

Career construction with a gay client: a case study

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(Received 10 April 2013; accepted 6 November 2013)

This article reports on the value of career construction counselling (CCC) with a gay person. The participant was selected purposively, with the selection criteria calling for a mid-career woman who had sought career counselling. The intervention involved administration of the *Career Construction Interview (CCI)* and the creation of a life portrait. A case study design (working with a participant in a one-on-one research setting and incorporating a qualitative, interpretive paradigm) was implemented. The *CCI* (including the three early recollections technique) was administered to gather qualitative data, and Savickas' eight-step strategy was followed to complete the participant's life portrait. After the intervention, the participant demonstrated an enhanced sense of self as well as an increased sense of personal authorship. CCC can thus meet the career counselling needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, and, possibly, also of members of other minority groups.

Keywords: career construction counselling; gay; minority; narrativity; holding environment

Introduction

Any perceived bias towards or unfair treatment of people is bound to cause feelings of resentment, anger and frustration. Discrimination, in whatever form, negatively impacts a person's self-concept in the workplace and de-authorises employees as the authors of their life stories (Savickas, 2011a). Workers from minority groups in general and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) individuals are particularly vulnerable. Datti (2009) contends that the situation has changed somewhat in recent years with LGBT individuals becoming more visible and accepted; yet they still are required to deal with multiple unique challenges including isolation, rejection and an impaired sense of self (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2007).

Different lenses have been used in the past to look at ways in which the kind of discrimination outlined above can be dealt with. However, as far as I could establish, nothing has been written about the use of career construction theory (CCT) as a means of examining the idiosyncratic situation of LGBT individuals.

The central thesis of career construction, which lies at the heart of this article, is about authoring one's own career story. Career construction as a specific counselling approach is uniquely positioned to assist clients to feel empowered to author their own career and life stories. Seen from this perspective, the central goal of career construction is to enable

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