Career & Lifestyle Development

Career questions usually ask you to identify a theory from a short description or to choose the next step in career counseling. Learn each theorist's one big idea and its signature terms.

> **Where it shows up on the NCE:** Areas of Clinical Focus (career concerns); Counseling Skills & Interventions; Intake & Assessment (career inventories).

Major career theories

Theorist	Theory	Signature ideas
Frank Parsons	Trait-and-factor	Know yourself, know the world of work, and match them with "true reasoning"
John Holland	RIASEC typology	Six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional; congruence, consistency, differentiation; hexagon (adjacent types are most alike)
Donald Super	Life-span, life-space	Stages: growth (0–14), exploration (15–24), establishment (25–44), maintenance (45–64), disengagement (65+); self-concept; Life-Career Rainbow; career maturity
Linda Gottfredson	Circumscription & compromise	Children rule out options by size/power, sex roles, social valuation, then the internal self
Anne Roe	Personality & parent–child relations	Early family climate shapes orientation toward or away from people; 8 fields × 6 levels
John Krumboltz	Social learning theory; planned happenstance	Learning experiences shape choices; turn chance events into opportunities
Lent, Brown & Hackett	Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)	Self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals (built on Bandura)
Mark Savickas	Career construction	Career adaptability: concern, control, curiosity, confidence; life themes and stories
Ginzberg et al.	Developmental	Fantasy → tentative → realistic periods
Tiedeman & O'Hara	Decision-making	Anticipation and implementation phases
H. B. Gelatt	Positive uncertainty	Rational and intuitive decision-making; accept uncertainty

Tools and resources

Tool	What it does
Strong Interest Inventory	Compares interests with people satisfied in occupations; uses Holland themes
Self-Directed Search (SDS)	Holland's self-scored inventory producing a three-letter code

Tool	What it does
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	Personality type; often paired with interest inventories
O*NET	Online occupational database (replaced the Dictionary of Occupational Titles)
Occupational Outlook Handbook	Bureau of Labor Statistics: job duties, pay, training and outlook
Kuder inventories	Interest and career-planning assessments

Terms to know

Career counseling vs. guidance	Counseling is a personal, ongoing relationship; guidance is more informational.
Spillover vs. compensatory	Spillover: leisure mirrors work. Compensatory: leisure makes up for what work lacks.
Undecided vs. indecisive	Undecided is normal and situational; indecisive is a broader pattern of difficulty making decisions.
Dual-career couples	Both partners pursue careers; role negotiation and work–family balance issues.

Exam traps

- Holland's adjacent types (e.g., Realistic–Investigative) are the most consistent; opposite types (Realistic–Social) are least alike.
- Super is the developmental theorist; Holland is the typology theorist.
- Before suggesting an assessment, explore the client's goals and context.
- O*NET replaced the DOT; the OOH comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Quick self-check

1. Name Holland's six types.
2. Which theorist described the Life-Career Rainbow?
3. "Planned happenstance" belongs to whom?
4. What three variables anchor SCCT?
5. Which online database replaced the DOT?

Answers: 1. Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional. · 2. Donald Super. · 3. John Krumboltz. · 4. Self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals. · 5. O*NET.

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