

## CAREERPRO CONFERENCE 2016

Intro to Emerging Career Development Theories & Models: Applying Career Development Theory  
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For as long as we can remember, we have been exposed to a wide array of career development theories and models, dating back to the early 1900s. From Maslow to Holland, Super and Krumboltz and onward, we can appreciate each theory for its evolution and fundamental uniqueness. Over the centuries, each of these theories has evolved by the changing times, labour market trends, and jobseeker needs. Career development theories have also evolved due to social, environmental, and economic factors, as well as demographics. You may even notice that theories have over time progressed from a developmental view to a more contextual, client-centered view.

### What is Career Development?

Career development theories serve as an important medium for making choices that lead to a purposeful and rewarding career path. Career development refers to the sequence of career-related choices and transitions made over the life span. Career development theories differ in perspective, positing a set of assumptions based on research that explain human behaviour or phenomena. As career practitioners, we understand that career development is essentially a lifelong process according to the Classic Career Development Model – involving continual management.

### Why study career development theories and models?

Career development theories and models integrate psychological and sociological perspectives. As career practitioners, we need to be well-informed about career development theories and models in order to see the bigger picture. This will allow us to understand various factors that affect our clients' careers and professional choices in order to meet client's needs. Specific reasons include:

- Help us understand our diverse needs and career goals, as well as our purpose and mission.
- Increase self-realization, growth, and self-awareness – understand how theories have evolved over time, the contributing factors, and how theories shape our perceptions and values.
- Understand human behaviour (psychology) around vocational choice and personal development.
- Explore the development and use of specific assessments and interventions for clients.
- Aid our clients in making informed and sound career choices and decisions that are aligned with their true purpose, passion, and strengths.
- Provide effective guidelines, tools, and techniques for career development strategy – allowing us to think strategically and use analytical skills.
- Anticipate future events, labour market trends, or career changes through forecasting.
- Refer clients to appropriate sources when necessary.

### Limitations of Career Development Theories

While career development theories can offer tremendous insights about ourselves, our past or present and future career paths, they also come with limitations. Many theories developed in the 20th century do not address gender, class, or race. Most theories reflect a Western culture and have a middle class-focused orientation without considering other groups. Most recently, theorists are placing an emphasis on global career development, research, and validation.

### Helpful for Career Practitioners to Know

Before discussing and investigating career development theories and models, we need to understand each theory's strengths and weaknesses. With a balanced understanding of career development theories and models, you can then apply theory as a starting point to discuss your client's needs and goals. It's prescribed to draw on a combination of career development theories and strategies. Always use discretion and sound judgment; remain open-minded and flexible when studying and assessing career development theories and models – from past to present. Consider the type of client population you are working with and the environment. Discuss the implications of theories and the client's particular situation. Theories often do not consider the client's experience and history which needs to be accounted for and discussed.