Practitioner Research Conference

National Panel – Sharing insights and experiences

February 24th 2022

Schedule 10.30-11.30

- Chaired by Dr Fiona Christie (AGCAS and Manchester Metropolitan University)

- 10.35-10.50 A practitioner perspective on the research process and use of digital technology. by Leigh Fowkes (Open University)

- 10.50-11.05 The 'R Value' of Research in Quality Guidance Provision by Lydia Lauder (Open University)

- 11.05-11.20 Co-creating a model for practitioner use, by Dr Sarah Snape

- 11.20-11.30 Q&A

A practitioner perspective on the

Research Process

And use of digital technologies

Leigh Fowkes: Careers & Employability Consultant

CDI Research Conference 24th Feb, 2022

Email: Leigh.Fowkes@open.ac.uk
Twitter: @careers_chap
Blog: careerschap.wordpress.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7191-0365

matrix ™
quality standard for information
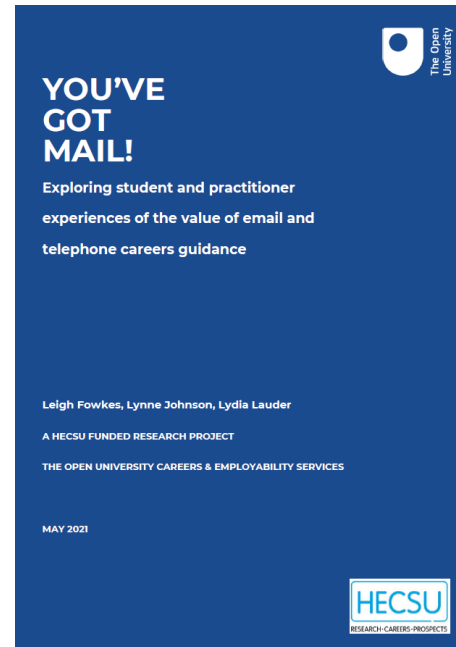advice and guidance services

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A bit about me and my journey so far…

2019 – The impact of online discussion forums

2021 – The value of email and telephone guidance (undertaken with two colleagues)

2021 - Journal article: The impact of career focused online discussion forums

2022…..

Journal article based on "You've got mail" research

The research process – the worst part is getting started

Insert motivational "first step is the hardest" quote here

Imposter syndrome – it can be hard feeling the odd one out…

The biggest challenges – What would Bear say?

Am I ready?

How to decide what to research?

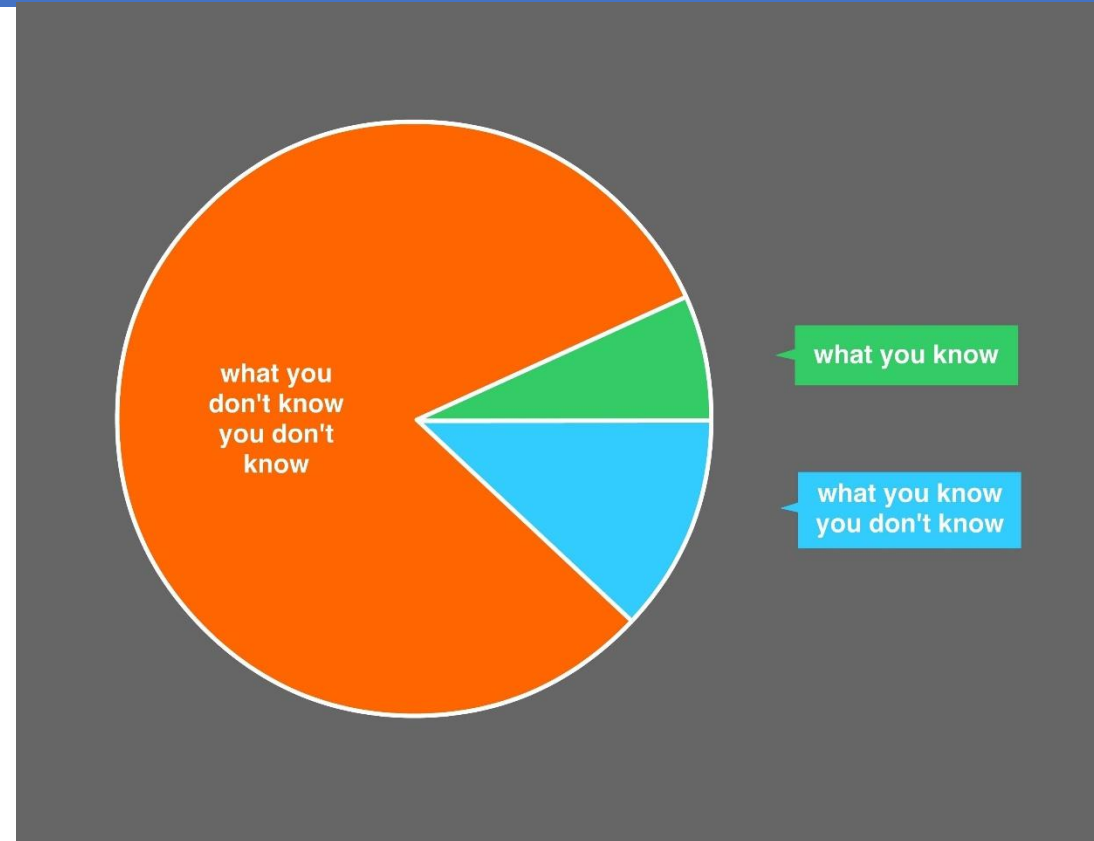What does a good research plan/bid look like?

What methods should I use?

What digital tools will help me?

Where can I get support?

What if things go wrong (e.g. not enough data).

Do I have to learn as I go?

Beware of Imposter Pac-Man

So how did I approach these important questions?

Am I ready?

How to decide what to research?

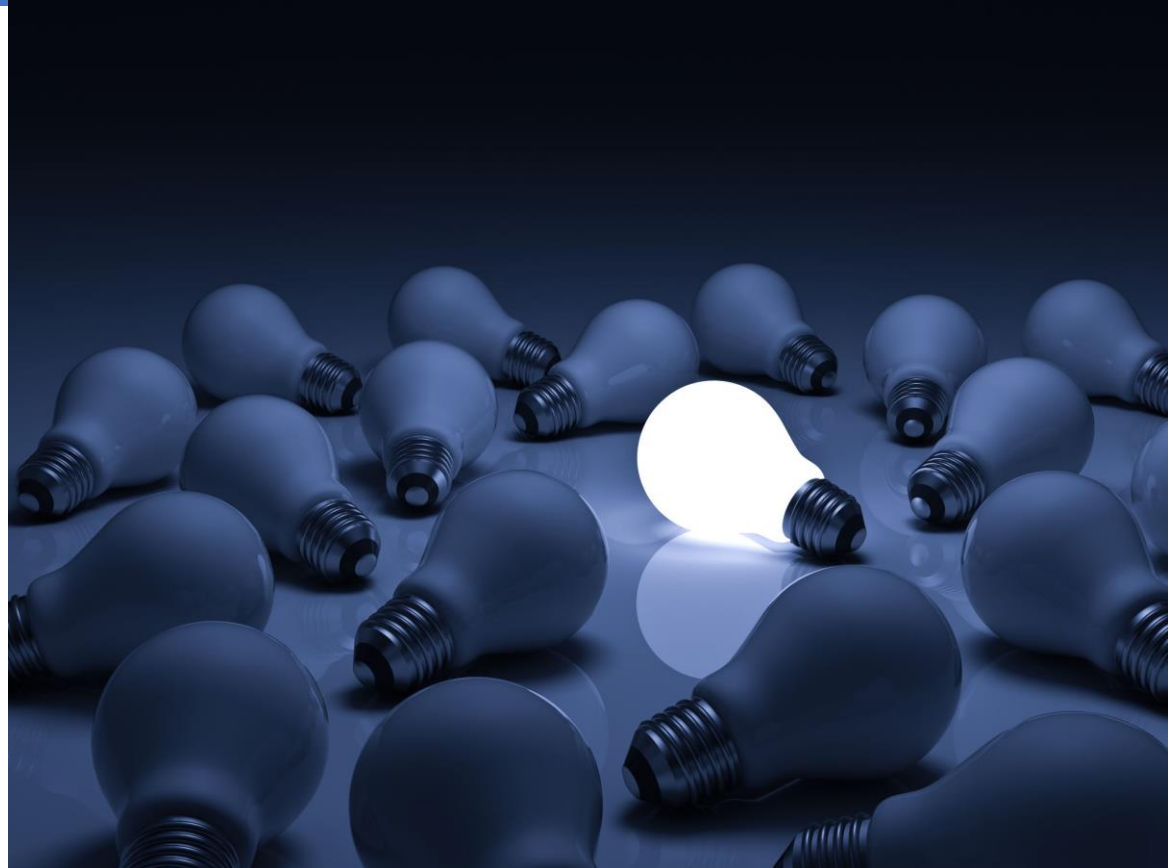What does a good research plan/bid look like?

What methods should I use?

What **digital tools** will help me?

Where can I get support?

What if things go wrong (e.g. not enough data).

Do I have to learn as I go?

Quick case study example: A reliance on digital technology

I used a self-completed structured **Jisc online questionnaire**. I needed to learn the package (online guides, videos, colleagues) and then user test questionnaires. I struggled to get the data.

I employed qualitative description inc coding framework of Open University student and career practitioner posts across six Careers & Employment Service hosted **online discussion forums** (ODFs). I didn't get permission from all forum participants.

Thematic analysis of **semi-structured interviews (online via Adobe Connect)** undertaken with a sample of OU Careers & Employability Consultants. I had too much data!

BUMPING ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS IN A SOCIAL MEDIA AGE ("IYKWIM")

Exploring the impact of career focused online discussion forums in supporting the career learning and development of Open University students

A HECSU funded research project
Leigh Fowkes | Careers & Employability Consultant | The Open University

Resources

AGCAS Phoenix (June 2020) The Research Issue

https://issuu.com/agcas_00/docs/mar064_-_phoenix_160_single_pages__150dpi/?ff

Fowkes, L (2020) AGCAS article – my experience as a first time practitioner researcher.
https://careerschap.wordpress.com/2020/06/19/new-agcas-article-my-experience-as-a-first-time-practitioner-reseacher/

Lobe, Bojana. 'Best Practices for Synchronous Online Focus Groups'. In A New Era in Focus Group Research: Challenges, Innovation and Practice, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and David L. Morgan, 227–50. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017.
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58614-8_11.

Staunton, Tom (2021) An intro to digital research.

https://runninginaforest.wordpress.com/2021/02/25/an-intro-to-digital-research-for-careers-practitioners/

Van Mol, Christof. 'Improving Web Survey Efficiency: The Impact of an Extra Reminder and Reminder Content on Web Survey Response'. International Journal of Social Research Methodology 20, no. 4 (4 July 2017): 317–27.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1185255.

THE 'R VALUE' OF RESEARCH IN QUALITY GUIDANCE PROVISION

Lydia Lauder

24 February 2022

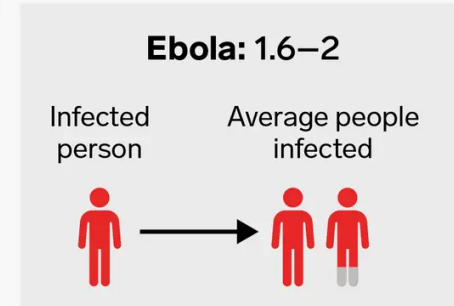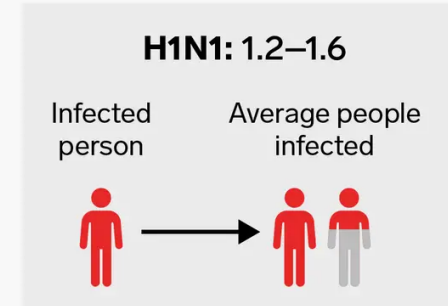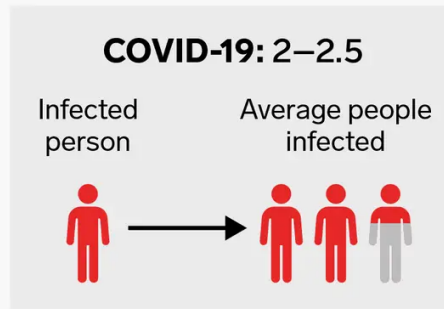## The R Value and a Researcher's Journey

Research

'A systematic approach to solving a problem and identifying new knowledge: it is about asking questions and arriving at some conclusions'

(Neary and Johnson, 2016).

The average number of people that one person with a virus infects, based on the R0 scale

COVID-19: 2−2.5

Infected person → Average people infected

H1N1: 1.2−1.6

Infected person → Average people infected

Ebola: 1.6−2

Infected person → Average people infected

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Outreach and Guidance Worker:
Establishment of the JET Project.

JET
JOBS · EDUCATION · TRAINING
Helping you find your way in the UK

IR Information research (IR) leading to the development of services.

IR

P

P
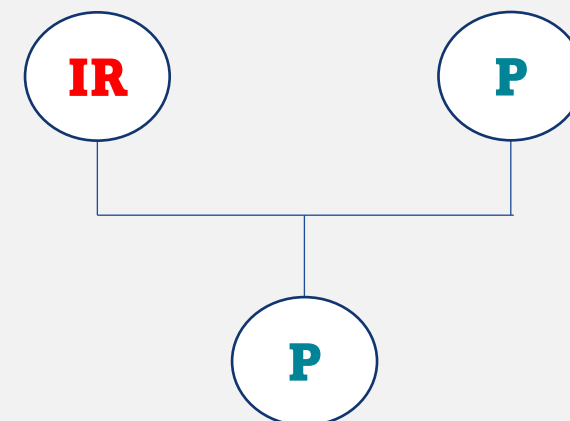
National Careers Service
# Prime Contractor Manager & Masters Student

Action Research (AR) is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by practitioners in social situations in order to improve the nationality and justice of their own practices,
their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

(Carr and Kemmis, 1986)

AR

Some outcomes of this research...

✓ Led to the development of a regional workforce development strategy.

✓ Provided a strong evidence base for supporting Ofsted Inspection (examining continuous improvement and staff development aspects).

✓ Intelligence to support the development of our observation framework.

✓ Publications of research papers – e.g. Lauder, L and Neary, S. (2020).

✓ Service continuous improvement strategy – independent business report produced on best practice as well as areas for improvement for future training programmes and workforce development activity.
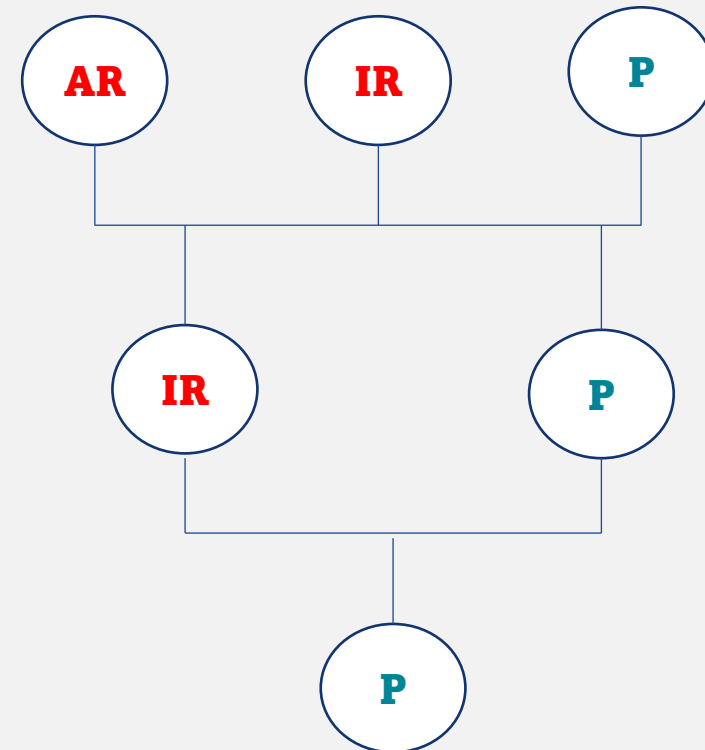
Research has so many catalytic effects! It carries practical applicability. It is contagious! It has the R factor!
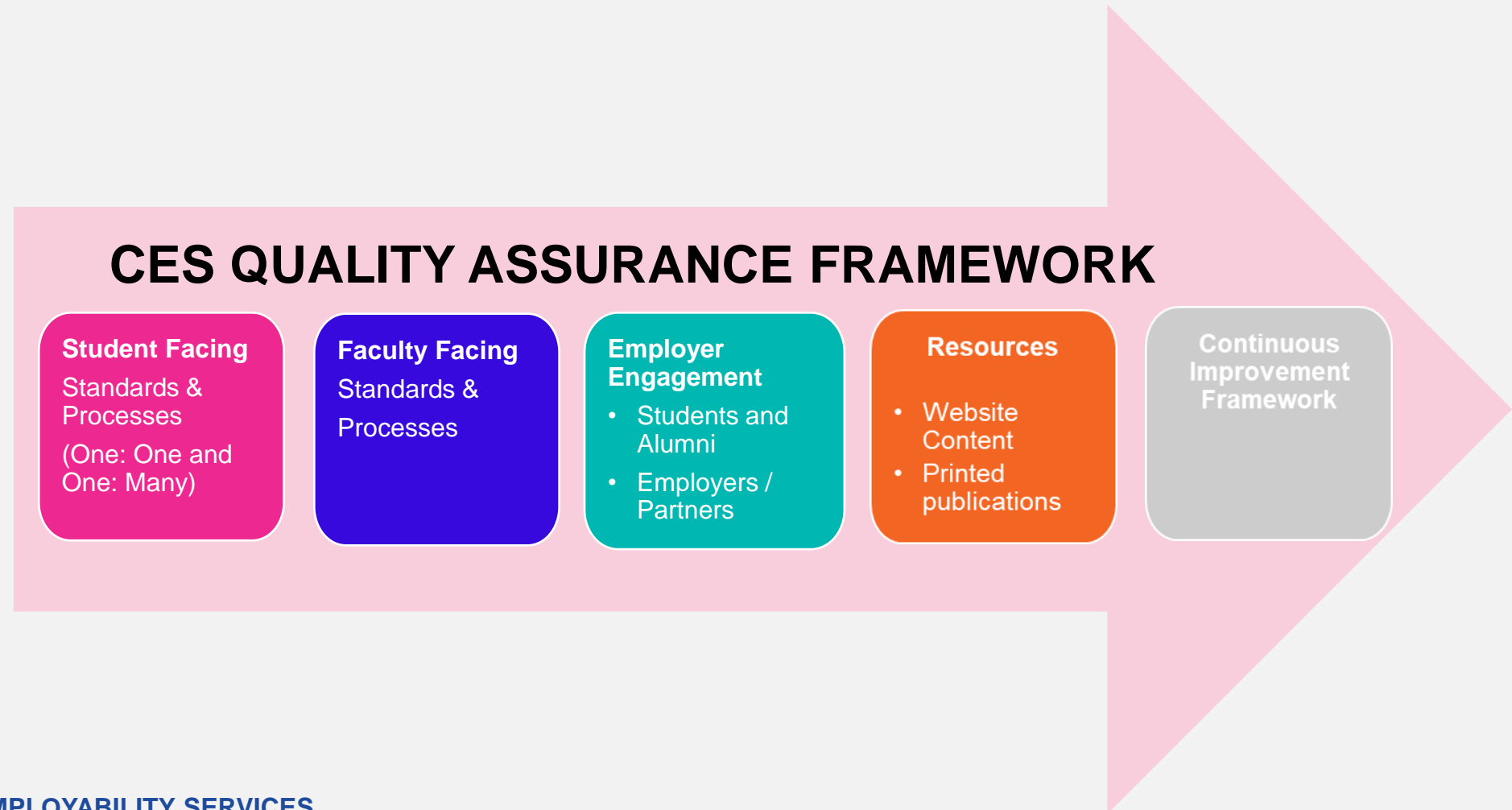
CES Quality Assurance Strategy

Key Activities to Achieve Strategic Aims

Enable continuous improvement	Share good practice	Inform learning and development
Develop success measures	Develop quality related data	Enhancing feedback
Support behaviours	Support culture	Celebrating success

- Quality Assurance at CES follows an organic approach with responsibility of the full professional community of managers and practitioners.

- Quality is driven by an evidence-based approach (EBA) to practice.

- This is a form of research also. It is linked to demonstrating the impact that careers provision has.

EBA

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Key Drivers to assessing impact

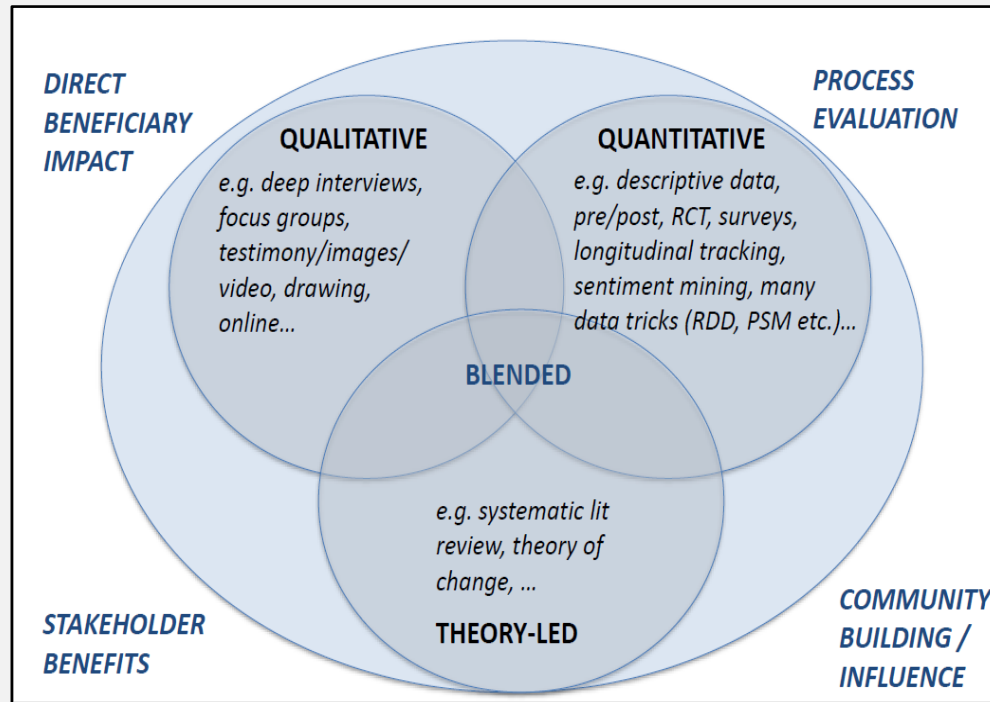**INSTITUTIONAL** - does the service provide value for money?

PROFESSIONAL – is what I do is meaningful and of value to students?

CLIENT – does using CES help the student in some way?

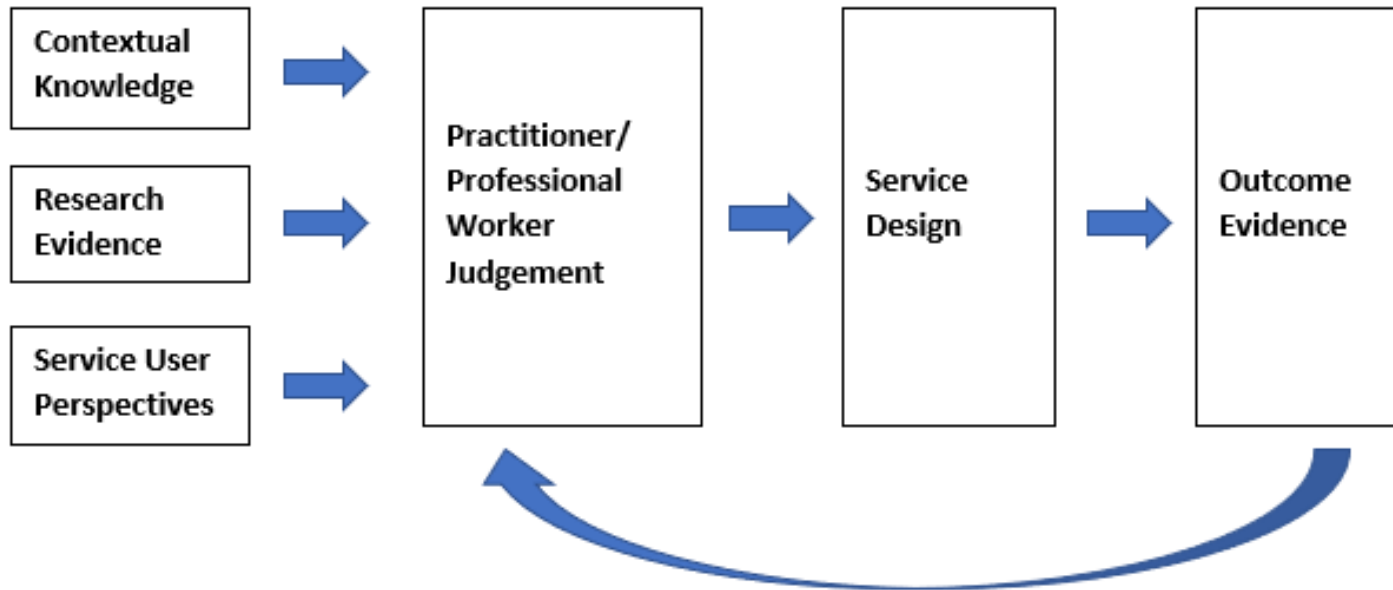# Using theories and research-based approaches to evidence impact.

Blended Model, *DMH Associates (2020)*

Theory of Change

'The theory of change describes the steps that need to take place between what you do and the impact that you hope to achieve. It helps you to think about what you are doing and why. It also helps you to establish a framework for evaluation and quality assurance.'

(Hooley, 2018)

An Integrated Model for Evidence Based Practice (Robertson, 2020)

WHY MUST WE USE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS?

PLANNING → DELIVERY

All CES service priorities must be underpinned by impact assessment within the delivery model cycle

EVALUATE

To collect quantitative and qualitive data

demonstrate our value to stakeholders, partners, funders, regulators, and the wider careers sector

service improvements, professional development, and good practice

2. BE DISCIPLINED, PROPORTIONATE, PRAGMATIC

Don't measure everything or what is easy, measure what is relevant.

Not all activities will require the same depth of analysis.

Not everything can or needs to be measured.

Peer review and collaborate with colleagues.

Adapt language, formats, and methodology to consider equality and diversity.

CES IMPACT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

3. USE A BLENDED MODEL OF EVALUATION *(DMH Associates, 2020)*

Stakeholder benefits

Community influence

Theory-led

Qualitative   BLENDED   Quantitative

Process evaluation

Direct beneficiary
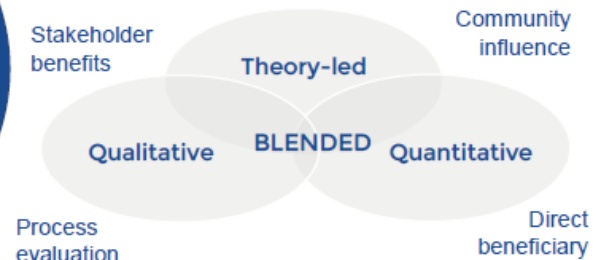
Access internal and external data via <u>CES MI Share Point</u>. For in-depth qualitative analysis use <u>CES Qualitative Evaluation Framework</u>.

1. BE PURPOSEFUL AND PLANNED

CLARIFY THE NEED
- Do we need to do this and why?
- What are we trying to achieve?
- What user need are we meeting?

RECYCLE PREVIOUS WORK
- What can be reused to avoid duplication?
- What can it link or connect with?

THEORY OF CHANGE
- How does this fit with Continuous Improvement Plan?
- Does everyone agree this is best?
- Do we anticipate barriers?
- Will there be larger impacts?
- What support is needed?
- When is best time?

4. REPORTING

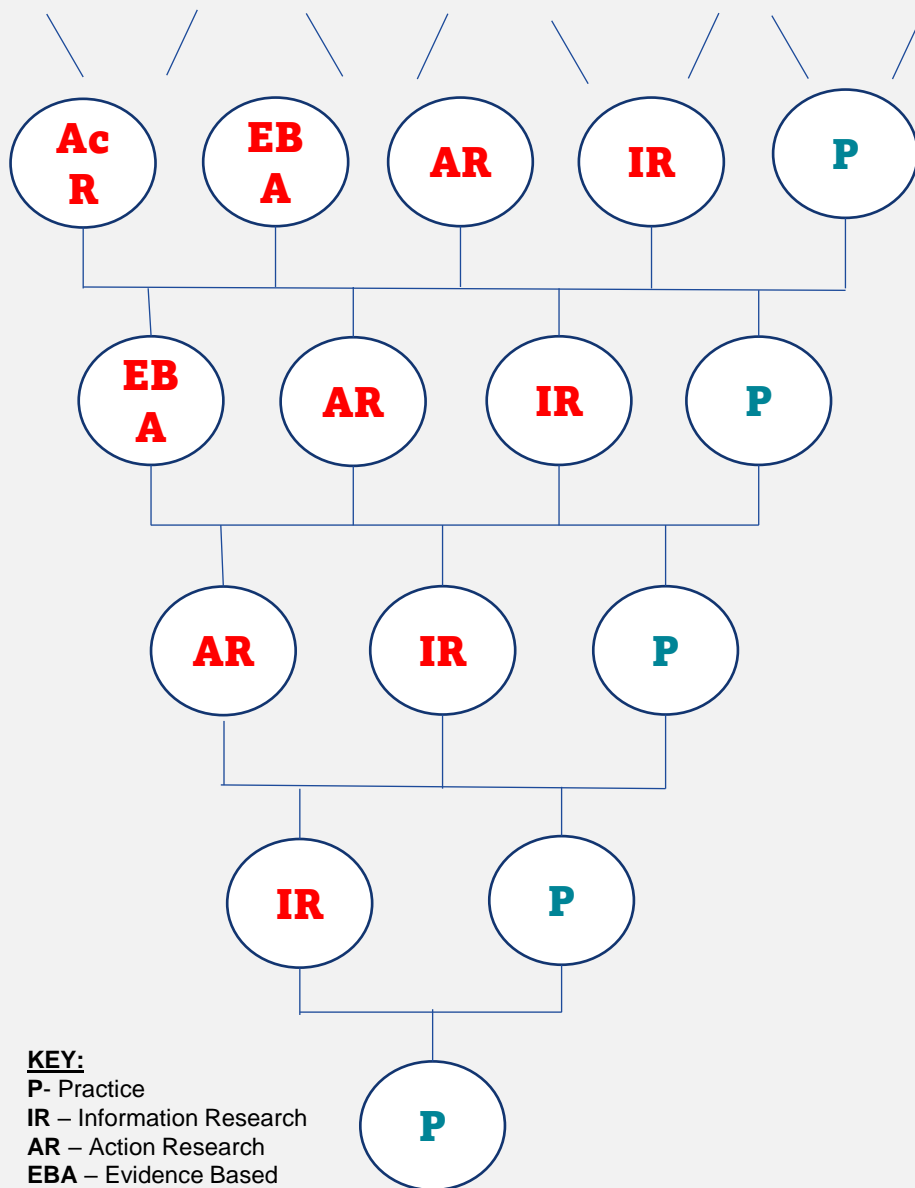Findings can be reported via standard templates available

EXAMPLES:
- <u>User Testing: Your Career Planning Guide</u> (light, low analysis).
- <u>DVS podcasts</u> (wider analytics).
- <u>Student Voice</u> (In-depth, quantitative, <u>CES Qualitative Evaluation Framework</u>).

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP?

Email   Lydia.lauder@open.ac.uk
- <u>AGCAS (2020) Research Driven Practice</u>
- <u>OU (2019) Methods for Research and Scholarship</u>

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Research has a high R value!

Diagram: an inverted pyramid of connected circles showing research stages:

- Top row: **AcR**, **EBA**, **AR**, **IR**, **P**
- Second row: **EBA**, **AR**, **IR**, **P**
- Third row: **AR**, **IR**, **P**
- Fourth row: **IR**, **P**
- Bottom: **P**

KEY:
P- Practice
IR – Information Research
AR – Action Research
EBA – Evidence Based Approach
ACR – Academic Research

➢ Research takes different guises – information gathering; action research; evidence-based approaches; academic publications.

➢ Research is not only academic, it is above all very pragmatic, of practical value.

➢ Research is an iterative process – and as you engage with research you will evolve as will your research!

➢ Research can be contagious! It's got the (good) R factor!

➢ Get involved!

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES

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- DMH Associates (2020) *The Career Development Landscape: Evidence and Impact Assessment.* https://dmhassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/080920-The-career-development-landscape-webinar-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

- Hooley, T., (2018) Evidence based practice and evaluation in career guidance. ADVENTURES IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT [Online]. Available at: https://adventuresincareerdevelopment.wordpress.com/2018/11/24/7023/ (Accessed: 2 July, 2021)

- Lauder, L and Neary, S. (2020). 'The role and relevance of theory in careers professionalisation and practice'. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, pp. 1-16.

- Neary, S. and Johnson, J. (2016). *CPD for the Career Development Professional: A Handbook for Enhancing Practice*. Bath, Trotman Publishing, pp81-100

- Robertson P.J., (2020) Evidence-Based Practice for Career Development *In*: *The Oxford Handbook for Career Development.* Ed: P Robertosn, P. J., Hooley, T., and McNash, P., Oxford University Press. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dJgqJTO74GMNuugk_EfFG09FnOFSRdsP/view

Thank you!

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."
—Marie Curie

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Creating a coaching model for practitioners

A Conceptual Encounter Study, 2020

Sarah Snape

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Motivation for the study

Is this **right** for me?

Do I **really** want this?

I don't feel I **fit in**
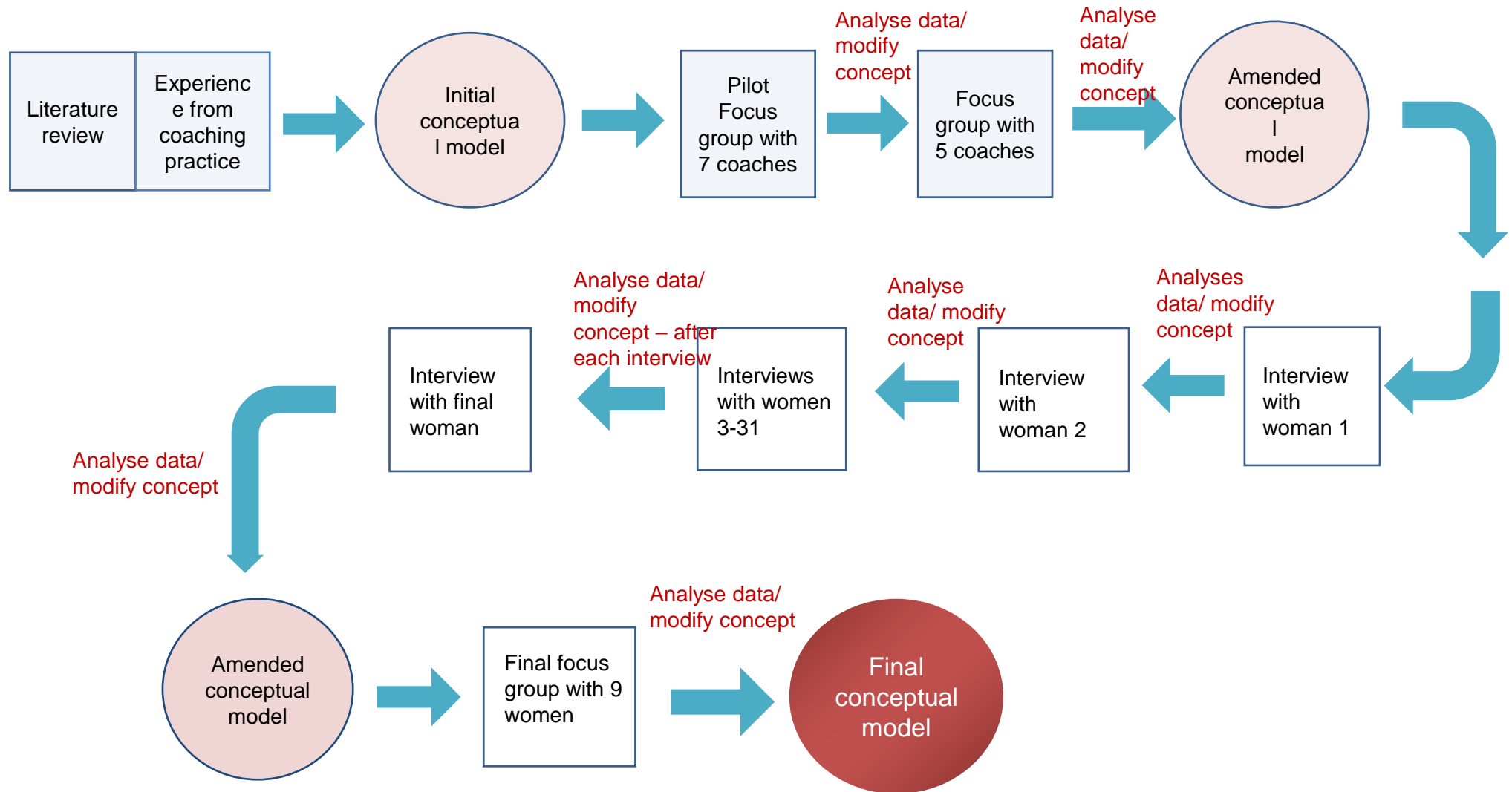
Should I be acting **differently**?

I don't like **the person I am becoming**

I don't know **who** I'm meant to be

What are people thinking/saying **about me**?

I think they **regret** giving me this position

How can I become who I want to be?
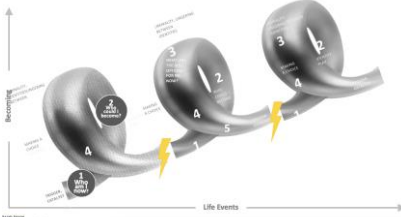
Conceptual Encounter Methodology

Progression of model
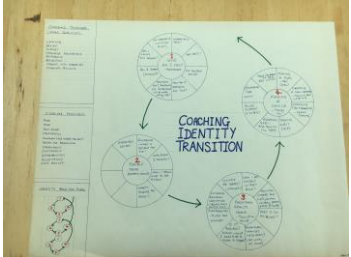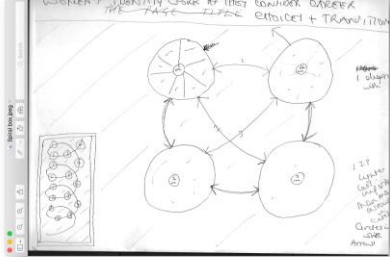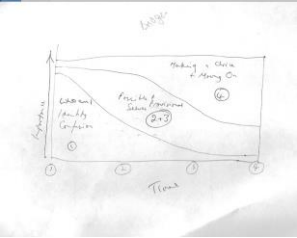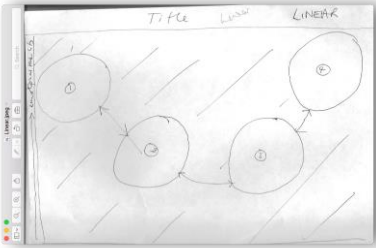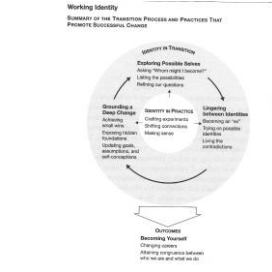
The MAP (Me-As-a-Process) coaching model:
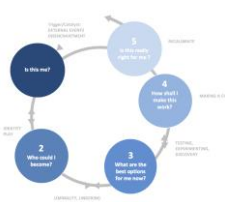Women's experience of identity work in career choices and transitions
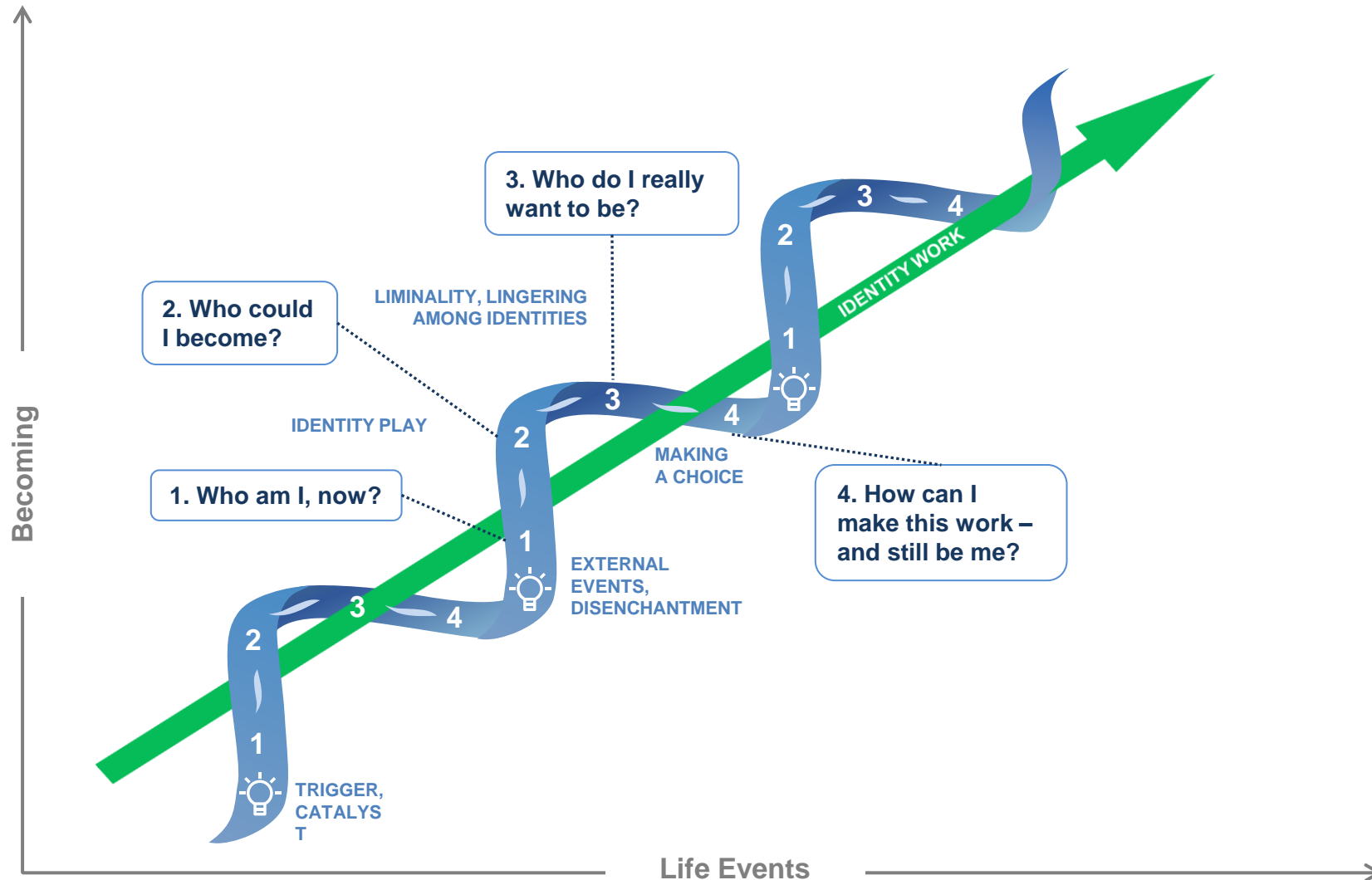
MAP Coaching Questions: Which questions most resonate for you?
(Stages may be experienced sequentially, concurrently, or haphazardly)

IDENTITY WORK →

1 Who am I, now?

- What's my story? (up to this point)
- How do I introduce myself?
- How am I spending my time?
- Am I learning?
- Am I fulfilling my potential?
- Am I living my values?
- How do I see myself?
- How do others see me?
- Who have I been, in the past?
- Is what I do congruent with who I am?
- Who am I expected to be?
- How many 'me's are there, who am I to different people?
- Am I happy (enough?)
- What are others assuming about me?
- What am I assuming about myself?
- What motivates me?
- What are my strengths?
- Is this life right for me?

2 Who could I become?

- Who do I want to be?
- In my wildest dreams, who could I be?
- What do I want in my life?
- Who don't I want to be?
- Who can't I be?
- Who inspires me?
- Who or what supports me?
- Who or what undermines me?
- How would I like others to see me?
- What's leading me to change?
- What's holding me where I am?
- Am I ready to disengage from the past?
- What is in my/outside my control?

3 Who do I really want to be?

- Do I really want this?
- How will I see myself in that role, how will others see me?
- Does it fit my values? Can I be me?
- Does it fit in with my life's purpose?
- Can I be who I want to be?
- Will I have the right amount of growth and stretch?
- How would I need to change?
- What would stop me?
- How could I make it happen?
- What are the pluses/minuses?
- What are the consequences?
- Could I be happy (enough)?
- Would I be more congruent in this role?
- How shall I explore this more, how can I test it out?
- What changes can I make so that this can work for me?
- Who will support me?

4 How can I make this work – and still be me?

- What is my purpose here?
- How shall I navigate this new environment?
- What are my short- and long-term goals?
- What are the first steps I should take?
- How do I become comfortable with the discomfort of learning and growth?
- Looking back, what patterns do I notice about myself in transitions?
- What is expected of me?
- What do I need to pay attention to?
- What resources will I need?
- Where might I have gaps?
- How shall I create new networks and support systems?
- What behaviours will I need to start/stop/continue?
- Who could be role models or sponsors for me?
- How can I make this be what I want it to be?
- What's my story now?

What emotions am I becoming aware of? What are they telling me?

Chapter 5: Key findings for this group of women participants

Stage 1
Who am I, now?
How women understand identity and identity work
How gender affects identity and identity work
The identity work of navigating social and relational expectations

- Lack of clarity about the nature of identity and identity work
- Strong exclusive identification with career, or being a mother
- Trigger events emphasise identity threats and catalyse change
- Anger and overwhelm at consequences of gendered society they live in
- Confusion at society's (including their own) changing attitudes to women
- Strong influence of others, parents, and gender on identity

Stage 2
Who could I become?
Women's experiences of possible and impossible selves
Identity motives

- Possible selves and impossible selves provide information by bringing future into the present. Also provide self awareness, temporary relief from stress, and increased sense of choice and control
- Strongest Identity motives: Control and Agency; Challenge and Learning; Values and Authenticity; Meaning and Purpose; Finding a Balance.
- Less strong identity motives: Belonging, Inclusion; Ego, Status

Stage 3
Who do I really want to be?
The challenge of moving from reflection to action
Testing and experimenting

- Challenge of moving from internal consequence-free contemplation to exposure to reality and consequent risks
- Time-out, or may not proceed with transition process
- Need for support

Stage 4
How can I make this work – and still be me?
Adaptation and learning
Being me
Story-telling in identity work

- Simultaneous fear and thrill, managing the discomfort of growth and learning
- Identifying needs and resources
- Temporary suspension of drive to 'be me' as they navigate their environment
- Learning from past experiences
- Revisions to narrative
- Taking agency in designing a life that will fulfill their identity motives

Thank you

Sarah Snape

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