

# Supporting Researchers' Careers and Career Choices

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# Complexities for Researchers

- Difficulty of finding the next postdoc or achieving lectureship
- Disinterest in their career development from their PI
- Issues around leaving academia – feelings of failure; not knowing where to start
- Family issues – children, schooling, need for stability, spouse's/partner's career
- Financial worries – how to survive between contracts, paying a mortgage

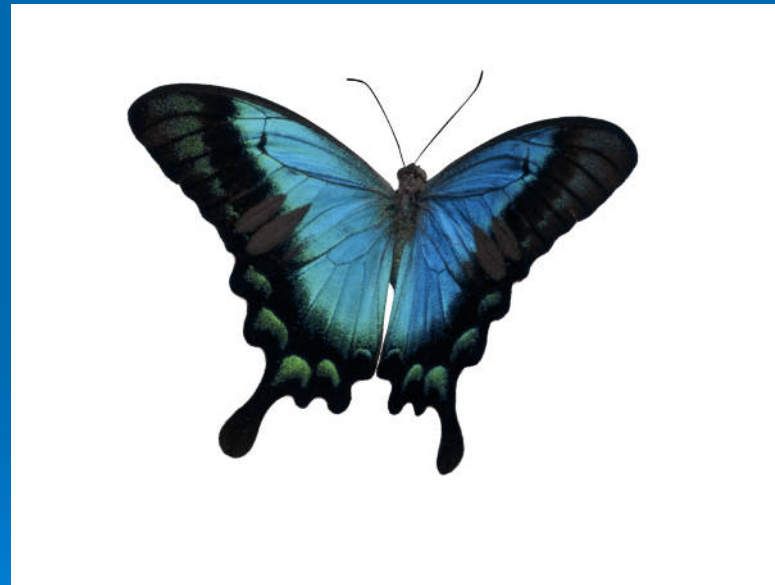
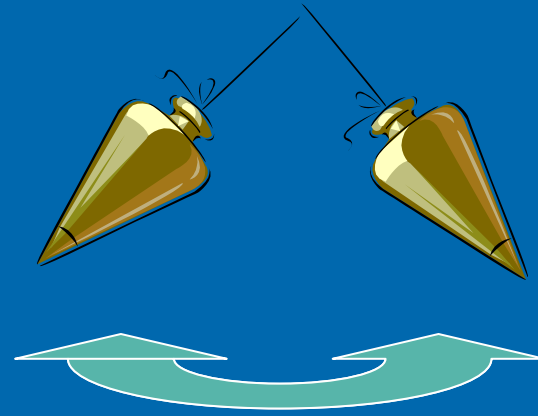
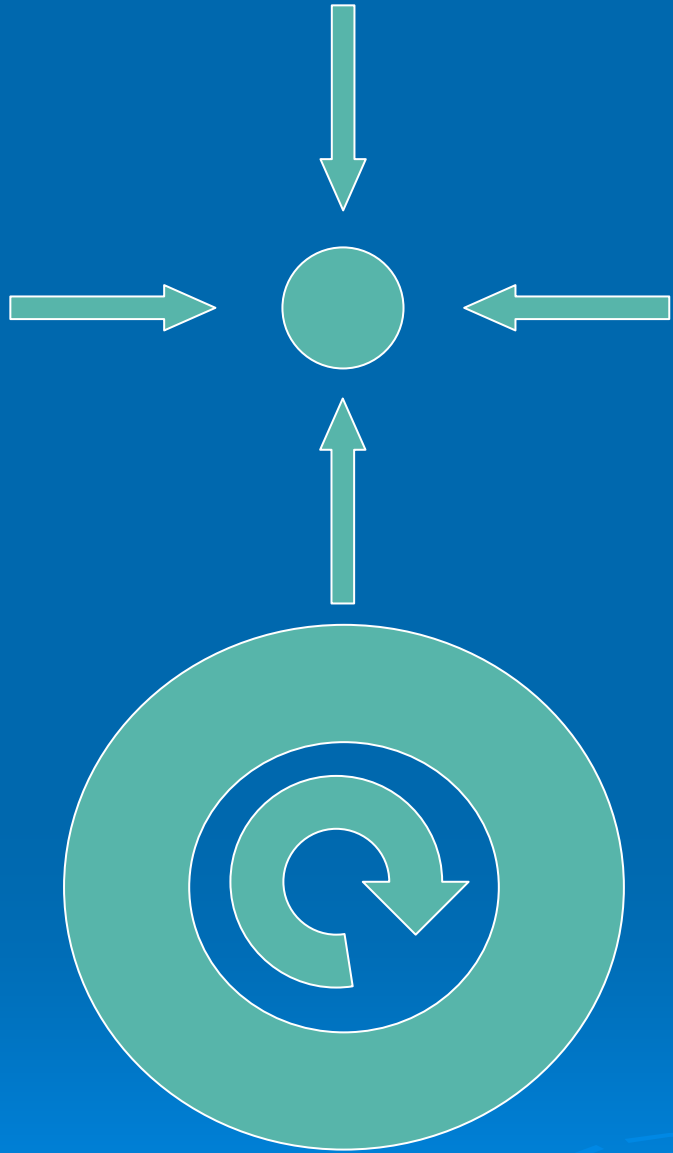
# Theories of Career Development

## Traditional

- Helping the client make a decision
- Process of analysis, logic and elimination
- Finding the ideal job
- Matching skills etc to job
- Narrowing down choices

## Planned Happenstance

- Future uncertain and unpredictable
- Behavioural strategies to deal with this
- Chance events provide opportunities
- Must be pro-active
- Based on ideas and concepts of theories of chaos



# Discuss:

- How have unplanned events influenced your career choices?
- What actions did you take that had a positive influence on your career?
- How far were you responsible for the unplanned event itself?

## Planned happenstance

- Curiosity – exploring new learning opportunities
- Persistence – exerting effort despite setbacks
- Flexibility – changing attitudes and circumstances
- Optimism – viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable
- Risk taking – taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes

## Researchers

- Curiosity
- Persistence
- Flexibility
- Optimism
- Risk taking

# For the researcher

- It is OK to change your plans and make mistakes
- Anxiety about the future is normal
- Navigating a career path is a life-long process – you will have to make many decisions in response to unexpected events
- It is possible to create future beneficial unplanned events

# Questions to ask

- How have unplanned events influenced your career?
- How is your curiosity excited?
- How have chance events contributed to your curiosity?
- How could you explore the career implications of your curiosity?

# More Questions

- How can you act now to increase the likelihood of a desirable event?
- How would your life change if you acted?
- How would your life change if you did nothing?
- How would you overcome a block that prevented you doing what you wanted?

# The neglected realities of career decision making:

- Chance and Unpredictability
- Limits of knowledge at the point of decision making
- Limitations of goals
- Non-linearity of change

# For further information:

- [www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/researchers](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/researchers) - look under Researching Options in the left-hand menu
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