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Child and Adolescent Career Construction: An Expressive Arts Group Intervention

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ABSTRACT

The Child and Adolescent Career Construction Interview (CACCI) is a developmentally appropriate expressive art intervention designed to facilitate self-expression and career exploration for children nine years and older. The CACCI includes a socio-emotional emphasis; clients are encouraged to explore self-concept and life themes in addition to career awareness and identity. The intervention lends itself to application within both mental health and career counseling contexts because of the integration of personal identity and career identity variables. This article describes the CACCI treatment protocol, critical components of the intervention, and rationale for each session along with related questions. The use of a case example further illustrates the application of the protocol.

KEYWORDS

Career construction; child and adolescent; career development; expressive arts; creativity in counseling

Given the relationship between work and mental health, it is perplexing that there has been an artificial distinction between career counseling and mental health counseling on the part of many clients and counselors. Career counseling and personal counseling are often referred to as if they were completely separate entities. In fact, there are few things more personal than a career choice (Niles & Pate, 1989, p. 64).

Career counseling and mental health counseling are both rooted in vocational guidance, yet there still exists a false division between these two counseling modalities (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017). Researchers have found few differences between clients in counseling that report career related issues, and those that do not, indicating that career concerns do not function in isolation (Pace & Quinn, 2000). In fact, career counseling clients' responses to intake questions and assessments often indicate a fundamental mental health challenge (Walker & Peterson, 2012). Personal counseling issues may serve as the catalyst for career problems or exacerbate existing career-related concerns; underlying mental health difficulties, such as depression or anxiety, may impede the career counseling process if clients are unable to engage in the cognitive processing and decision-making activities typically involved in career counseling (Walker & Peterson, 2012).

The potential intersection between career and mental health challenges highlights the importance for career counselors to employ appropriate screening to assess client's readiness to engage in career decision-making and exploration (Pace & Quinn, 2000). Moreover, career counselors may benefit from utilizing interventions that both engage and develop clients' socio-emotional resources (Walker & Peterson, 2012). In so doing, career

counselors can more readily assess for clients' emotional needs and tailor interventions to meet career and mental health needs concurrently.

Addressing both cognitive and socio-emotional variables in career counseling entails creative approaches to interventions (Walker & Peterson, 2012). This is particularly important when working with children and adolescents given their need for non-verbal means of communication during therapy (Ceballos, Bratton, & Meany-Walen, 2017). Specifically, scholars in the field advocate for the use of expressive art activities in group work with preadolescents to meet their unique developmental needs (Ojiambo & Bratton, 2014; Veach & Gladding, 2007). Thus, child and adolescent career counselors are encouraged to adopt developmentally appropriate approaches that meet the specific mental health needs of this population while still attending to key career development benchmarks (Sharf, 2013).

Child and adolescent career development

There is a dearth of literature related to childhood career development (Sharf, 2013). Particularly within the school context, there is a focus on externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors, general classroom conduct, remaining on-task and performing academically (Sink, 2008); there is less emphasis on specific career development concerns. The existing career development literature focuses more on late adolescent career development (Sharf, 2013). Assessments and activities are more in line with older adolescents' who have the cognitive capacity to actively engage in career decision making processes. They also have acquired future time perspective necessary to more accurately understand and evaluate the future career impact on current decision-making and academic engagement (Ferrari, Nota, & Soresi, 2012). This is largely due to the limitations of time perspective, which rarely manifests before age nine (Ferrari et al., 2012). The issue of time perspective perseveres during the pre-adolescent phase because although during this stage children start to develop abstract thinking, they often revert to concrete thinking (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2011). Yet, within the career counseling field, there tends to be a future orientation; it is common for adults to ask children and adolescents "what do you want to be when you grow up?" This question conflicts with an inability to think of current and future interests in an abstract manner. Thus, it is important for career counselors that regularly work with children and adolescents to have a thorough understanding of key developmental milestones and career concerns at each stage (Sharf, 2013), and tailor interventions to meet both the mental health and developmental needs of the target population.

During preadolescence, between the ages of 9 and 13, children start to experience curiosity and self-confidence in their ability to engage in career decision-making (Savickas, 2013). According to Porfeli and Lee (2012), throughout adolescence, career counseling encompasses "achieving progress on vocational identity development tasks, on the one hand, and improved well-being and diminished distress throughout adolescence ... on the other" (p. 11). The authors further emphasized that career development during adolescence focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of self. This indicates that career development activities for adolescents should facilitate a *here and now orientation*. That is, preadolescents should be encouraged to explore current interests, skills, values, personality, identity variables, and socio-emotional issues. This present-focused approach may help

preadolescents develop current self-awareness and lay the foundation for future self-exploration by helping them develop key identity awareness skills as they move through adolescent development. In addition, career interventions need to be delivered in developmentally appropriate ways that respond to the communication style and social needs specific to adolescent development.

Developmentally appropriate career counseling modalities

Group work

The 1980s saw an explosion of group activities and team-focused endeavors across organizational, educational, and counseling settings (Proehl, 1995). Consistent with this movement toward the shared experience, the career development field followed suit and career group interventions such as the Life Planning Workshop and the Vocational Exploration Group increased in popularity (Proehl, 1995). Since then, career counselors and research-practitioners have utilized career counseling groups to address a wide range of career development concerns (Pyle, 2007). Apart from the efficiency of providing career counseling services in group format, research suggests that offering group services facilitates universality (Hamm, Mack, & Dunaway, 2010), development of self-efficacy (Sarvi, 2016), social support, and social skills rehearsal (Harel, Shechtman, & Cutrona, 2011).

Schechtman (2007) endorsed the use of group work with children and adolescents, not only to better utilize limited resources, but more so to meet the specific developmental needs of this population. Given the increased knowledge regarding the mental health and academic needs of children and adolescents (Sharf, 2013), and the focus on early detection of educational, behavioral and psychological issues (Mental Health America [MHA], 2011), clinicians and researchers are examining more appropriate ways of intervening with this population, especially within the school system (Weare, 2013). Group work is ideal for preadolescents in particular as they are becoming more dependent on friends to problem solve and to achieve a sense of belonging (Kretschmer, Sentse, Kornelis Dijkstra, & Veenstra, 2014).

Whether working in community agencies, private practice or the school context, addressing the needs of children and adolescents requires an acknowledgment that one cannot simply run these groups in the same way that one would run an adult group. In her study of the key therapeutic factors for children and adolescents, Schechtman (2007) developed a “unique theory of child group counseling and therapy ... using an expressive-supporting modality” (p. 9), a combination of Hill’s (2005) and Prochaska’s (1999) models. Research on this adapted approach indicates that children and adolescents tend to benefit most from groups that offer support through opportunities for self-disclosure and self-expression (Schechtman, 2007). The use of expressive art activities within a group therapy format provides children and adolescents with a developmentally responsive means to reconsider perceptions about self as they try out new roles and solutions within the safety of the group (Ceballos et al., 2017). This highlights the importance of developing mental health and career counseling interventions that offer children and adolescents a safe space that allows for appropriate self-disclosure, while facilitating increased self-awareness and creative self-expression.

Use of expressive arts

Within the last two decades, counseling research-practitioners have increasingly used expressive art techniques and interventions with clients across the lifespan (Perryman, Moss, & Cochran, 2015). Rogers (1993) described expressive art therapy as utilizing “various arts-movement, drawing, painting, sculpting, music, writing, sound, and improvisation-in a supportive setting to facilitate growth and healing. It is a process of discovering ourselves through any art form that comes from an emotional depth” (p.2). The focus is not an evaluation of the artistic product, but rather, an emphasis on the therapeutic process, meaning-making, and self-expression of the client.

Children can benefit from mental health and educational interventions that incorporate various art forms including music (Davis, 2010), storytelling, visual arts (Leggett, 2009), digital media art (Jamerson, 2013) and sand-tray (Knoetze, 2013). By incorporating both talk and play-based interactions, utilizing creative forms of expression in the counseling context can help children with both verbal and non-verbal expression (Leggett, 2009). Similarly, school counselors and career counselors that work with children can utilize play-based interventions and expressive art media to promote mental health and facilitate early career awareness.

Whereas young children’s lack of time perspective limits a direct connection between current interests and a specific career path, research findings suggest that middle schoolers are already thinking about future careers (Shapiro et al., 2015). Even though preadolescents can use abstract thinking skills, they often revert to concrete thinking during times of cognitive or emotional distress (NIMH, 2011). Therefore, it is important to develop mental health and career counseling interventions that respond to preadolescents’ developmental need to negotiate between abstract and concrete thinking. Incorporating expressive art media can allow pre-adolescents to navigate between verbal and nonverbal expression within the therapeutic and career counseling contexts (Akos & Martin, 2003). The use of expressive arts with preadolescents also supports the healing process (Grey, 2010) and increases resiliency (Jang & Sunnan, 2012).

In North America, work is a core component of most teenagers’ lives (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006). Consistent with the development of time perspective and a culture-driven emphasis on work identity, theories of adolescent identity development often focus on the significance of adolescents’ future career goals (Yeager, Bundick, & Johnson, 2012). Within the therapeutic setting research-practitioners have found the use of expressive art media to be helpful in facilitating the creative expression of adolescents (Bratton, Taylor, & Akay, 2014). Adolescents have a natural affinity for self-expression through expressive arts, thus their identity development can be demonstrated through art therapy and other creative media (Khan, 1999). Career identity development is key to overall adolescent development (Berk, 2014) and as such, expressive art media can also facilitate career exploration and career identity development.

With appropriate screening, the freedom of expression facilitated by expressive arts career counseling interventions may be further enhanced if group work is involved. A group experience led by a skilled clinician allows for shared experiences, the opportunity for participants to listen to each other and even engage in problem-solving where applicable (Basso, 2010).

Child and adolescent career construction interview

The Child and Adolescent Career Construction Interview (CACCI) is a modification of the Career Construction Interview (CCI; Savickas, 2015). The CCI, grounded in career construction theory, is a structured interview that utilizes a narrative approach to career exploration and assessment. During the CCI, the counselor explores five areas aimed at eliciting life themes and facilitating the client's career decision-making. In contrast to employing career instruments to assess interests or other attributes, the CCI focuses on the process of developing meaning and understanding of both life and work roles (Savickas, 2005). This may be particularly helpful to students who may not yet benefit from the trait-and-factor approach which is often used in middle and high school career development programs (Savickas, 2001, p. 53).

To date, the CCI has been utilized with adults facing career transitions (Reh fuss, Del Corso, Glavin, & Wykes, 2011), college students exploring potential majors of study (Reh fuss, 2009), and high school students struggling with career indecision (Reh fuss & Sickinger, 2015). However, the nature of the five scaffolding questions positions the CCI for application to the preadolescent population as well. The CACCI involves a modification of the CCI to include a developmentally appropriate expressive art intervention to facilitate self-expression and career exploration for children ages nine and older. Consistent with the CCI protocol, the CACCI includes a socio-emotional emphasis; clients are encouraged to explore self-concept and life themes in addition to career awareness and identity. Because of the integration of personal identity and career identity variables, the CACCI lends itself to application within both mental health and career counseling contexts. The following section describes the CACCI treatment protocol, critical components of the intervention and rationale for each session along with related questions. Sample responses from Elsa, a middle-school CACCI participant, illustrate the application of the protocol.

CACCI treatment protocol

The CACCI is an eight-week intervention consisting of seven group sessions followed by an individual session with each group participant. Sessions one through seven include introductions and orientation to the group process, adaptations of the Career Construction Interview (CCI, Savickas, 2015) questions utilizing expressive art media, and termination of the group experience. Throughout the seven-week group process the counselor takes detailed notes on the overall group experience as well as specific notes on individual participants.

Depending on the context, counselors may choose to video or audio-record sessions. At the end of seven weeks, the counselor reviews session notes and/or recordings and develops a CACCI summary sheet, an adaptation of the CCI worksheet (Savickas & Hartung, 2012), for each participant. The CACCI summary sheet is an overview of the participant's responses to questions posed during the first seven sessions and is used to elicit detailed conversation with the participant regarding current perspectives and potential academic and career decisions. The modifications of the CCI questions and worksheet primarily include using developmentally appropriate language to facilitate participants' understanding of the material presented.

CACCI materials and overall group session structure

Consistent with an emphasis on facilitating creative self-expression, the CACCI protocol utilizes expressive art media throughout the seven-week group process. CACCI materials include: individual sand trays (one for each group member), sand tray miniatures, an expressive arts cart (writing/drawing utensils, cutting tools, gluing tools, paper, play-dough/clay, paper plates, paper bags, felt, decorating materials, paint materials, glitter, beading materials), participant folders (weekly intervention questions and the CACCI summary sheet), counselor folders (CACCI protocol, post group session notes, individual session counselor notes), and a demonstration kit. Depending on the ages of participants, counselors can use the demonstration kits to facilitate the semi-structured activities and provide group members with ideas for their expressibles.

While CACCI session 1 focuses on group orientation, and CACCI session 7 covers group closure, sessions 2–6 follow the same basic format. Each session includes a welcome and brief check-in, written responses to weekly intervention questions, an opportunity for participants to draw or make expressive arts representations of their answers to the intervention questions, an opportunity for participants to share their expressible with other group members, closing of the current session, and a preview of the next session.

CACCI session 1: introductions

Group orientation

During CACCI session 1 the counselor facilitates group introductions and helps orient members to the group process. Specifically, the counselor introduces themselves, reviews confidentiality and explains what to expect from the group experience. Both the introduction and termination sessions utilize sand-tray work structured around specific prompts.

Sand tray activity

During CACCI session 1, using the following prompt, the counselor introduces the sand tray activity: *“this activity is for us to get to know each other. Using the sand tray and figures, put something together that represents you (or your life).”* The counselor can further facilitate by using examples: *“things you like, things you don’t like, your family, or your friends”*. The counselor can also show an example from the demonstration kit. After group members have completed their sand-trays, the counselor invites group members to describe their individual sand trays and uses reflective skills to help members process their creation.

Case example

Elsa is a sixth-grade student referred to the career expressive arts group by her English teacher, Ms. Lewis. During the most recent parent-teacher conferences, both Ms. Lewis and Mr. Jones, Elsa’s Science teacher, noted a decline in Elsa’s classroom engagement and focus, as well as the overall quality of her assignments. Elsa’s parents have also noticed that she has become more withdrawn and spends less time in social activities with her schoolmates.

During CACCI session 1, Elsa’s sand-tray creation reflected collaboration or connection between some figures, while being clearly separated from others. When prompted, Elsa

described a sense of safety and connection at home with her family, whereas, at school she felt restricted to explore new opportunities and express herself in ways of her choosing.

CACCI session 2: interests

Rationale

The goal for session 2 is to facilitate exploration regarding participants' interests. Interests are key indicators of career suitability (Sharf, 2013). Therefore, session 2 helps group members identify the kinds of activities and environments that may be of interest to them. Due to manifest interests having the greatest degree of predictability, when conducting career counseling interventions, it is often helpful to determine the kinds of environments in which clients place themselves, both in real-life and within the world of imagination (Savickas, 2015).

Session activity

At the beginning of session 2, the counselor previews sessions 2–6: *“Starting today our time together will be a little different than last week. Each week I will bring questions for you to think about. First, you will write down your answers to the questions. Then, using any of the materials that you find in this room, you will draw or make something that represents your answers to the questions.”* The counselor then provides the following prompt: *“Write your answer to the following questions: Do you have a favorite TV show, website, social media site or magazine? Please tell me about them. What do you like about them?”* Per the CCI protocol (Savickas, 2015), the counselor asks for three examples of each; there can be a combination of favorite magazines, TV shows or websites.

Once group members have written down their answers to the interest question, the counselor says: *“I am going to ask you to use the materials that are here to draw/make something that represents your answers to the questions”*. Like session 1, the counselor asks each group member to process their answers/creations.

During CACCI session 2, Elsa stated that one of her favorite television shows was ‘Lucifer.’ When prompted, Elsa noted that the main character, Lucifer, feels misunderstood and throughout the course of the series proves to himself and others that he is good. Elsa also told the group that she often feels misunderstood by her friends at school but feels understood by her sister, with whom she has a close relationship. This suggests that Elsa would likely gravitate to a work environment that is supportive and accepting, allowing her to build relationships and openly express herself.

CACCI session 3: my favorite movie or story

Rationale

“Stories can serve as a lens through which people perceive and understand events that they experience” (Savickas, 2015, p. 58). A participant's favorite story or movie provides a level of familiarity and comfort as they imagine themselves in that story or identify with the lead character. Moreover, particularly when there is a favorable outcome, the participant may see the lead character's story and decisions as possible solutions to navigating their own day-to-day problems or providing specific answers to academic or career-related questions.

Session activity

The CACCI session 3 follows the same general structure of session 2. The counselor poses a question, asks participants to write their answers, then draw or make a representation of their answers using the expressive arts material. During the CACCI session 3, the counselor asks: “*What is your favorite story from a book or a movie? What is the story about?*” Elsa described her favorite story: “I Love You Stinky Face, the first book I learned how to read. I used to always demand that my Dad read it to me when he wasn’t on work trips. It’s about a little child asking their mom if she would still love them if they were different things; such as monsters, lions, dinosaurs, and at one point, a stinky skunk.” Elsa’s response aligns with her relational nature, a desire to be understood and cared for despite flaws. It is likely that Elsa would appreciate a career that allowed her to experience this level of relationship and understanding as well as provide it for others in the workplace.

CACCI session 4: advice to myself

Rationale

Savickas (2015) referred to clients’ advice to themselves as the “unthought known” (p. 64). Even at an early age, participants’ advice to themselves represents words of wisdom that they apply particularly during difficulties or times of transition. It represents the answer to the questions they may not even know they have, and offers a strategy for tackling a problem, whether related to life in general, or specifically to academic or career development. According to Savickas (2015), clients’ ability to listen to their own advice builds confidence as they realize that they have the answer, rather than needing to depend on the counselor to provide a solution.

Session activity

During session 4, the counselor asks: “*What is your favorite saying or advice to yourself?*” Savickas (2015), notes that if participants have difficulty, the counselor may say: “*Have you seen any saying that you like on a poster or bumper sticker?*” If a group member is unable to come up with a saying, the counselor can help facilitate the process by saying: “*Would you be willing to make one up right now? We can work on it together.*”

Elsa’s advice to herself was “Those who mind don’t matter, and those who matter don’t mind.” She shared with the group that she sometimes felt isolated at school especially when she expressed herself in ways that were not typical of other girls in school. Again, this response is consistent with Elsa’s emphasis on relationships, open expression and acceptance.

When faced with relational problems or conflict at school or in the workplace, Elsa would likely focus on building healthy relationships and moving away from dysfunctional interactions.

CACCI session 5: my heroes

Rationale

According to Savickas (2015), the identification of a role model is the first career decision that a person makes. A hero represents someone that the client admires and/or aspires to be. However, a role model also has characteristics that the client sees in themselves. For this reason, a participant’s description of a hero really describes their “construction and

conception of self". The development of self-concept is a key component of career identity development, (p. 27–28).

Session activity

The prompt for session 5 is: *"Who do you admire the most? Who are your heroes? I'm interested in learning about three people. They can be real people, even if you don't know them personally. Or they can be make believe people like super-heroes, cartoon characters, or characters in books or on TV."* Elsa stated, "my heroes are my older sister, people who respect others' religions, and my cousin". She then spent some time describing her relationship with her older sister whom she admires for her courage and compassion. Elsa's response to the session 5 prompt reinforces the value she places on healthy relationships and respect. At school, or in the workplace, she would likely endeavor to be a safe person who regards others despite differences.

CACCI session 6: memories

Rationale

Session 6 is grounded in the Adlerian technique *early recollections*. The goal of this session is to develop an understanding of how the participant views a problem or specific career or academic concern. "Early recollections help counselors understand the world in which a client lives and the ways in which the client deals with that world" (Savickas, 2015, p. 35). Even at a young age, clients begin to develop unique ways of dealing with questions or challenges based on their perceptions of life experiences.

Session activity

During session 6, the counselor asks: *"What are three of your earliest memories? I'm interested in hearing three stories about things that happened to you when you were younger."* Depending on the ages of the participants, the counselor may specify *"three to six years old"* to be more consistent with the Adlerian early recollection intervention (Androutsopoulou, 2013).

During the sharing portion of session 6, the counselor may use the following prompts: *"If you were to give a feeling to each memory, what feeling would it be? If you took a picture of the most important part of that memory, what would it show?"* The counselor also can work with participants to develop a news headline for each early memory: *"If the memory was a story in the news or the name of a movie, what would the headline or title be?"* One of Elsa's earliest memories was of her mom taking her to school for the first time. As she shared with the group, she reflected how safe she felt as her mom held her hand and walked her into the building. Elsa's account of her memory suggests that she would likely feel confident in facing academic or career challenges if she has support from people close to her. Therefore, in navigating career transitions, she may be inclined to seek help from close friends, family or mentors.

CACCI session 7: termination

Group closure

Consistent with typical group counseling experiences, CACCI counselors communicate timelines with group members and may discuss the termination session a week or two in

advance. This allows the participants to mentally and emotionally prepare for the ending of the group experience. During session 7, the counselor invites group members to process their feelings related to group closure. The counselor facilitates this discussion using a closing sand-tray activity.

Sand tray activity

The counselor introduces the sand tray and starts the activity with the following prompt: *“Using the sand tray figures in here, put something together that represents your experience in this group over the past 6 weeks.”* The counselor can further explain by using an example of things that can be represented in the sand tray (e.g. things you liked, things you learned about yourself, your feelings about the group). The counselor then allows group members to describe their individual sand trays and uses reflective skills to help participants process their experience. Once all participants have had an opportunity to share their sand-trays the counselor thanks group members for their participation in the group and reminds them about their individual sessions.

While developing her sand-tray scene, Elsa chose figures to represent each group member. Elsa then described group members’ strengths as well as her perceptions of their struggles. She also indicated a desire to support them more and shared an overall appreciation for the support and acceptance of the group.

Individual sessions and CACCI summary

Individual session

During individual sessions the counselor has an opportunity to provide individualized feedback, while allowing participants an opportunity to comment on their experience and ask specific questions related to their career development. The major goal of the individual session is for the counselor to provide a mock-up of the CACCI summary sheet, engage in collaborative dialogue and make changes based on the participant’s responses.

CACCI summary sheet

As mentioned, throughout the seven-week group process the counselor takes detailed notes on individual participants. Prior to engaging in individual sessions, the counselor compiles notes and prepares a CACCI summary sheet for each group member. The summary sheet is an adaptation of Savickas and Hartung’s (2012) Career Construction Interview worksheet comprised of statements made by participants, and uses the headings *‘Memories (what matters to me ...)’*, *‘Heroes (I want to be like ...)’*, *‘Interests (I like places ... I like doing ...)’*, *‘Favorite Story or Movie’*, *‘What Makes Me Happy’*, and *‘Advice to Myself’*. Elsa’s CACCI summary sheet incorporated all her responses to the session prompts and included the following statements: a) “What matters to me are family and connection with others,” b) “I want to be like people who are supportive and kind,” c) “I like places that are accepting of everyone,” “I like trying to help others feel included so no one feels alone,” d) “My favorite book is about a character who is small and unimportant but becomes strong and important. It shows that anyone can grow and change,” e) “I will be most happy when I am able to be myself in places where people are supportive and I can grow and support others so no one is alone” and, f) “My best advice to myself is to treat others how you want to be treated.”

The CACCI summary sheet and related discussion helps build a bridge between the experiential component of the seven-week group process and more concrete application to the participant's academic work and overall career development. When providing individual feedback, it is important to consider the age and maturity level as well as cultural and academic context of the client. With adult clients, the counselor often focuses on narrowing down specific career options. This may involve utilizing standardized assessments to supplement the counseling process or provide clients with more targeted occupational information. However, for young clients like Elsa, participation in a CACCI experience is largely about increasing self-awareness and learning to ask important career related questions from an early age. Elsa already knows that she wants to work in an open, accepting and supportive environment. She would likely gravitate toward a career in a helping profession, such as teaching, counseling or social work, and because of her focus on connection would likely need a career that allowed her to spend time with friends and family. Finally, as part of her sixth-grade curriculum, Elsa had to choose a career cluster to focus on for the next few years. Elsa's responses to career assessments taken as part of this requirement indicated a *Human Services Career Cluster* (South-Western Cengage Learning, 2009). This cluster includes careers in early childhood development, counseling and mental health, family and community services, personal care and consumer services. In addition to discussing more long-range plans regarding occupational interests and environment, Elsa's counselor also helped her to match her CACCI summary statements with the Human Services Career Cluster. In this way, the CACCI experience provided Elsa with useful insights regarding self-concept and career planning, but also attended to more immediate practical concerns.

Conclusion

The CACCI model allows children and adolescents to explore academic and career related concerns in a developmentally appropriate format that facilitates creative self-expression and allows for individualized attention and guidance. The CACCI lends itself to application in both mental health settings and school counseling contexts because of its socio-emotional components. Depending on the specific counseling setting, adaptations may be made for number and length of sessions. For example, in a mental health setting, depending on the autonomy of the practitioner, as well as parents or guardians' resources, treatment length may extend beyond eight weeks to allow for more in-depth processing of experiences, or to meet the unique needs of clients. The intervention may also take the form of individual sessions, if indicated by the presenting issue and the practitioner's therapeutic judgment.

Because the model is designed for children and adolescents, ranging from upper elementary to high school age, it is important to adjust for the specific developmental level of group members. Consistent with recommendations regarding group work with children (Schechtman, 2007), CACCI groups should consist of clients of similar age, and with the middle-school population, single gender groups may facilitate increased safety and active participation (Hamm et al., 2010).

Research on the effectiveness of the CACCI model could include incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. For example, one could examine the impact of CACCI participation on the self-concept, occupational identity and career adaptability

of participants. Finally, pre- and post-interviews and analysis of participants' reflections could glean useful qualitative data regarding the process and impact of the intervention.

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