Group career coaching- a channel for challenging inequality.

Susan Meldrum, Programme Leader, PgDip Career Guidance and Development, Edinburgh Napier University

Group career coaching –
a channel for challenging inequality.

Current Focus

A Need for a Change of Focus?

What Can We Do?

How Can We Do It?

Examples?

Current Focus

- Focused predominately on 1-1 practice.

- Main purpose is to actively enable **individuals** to take charge of **own** career development.

- Building up of career management skills, career adaptability, career resilience, employability skills are key.

- Evidence of effectiveness (Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff 1998; Maguire and Killeen 2003; Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes 2008; Hughes and Gration 2009).

- Plus long term macro-economic benefits – productivity levels and economic growth (Hooley, 2014).

- So why change?

A need for a change of focus?

▸ Peoples' life chances are not equal and personal agency focus of 1-1 models fails to adequately address inequality of opportunity, multiple barriers and oppression which different social groups face (Hooley and Sultana, 2016; Watts,1996).

▸ So do 1-1 approaches unintentionally serve individuals to passively accept the status quo rather than empower groups to challenge and address power imbalances?

What Can We Do?

▶ Build up new evidence base?

▶ Change of policy?

▶ Maybe but what about re-constructing career guidance practice?

    ▶ E.g. set up frameworks to shift the focal point from 1-1 services to group or collective approaches?

The power of the group

- ▶ Peer support and collective learning.

- ▶ The building up of collective relationships and social bonds.

- ▶ Career practitioner can guide the groups towards challenging inequalities.

- ▶ Groups are able to take collective action rather than individual action towards change.

- ▶ In other words offering space for individuals to share inequalities with the rest of the group and the encouragement of the group to take collective responsibility to make decisions, raise issues and address change.
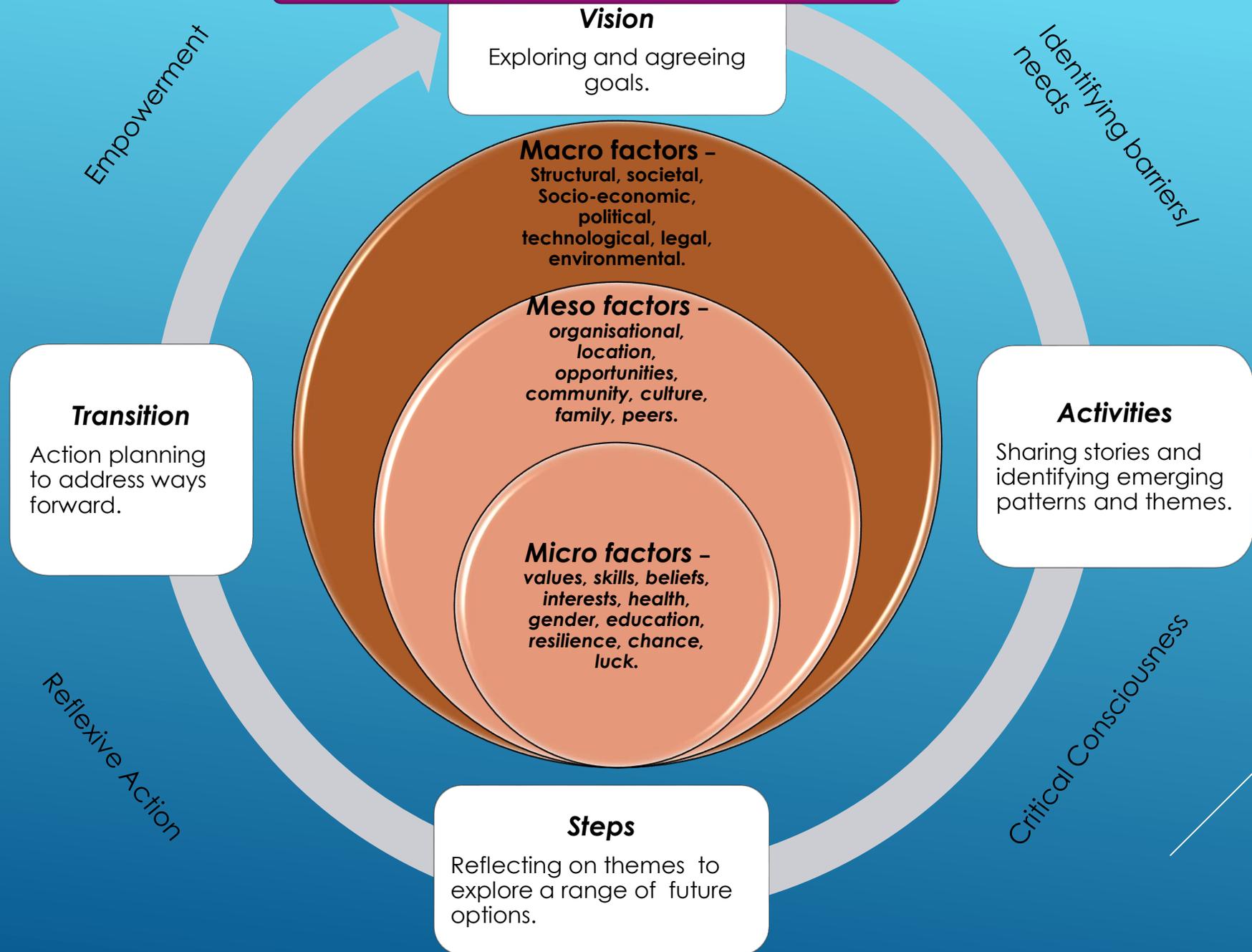
How Can We Do It?

▶ Collective Career Coaching Model (adapted from the GINA Approach, Meldrum, 2017).

Collective Career Coaching Model

Vision
Exploring and agreeing goals.

Macro factors –
Structural, societal, Socio-economic, political, technological, legal, environmental.

Meso factors –
organisational, location, opportunities, community, culture, family, peers.

Micro factors –
values, skills, beliefs, interests, health, gender, education, resilience, chance, luck.

Transition
Action planning to address ways forward.

Activities
Sharing stories and identifying emerging patterns and themes.

Steps
Reflecting on themes to explore a range of future options.

Empowerment

Identifying barriers/ needs

Reflexive Action

Critical Consciousness

Planning Group Coaching

➤ **Vision**   Why should it take place? Who is it for? What is the topic? Written pre-planned aim and learning outcomes for the session which can be re-negotiated at the start of session.

➤ **Activities** Plan group activities and feedback sessions with timings. Align activities clearly to the learning outcomes and goals for session.

➤ **Steps**   Plan group activities and feedback sessions with timings.   Align activities clearly to the learning outcomes and goals for session.

➤ **Transition**   Plan group feed back and joint action planning. Evaluate session ensuring feedback is aligned with activities and learning outcomes.

Delivering Group Coaching

- ➢ **Vision**   All group together to negotiate and agree joint goals for session. Explain broad purpose of session e.g. raise interest in STEM careers with a group of female pupils in school.

- ➢ **Activities** Smaller group activities with appointed facilitator for each group. Explore issues e.g. lack of interest in maths and physics at school, lack of awareness of career options, gender stereotyping in the workplace, inequalities in STEM professions, low number of females in STEM careers. Bring whole group back together to feedback.

- ➢ **Steps** Smaller group activities with appointed facilitator for each group to explore how issues can be addressed e.g. consider wider STEM subject choice, explore STEM career options, consider collective work experience opportunities, approach employers, take part in wider STEM awareness activities, source female STEM mentors, teach others about STEM options. Bring whole group back together for feedback.

- ➢ **Transition**   Small group activities to co-action plan. Whole group together to revisit goals, summarise and evaluate session.

Example
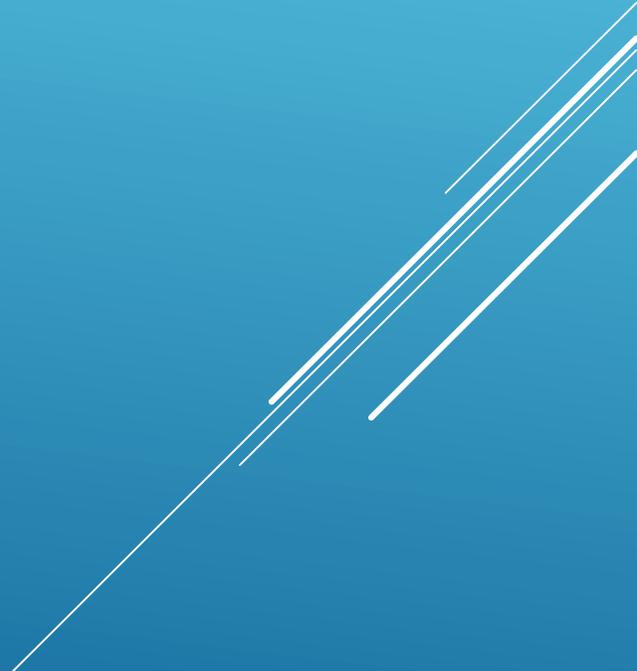
Questions?

References

Bimrose, J, Barnes, S.A. and Hughes, D (2008) *Adult career progression and advancement: a five year study of the effectiveness of guidance,* London: Warwick Institute for educational research, DfES

Hooley, T (2014) *The evidence base on lifelong guidance*, Jyvaskyla, Finland: European Lifelong guidance policy network.

Hooley, T. and Sultana, R.G. (2016) *Career Guidance for Social Justice*, Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 36: 2-11.

Hughes, D, Gration, G (2009) *Literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions,* Literature review (CfBT Education Trust), CfBT Education Trust, Reading, available at http://www.cfbt.com/en-GB/Research/Research-library/2009/r-evidence-and-impact-careers-and-guidance-related-interventions-2009

Maguire, M and Killeen, J (2003) *Outcomes from career information and guidance services*, Paris: OECD.

Meldrum, S (2017) Group Guidance: *Is It Time To Flock Together*, Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, Issue 38, pp 36-43.

Watts A.G. (1996) *Socio-political ideologies in guidance* in *Rethinking Careers Education and Guidance*, Watts, A. J; Law, B; Kidd, J., M; Hawthorn, R (eds), London, Routledge, Hill Education.

Whiston, S.C., Sexton, T.L and Lasoff, D.L (1998) *Career interventions outcomes: a replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane* (1988), Journal of counselling psychology 45 (2): 150-165