

Section 6: Action Plan

Estimated Time to Complete All Activities: 2.5 hrs

Facilitator Materials

- PowerPoint presentation
- Computers for youth
- Internet access
- *Potential Solutions to Obstacles*

Youth Handouts

- SMART Goals
- Action Plan
- Potential Obstacles to Career Navigation
- Revisiting and Revising Your Action Plan
- Reflection Questions – Section 6

Let's Start Planning! (Slide 2)

This last section of WENav is dedicated to creating a detailed, action-based plan for youth to follow that will help them reach their career goals. This action plan will reflect what they have learned during the program.

DISCUSSION

- To emphasize the importance of creating an action plan, ask the following:
- **Prompting Questions:** *Why is it important to plan for the future? Why is it important that your plan be based on action (action refers to the steps you will take to reach your goals)?*

SMART Goals (Slide 3)

Research shows that those who set goals are more likely to achieve those goals. To help guide youth in setting effective goals, they can refer to the *SMART Goals* handout. The purpose of this activity is to give youth practice in setting effective, action-oriented goals.

DISCUSSION

Corresponding Handout: *SMART Goals*

- As a group, go through the SMART Goals handout and the examples for each section of a SMART Goal. Have youth come up with their own examples as well, and share with the group.

Specific – Your goal should be focused on improving or achieving a particular thing.

- ✗ Not Specific: I want to improve my history grade.
- ✓ Specific: I want to improve my history grade by 9% by the end of the year.

Notes: _____

Measurable – How will you know that you achieved your goal?

- ✗ Not Measurable: I will score lots of goals.
- ✓ Measureable: In the next game, I will score a minimum of 4 goals.

Action – What specific actions will you take to reach this goal?

- ✗ Not Effective Action: I will become flexible.
- ✓ Effective Action: I will become flexible by stretching my hamstrings for five minutes every night for three weeks.

Realistic – Your goal should be realistic.

- ✗ Not Realistic: I will become a millionaire by next year.
- ✓ Realistic: I will save 40% of my money in a savings account for the next year.

Timeline – When will you achieve your goal? Give yourself a deadline.

- ✗ I will learn to play the piano.
- ✓ I will learn how to play three songs on the piano by December 1st.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding Handouts: *SMART Goals*

- Youth will now create their own SMART career goals. This can be a short-term goal (I want to get my English grade up to 85% so I can qualify for a scholarship) or a long-term goal (I want to be hired by this company by this time).
- Youth will identify a way that they will be held accountable for these goals. Whether by asking another person to hold them accountable, writing their goal on an online forum, etc., having something to hold them accountable to their goals will help to increase the chances of them reaching their goals. Youth can share their ways of being held accountable for their goals with the rest of the group.
- Youths' goals may change over time. Regular reviewing of their goals and their progress can help them to keep track of these changes and revise their goals and actions accordingly.

Overcoming Career Obstacles (Slide 4)

Now that youth have made their career goals, they can examine what could possibly get in the way of achieving these goals.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding Handout: *Potential Obstacles to Career Navigation*

- Use a lack of experience as an example, as this is likely an obstacle that most youth will face. Highlight the fact that under the example solution, there is a measurable action to

Notes: _____

take. This should be the kind of solutions the youth create (solution, then action).

- Youth will come up with their own solutions and actions for a lack of experience.
- Independently, youth check any obstacles that they think may get in the way of them achieving their career goals, both short and long term. They also have the option of writing their own obstacles.
- Some obstacles are more easily identifiable than others; for example, coming from a low SES background is an easily identifiable obstacle, however, an inability to pay attention to detail is a less easily identifiable obstacle, but can have a great effect on a youth's future career success. Urge youth to consider their obstacles carefully for this reason, and to refer back their weaknesses listed on their *All about Me* charts.
- Youth will find possible solutions and actions for overcoming these barriers. Facilitators can refer to the *Potential Solutions for Obstacles* resource for some potential solutions or coping techniques for some of these obstacles, however, **facilitators are highly encouraged to first allow youth to design their own solutions** and only refer to the *Potential Solutions for Obstacles* resource if it is essential. This will help youth to develop problem solving skills and give them practice generating alternative plans and solutions. These skills are crucial for developing adaptability, which is fundamental for effective career navigation. This is why this activity is one of the imperative activities for youth to work through. Youth can use internet searches to search for ways of overcoming these obstacles as well.
- If youth feel comfortable sharing their potential obstacles, they can get into small groups and share potential obstacles and possible solutions. Having more than one person brainstorming possible solutions can be effective.
- If your specific demographic of youth mostly share a potential obstacle (such as a group of youth with disabilities or unemployment), brainstorm possible solutions as a group. In this case, it may be helpful to do research ahead of time to find possible solutions for these shared obstacles.

Action Plan (Slide 5)

Youth will now create their Action Plans – a culmination of what they have learned in WEnav.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding Handouts: *Action Plan*

- Youth will complete all sections of their Action Plans.
- Encourage youth to write their Action Plans in pencil, and encourage them to continually revisit and revise their plans as they move along their career pathways.

Notes: _____

Below is the information that is included in the Action Plan. General instructions and information on how to help youth complete the Action Plan are in red font. Youth will attach their *All about Me* charts and their *Potential Obstacles* sheets to their Action Plans, as well as any other valuable information. Encourage youth to keep all of this information together in a Career Portfolio so that it will be simple to re-visit in the future.

<p>Career Goal <i>This is where you want to be at the end of your career navigation.</i></p>	<p>What is my big picture career goal? Youth will write their main, ultimate career goals in this section. This is where they want to ideally end up in their careers. This can be specific (ex: I want to teach chemistry at a university), or more general (I want to help people by working in the non-profit sector), depending on the youth.</p>
<p>Location <i>Where you think you want to live/work.</i></p>	<p>Where would I like to live and work? For some youth, this may not be relevant, or they may not know yet. Encourage youth to consider the educational opportunities as well as labour market information in various locations.</p>
<p>Education/ Training/ Experience <i>Refer to your research for this information.</i></p>	<p>What are my best options for getting the necessary education/training/experience? Youth can refer to their <i>Where Can I Get This Education/Training/Experience</i> handouts for this section.</p> <p>How will I pay for this? Youth can list their options for paying for their education/training, if applicable. This can include savings, scholarships, loans, OSAP, parents, etc.</p> <p>What are the steps that I will take towards getting this education/training/experience? Youth will list the actions they need to take to get this education, training, or experience. This can include achieving certain grades, applying to certain programs, taking courses, calling an educational institution for more information, etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

Notes: _____

<p>Skills <i>Example: writing skills, machine operating skills, organization skills.</i></p>	<p>What hard and soft skills are needed or helpful for this career? Youth will list all of the hard and soft skills that are vital to their careers of interest. This information can come from their <i>Career Investigation</i> handouts, their information interviews, job ads, etc.</p>	<p>Which of these skills do I need to improve? Youth will evaluate their own skill sets next to the skills that are required for their careers of interest. They will list all of the skills that they need to improve upon or develop. They can refer to their <i>What Do Employers Want</i> and <i>All about Me</i> handouts.</p>
<p>Experience <i>Consider all experiences that are or could be valuable.</i></p>	<p>What specific experiences (paid or unpaid) can help me develop these skills (practise, training, volunteering, etc.)? Youth will list any experience they have previously had (they can consider their <i>Valuable Experiences</i> handouts) or can participate in in the future that will help them develop the skills mentioned above. This may include volunteering, taking classes, practicing, extracurricular activities, etc.</p> <p>What are the next 5 things I will do to help me further develop these skills? Youth will list the actions they will take to get this experience. All steps must be action based. Encourage youth to include strategies for ensuring they go through with these actions. For example, if a youth is going to practice the piano every day to improve this skill, he should include this as a way of ensuring that this practice actually gets done, such as asking someone else to hold him accountable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 	
<p>Network <i>Your network is made up of the people that you know. For example, friends, parents, employers, teachers, etc.</i></p>	<p>How can my network help me to achieve my career goals? Who are the people that I know who may be able to help me in the future? Youth can refer to their <i>Networking</i> handouts for the key people in their networks.</p> <p>How can I expand (grow) and develop my network? Encourage youth to write action based answers for this section. For example, “I will become a member of ___ club”.</p>	

Notes: _____

<p>Getting Hired Where can you work one day?</p>	<p>What companies/organizations can I work for in this career? Youth will research the specific companies they could work for one day. This research may have occurred when looking for an information interview and other experiential learning opportunities. If not, youth can find this information on the internet (411 and yellowpages.ca are some easy options for this).</p> <p>Encourage youth to find out how these companies hire, the company culture, their mission, etc. so that the youth can keep this information in mind while navigating their careers. When it comes time to do actual job searches, youth can use this information when applying to jobs.</p> <p>How can I learn more about these companies/organizations or other companies/organizations I may want to work for? This will give youth practice looking for companies they can work for as well as make them more aware of the local opportunities available to them.</p>	
<p>Things That Can Help Me What can give you an advantage?</p>	<p>Opportunities: What opportunities are available to me that can help me reach my career goals (training, volunteering, extracurricular activities, community help, network, information, etc.)? Encourage youth to do real research here to find local opportunities that can help them. For example, as opposed to merely writing “volunteering”, youth can research actual local volunteering opportunities (they may have already found some of this information when completing their <i>Experiential Learning</i> handouts). They should always be consciously looking for new opportunities, which will help them recognize opportunities as they arise. Youth can ask themselves the following questions when presented with a new opportunity to determine if it may be valuable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I learn new skills? • Can I learn about myself? • Can I learn new knowledge? • Can I expand my network? • Do my current skills/transferable fit or can they be built off? 	<p>Strengths: What are my personal strengths that can give me an advantage in reaching my career goals? To help youth with their confidence levels as well as with their abilities to promote themselves, it is important for them to recognize what characteristics they have that will help them with their career navigation. This will also help youth to become more aware of their strengths, and in turn, help them to become more aware of making use of their strengths. Encourage youth to consider how they could leverage these strengths and opportunities.</p>

Notes: _____

<p>Things That Can Get in My Way (refer to your <i>Potential Obstacles to Career Navigation</i> handout)</p>	<p>What things can get in the way of me reaching my career goals? Have I come up with possible solutions for these obstacles? Is there anything that is out of my control? Have I created back up plans?</p> <p><i>This section serves as a reflection section for youth to consider their potential obstacles and solutions. Youth can refer to their Potential Obstacles to Career Navigation handouts for this section. This should help them to sum up what they have on their handouts, and to help them realize their solutions and become more confident.</i></p>
<p>What are my other options? <i>What other careers can I do if I am unable to get this/these one(s)?</i></p>	<p>What else will I be able to do with the education/training/experience that I have or I am hoping to get? How will my skills be transferable?</p> <p><i>Youth can refer to their What Else Can I Do With This Education/Training/Experience handouts for this information. Encourage them to seriously plan for these contingency plans.</i></p> <p>What other education/training/experience, if any, will I need to do this?</p> <p><i>This information can also be found on their What Else Can I Do With This Education/Training/Experience handouts.</i></p>
<p>Resources <i>Resources are things you need to use (such as money, a computer, an employer, etc.).</i></p>	<p>What resources (for example, money, car, certain programs, community agencies, etc.) do I need to help me achieve my career goals?</p> <p><i>This information may not be relevant to some youth, but for others, it may help them to plan financially. Youth should keep in mind everything they will need. This may include transportation, laptop, certain training, professional attire, etc.</i></p>
<p>What else? <i>Think of three things that could help you to achieve your career goal. Examples: join a club, read a certain paper, etc.</i></p>	<p>What else could possibly help me in achieving my career goals?</p> <p><i>This section is for youth to come up with their own ideas of what else could help them, which encourages them to think more deeply about their opportunities and about what can help them reach their goals. They can do online research to complete this section, or refer to their informational interviews.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 2) 3)

Timeline

The Timeline serves as a way of motivating youth to reach their goals, breaking up their large career goals into smaller, more achievable goals, and keeping track of their progress. Youth can use the *SMART Goals* sheet to create these goals, or they use the timeline as a general goal list.

Notes: _____

- Keeping in mind when they would like their action items completed by, youth will complete their Timelines. The Timeline is a way for youth to keep track of everything they need to do to reach their career goals. For many youth, this may be easiest to accomplish by working backwards.

Your Action Plan is not written in stone...(Slide 6)

It is important that youth understand the importance of revisiting and revising their Action Plans as they continue with their career navigation. Their Action Plans must be flexible to allow for unpredictable factors. This will help youth to face these unpredictable factors as they come, and realize what it is in their plans that need to be revised.

DISCUSSION

Corresponding Handout: *Revisiting and Revising Your Action Plan*

- There are many reasons why youth would want or need to revisit and revise their plans. Some of these reasons are listed below:
 - Growing Network
 - New Opportunities
 - New Interests
 - Labour Market Information Updates
 - Life Changes
 - Successes
 - Failures
 - Changes in Values or Priorities
- **Prompting Question:** *Why write an action plan if it is likely to change?*
 - Explain that writing an Action Plan outlines all of the important things that you need to focus on when navigating through your career. With proper planning and clear actions outlined, you will be more likely to reach your goals and you will be less likely to miss any details if you need to revise your plan. This also will help you to identify the details that may need to change if your Action Plan is to be revised.
 - Emphasize one of the concepts learned in the first section; career navigation is unpredictable and looks different for everyone. Therefore, being adaptable and having an open mind are vital for navigating career pathways in our rapidly changing world.

Examples

The following examples can be used to illustrate the importance of revisiting and revising an Action Plan.

Notes: _____

DISCUSSION

Corresponding Handout: *Revisiting and Revising Your Action Plan*

- Youth have these examples on their handouts. Read the following examples aloud and discuss the prompting questions as a group.

Dylan's Example:

Dylan completed the WEnav program, but never revisited his Action Plan. He followed his Action Plan, was successful, and was working as a real estate agent, which was the career that he wanted. Dylan then became a father. For a few more years, he tried to balance the inconsistent hours of a real estate agent with the demands of being a father. He realized that the off hours that his jobs required did not fit with his life as a parent the way that he wanted it too, but he stuck with it because he felt like it was what he should do. Finally, after years of being stressed and pressed for time, Dylan realized that his values had changed, so he revisited his Action Plan. He was able to revise his plan and find a career that fit better with his lifestyle. He was happy it had worked out well, but disappointed that he had not done this sooner to save him and his family from the added stress.

- Prompting Question:** *What could Dylan have done differently? What made him change his career goals?*

Rachana's Example:

Rachana completed the WEnav program and was soon working in her dream career as a cosmetic sales person. She loved her job and was successful in it. She loved how she could combine her creativity and love of cosmetics with the challenge of sales. About 2 years into her job, Rachana was let go. Her company was downsizing their sales department because many people were now doing their shopping online, so they had started focusing their efforts on online advertising. Rachana left the company with a fantastic reference letter and 2 years of experience. She looked back to her Action Plan and started to navigate through her career once again. Because she had done this once before, it was easy for her to do. Rachana took a few extra courses so she could learn about online advertising, and was soon able to start a new career in creative online advertising. She enjoyed this job as much as she enjoyed her previous job (she still could combine her creativity with her love for cosmetics) and she was very good at it.

- Prompting Question:** *What made Rachana change her career goals? Is there anything that Rachana could have done to avoid this? Was losing her job a negative thing for Rachana's career?*

Notes: _____

George's Example:

George completed WEnav and found a fun career in management, which he enjoyed. One year later, he thought it would be a good idea to look over this Action Plan, even though he was happy in his job. He started to add things to his All about Me chart that he had discovered during his last year of working and saw that he had gained many new skills and realized many new things about his work preferences. With this in mind, George started to seek out different management opportunities that suited his preferences. Through his network, he found out that his company was looking for someone to manage a new project. George applied for that position and got it. He enjoyed this position even more than the first.

- **Prompting Questions:** *Why was George able to recognize this opportunity? What do you predict his career would have been like if he had not recognized it?*

Jonas' Example:

Jonas' dream was to become a food photographer for a popular food magazine. He created his Action Plan around this dream. He received a project where he needed to photograph food from the beginning (growing on the vine) to the end (in an expensive dish). Jonas had to visit a local agriculture facility to accomplish this. While he was there, he realized that agriculture was extremely interesting to him, so he revisited his Action Plan to see what he could do to take advantage of this new interest. He had an informational interview with one of the managers at the agriculture facility and got some advice on how to get into the field. Jonas re-did his Action Plan with the career goal of becoming a **grower**. Jonas still does photography in the side, but he now is working full time as a grower, making lots of money, and is loving his career in a field that he previously knew nothing about! Jonas was so glad that he revisited and revised his Action Plan.

- **Prompting Question:** *How did Jonas find and recognize this new opportunity? Do you think that you would be able to recognize an opportunity such as this?*

Career Profile: Grower

Description: Care for crops (watering, spraying, testing, improving), supervise other positions, interpret value of assets on the farm.

Pay: \$28/hr

Education: Bachelor degree in Horticulture, Biology, or related field; Pesticides Application License; Hand-on experience (in some cases, you can work your way up to this position by working on a farm)

Skills: Leadership, problem solving, communication

Notes: _____

Mya's Example:

After completing the WEnav program, Mya began working in her dream career as a horse trainer. Years later, she thought she should revisit her Action Plan as she knew the importance of being adaptable in her career. Mya revisited her Action Plan and her All about Me chart. She added a few new things to her chart, but overall, she decided that she was very happy in her career and that she was not in need of a change. Revisiting her Action Plan helped confirm for Mya that she was in the right place in her career.

- **Prompting Question:** *Was revisiting her Action Plan a waste of time for Mya? What did it accomplish? Now that Mya has revisited her Action Plan and is happy with it, does she need to revisit it again?*

Slide 7: Reflection Questions

DISCUSSION

Corresponding Handout: *Reflection Questions – Section 6*

- Youth will write, discuss, and/or draw their responses to the following questions:
 - 1) How will I make sure that I revisit my Action Plan to keep it up-to-date?

Congratulations! (Slide 8)

It is important to leave youth with a sense of excitement, confidence, autonomy, and responsibility in relation to their career navigation and career plans. Youth should exit the program feeling like they have control over their career planning and motivated to maintain their Action Plans and follow their Timelines.

DISCUSSION

- Facilitators can help instil this sense of confidence and motivation in youth by discussion one or more of the following discussion topics:
 - If your career does not unravel the way that you have planned, is this necessarily a bad thing?
 - If everyone in the world was working in a career that they enjoyed and for which they are well suited, do you think this would impact society? How so?
 - What kind of effect do you see your career navigation having on the rest of your life?
- Congratulate youth on the time and effort that they have put into career navigation. Remind them that the skills and knowledge that they learned in WEnav will help them throughout the courses of their careers.

Notes: _____
