

Career Chats: A New Group Advising Format

Atifa F. Karim, MEd, OCT
Lead Coordinator, Career Education



Agenda

- **Setting the Context:** Why did Career Exploration & Education develop a group advising program and model?
- **Overview of Career Chats:** Program Goals, Structure, Assessment Results & Next Steps
- **Program Design:** Putting it into Action!



Learning Outcomes

- Articulate strength and impact of group advising
- Describe theories used to design and assess this model
- Examine challenges and opportunities related to group advising



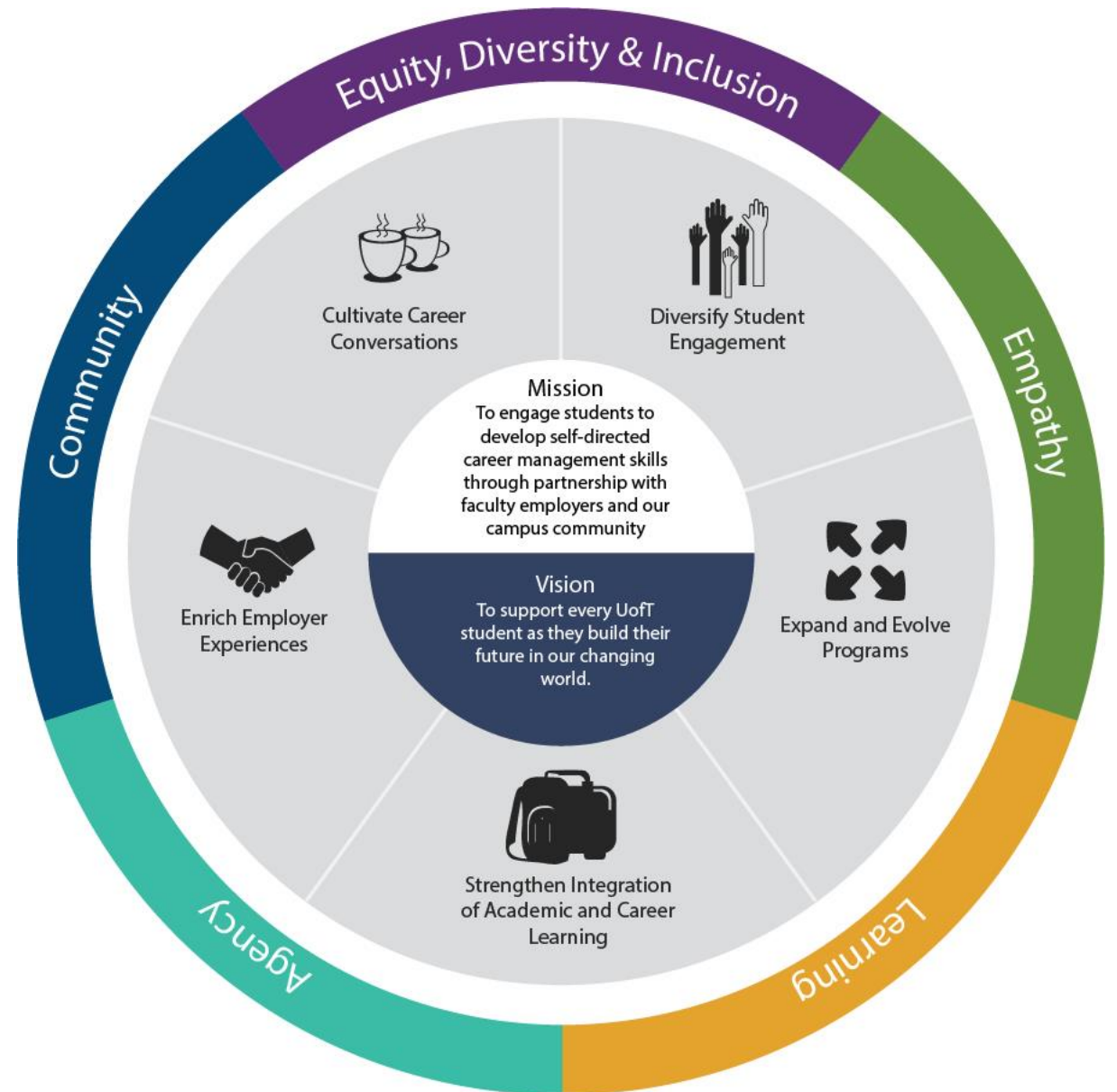
What is group advising?

- When you consider designing and implementing a group advising program, what comes to mind?
 - Assumptions
 - Anticipated Challenges
 - Possible Benefits



Career Exploration & Education

- Career Education
- Employer Recruitment & Engagement
- Career Exploration
- Peer Programs



Career Learning



Rationale: Emerging Career Needs

- **Drop In Survey** – students expressed a strong interest in having additional opportunities to drop-in for a casual conversation
- **Exploring Meaningful Work Project** – students want to explore the “messy” questions about career, and want more access to Career Educators as “a source of information, mentorship and inspiration”
- **Innovation Hub** – students expressed a need for “way-showing” and are seeking spaces to connect and openly ask questions

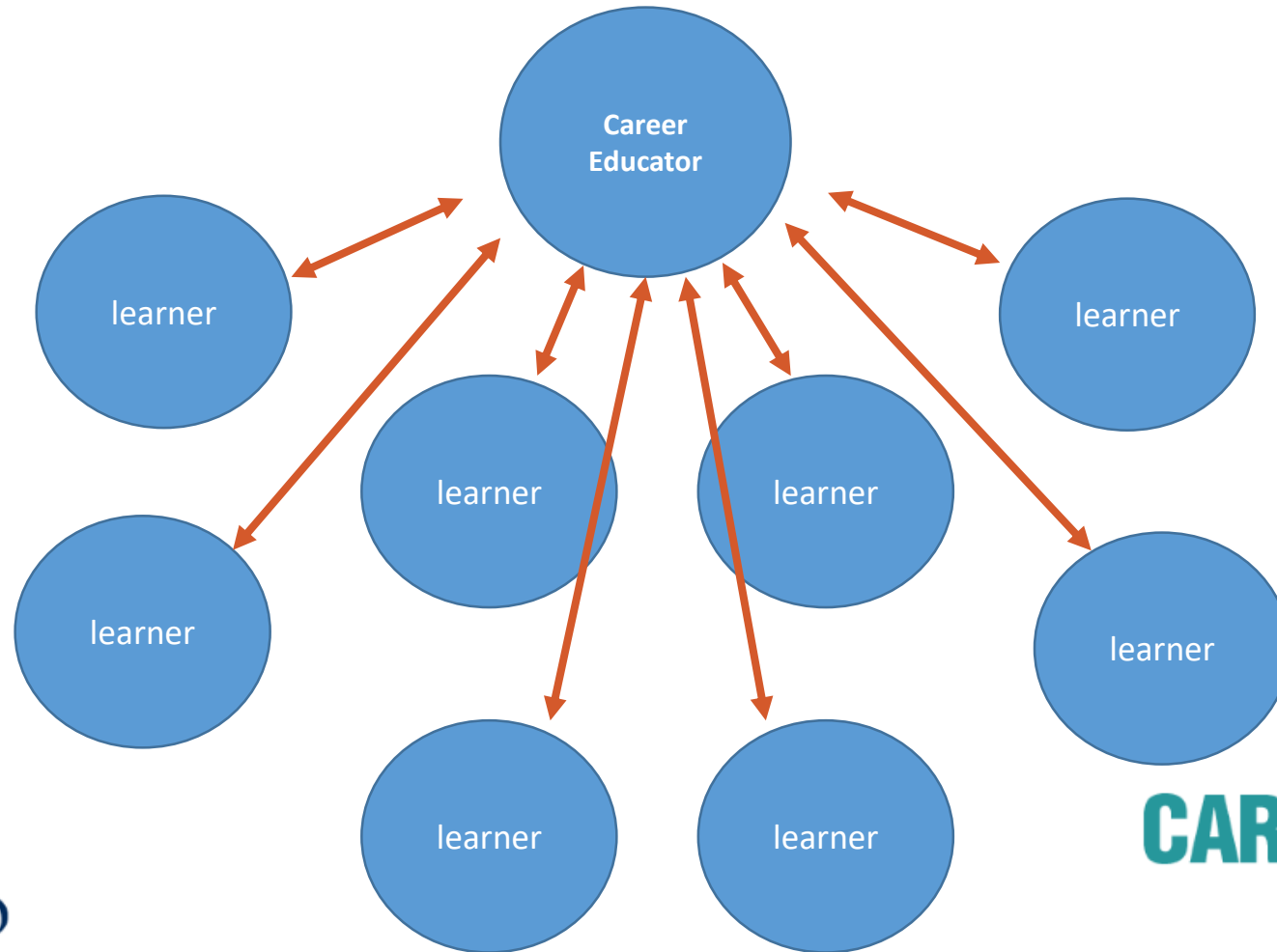


Perfect Timing: Student Success Centre



**CAREER EXPLORATION
& EDUCATION**
Student Life

Conceptual Models



Program Overview

- **Program Goals**

- Create consistently welcoming space for students to drop in and explore their career exploration, and job searching questions
- Facilitate a discussion-based learning experience that emphasizes peer-to-peer interaction, reflection, and fosters hope, perseverance, and optimism.

- **Student Learning Goals**

- Further clarify and articulate personal values, strengths, skills, and interest in relation to their self, academic, and career identity
- Identify and develop strategies to navigate the sometimes ambiguous and challenging nature of career exploration and job searching.



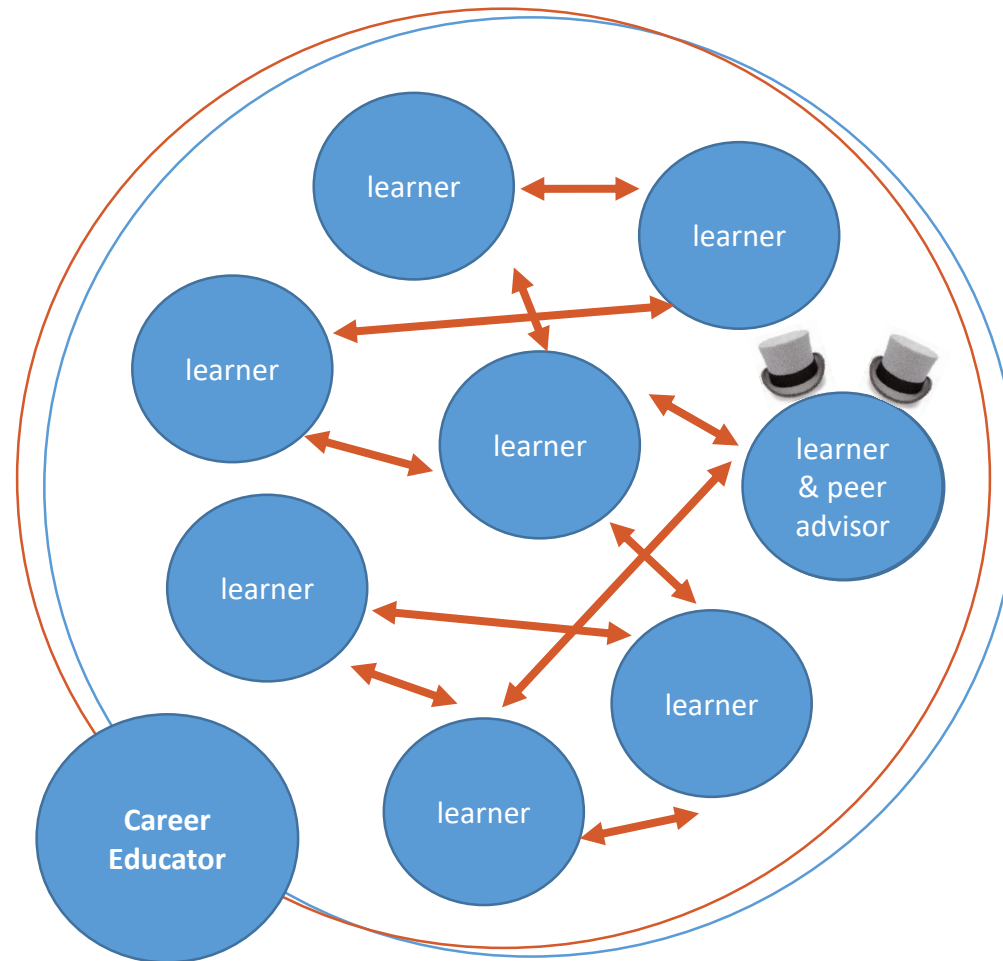
**CAREER EXPLORATION
& EDUCATION**
Student Life

Theoretical Foundations

- **Appreciative Advising** – an intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students reflect on their experiences, and engage in goal setting to achieve their goals
- **Solutions Focused Coaching** – employs questions that focus and refocus the session on solutions based on the individual’s strengths and maintains a future-focus orientation
- **Heron’s Six Categories of Intervention** – a conceptual framework for understanding interpersonal relationships within a “helping relationship”. The service provider can take either an ‘Authoritative’ or ‘Facilitative’ role



Conceptual Model



Program Overview

Time	Stage	Learning Objectives
10 mins	Disarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect learners as peers asking the same questions• Normalizes experiences• Data gathering and group assessment
5 mins	Discover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifies the “it” of the topic being discussed• Connect learners as peers asking the same questions• Gets the agenda items heard and organized
25-30 mins	Dream	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Productive discussion that moves topic from individual’s to the group’s experiences• Ask learners to actively note next steps, thoughts, ideas, resources
5 mins	Re-discover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-clarifies the “It” of the topic being discussed• More clarity may change the agenda
5 mins	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop next-steps based on discussion
5 mins	Deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commit to own goals and actions to be taken
5 mins	Stepping Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide learners with commitment to continued support• Final reflection on hour of learning and change• Assessment data collection

Career Chats



**CAREER
CHATS**

Join informal, small-group sessions that bring together current students, recent grads and a career educator to talk about:

- networking
- exploring career options
- job search motivation
- exploring further education

**No registration required,
light snacks provided.**

Thursdays 12 – 1 p.m.

CLNX.utoronto.ca

Group Collaborative Learning



Program Assessment – Proof of Concept

- **Learning Format KPIs**

- Peer Career Advisors identify the format as valuable to continue or to develop into other career learning areas or collaborations.
- Career Educators identify that the learning format enables the use of a ‘facilitative’ approach (based on Heron’s 6 Categories of Intervention Model).

- **Student Learning and Engagement KPIs**

- Consistent participation rate of 2-3 students or recent alumni at each session.
- Participants gain insights or clarity as a result of participating.
- Students consistently rate their experience in session as satisfied or highly satisfied.



Assessment Results: Learning Format

- **Peer Advisor Reflections**

- Participants have “a central role in leading the conversation, setting the agenda and actively participating in discussion on their own”
- “Challenges common, and often harmful and/or inaccurate, stereotypes regarding career planning and pathways”

- Career Educators reported that they most commonly took a “**catalytic**” approach

- **Enabling Factors:**

- diversity of learners (levels of study &, programs of study, work/life experience)
- small group meant sufficient time to engage in reflective “messy” questions
- presence of a peer advisor to model engagement



Assessment Results: Student Satisfaction

- Approximately 5-6 participants at each Career Chat
 - Over 60% of participants were in year 1-3
- 82% of participants would recommend the program
- Other feedback:
 - *Thank you for making this space so inclusive! This workshop has given me useful tips for where to look next in my career exploration.*
 - *I think it is very helpful to bounce ideas off of people.*
 - *I love that this info can be applied to regular life. I think this will help with my confidence overall*



Assessment Results: Student Learning

- Increased understanding of career process, personal mindset, and knowledge of career strategies and resources
- 86% of students identified that they were confident they could positively respond to career ambiguity and challenges. (Pre = 39%).
- 90% of students identified that the session helped them understand how to use the information and resources available to them. (Pre = 48%).
- Normalization of experience: I learnt “that other people have similar concerns” as I do.



Lessons Learnt & Next Steps

- Refining the topics
- Student reflection and note taking tool
- Value of opening conversation on discretion vs. confidentiality
- Training for Career Educators & Peer Facilitators
- Continued evolution of learning formats (“Career Camps”)
- Updating our Advising Service model



**CAREER EXPLORATION
& EDUCATION**
Student Life

Putting into Action!



- In your current setting, where do you see an opportunity for a group advising program?
- What topics might work well for you and your students?
- What strategies, tools and/or resources can you use to navigate any anticipated challenges?



thank you!

Atifa F. Karim – atifa.karim@utoronto.ca



**CAREER EXPLORATION
& EDUCATION**
Student Life