Successful career exploration is about knowing yourself, knowing your options and knowing how to find out about your options. In working with students and postdocs, we’ve noticed many trainees often get ‘stuck’ somewhere in the career exploration process. Unsure how to address the inertia or hurdles, their exploration fizzles out. Feeling lost? Assess where you’re stuck using these seven milestones in the career exploration process, and learn about OCPD workshops and resources can help get moving again. Have questions? Schedule an appointment at career.ucsf.edu.

**Career Exploration and Decision Making for PhDs: Where Are You Stuck?**

- **Your Skills, Interests & Values?** Can you describe your skills, interests & values? Without this awareness, it’s hard to recognize what positions would be a good fit for you.
  - **For Example:** I want a career where I can: 1. Tackle communicable diseases. 2. Educate professional peers & general public 3. Apply my knowledge and see tangible outcomes 4. Have Job security 5. Time for family & friends 6. Have a good income
  - **You Can:** Attend workshops: 1) Identifying Your Values & Motivators; 2) Handshakes, Eye Contact, Pitch; 2) Handshakes, Eye Contact, Small Talk; 3) Effective Informational Interviews; 4) Building Your Brand; 5) Using LinkedIn to Explore Careers
  - **You Can:** Read the career features at ScienceCareers.org
  - **You Can:** Schedule a 1:1 appointment with OCPD career counselor at career.ucsf.edu

- **What It Means to ‘Research a Job Option’?** Career fit is about finding a job that is a good fit with your skills, interests & values. Researching a job option means you know how to find out about the key aspects of a position.
  - **For Example:** After researching a job, you know: 1. What a typical day is like 2. What a typical week is like 3. What is most challenging about the job 4. Skills and qualifications needed 5. Typical compensation 6. Typical people jobs move into 5-10 years after the position
  - **You Can:** Attend our workshop: Using LinkedIn to Explore Careers

- **How to Network to Explore Careers?** Can you describe and engage with the various skills involved in building and engaging a professional network to explore careers?
  - **For Example:** 1. You can navigate the etiquette of professional mixers, etc. 2. You can concisely describe your work, yourself and your interests 3. You know how to find people in careers of interest to you, ask for informational interviews, and use what you learn 4. You know how to maintain professional relationships
  - **You Can:** Attend our networking series, including: 1) Creating your Elevator Pitch; 2) Handshakes, Eye Contact, Small Talk; 3) Effective Informational Interviews; 4) Building Your Brand; 5) Using LinkedIn to Explore Careers
  - **You Can:** Look at ScienceCareers.org’s career features

- **Your Career Fields of Interest?** Can you identify 2-3 career fields of interest to you? Think of career paths skill sets in different fields (e.g., the skill set of project management is valued in the fields of academic and biotech)
  - **For Example:** Administration, business, (science) communications, consulting, legal affairs, marketing, public affairs, policy, politics, program/project management, bench research, teaching, etc.
  - **You Can:** Attend our workshop: Using LinkedIn to Explore Careers
  - **You Can:** Join the Graduate School Internship Career Exploration (GSICE) Program at gsice.ucsf.edu

- **Your Specific Job Titles of Interest?** Can you identify 5-10 specific job titles of positions in those career areas that are of interest to you?
  - **For Example:** If you would describe your personality as introverted and decision making style as data-driven, you might first focus on reading several career path profiles, narrow down to 2-3 fields and then conduct a few targeted informational interviews. Extroverted and intuitive? Start with informational interviews and internships to help you make a decision you’re comfortable with.
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- **Your Personality & Decision Making Style?** Forget how your friend found their career path - can you describe how you make important decisions in your life? Implementing a career exploration plan that doesn’t sync with how you make decisions can leave you feeling lost.
  - **For Example:** Are you conscious of the internal and external factors that are positively and adversely affecting you? This awareness helps you mitigate their effect on your decision.
  - **You Can:** Schedule a 1:1 appointment in the OCPD to explore your decision making style, and develop a plan that recognizes that style at career.ucsf.edu

- **The Factors Affecting Your Decision?** Are you aware that your decision between pursuing an academic or non-academic career is being influenced by:
  1. Concerns about the approval of your PhD advisor or PI
  2. Financial concerns
  3. Your desire for meaningful work
  4. Family considerations
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- **What you can do For Example...**
  - **You Can:** Attend workshops: 1) Identifying Your Values & Motivators; 2) Transferrable Skills and Strengths
  - **You Can:** Read the career features at ScienceCareers.org
  - **You Can:** Schedule a 1:1 appointment with OCPD career counselor at career.ucsf.edu
  - **You Can:** Join the Making Informed Decisions Career Exploration programs at mind.ucsf.edu

**Career Exploration & Decision Making for PhDs**

Can you describe / Do you know...

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