



## Supporting Young Adult Immigrant Career Transition: A Contextual Action Theory Intervention

Mindy Ming-Jung Chiang<sup>1</sup>, Alejandra Botia<sup>1</sup>, Mathew Gendron<sup>1</sup>, Meredith MacKenzie<sup>1</sup>, Margaret Noel<sup>1</sup>, Kesha Pradhan<sup>1</sup>, Shalet Rosario<sup>1</sup>, Vanessa Silva<sup>1</sup>, Christine M. Yu<sup>1</sup>, Jose Domene<sup>2</sup>, Yan Liu<sup>1</sup>, Natalee Popadiuk<sup>3</sup>, Richard Young<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia, <sup>2</sup>University of Calgary, <sup>3</sup>University of Victoria

### Introduction

Young adult immigrants face multiple transitions as they settle in a new country. Particularly, many immigrants face significant challenges in their career development<sup>1</sup>.

Individual-focused counselling approaches may not be adequate to address the unique meaning-making process of starting a career in a new country.

This poster introduces a supportive intervention grounded in the Contextual Action Theory<sup>2</sup>.

### Contextual Action Theory

Contextual Action Theory (CAT) conceptualize immigrant career transition as a **goal-directed** and **socially constructed** process. CAT emphasizes:

- **Social nature** of transitions
- **Agency** underlying actions

Focus is on **forward-looking** goal-directed processes rather than causal explanations from the past

This supportive intervention is based on the related **Action-Project Method**<sup>3</sup>, and aims to:

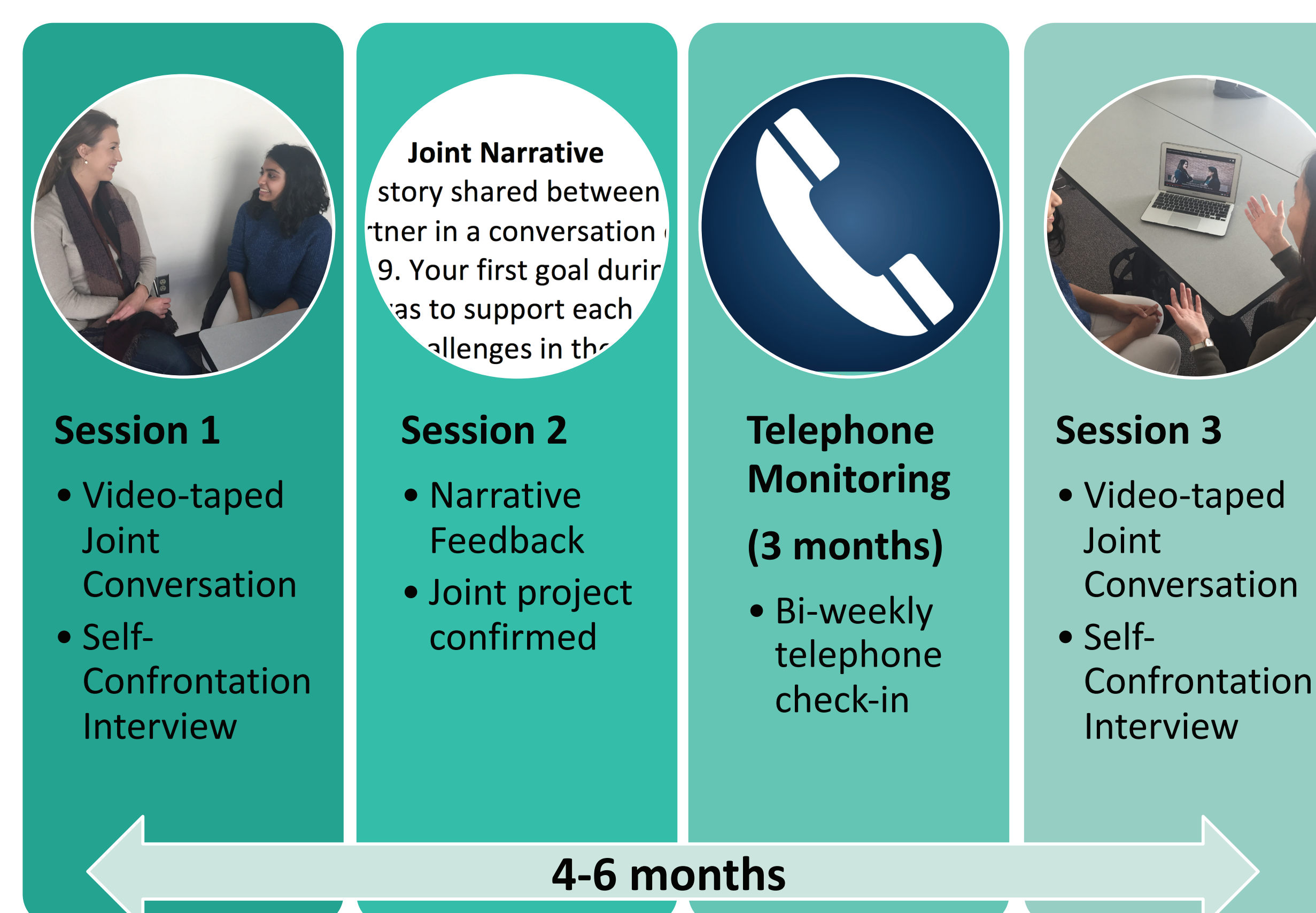
- Make explicit the goal-directed actions (project) in which individuals are already engaged with others pertinent to their career transition
- Facilitate the joint project over 4-6 months through: joint conversation, self-confrontation, narrative feedback, telephone monitoring



Picture credit: <http://www.brexaminer.com/magazine/weekly/brexaminer-v1-44>  
<http://blogs.ubc.ca/khagge/2011/10/10/the-impact-of-future-expectations-on-stock-markets>



### Intervention



### Case Illustration

	Kevin	Julie
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21-yr-old</li> <li>• In Canada 3 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23-yr-old</li> <li>• In Canada 6 months</li> </ul>
<b>Joint Project</b>	To problem solve and work toward shared goals (e.g. gain more clarity around career path) by identifying ideas and strategies that could support one another in transitioning into this new phase of adulthood	
<b>Intervention Support Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer each other ideas and problem-solve challenges together</li> <li>• Find community career supports and resources to explore future career paths</li> <li>• Practice English together and with your friends and attend MeetUps</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions taken over 3 months</b>	<b>Kevin</b>	<b>Julie</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sought out job shadowing opportunities and tried to network</li> <li>• Raised concerns and uncertainties over his path &amp; brainstormed with researcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reached out to professionals for informational interviews</li> <li>• Asked questions and gained a better understanding of interested professions</li> </ul>

### Discussion



- This supportive intervention facilitated the goal-directed actions of young adult immigrants toward career development
- Building community and social connections seems to be an important component in young adult immigrant career transition

### References

1. Yakushko, O., Backhaus, A., Watson, M., Ngaruiya, K., & Gonzalez, J. (2008). Career development concerns of recent immigrants and refugees. *Journal of Career Development*, 34(4), 362-396.
2. Young, R. A., Valach, L., & Collin, A. (2002). A contextual explanation of career. In D. Brown & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (4th ed., pp. 206-250). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
3. Young, R. A., Valach, L., & Domene, J. F. (2005). The action-project method in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 215-223.

**We'd like to hear from you!**  
**How have you supported immigrants in their career transition?**