

Career Development and Exploration in Art Therapy

By

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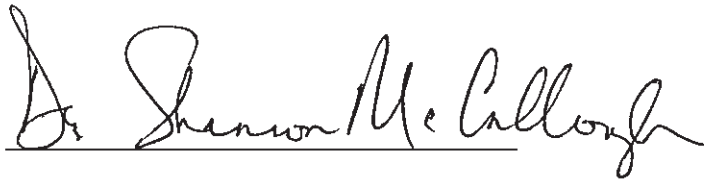


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Accepted May 2022



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Submitted to the faculty of the Art Therapy Program  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Art Therapy  
in the Herron School of Art and Design  
Indiana University  
May 2022

### **Acknowledgments**

I am very appreciative of the love and support given to me by my family and friends. They have all been there for me continuously and have pushed me to work hard and persevere through every obstacle. I am incredibly grateful for the kind words of encouragement from each and every one of them. I would also like to thank my instructors throughout my grad school journey for all of their wisdom and knowledge. It has been truly inspiring to see other art therapists model how impactful this field is. To my advisors for this research, Professor Eileen Misluk and Dr. Shannon McCullough, I am beyond grateful for all of the time and dedication you both gave me to help achieve my goals in this process. I am appreciative of all your suggestions and recommendations to complete this work. My cohort is filled with talented, insightful, inspirational, and supportive people. Bailee, Baley, Gabby, Gracen, John, July, Jung Eun, Kate, Katelyn, Katie, Mackenzie, and Taylor... You all are amazing people and cool colleagues. I am forever thankful for all of the inspiration, laughter, and support we have given each other!

### **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to empowering those who need support, guidance, and encouragement in the process of planning their career and their future.

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### **Abstract**

This research explains and implements creating a proposal with art therapy and career counseling for high school systems while working with adolescents. Within the literature review, existing research has demonstrated that career counseling yields benefits in professional planning and satisfaction. The adolescence stage has many expected developmental tasks, including choosing a career about individual traits and strengths. Research also addresses influences relating to adolescent needs that may help or hinder career choices. To manage educational settings and conditions, the research discusses benefits and limitations. While research has provided understanding for career counseling, limited research combines both art therapy and career development. Art therapy research has highlighted many goals about self-awareness and empowering individuals to understand themselves. Comparisons of research on art therapy and career counseling provide evidence and information to create a program proposal for individual students. Career theories such as Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice and Social Cognitive Career Theory go in-depth on clients' needs in this process. These theories also tie in three themes explored from existing art therapy literature, including identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

*Keywords:* art therapy, career counseling, career development, career choice, adolescents, education, identity, self-efficacy, self-esteem

## Chapter I

### Introduction

“Adolescent aspirations and goals act as a compass to help chart a life span and direct the spending of time and energy” (Ashby & Schoon, 2012, p. 1694). During adolescence, developmental tasks support the discovery of career paths (Liang et al., 2020). Choosing a career is a decision-making process, and careers are a huge part of overall life satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2020). Several significant barriers exist in this process, including mental health concerns, interpersonal relationships, and a lack of self-acceptance (Germeijs et al., 2006). Life stressors can challenge the process of a career search and inhibit motivation and decision-making skills (Gadassi et al., 2015). During this developmental stage, adolescents who seek clarity for themselves have a stronger sense of identity, have higher self-esteem, and learn self-efficacy skills with proper guidance (Erikson, 1959; Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Problems can arise in the process of career development if these personal insights are ignored and unexplored (Lent, 2020). Therefore, evidence-based interventions can provide goals relating to career development that align with other counseling goals.

Career development has been integrated into school counseling interventions as a way for adolescents to take steps and plan for their future (Germeijs et al., 2006). The process of personal exploration can include working through interests and skill sets that support setting goals in a specific career path (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Goal setting for career readiness as a therapeutic intervention in career counseling will support job searching and build professional skills, including problem-solving, interpersonal communication, and reducing stress through effective coping strategies (Liu et al., 2014). Social-emotional learning plays a vital role in a school's incorporation of building these career skills into the curriculum (Randick & Dermer, 2013).



Art education has paved the way for integrating art therapy programs within the school curriculum, allowing students to process mental health needs with creativity (Isis et al., 2010). Educational settings can include creative interventions to their counseling practices by funding and creating art therapy programs (Isis et al., 2010). Art therapy interventions have fostered academic, social, and emotional goals in school counseling (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Using creativity, individuals may find more profound reflections on their life experiences that support self-discovery (Parisian, 2015). Identity exploration within the world of adolescents can also be expressed through art marking (Parisian, 2015). Combining art therapy with career counseling can allow students to explore their futures with a creative approach.

This research aims to provide evidence to back up art therapy in career counseling and create a proposal to integrate these individual therapy practices into school counseling programs. A traditional literature review method was used to understand the benefits of art therapy for career counseling to address the exploration and personal growth in identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem that enhances adolescents' career development. The study resulted in developing a treatment framework that provides examples of art therapy directives addressing career readiness. A focus on presenting problems in adolescents, such as familial support and mental health factors that impact career exploration and planning, will be discussed.

## **Operational Definitions**

**Career:** An individual's experiences in a number of jobs in their lifetime, either within one or multiple fields (Lent & Brown, 2020). The terms are used interchangeably with occupation and vocation.

**Career development:** Choosing a career path through interest by exploration and planning throughout the lifespan. (Lent & Brown, 2020).

**Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice:** In 1959, John Holland created a theory to identify and combine multiple traits for individuals and career environments (Nauta, 2020).

**Identity:** This is the result of self-awareness and social factors that build our sense of self, including psychological, physical, geographic, political, cultural, historical, and spiritual connections (Parisian, 2015).

**Self-efficacy:** An individual's self-hindering or self-aiding beliefs about their ability to achieve their goals and complete tasks while preserving through challenges or obstacles and furthering their motivation levels (Bandura, 1989).

**Self-esteem:** Individuals self-evaluate and formulate an opinion of themselves and their traits (Franklin, 1992).

**Social Cognitive Career Theory:** A theory applied to understand self-efficacy and the effects of individual, environmental, and developmental factors (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019).

## **Chapter II**

### **Methods**

The following research is presented as a master's level thesis as a M.A. art therapy student enrolled at Indiana University- Purdue University Indianapolis. I utilized a traditional literature review to develop a framework integrating career development and art therapy approaches for adolescents. A traditional literature review is a collection of research with a scientific topic, by which the literature review summarizes, highlights current research, gives an overview, and identifies study and topic gaps (Hempel, 2020). I gathered relevant data from the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis library databases, including IUCAT, EBSCO, APA PsychNet, Taylor & Francis, and ProQuest. Data collection was organized into a literature matrix using a thematic approach. A literature matrix is a form of data extraction that organizes and summarizes key research points included and presented in this study (Hempel, 2020). Data analysis included the review of themes from the literature matrix focusing on overlapping studies of career counseling and art therapy.

Limitations in my research that have affected the planning of this program include the lack and limited availability of studies that combine art therapy and career development. Key points within art therapy directives and intervention often include fostering identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Art therapy literature shares the process of art-making and how that can potentially benefit the individual in self-exploration. Several connections through existing career development literature can explain how these themes can grow and help an individual with career exploration and readiness. Within this literature, theoretical approaches to career counseling may also connect to these themes. These connections have been made to create my literature review, which serves as information to establish this program. The program utilizes

many existing art directives to foster and empower the individual's awareness of self and connection to their world.

The language usage often proved to be less relevant due to the continued need for addressing multicultural competence in therapeutic services. Gender roles and stereotypes were also prevalent in the process of career development, with the limitation of binary language to address gender's role in career planning. Recent events may continue to contribute to changes of possibility related to career options. The reality of systemic barriers is that they are everchanging, negatively impacting people within multicultural groups. A lot of the research presented reflects limitations in mentioning current events and the potential impact on career choices.

Delimitations of this study include the time frame, search terms, and a traditional narrative literature review which does not exhaust the available research on this topic. Personal research helped me navigate terms for various search terms for career and other important key terms. Furthermore, the researcher intended to limit the scholarly sources to no more than ten years post study date. However, there was no comprehensive understanding within the ten years, and there were gaps in the published research. To address researcher bias, a literature matrix was used and two professional mentors.

## Chapter III

### Literature Review

#### Adolescent Development

The adolescent stage of life starts around 12-13 years of age and continues until an individual is considered a young adult, from 18-20 years old (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). While adolescents are experiencing hormonal and physical changes during puberty, their social world and roles also become important (Erikson, 1959). These factors of development and how they shape experiences we may face impact our understanding of ourselves and personal interests as people discover their strengths and personality traits through self-exploration and guidance from influential individuals (Germeijs et al., 2006). Self-actualization and identity formation explain how personality is constructed and shapes one's *self* through both the conscious and unconscious mind, which Carl Jung explored in 1928 (Ivtzan et al., 2013). Self-actualization, mentioned in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, expresses the growth and formation of developing one's interests and abilities, one of the higher motives within the groups of human needs (Ivtzan et al., 2013).

Erik Erikson, who theorized developmental conflicts within the lifespan, specified that during adolescence (defined as 12-20 years old), identity formation and role confusion are fundamental conflicts as we navigate our personal, social, and cultural values (Erikson, 1959). This identity search becomes part of the self-analysis of finding meaning and a sense of individual purpose (Parisian, 2015). A positive outcome of this stage is *fidelity* which means being committed to oneself and others, while a negative result is the inability to establish a sense of self (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Erikson also emphasized *generativity* or work as one of the influences in developing self by noting one's interest in vocation (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

Erikson (1959) also highlights the role of self-esteem in creating future achievements through personal acceptance of one's traits and identity. Through belonging to their culture, self-esteem is enhanced by approval from others (Erikson, 1959).

Most developmental tasks are set within a group of people through culturally determined ideals (Ivtzan et al., 2013). Educational settings play an essential role in development, as adolescents are guided in developing self-awareness, values, and interests, aiding in future preparation and planning (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). For example, academic and non-academic self-concept entails differences in school experiences and successes, including social-emotional connections (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). The preadolescence stage also marks the beginning of increased clarity and confidence in their ability to make occupational decisions (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). By adolescence, the growth of formal thinking allows them to make inferences more abstractly and relate to emotions while comparing, concluding, and organizing thoughts (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). This formal thinking helps make ideas and goals less abstract, and into a reality that is achievable and attainable (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

### **Career Development**

Investigating vocational interests is an expected developmental stage in adolescence (Liang et al., 2020). Germeijs et al. (2006) identified the importance of decision-making skills required during this stage. Lent and Brown (2020) found that meaning, desire, and satisfaction go into career decisions and any life role that people can take on. Furthermore, adolescents are learning and mastering life skills designed to enhance empowerment and independence (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006).

Career aspirations identified in adolescence become “a salient aspect of people’s life histories” (Ashby & Schoon, 2012, p. 1702). During this time, career interests are chosen based on self-identified strengths and values (Ashby & Schoon, 2012) and meaningful social experiences (Liang et al., 2020). Career consciousness is directed as self-directing behaviors, interests, and callings that provide a sense of purpose or meaning to work (Gysbers et al., 2014). Additionally, it challenges counterfactual thoughts occurring in the present and past decision-making situations (Gysbers et al., 2014). Career consciousness provides an understanding of the role of a career in life satisfaction and optimism (Gysbers et al., 2014).

### ***Identity, Self-efficacy, and Self-esteem in Career Development***

**Identity.** Identity is a part of self-concept (Franklin, 1992). Personal character development is within identity formation (Erikson, 1959). Identity impacts everyday life experiences, values, and viewpoints, including career aspirations and exploration (Parisian, 2015). Value exploration goes along with identity roles from social impacts and personal values that become more apparent when being explored (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). The following factors - psychological, physical, geographic, political, cultural, historical, and spiritual - form identity development and turn our career trajectory from ideas to reality (Parisian, 2015). In addition to those factors, identity markers such as gender, racial and ethnic identity, and systemic factors also influence career development (Parisian, 2015). “Identity results from piecing together these scattered parts, involving an inward and outward journey that connects us to the larger world” (Parisian, 2015, p. 130). Erikson noted that identity includes multiple connotations based on an individual character's personal and social definition (1959).

Using an intersectional framework, identity is understood as multifaceted and diverse (Parisian, 2015). Research findings often suggest little to no gender difference in identity

formation (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Cultural considerations in identity formation support a variety of the process of self-development, depending on culture, values, and expectations (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Social acceptance of culture can also make all the difference in identity discovery and formation, as individuals feel safe and supported in who they are (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Parents may encourage utilizing cultural socialization practices such as interest exploration, participating in family and individual decision-making, and following through on choices (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Cultural expectations influence decision-making processes and career decisions (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2020). Opposing viewpoints or bias toward a person's cultural identity can hinder the sense of belonging and further impact identity development (Parisian, 2015). Feelings of shame resulting from opposing viewpoints create internal conflict with one's identity and hinder self-acceptance (Parisian, 2015).

Social inequities and systemic problems of racism and sexism create challenges to career aspirations and opportunities due to workplace discrimination and vocational stereotypes (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Fouad and Kantamneni (2020) focused on the impact of barriers that limit opportunities for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and found that it lowers skill development and advancement in job positions.

Gadassi et al. (2015) found that gender differences are reflected in personality traits, emotional responses, and decision-making behaviors. Schultheiss (2020) suggested that socially and culturally determined gender roles for men and women throughout history continue to impact identity development. Gender roles are culturally determined viewpoints and practices learned at a young age (Hoff et al., 2018). For example, in many social and cultural groups, women are seen as nurturers or caregivers in a family system, creating career expectations and



barriers (Schultheiss, 2020). Even within the stage of adolescence, there is awareness of the effects of gender roles that often make girls more susceptible to lowered self-esteem, depression, and feelings of less competency regarding vocational choice (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

Most significantly, leadership positions demonstrate gender imbalances, including more men in these roles, resulting in disadvantages for women in the hiring process (Schultheiss, 2020). Gender stereotypes play a prominent role in this imbalance. For example, women are labeled as nurturing, while men are agentic and more confident (Schultheiss, 2020). These labels often influence the positions and filling of leadership roles (Schultheiss, 2020). Ashby and Schoon (2012) found in a longitudinal study with 170 participants that gender roles and past expectations impact career paths and choices, but they found that there was equivalent interest in specific roles, for example, management positions. Additionally, Hoff et al. (2018) found that gender stereotypes for occupational interests decrease with age. Other gender-related concerns are wage gaps with lower pay rates for women even within the same or higher-level positions as men and higher rates of sexual harassment (Schultheiss, 2020).

As a note for current research, there is often a failure to mention gender beyond the binary understanding. Gender identity goes beyond cisgender men and women, and there are many more gender identities represented in the LGBTQIA2+ community. Currently, there are not a lot of career development studies that align with present gender studies. Lyons et al. (2020) define *cisgender*, where gender aligns with sex at birth, and *transgender*, where gender does not align with sex at birth. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation, though both may present marginalization and discrimination in the workplace (Lyons et al., 2020). Studies have shown that workplace environment and acceptance make for more likely satisfaction and job success. Vocational stereotypes are also common amongst individuals in the LGBTQIA2+

community. Other barriers may include the process of coming out and how it may pause career development because of identity's impact. Identity is a direct influencer and needs to be explored and acknowledged by adolescents (Lyons et al., 2020).

**Self-efficacy.** Bandura (1989) defines self-efficacy as personal beliefs one has that aid or hinder their self-assessment of their ability to achieve certain goals and tasks. It is noted that self-efficacy directly engages levels of motivation and effort and helps them push through obstacles. Self-efficacy also combines with analytical thinking to combat distortions regarding failures and helps the individual push through those challenges with resiliency. There is evidence that self-efficacy enhances overall well-being and allows individuals to anticipate ways to grow and work through their everyday choices (Bandura, 1989). Liu et al. (2014) state that building skills necessary to overcome challenges, for example, practicing presentations, solving problems, or role-playing, boosts self-efficacy. Behaviors reflect our internalized sense of capability and self-efficacy in different situations (Lent, 2020). Self-efficacy is a personal process altered by external factors outside one's own opinion of self from expected outcomes or views of one's ability (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Social factors, such as other people's expectations, biases, and opinions, influence personal beliefs on the perceived ability to complete specific tasks and create challenges in goal setting and exploring interests (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy skills lay the foundation for navigating career exploration (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Identity factors impact self-efficacy and influence expected outcomes (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Ability is not the only determinant for career success, though the presence or lack of self-efficacy and opportunities to develop these skills is a significant concern (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2020). In job searching, Liu et al. (2014) suggested that effective interventions aim to develop self-efficacy skills for the chosen career path. Self-efficacy boosts commitment

and perseverance and ultimately leads to a successful job search (Liu et al., 2014). Social influences help adolescents discover new abilities and potential through relationships with people who have similar interests (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Furthermore, setting career goals will feel difficult or unachievable if individuals anticipate or experience vocational discrimination (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Self-efficacy skills are represented in gender differences regarding gender discrimination in pay and lack of promotions (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019).

**Self-esteem.** According to Franklin (1992), defining self-esteem is trust in personal abilities leading to feelings of self-worth and fulfillment. Positive self-esteem is the process of self-evaluation and acceptance of our current state of being (Franklin, 1992). There are internal (e.g., thoughts and feelings) and external (e.g., social and cultural influences) impacts that alter our self-evaluation (Parisian, 2015).

Self-esteem and identity are vulnerable to the reactions and perceptions of others (Franklin, 1992). Erikson (1959) discusses cultural implications with identity and how cultural values connect with individual values. When individuals receive any amount of social feedback, there is the potential to alter one's perception to match the perception of others (Franklin, 1992). Social and cultural expectations most likely influence self-esteem, creating specified goals for achievements (Erikson, 1959).

Other considerations impact self-esteem and guide career outcomes in various ways, including career development and decision-making (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Differences within gender identity may influence self-esteem due to societal expectations and gender biases. Conkel-Ziebell et al. (2019) further noted that through experiences that challenge self-efficacy, like gender bias, self-worth is negatively impacted too. Gadassi et al. (2015) discuss self-esteem

and mental health concerns while specifying explanations of gender differences in career development. The term *autonomy* is indicated for goal achievement that may be more vulnerable to those who identify as men due to wanting individualism (Gadassi et al., 2015). In comparison, *sociotropy* or interpersonal relation through creating goals is the desire to feel connected and accepted by people, often reflected in people who identify as women (Gadassi et al., 2015). Gender stereotypes can create personal expectations based on societal expectations that further impact self-esteem (Gadassi et al., 2015).

Discrimination and societal barriers are social considerations that influence self-esteem (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Racial and ethnic minority groups experience oppression, resulting in negative self-esteem (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). For example, Parisian (2015) discussed a case study of a 15-year-old Filipino American who rejected their Filipino culture to gain social acceptance by American peers. Exploring these experiences in the clinical setting helped this client accept all parts of their identity and personal interests. This example emphasized addressing identity factors and personal experiences to encourage self-acceptance. Ultimately, having positive self-esteem leads to positive relationships with others and the possibility of fostering job satisfaction in their chosen field of work (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Positive self-esteem helps people feel empowered to achieve their life goals (Franklin, 1992). Consistently progressing in created plans enhances feelings of competency and success (Lent, 2020). Utilizing problem-solving skills and navigating challenging situations further enhances feelings of empowerment and increases self-esteem (Franklin, 1992). Self-esteem impacts career interests because aspirations reflect the skills a person is most confident in, while other choices will likely be avoided or dismissed (Lent, 2020).

### *Influences*

**Familial Support.** Positive caregiver support can help adolescents when researching and planning by fostering motivation and exploring interests (Liang et al., 2020). While some caregivers are more present and engaged during the planning process, there are adverse effects when caregivers lack support or input in career aspirations (Liang et al., 2020). Through parenting, warmth and responsiveness support wellbeing and self-acceptance (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). There are notable differences in adolescent achievement and life choices with different parenting styles in varying cultures (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

Prosocial relationships, including positive family dynamics, support the overall wellbeing of individuals while they learn and develop life skills (Ashby & Schoon, 2012; Wall et al., 1999). Active involvement in career aspirations from a caregiver increases adolescent success during high school needed to further and advance in career paths (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Parental acceptance is pivotal for a child to accept their strengths and potential (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). There are even connections between parent and child's decision making and self-efficacy (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). Specifically, the impact a parent has in guiding their child in career development tasks (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). It is often recommended that parents stay actively involved in their child's career counseling journey to be aware of the needs and work in that supportive role (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

**Financial Concerns.** An individual's socioeconomic status or SES includes vocation, vocation prestige, income, benefits, healthcare, cultural privilege, and environment and community around them (Juntunen et al., 2020). When the term career is often used, there are many connotations of the level of job status that fits into that category (Lent & Brown, 2013). It is clarified that career counseling helps clients with any career path, regardless of prestige, status,

or pay (Lent & Brown, 2013). While goals also indicate what the individual wants, there are still concerns about career development and planning due to potential systemic and individual barriers (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Career counseling plans may include processing economic barriers and encouraging them to find social support and resources when searching for their career paths (Juntunen et al., 2020). The career counselor must understand the influence of socioeconomic status on finding career opportunities (Juntunen et al., 2020).

Financial concerns may limit opportunities and resources for adolescents in career development (Lent & Brown, 2020). SES may affect how adolescents choose career paths based on resources (Juntunen et al., 2020). Adolescents from higher-income families have significant advantages in higher job positions and educational opportunities (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Clients with lower SES may seek support in finding resources needed for career goals, often due to marginalization they may experience, and career counselors must be aware of any barriers their clients may have overall (Juntunen et al., 2020). There is research on career counseling theories about SES, such as limited research on Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice (Juntunen et al., 2020). The Social Cognitive Career Theory, which emphasizes self-efficacy, also indicates that those marginalized due to SES can benefit from empowerment and working towards positive self-esteem to achieve their goals (Juntunen et al., 2020).

Several influences may encourage individuals to accomplish their set out goals relating to vocational interests. It has been acknowledged that even community changes and resources can influence career development (Juntunen et al., 2020). Multigenerational unemployment is also a factor related to outcome due to systemic marginalization, and there are challenges to note in intervention and overcoming systemic challenges (Juntunen et al., 2020). Adolescents are likely to think practically about decisions related to the career process because of current development

and the higher level of cognitive thinking compared to childhood (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Within adolescence, their social development also impacts their everyday decisions when seeking advice and acceptance from peers (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Connection to others may appear as community involvement and seeking support. Encouragement may also guide them to reach out and feel accepted and safe to do so.

Encouragement may be within their closer peers, such as family members. Healthy parental involvement can positively affect career aspirations and planning (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Motivation can be built through a parent's role of giving advice and suggestion and supporting their child's decisions and interests, rather than discouraging them (Liang et al., 2020). Even with SES factors, positive parental involvement makes a difference in supporting their child through this process (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Within the career counseling process, familial support also helps adolescents think about their resources and what can be provided to them through connection (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Then, counseling can encourage them to consider their goals and have therapists support them in searching for what resources they need (Ashby & Schoon, 2012).

**Mental and Physical Health Needs.** Having a career integrated into our daily lives and schedules fills our time with a sense of purpose and the potential for fulfillment (Lent & Brown, 2020). Work identity creates honor in the community, furthers meaning in life, and highlights personal narratives (Lent & Brown, 2020). Risks to mental and physical health can create barriers and challenges to daily life, including our job (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). An awareness of the impact of physical, mental, and emotional health on performance is a developmental milestone for adolescents and adults (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Connecting back to Erikson's theory of identity, work experiences will provide industry, and this can be a

variable in one's ability to overcome challenges and obstacles to continue achievements (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Working with children on resilience and motivation can help them as they grow and develop to build mastery in their interests and build optimism while overcoming challenges (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). This is important to address with adolescents in counseling as they may bring up mental health concerns or stress.

Mental health can also create challenges in careers and life fulfillment. Mental health concerns may be discussed by the client, and lowered confidence or well-being can influence the process of career development (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). If individuals feel incapable of reaching goals, it will likely affect their decision-making and resiliency (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Lowered self-efficacy directly results from mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety (Ivtzan et al., 2013). Barriers that prevent transparent decision-making for career paths can be low confidence, anxiety, and dependency on others for decision-making (Germeijs et al., 2006). Fear of commitment leads to further difficulty in dedication to a specific career path (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Anxiety related to career readiness may be related to personality challenges such as obsessive-compulsiveness, trait anxiety, and lowered self-esteem (Germeijs et al., 2006). Those personality challenges will affect the decision-making process for selecting a career and the choices, behaviors, and feelings expressed during a career (Germeijs et al., 2006). Lowered confidence, which can indicate lowered self-efficacy and self-esteem, creates problems for career tasks and overall job performance satisfaction (Liang et al., 2020).

Beyond the potential for anxiety-related challenges, adolescents may be diagnosed with clinical depression or have experienced depressed mood (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Dysfunctional thoughts associated with depression increase challenges in decision-making skills (Gadassi et al., 2015). Depression brings challenges relating to self-esteem and self-efficacy,



with chances of more pessimistic views, added stress, and mood regulation difficulty (Gadassi et al., 2015). Depression lowers motivation and productivity overall for an individual, and decreased productivity could equal lowered job satisfaction if not addressed (Gadassi et al., 2015). Counselors may provide interventions relating to task creation and completion, as well as interventions exploring mood that may also be applicable (Gadassi et al., 2015). These interventions can be integrated into career counseling goals.

Life stressors affect an individual's well-being, creating barriers to motivation and goal attainment (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Occupational stressors accompanying other stresses may include job security or instability, job searching, and overall job satisfaction (Gadassi et al., 2015). Students in counseling report occupational stressors that correspond to mental health concerns (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). For anticipated problems in a career field, adolescents can work on effective coping strategies for their mental health (Liang et al., 2020). To allow students to address current mental health needs in counseling, counseling can encourage facing concerns rather than suppressing them and manage any existing barriers to career exploration (Randick & Dermer, 2013).

**School and Peer Support.** Prosocial relationships among peers can be fostered to help identity growth (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Social interaction in educational settings goes along with the overall climate of the school to create further support (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Adverse school outcomes and experiences negatively influence motivation and engagement (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Social factors, including family, school staff, and peers, influence educational and vocational efficiency, reduce stressors and impact academic goals and achievements (Wall et al., 1999). However, some adolescents experience uncertainty in their future and vocational interests because they lack goal-setting and decision-making skills

(Liang et al., 2020). These can be practiced at school within the classrooms and in extracurricular activities.

### *Approaches and Theories of Career Development*

**Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice.** In 1959, John Holland created a vocational theory that describes people and environmental traits (Nauta, 2020). Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice described six personality traits: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, emotional, and conventional referred to as the acronym RIASEC (Littman-Ovadia et al., 2014). The main point of his theory is that personality can link to a person's interests (Hoff et al., 2018). People explore their interests and develop areas of strength that often align with their RIASEC traits (Nauta, 2020). Influences both social and personal may be a factor in discovering these interests (Nauta, 2020).

Holland proposed that if there is congruence in a person and environment's traits, it will display positive results for overall job satisfaction (Nauta, 2020). The RIASEC traits show similarities and differences in environmental changes (Hoff et al., 2018). Holland's theory has a limited understanding of multicultural influences in career development, so future research is needed (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2020). RIASEC scoring may reflect differences in career exploration and interest based on personality traits reflecting gender stereotypes for typical jobs rather than true career interests (Schultheiss, 2020). Therefore, therapists should keep this in mind when using Holland's assessment and encourage exploring interests regardless of societal gender norms or stereotypical gender career paths (Schultheiss, 2020).

The scored traits of a person can reflect career aspirations that would be a good fit for the individual (Nauta, 2020). With this assessment, characteristics may be inconsistent for specific

individuals, which would create challenges for career decisions and satisfaction (Nauta, 2020). Towards late adolescence, Holland believed there might be more accuracy and consistency in discovering the right combination of distinguishing traits (Nauta, 2020). The rationale for implementing this assessment with younger children and adolescents is that it helps discover and name current personality traits offering suggestions for careers that align with these traits (Nauta, 2020).

**Social Cognitive Career Theory.** Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) follows other career theories that indicate developmental considerations (Lent, 2020). SCCT integrates Holland's theory by looking at impacts on self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2013). Furthermore, SCCT notes that self-efficacy can be positivity fostered to motivate and develop interests (Hoff et al., 2018). "Self-efficacy refers to people's confidence in performing specific activities" (Liu et al., 2014, p. 1012). SCCT suggests that identity and social environment influence self-efficacy in making career choices (Conkel-Ziebell et al., 2019). Learning skills and behaviors vary across cultures, so SCCT explains multicultural influences by considering cultural values and outcome expectations for career development (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2020). SCCT examines gender identity and explains notable self-efficacy differences (Schultheiss, 2020).

Along with environmental influences, SCCT believes that an individual's inner agency and self-determination or motivation to complete tasks explains self-efficacy (Lent, 2020). SCCT was designed to include an individual's interests and decision-making skills and aid in enhancing job satisfaction and stability (Lent & Brown, 2013). Self-efficacy in decision-making may look like confidence in career exploration (Lent et al., 2019). When it comes to self-efficacy, Wallace-DiGarbo and Hill (2006) state that "[adolescents] must learn to develop forms of self-control in

school, home, and other social contexts so that they can manage crises, inspire commitment, express idealism, and mitigate alienation” (p. 119).

The SCCT theory has progressed into various models. Lent et al. (2019) elaborated on multiple models that described career interest, career choice, and career performance. The career interests model focuses on nurturing potential through vocation exploration activities in childhood and adolescence within school, home, and the community (Lent et al., 2002). The choice model explains that environmental factors such as peer support or negative impacts like financial concerns will affect self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2002). The performance model evaluates one’s strengths and the ability to succeed in their selected career (Lent et al., 2002). The career self-management model in the SCCT framework built from other models discusses potential outcome expectations and possible challenges experienced during the job (Lent et al., 2019).

**Goals.** Career counseling theories align with a person-centered approach, most notably in gathering information, goal setting, and exploring vocational ideas (Gysbers et al., 2014). Gysbers et al. (2014) note that career counseling has separate and overlapping goals found in counseling and therapy. Lent and Brown (2020) found that the roles held at work intertwine with all other roles in life. A career can either align or create conflict from job dissatisfaction in life (Lent & Brown, 2020).

Career goals in counseling might include job searching, learning professionalism and problem-solving skills, seeking support, and stress management (Liu et al., 2014). Specifically for adolescents, focusing on self-knowledge and self-awareness, educational and vocational exploration skills, and fostering decision-making skills are all developmentally appropriate and common career counseling goals (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). Approaches target treatment goals relating to the negative impacts of mental health concerns on this process (Gadassi et al.,

2015). Adolescents learn coping strategies and skills to manage the stress associated with vocational exploration (Liu et al., 2014). Social-emotional interventions can help lay the groundwork for seeking support with communication skills and self-awareness for regulating and reducing stress (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). These social-emotional interventions often happen in school-based settings.

**School-Based Career Counseling.** Schools have begun incorporating social-emotional learning in the curriculum to prepare students with skills for their future careers (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Educational settings have classroom expectations for practicing task completion and practical problem-solving skills (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). These are valuable life skills that will continue throughout school and career. These skills provide ways to manage workplace stress and concerns (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). There are a variety of career development inventories, such as the Career Maturity Inventory and the Adult Career Concerns Inventory, that evaluates the readiness of tasks and management of needed skills for a career (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). These inventories are recommended as part of school-based counseling programs (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

As a potential for being a supportive role, school staff must be equipped to guide students through exploring and planning for their future (Waalkes et al., 2019). While developing career goals, it is helpful for students to know their strengths, interests, and skill level (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Students need further guidance on resources to achieve the requirements and steps for their fields of interest (Randick & Dermer, 2013). One example is Holland's Self-Directed Search which combines their interests with planning skills to continue to explore during therapy sessions (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

### *Studies and Research on Career Development*

Gysbers et al. (2014) developed ideas and solutions that provide a person-centered structure and structured phases that address a structured timeline for career counseling. The first phase includes obtaining treatment consent, reviewing confidentiality, setting treatment goals, and building rapport. Using quantitative or qualitative procedures such as interviews and assessments, the next step gathers information such as identity statuses that affect worldviews and connections to life roles. The next phase includes behavior acknowledgment through career and personality theories. This section looks at parts of identity concerning counseling goals to understand the roles and variables affecting career decisions and behaviors. The final phase includes developing plans, taking action, working through conflicts, and other barriers to career attainment (Gysbers et al., 2014).

Stickley (2010) described a narrative approach to career planning that utilized individual interviews to understand different developmental stages. With this approach, Ashby and Schoon (2012) inquired about the consistency of career interests throughout their participants' lifespan, between 16 and 50 years of age. They found that goals planned in adolescence proved to be considered and referred back to various stages of development (Ashby and Schoon, 2012). This study provides evidence that early interests are reflected, so it is imperative that schools promote explorations and proper skill sets.

### **Art Therapy**

The use of art therapy in schools has been primarily pioneered by art education within the curriculum (Malchiodi, 1997). The therapeutic qualities that art can provide students have been advocated by professionals and have shaped its presence in school settings today (Malchiodi,

1997). The goals that combine art therapy with school counseling are complementary. These programs in educational settings promote creativity in therapeutic interventions (Isis et al., 2010). Having therapy available in schools creates a safe space for students to process emotions and address stressors affecting school performance (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). Art therapy assessments incorporate art and creative imagery in academic counseling to continue tools and resources meant to complete appropriate interventions (Isis et al., 2010). It is a collaboration between the counselor and student to combine resources and ideas (Burton & Lent, 2016). Art therapy within schools can integrate various theoretical approaches for students in academic advising, psychoeducational learning, and career counseling (Malchiodi, 1997). Randick and Dermer (2013) stated that “academic, social, and emotional school counseling goals—increasing self-esteem, self-confidence, self-advocacy, coping skills, healthy risk-taking, communication, social interest, and the like—mirror the goals of art therapy” (p. 34).

Art therapy creates a space where students can make self-discoveries and utilize strengths through creativity to work through their presenting problems and goals (Randick & Dermer, 2013). The possibility of art fostering strengths with the individual’s experiences may address the impact of finding a positive career experience (Randick & Dermer, 2013). The clients may or may not connect to the art process, but when they do connect, it provides emotional benefits such as relaxation and managing stress (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). They may also gain a sense of pride and excitement towards their creation, benefiting them with added confidence (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019).

While self-discovery is taking place, the developmental task for adolescents is social acceptance - a necessary work-related skill (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Creative expression can provide a tool for reflecting on personal influences, their roots, and their impact on adolescents

(Parisian, 2015). Creativity can be used to explore and reflect on various outcomes under the guidance of a counselor (Burton & Lent, 2016). To work towards achievements and satisfaction, therapists may work with students to embrace and use their strengths in the work and educational worlds (Randick & Dermer, 2013). Identity factors support individuality, which impacts interpersonal relationships and how we view ourselves about others (Ashby & Schoon, 2012). Prosocial skills may look like seeking support, while individuals also strengthen their ability to self-manage (Randick & Dermer, 2013). The therapeutic relationship also encourages communication and connection with peers and the practice of interpersonal effectiveness skills in the job setting (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019).

### *Art Therapy in Educational Settings*

There are pros and cons to art therapy in school-based settings. Today, certain schools have honored that emotional care for students is beneficial and essential to effective learning (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). Emotional care now aligns with the learning objectives to provide critical life skills for students (Randick & Dermer, 2013). As noted, Malchiodi (1997) writes about the impact of art as therapy and art therapy through making connections to art education, a part of the general education curriculum. Students with anxiety, depression, trauma, learning disability, or behavioral concerns were observed by Malchiodi when she was an educator in the art classroom. She saw the power of art to heal and grow individual wellbeing (Malchiodi, 1997).

Art classrooms are a creative space that allows for various artmaking (Malchiodi, 1997). They often provide an innovative and expressive atmosphere, being one of the potential locations for therapy (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). Depending on funding, the classroom is equipped,



materials can be utilized in session (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). The room may provide various materials such as painting, ceramics, drawing media, photography, and sculpture, which offers variety for the therapeutic processes (Malchiodi, 1997). Because art can be therapeutic and help with academic achievements, the complementary factors are also a plus for schools providing art therapy within their counseling services (Malchiodi, 1997). While clinical approaches are still implemented, there is also the possibility of exploring open studio and group work to connect students (Malchiodi, 1997).

Adoni-Kroyanker et al. (2019) have discussed challenges to school settings, including concerns about maintaining confidentiality due to those public or shared spaces regarding individual therapy. Due to funding, there may also be limited rooms available and limited supplies. Another challenge is limited availability of time because of the student's schedules and school breaks, which may cause setbacks in treatment from a lack of appointments or a decrease in other services. While these are sometimes unavoidable, they create setbacks, including the therapeutic relationship. It is suggested that counseling with clear time-specific treatment goals can be more effective within a school's limited timeframe (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019).

### *Identity, Self-esteem, and Self-efficacy and Art Therapy Directives*

**Identity.** High vocational stress and lack of exploration may confuse identity development (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Focusing on role confusion, adolescents need opportunities to safely experience how they see themselves and fit into society (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Art can help individuals process their viewpoints on their identity (Parisian, 2015). There is also a significant desire for the process of art to empower the client in their identity and help them feel connections to who they are (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006).

In art therapy, representing one's identity can happen through symbolism; As an example, a mask directive may display how encounters create cause and effect and how one may overall project outwardly in a situation (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006). Wallace-DiGarbo and Hill (2006) provided a group of 55 middle schoolers with a community-based group that included art directives and intervention. The goals of this diverse group were to explore their identities' everyday experiences and foster academic achievements (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006). One of the directives in this program included masks, in which plaster gauze and other art materials to decorate were provided (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006). Mask-making can extend the individual as a canvas to represent identity (Randick & Dermer, 2013). The use of masks allowed the participants to practice sharing about themselves to others and discuss their experiences in allowing themselves to connect with identity (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006). Therefore, cultural empowerment is possible through self-expression in art-making (Kapitan, 2014).

The masks are filled to include symbolism for identity, which can be seen in other directives, such as asking clients to create self-symbols (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006). Another art directive includes vision boards, where the client inquires and represents the influences of identity in their interests, fostering self-efficacy and the beliefs of their abilities to complete their accomplishments effectively (Waalkes et al., 2019). Empowerment of the individual further connects with self-efficacy in that it works on managing barriers adding stress and lowered belief of personal ability to achieve goals (Kapitan, 2014).

**Self-efficacy.** Kapitan (2014) noted, "Clients gain self-efficacy by exercising creative and critical thinking, by taking risks, and by making the exhilarating discovery of how to participate in the influences that shape their lives and the lives of others" (p. 2). Waalkes et al. (2019) used

vision boards to address self-efficacy with middle schoolers at camp. Part of their experiences included accumulating learning experiences at a university and using the vision board to reflect on these experiences and how they could align with their ideal future (Waalkes et al., 2019). They were provided other self-assessing tools such as value sorting cards, discussing role models and their influences, and working together in groups to foster problem-solving and communication skills (Waalkes et al., 2019). As the vision boards were completed, it resulted in a summary of the camp experience and provided them with more clarity and allowed for the possibility of continued exploration (Waalkes et al., 2019).

Under SCCT, the individual and therapist work together to understand the influences such as identity and cultural factors that may need further exploration to relate to the goals and individual's interests (Waalkes et al., 2019). Addressing these identity factors gives insight into growing self-efficacy and confidence (Waalkes et al., 2019). The students at the camp added identity factors to their vision boards and how those experiences shaped their aspirations (Waalkes et al., 2019). SCCT paired with expressive arts, can explore individuals' internal and external experiences (Waalkes et al., 2019). Additionally, applying solution-focused theory keeps clients in the present here-and-now while working on their vision board, exploring academic problems, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationship skills, and working through current stress and burnout (Burton & Lent, 2016). The vision board discoveries in the camp example above also mention the connections to Holland's career interest categories, as these themes would emerge in the art to showcase possible interests (Waalkes et al., 2019).

In art therapy, utilizing vision boards and incorporating collage materials can provide imagery for clients to create goals and plans (Waalkes et al., 2019). It is a dialogue tool for the counselor to discuss goals with the client (Burton & Lent, 2016). The vision board starts from the

thoughts and ideas of the client and then serves as a planning tool and an overall vision to evaluate and acknowledge to turn into achievable goals (Burton & Lent, 2016). Making a vision board enhances exploration, as it allows for a canvas for growth, expansion, or entirely changing ideas (Waalkes et al., 2019). Vision boards are also beneficial for students when school counselors can provide resources and support to make these goals and dream part of their reality (Waalkes et al., 2019). The vision board allows students to name areas of improvement for themselves, regardless of clinical judgment (Burton & Lent, 2016). Using concrete images enables the client to construct them together and provides the therapist with clinical insights relating to their mental health and needs (Burton & Lent, 2016).

**Self-esteem.** Empowerment goes beyond oneself because there is the desire to connect and seek relations from others while enhancing self-discovery and giving a sense of power. (Kapitan, 2014). Self-esteem in the art can present as empowerment to the client by giving some fulfillment and accomplishment in creating (Kapitan, 2014). In their study, Wallace-DiGarbo and Hill (2006) analyzed how an art therapy program could help clients improve interpersonal relationships, adjustment, school performance, and attitudes relating to self-acceptance and competency. Art therapy can provide empowerment between the client and their art to encourage decision-making and to have a sense of control over choices such as materials and subject matter (Kapitan, 2014). Empowerment can also be a part of the rapport building between the art therapist and the client, giving the client skills needed for socialization and feeling more confident in their ability to make connections to others (Kapitan, 2014). These skill sets can go along with the need to build professional rapport with future colleagues.

Creative processing can enhance self-esteem as self-expression is explored through various materials (Franklin, 1992). For example, an art directive that uses a guided imagery

script may support problem-solving skills to address inner conflicts and navigate possibilities for researching career paths (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Usually following the guided meditation script, clients are asked to process and represent their experience in artwork (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Reconstructing in this way empowers and helps self-esteem flourish (Franklin, 1992). Using guided imagery can help clients name their strengths, limits, and areas of self they wish to work on (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). Guided imagery as an imaginative and narrative theoretical approach can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). In the case study provided by Marshall and Farrell (2019), this guided imagery was used alongside a discussion of a personality assessment and how that provided further self-awareness.

Another directive that is strengths-based and focuses on the individual is mentioned by Buchalter (2004) and titled “Your First Job” (p. 40). The client receives drawing paper and drawing media and then represents skills and strengths that align with their job and may create satisfaction (Buchalter, 2004). The therapist may ask questions relating to previous experiences that have helped them become aware and shape their strength exploration (Buchalter, 2004). This directive may go well alongside personality assessments that highlight strengths and allow the clients to imagine what it would be like in the future. A variation of the “Pie Chart” directive by Buchalter (2004) could also combine the use of a circle and create compartments for some organizations (p. 69). The original directive talks about what the client does at different times of the day in other sections of the mandala (Buchalter, 2004). This directive could be paralleled with Holland’s personality traits as a variation of this original concept. This mandala exploration would allow the client to creatively represent their top-scored traits that may be of interest or align with their goals.

## Chapter IV

### Results

Through my literature review, I found a gap in research that addresses art therapy approaches and interventions that focuses on academic or career-related goals. However, research combining art therapy and career counseling has grown (Randick & Dermer, 2013). The data were organized in a literature matrix through content themes. These themes were analyzed by comparing and contrasting the findings to develop a proposal for a school-based career counseling art therapy program.

The existing literature discussed the benefits of utilizing self-exploration and strengths-based interventions in academic and career success (Randick & Dermer, 2013). This review included 40 individually cited sources, including book chapters, textbooks, research studies, editorials, and information articles. These sources have a collection of key terms and topics that could be used to combine and create this presented research. Looking at career theory and development, themes of identity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are necessary in fostering career readiness and success.

Among the 40 sources, 13 related to art therapy as a theme and keyword. Career development and theories were discussed in individually cited 26 sources total. Career theories of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice were within twelve sources, including eight chapters within a textbook for career development. This textbook highlighted implementing interventions with various populations and further elaborated on career theories about each population group. School counseling and career counseling are often intertwined in high school settings. School counseling sources touch on the process of

therapy in educational atmospheres, which was explained through nine sources. Seven studies focused on working only with adolescents, and three included young adults in universities. These themes bridged the gap between art therapy and career counseling.

The sources that combined career development and art therapy included four individual citations with those as search terms. However, the research provided insights into the similarity in goals found in art therapy and career counseling, which included adding seven sources regarding the themes of identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Furthermore, three sources were found that overlapped career counseling and art therapy within a school-based setting. There are many connections between art therapy in the school setting, and seven sources discuss how that has been pioneered and implemented. Within these sources, five have specific client case studies and directly present the art therapy interventions.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

The majority of the existing studies present career counseling and interventions for young adults rather than adolescents. These young adults are enrolled at a university and receive career counseling to ensure the next steps after higher education. Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2017) discuss the expectations of high schoolers to move on to college for work in degree-required fields. This expectation often leads to the lowered concern of career counseling in high school and instead academic and social-emotional counseling. College is not an accessible resource for many even though it has become a common aspiration, rather than offered as one singular option beyond high school. As a higher education goal, college preparation has more understanding than other job fields such as those in trades, like finances and construction. Many college students enroll without a true career aspiration and lack the knowledge or skills needed as a professional (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

### **Purpose of this Framework**

This proposal connected the career process and its integration into schools, including universities. Consistency in career counseling in high school can improve career readiness. This proposal intends is to provide resources that go beyond college, tailored to the individual career goals. The presented research explores the world of adolescents and key areas of development that would need to be addressed when creating a high school proposal for career counseling. Upon researching literature on adolescents, key themes such as identity formation, social factors, and cognitive changes are acknowledged to provide insight into this population. Other considerations such as student demographics and multicultural factors were addressed within a school setting. The areas of focus within development play an important role in career decisions,



especially for adolescents exploring their sense of self. It is anticipated that barriers, including mental health, less support from peers, and identity-related concerns, may be brought up in session.

The intent of this framework is that it can be used for adolescents within a diverse school setting. Other considerations will be the practical needs for implementing this in an educational environment and noting various benefits and limitations. The public nature of school, combined with the lack of availability of rooms, materials, or funding, can be potential barriers (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). This creates the need for the preparation of materials and space to comply with confidentiality requirements. A budget for supply and funding would be implemented in order to be effective with school finances. The directives for this program were carefully planned to be resourceful. While students have limited availability, breaks can also create pauses in treatment (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2019). The nature of this proposal can be completed to the individual's schedule.

The goal will be to support educational settings with a framework that considers and addresses all influences in an individual's career development and interests. For this proposal, two career development theories, Holland's Personality Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory will be explored and aligned to the individual program proposal. This proposal uses directives in art therapy literature focused on building identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Art therapy directives will be rationalized by connecting career counseling theoretical approaches.

### **Proposal**

To provide schools with a foundation for the combination of art therapy and career counseling, goals must relate to the developmental characteristics of adolescents. Many current

art directives do not solely focus on career decision-making and planning but instead on what the individual may need to conquer and explore goals. The three themes of identity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are applied to career development by fostering these through art-making. The overarching goal for this program is to allow for creativity and career exploration to emerge in a school setting that already provides a curriculum geared towards helping students with professional skill sets. Pairing art therapy directives with existing career counseling would further current interventions and approaches. However, career theories, including Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice and Social Cognitive Career Theory, explain the rationale for each directive and art therapy theory.

Though the process of discovering a career can be initiated in early adolescence, this program is designed to be used in the later years of high school for older adolescents, aligning with the suggestions of Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2017). Adolescents' work in career development is crucial, as they are preparing to advance to higher education or the job world immediately. While career interest is discussed throughout childhood, career choice is more urgent, and pressure in the world of adolescents to create their future as upcoming young adults (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017).

The program is designed for ten weeks of weekly individual sessions for 60 minutes. The program starts with introductions, similar to the suggestions of Gysbers et al. (2014), who noted the importance of rapport building and explaining processes such as confidentiality during this time. Each session builds upon the prior session and offers a scaffolded approach to developing therapeutic goals. Accommodations are made based on barriers relating to current needs, such as mental health, physical health, and social barriers. The directives mentioned in this proposal are aimed to allow exploration of themselves and use insights to address potential obstacles while

creating empowerment and confidence in their ability to achieve their goals. The stages for career counseling structured in Gysbers et al. (2014) are utilized in this program to align with the stages and goals presented.

### ***Stage 1: Rapport Building***

**Purpose.** This session is the initial meeting between the therapist and client and will focus on rapport building. According to Gysbers et al. (2014), this is a time for the client to understand treatment dynamics, such as responsibility and confidentiality. The client will share concerns and goals relating to career counseling (Gysbers et al., 2014). Rapport building is essential in this session (Gysbers et al., 2014). The nature of this program is a small timeframe. However, time can be accommodated for individuals to effectively explore careers and factors relating to the process. Other topics may include viewpoints based on personal and environmental factors (Gysbers et al., 2014). Processing questions serve therapists to learn more about the client and see any defenses that may arise from the creative process. It would be necessary for the therapist to know if the client shows hesitation in personal exploration and figure out reasoning to address it effectively.

**Table 1***Mask Making*

Session	1
Career Counseling Theory	Social Cognitive Career Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice
Goals	rapport building
Materials	mask paint glitter miscellaneous decorative materials
Directive	Introductory mask-making that can explore personality traits and identity and environmental factors (Wallace-DiGarbo & Hill, 2006).
Processing Questions	What do others see of you? What is internalized? What parts of your identity did you include on your mask? Did you create this mask based on reality or how you wish to be perceived by others?

**Goals Explained.** This directive includes the use of mask-making. As a starting point, the client will explore their life and who they are. The client will begin to think of family and community influences and how they impact them as an individual. This dialogue also presents the chance to see social influences. The building of rapport is important in this stage. The mask and directive can be as simplified or detailed as the client wishes, which may provide more structure and less expectation on art quality.

**Processing Questions.** These questions help the therapist learn more about the client and see any defenses that may arise from the creative process. It would be important for the therapist

to know if the client is showing hesitation in personal exploration and figure out reasoning to address it effectively.

**Table 2**

*Self-portrait*

Session	2
Career Counseling Theory	Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice
Goals	continued rapport building, self-evaluations with career assessment
Materials	paper drawing materials
Directive	Draw how you see yourself and your traits before taking the assessment. After completing the assessment, draw what insights have emerged and connections to the traits provided. The client and therapist will compare the two drawings.
Processing Questions	What has this assessment taught you about yourself?  Are there any connections or curiosities about careers you did not have prior?  Did this confirm any traits that you feel you had?

**Goals Explained.** This session will continue rapport building and strengthen the therapeutic relationship while using tasks such as personal evaluations and assessments (Gysbers et al., 2014). Along with further personal exploration, the other goals of this session are to begin to educate the client on the impacts of a career and give exploration resources. This session is built to explore career choices as they arise and get an insight on how to take the next steps toward goals. Assessments can be utilized as an introduction to exploring career paths that follow traits, specifically using Holland's RIASEC traits. Based on a code of realistic,

investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional, assessment participants will gain in-depth knowledge of personality traits that are both cultural and personal (Nauta, 2020). Guided imagery in pairing with assessments, helps the client's connection (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). This code will be explored about the individual throughout the program.

This directive includes a series of drawings. The client can do the first drawing to represent their idea of self and traits before taking the assessment. The next drawing will be done after the assessment. Using Holland's assessment, the client will create an image representing the explorations of personality traits. Therapists will ask clients to think about the insights that emerged from research and using this assessment.

**Processing Questions.** During these questions and looking at the indicators of the artwork, the therapist may find and gauge where the client was with self-awareness and personal exploration. These questions may provide feedback on whether or not the client found benefits to this assessment in this process.

### ***Stage 2: Self-Exploration***

**Purpose.** This stage includes an in-depth exploration of the client and helps them understand identity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem in the role of this career exploration through psychotherapy. In line with the career stages from Gysbers et al. (2014), this stage strengthens therapeutic relationships by the act of exploring specific goals of treatment. The client presents their own social, cultural, and historical meanings of their worldviews (Gysbers et al., 2014). As presented in research, these factors will influence the client's choices, including vocational choices. It can affect career path and details such as companies, positions, and locations. Client roles can be understood in the past, present, and future, and how it impacts how they see

themselves (Gysbers et al., 2014). Barriers are further described and reflected on, and possible solutions could be made or processing emotional responses to barriers (Gysbers et al., 2014). The directives below aim to take an open-ended approach to processing these barriers. Overall, this stage will help gather information personal to their career journeys in hopes of connecting it to themselves.

**Table 3**

*Future Self*

Session	3
Career Counseling Theory	Social Cognitive Career Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice
Goals	identity exploration
Materials	paper drawing materials
Directive	Following a guided script, clients are asked to process themselves in the future, specifically what they envision as a career, and creatively draw what they imagined (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). They might draw their first job as they imagine what it can be like to be there and what they may experience (Buchalter, 2004).
Processing Questions	What are your feelings arising from exploring yourself and the work environment?  What do you anticipate about the work environment?  Are there similarities to school?  What job did you envision for yourself?

**Goals Explained.** A large factor of development for teens is fitting into social settings and surroundings while feeling safe in who they are personally (Parisian, 2015). Relating to

family and peers, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and gender, these factors make up an identity and how viewpoints are shaped (Parisian, 2015). With the exploration of personal traits that align with social experiences, this will be a time for the client to explore themselves in connection to the world around them. A directive by Buchalter (2004) asks clients to represent themselves in a first job specifically, which may provide a chance to explore changes in career interests.

Reflecting on past sessions, the therapist will have the client draw themselves about a job environment. This directive can be a chance to explore feelings relating to jobs and how adolescents may wish to navigate that. With a narrative approach, career counseling art directives can help with anticipation, questions, memories, and possible challenges to this process for the individual (Marshall & Farrell, 2019). This session will give the client a creative glimpse of their inner thoughts about the vocational world. Discussion between the client and therapist will provide perspective into underlying unconscious thoughts associated with this process. There is also a guided imagery script mentioned by Marshall and Farrell (2019) that helps the conversation and exploration of the envisioned future for the client.

**Processing Questions.** Exploring emotions or fears with jobs can provide the therapist with the client's perspective and past experiences with jobs. Often, part-time job exploration is common for adolescents to gain professional skills and continue the efficiency of social skills (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

#### **Table 4**

*Vision Board*



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Session	4
Career Counseling Theory	Social Cognitive Career Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice
Goals	self-efficacy exploration
Materials	paper collage materials glue stick tape
Directive	With the materials given, a vision board collage can be created to serve as a planning board (Waalkes et al., 2019). For a specific directive, this vision board will also explore fostering motivation in addition to personal representation.
Processing Questions	What motivates or inspires you to grow? What has inspired your career interests so far? How can seeking resources help support your journey to a career path and future satisfaction? Have you previously thought about your skills and talents regarding career choice? How has this influenced your choice of career?

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**Goals Explained.** Combining both Holland's theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory, which looks to highlight the importance of self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2013). The use of creativity and problem-solving skills further self-efficacy and gives confidence to learn the necessary skill sets (Kapitan, 2014). This session will aim to get an understanding of how barriers affect self-efficacy.

**Processing Questions.** The therapist will ask the client to include factors in daily life that motivate and inspire them. This will allow problem-solving skills in real-time to show the therapist how the client faces personal needs.

**Table 5***Abstract Self-portrait*

Session	5
Career Counseling Theory	Social Cognitive Career Theory
Goals	self-esteem exploration
Materials	paper collage drawing materials
Directive	Create an abstract image of yourself through collage.
Processing Questions	What are some of your strengths and areas of growth? What influences this?

**Goals.** By fostering self-esteem, clients are provided with encouragement to make professional connections that are often needed in the vocational world (Kapitan, 2014). At this life stage, confidence and self-esteem make a difference in the individual in many ways. In this session, the client will explore acceptance and positive feelings relating to their personality and individual strengths. A collage can be made that helps the client process feelings of self through words and imagery. This also helps gain more insight into factors influencing confidence and how that may affect future job satisfaction.

**Processing Questions.** The therapist can ask questions relating to feelings identification and how it affects the client's daily activities. This may also help the client think about what positively or negatively influences their self-esteem.

***Stage 3: Conclusion***

**Purpose.** This is the concluding session, in which reflection will be a guide to review and connect everything that was learned and discussed. This stage will take the information and directly relate it to the continuation of future goals to be completed beyond the program (Gysbers et al., 2014). This will also include problem-solving and selecting appropriate intervention or the client that can help the process outside of the session (Gysbers et al., 2014).

**Table 6***Mandala*

Session	6
Career Counseling Theory	Social Cognitive Career Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice
Goals	conclusion, providing resources
Materials	paper drawing materials
Directive	With this mandala, add compartments that include your insights from the assessment scoring and add other parts of your identity. Draw your identity, environment, and personalities merging to create you as a person and how it influences your goals.
Processing Questions	What are some things learned or gained from this program? What would you change about the program? Did these explorations provide you with the personal discovery that can align with career development?

**Goals.** This session will combine all the insights of previous sessions and act as a review. The therapist and client will work together to create action plans about career exploration

objectives (Gysbers et al., 2014). This session will work to reiterate the resources and options available to the client. Using the variation of the compartments within a mandala suggested by Buchalter (2004), the client will use the creative expression for reviewing knowledge gained from assessments such as Holland's RIASEC scores. This provides another space for clients to showcase their takeaways and for the therapist to provide resources relating to them.

**Processing Questions.** These questions will serve as a review and the overall satisfaction of their participation in the program. They may also provide insight to the therapist about how the client relates all of the information together and connects it back together. This may help the client connect the pieces to the relevance of these parts in choosing a career that can bring fulfillment and satisfaction.

**Termination.** Because of the individual person-centered basis of this program, termination would depend on factors such as their current needs. The school scheduling and timeline are also factors, depending on when the student seeks guidance relating to careers. Ideally, students would begin to explore their career interests in their second and third years of high school, and then completion would be aimed to be before seeking out resources to begin the next steps to the career path in their final year.

**Limitations.** The combination of art therapy and career counseling in literature was limited, so key themes were often explored as common goals between these interventions. Multicultural factors were identified about how they may affect career decisions. A presented limitation on research on the impact of gender identities on career development within the LGBTQIA2+ community. Other limitations and adjustments were made based on age representations regarding career development literature. Some of the research used was based on

young adult development and their efforts in career exploration. These adjustments align with research on adolescent development and certain milestones in line with this life stage.

## Chapter VI

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The literature reviewed for this study discussed theories and research that highlight interventions that impact career exploration and provide opportunities to understand cultural identity barriers, socioeconomic concerns, mental health and wellness, and challenges to successfully choosing a career path. Furthermore, family barriers and a lack of support systems impact career readiness and selection. It was found that providing a space to explore careers can make a difference to the student.

This proposal was designed to explore strengths and barriers to aid in career exploration. A limitation in my research is the lack of resources that connect art therapy directly with career counseling. However, this proposal demonstrates that there is an overlap in the goals. Increasing career counseling in high school offers learning opportunities to develop professional skills. With art therapy and career counseling, students are allowed to explore themselves. Often in educational settings, there are guidelines, rules, and expectations for every student. However, the personal experience one may have that creates challenges are not addressed. Furthermore, personality and individual strengths can also be celebrated as impacting academic achievement and growing skills to join the world of career.

With all this in mind, it is the job of the art therapist to be mindful of the barriers in place and work on celebrating the individual. Maintaining a growth mindset and focusing on empowerment supports developing abilities to overcome challenges and obstacles. The art therapist can help the student through the narrative of what a successful career looks like. For this, students must be guided on choices in line with their wishes, as well as helping them realize

the variety of paths and goals they can take. Overall, the therapeutic relationship may mimic professional skills, such as boundary setting, goal sharing, and communication skills. The program created is meant to allow the individual to explore career interests. As the directives appear vague and open-ended, the hope is that the clients find their connection and start the topics in dialogue, with some prompting in questions provided by the therapist.

Based on this research, it is recommended to be mindful of the limitations experienced within the school setting, including but not limited to funding, space, and schedule. Furthermore, it is imperative to be aware of cultural and systematic barriers that students face regarding engagement in services, career exploration, and planning opportunities. While this program has created a framework about individual students, variations to implementing a group therapy space to explore careers may be made. As part of the limitations, school settings would not be able to provide follow-up and discuss satisfaction in career path. It is in the interest of the students for the concluding session to provide ways for the client to check in with satisfaction and address continued stress or emotions from the workplace.

To enhance current research, continued work can discuss the impacts of cultural identity on career development. Specifically, studies can continue to be updated and created to the relevance of current events and research that includes multicultural understanding. The impacts of recent world events will continue to impact individuals and their career development and various paths they may take. Systemic barriers need to be raised for awareness, and changes will continuously happen, and research should reflect that. Furthermore, research shows the growth of technology use and how that may impact art therapy and career counseling and how it affects the working fields. Virtual work settings have become increasingly relevant to current events and provide new insights on options and planning for career development.

Overall, there could be continuation of implementing art therapy and career counseling together in schools. Art therapy has versatility in use that can support career development theories. The current research often discussed career exploration for adolescents and young adults, but more work can continue to help career satisfaction for adults and older adults. There is existing literature to back up the use of art therapy with multiple age groups and existing literature for the role of career throughout one's life. Growth in research combining art therapy with career development may present evidence for more similarities and insights to enrich the process, regardless of the stage of life. While this proposal is aimed to enrich the beginning of one's career exploration, connection and satisfaction continues after career choice.



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Career Development and Exploration in Art Therapy

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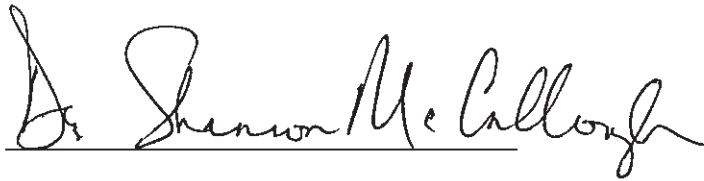


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