you might consider joining an existing one or organizing one for women in your community. To find members, try contacting your local YWCA, community centre, library, women's organization, parent-teacher association or union for help. A companion group leader's guide, *Times Change: A Leader's Guide to Career Planning for Women*, is available from Times Change.

At the very least, choose several people in your life who will support and help you as you go through the process on your own.

You are about to start a fascinating journey of self-discovery. The process calls for time and concentration and may be stressful at times as you struggle with certain decisions. However, you will gain self-confidence as you recognize your strengths and find out how to use them in your work.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

We gain knowledge in many ways — we receive formal education through schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions but we also learn a great deal from our day to day life experiences. Informal learning takes place through activities related to paid work, household work, volunteer work, leisure activities and other exceptional life experiences.

Getting down on paper what we know can seem like a difficult task. When confronted with the task we may suddenly wonder what it is we really know! Yet each of us has a wealth of knowledge gained from a lifetime of learning and experiences. The intention of this exercise is to capture the range of things you know something about.

Exercise: Knowledge Web

To explore the wealth of knowledge you have, allow yourself to relax and keep an open mind while doing this exercise.

Start by focusing on one aspect of your life, for example, your leisure activities. Write this aspect at the centre of a blank piece of paper and draw a circle around it. Write as many activities as you can think of randomly on the page at some distance from the central circle. Create a web by extending a line from the central circle to each activity. (See an example on page 1-31.) Draw a circle around each of the activities. Make sure you write down all your activities.

Now, for each activity ask yourself, “What did I learn from doing this activity?” Think freely. Write whatever comes to your mind and draw a circle around it and connect it with a line to the activity. Stimulate and expand your thinking by asking, “What else did I learn?” Keep on asking this question till you have explored all the areas thoroughly. You will be surprised by the amount of knowledge you have acquired informally through different activities.

Repeat this with other aspects of your life, think about:

- Education
- Volunteer work
- Paid work
- Activities in the home
- Exceptional experiences

Remember to ask yourself:

- “What did I do?”
- “What did I learn?”

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Notes:

If you have a large piece of paper create as many webs as you can on the one piece. Otherwise, create separate webs on regular sized paper and tape the individual papers together to get a clear picture of all you know.

Sample Knowledge Web



SELF-ASSESSMENT

My Knowledge Web

Notes:

CHOOSING YOUR CAREER

Comparing Choices (continued)

What's most important in my next occupation?	Choice #1	Choice #2	Choice #3	Choice #4
People (continued)				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
My self-management traits:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
My work style:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
My favourite areas of knowledge:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
My life values:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
My work values:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

continued

CHOOSING YOUR CAREER

Notes:

Comparing Choices (continued)

What's most important in my next occupation?	Choice #1	Choice #2	Choice #3	Choice #4
My work environment:				
Preferred location				
1				
2				
Physical working conditions				
1				
2				
3				
Work hours				
1				
2				
3				
People: Clients				
1				
2				
3				
People: Co-workers				
1				
2				
3				
Income range: \$ _____ to \$ _____				
Level of responsibility:				
1				
2				
My interests:				
1				
2				
3				
My passions:				
1				
2				
3				
Education:				
Current level				
Further training needed				
Totals				

My chosen occupation:

Congratulations!