

## Session Summary 4.2

### UNIT 4 SESSION 2: CAREER COUNSELLING FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS WITHIN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS

#### 1. Goal of the session

The goal of the session is to instil an understanding, in future career professionals, which it is both economically necessary and socially important to be attentive to the **specific needs and potentials of particular groups facing disadvantage and/or discrimination** or held back by historic injustices. Students are also to familiarised themselves with the **challenges and opportunities in** addressing their situation within **organisational contexts**. Students will become aware of the importance of **professional attitudes** and self-reflection in working with members of those groups. They will be given the opportunity to explore these issues in set examples.

#### 2. Preparation

For this session students will have read one of the four assigned **readings** and looked at the group work task associated with them.

#### 3. Content

The session will start by recapitulating the main points of the previous session (with reference to homework and knowledge evaluation form). On this basis students will engage in a discussion about what **target groups** would need particular attention by human resource development and career counselling in organisations, what difficulties and opportunities they expect and how they anticipate their own roles.

In a lecture sequence, students will presented with an account of how theoretical foundations of career construction need to be extended by **an intersectional perspective**. This will, firstly, help them to grasp why experiences of discrimination and disadvantage on the base of various backgrounds such as health status, racial and ethnic identifications, age, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, impact on career opportunities and development needs. Having gained a perspective on how to more adequately account for the conditions under which career authorship is to be facilitated, they will, secondly, be offered suggestions how to ground their professional practice in such insight, both attending to collective conditions *and* individual aspirations, potentials and needs.

Motivations and legitimacy for a focus on disadvantaged groups will be discussed by presenting the perspective from societal goals as “**social justice case**” on the one hand and from the angle of economic performance as the “**business case**” on the other. The *practical* relevance in the work of the career profession of *both cases* in combination will be argued and emphasised, particular against the background of having to maintain legitimacy within an organisational context with multiple constituents.

The professional attitudes of **critical-reflective practice** and **attentive counselling** will be explained. These comprise, firstly, the awareness of and systematic reflection on one’s own position vis-à-vis the client, including an examination of one’s own membership in disadvantaged and/or privileged groups and how these may affect the professional working alliance. Secondly, students will see how such reflection and awareness also must lead to an attentive practice in which the setting, process and content of counselling is adapted to the client’s situation.

Equipped with these foundations and their respective readings, students will then work in groups of three to five to tackle a specific situation they may encounter in their professional practice. Examples are drawn to reflect issues concerning workers with few or no formal qualifications, workers from minority racial or ethnic backgrounds, workers with disabilities, and older workers. Students will be aware that these **examples** are only spotlights and by no means an exhaustive overview.

Reconvening in class, students will report on their task and their experience trying to solve it. Together with the lecturer, **specific needs and potential strategies** regarding the four example groups will be presented and discussed. Potential problems and suggested approaches will be reflected with particular attention to organisational settings. Emphasis will be laid on the fact that there are no off-the-rack solutions and each counselling issue will require a **highly individualised solutions** while being **attentive to collective situations and experiences**.

#### 4. Session conclusion

To close the session and to relate it to the preceding and following sessions, students will discuss what the needs of specific groups mean for the way career counselling and human resources management can and should interconnect, and what challenges and opportunities they would expect in applying the learnt content to the world of small and medium enterprises.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

---



This license lets you (or other party) share, remix, transform, and build upon this material non-commercially, as long as you credit the Connect! project partners and license your new creations under identical terms.