

MANUALUL CONSULTANTULUI ÎN CARIERĂ. CAIET DE EXERCIȚII

[**The Career Consultant's Manual. Workbook**], Andreea SZILAGYI,
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BOOK REVIEW

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In a world characterized by an unprecedented pace of change, whether it intersects with professional, social, or personal life, people are increasingly experiencing situations that could affect their mental and emotional health. The choices they have to make regarding their educational and professional path are becoming increasingly difficult, given an educational offer with a low degree of attractiveness, most of the time, and a labor market characterized by instability and volatility.

In such a context, the expertise and guidance that school counselors, vocational counselors, career counselors, and all other professionals in the area of counseling services can offer become all the more necessary.

A name with strong resonance in the field of counseling, both nationally and internationally, ANDREEA SZILAGYI is a graduate of the Faculty of Sociology, Psychology and Pedagogy, majoring in Pedagogy, University of Bucharest, PhD in Educational Sciences - title obtained at the "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași, following the defense of the doctoral thesis on the theme "Educational counseling in contemporary society. Value and limits", the first doctoral research in the field of counseling in Romania. With over 25 years of experience in the academic and corporate environment, in Europe, Asia, and the USA, ANDREEA SZILAGYI has defined her main areas of expertise: education, communication, counseling in school, career, and mental health.

She is a pioneer in the field of the programs dedicated to counselors' training, at the university level and in the non-profit and business environment, in Romania and other countries around the world. The promotion of counseling is one of her priority objectives, being actively involved in the creation and management of the national and international networks in this field, as president, founding member, or member of representative associations, such as the *European Board for Certified Counselors - EBCC*, *National Board for Certified Counselors - NBCC*, *the Association of Romanian Counselors*, *the International Association for Counseling*, *the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, *American College Counseling Association*, *Association of Psychological and Educational Counselors of Asia Pacific*, *Association for Counselor Education and Supervision* etc.

In parallel with a prolific activity in the area of educational and counseling projects and programs, ANDREEA SZILAGYI also invests in academic educational work, currently being an associate professor at the Department of Training for Teaching Careers and Socio-Human Sciences within the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, where she coordinates disciplines such as *Pedagogy, Counseling and school guidance, Individual counseling techniques and group etc.*, and Vice-Professor at Antioch University New England (School of Counseling, Psychology & Therapy), USA - where she trains counselors and therapists, teaching courses in *Career Counseling, Ethics in Counseling, Human Development, Theoretical Models in Counseling, Trauma and Resilience*.

With an impressive career in the counseling field, ANDREEA SZILAGYI maintains her focus on the complex counseling process in her works, one of which is the *Career Consultant's Manual. Workbook* (243 pages), published by the European Institute, Iași, in 2023, whose reading, doubled by exercise and (self)reflection, we recommend not only to those who exercise professional roles circumscribed to counseling services but to all those concerned with accessing thorough and deep self-knowledge.

The workbook, as the author specifies, follows step-by-step the content units covered in *the Career Counselor's Handbook*, another reference work bearing her signature, and constitutes a consistent portfolio of informal assessment and self-assessment tools, relevant from the perspective of personal and career development.

The paper architecture integrates nine chapters, an introductory section, and a series of useful annexes. Having the format of an exercise book, the practical-applicative dimension is obvious, the work representing a genuine working tool for wider categories of specialists: career counselors, career consultants, career advisors, career coaches, vocational counselors, career guidance counselors, etc.

In the *Introductory* section, we find a series of recommendations regarding the use of the exercises described in each chapter. We record here one of them, which we consider to be extremely useful: that of capitalizing on the tools presented, first of all for one's benefit, circumscribing them to a necessary approach of self-reflection and development of self-awareness.

The first chapter - *Introduction to the field of career development* - brings to the reader's attention relevant applications from the perspective of some central elements/concepts of the field of career development: work, career counseling services, career, occupation, and profession. Through exercises including *Why do I work? Career development support, My workplace, Occupations, and professions, My roles - who am I?* etc., the author invites to an exploration of the meanings and personal meanings given to important aspects of our lives, invites to a deep process of self-knowledge, based on the reflective abilities of each one, a process that can stimulate the need for improvement, growth, change.

Chapter 2 - *Theories of career development* - allows the continuation of the "journey" on the path of self-knowledge, proposing another set of useful exercises: *Richard Bolles' Paradigm, RIASEC Code - Holland, Personal Roles, Self-Efficacy - Albert Bandura* etc. The tools presented correspond to various theoretical models (described in *the Consultant's Manual*), facilitating the identification of the factors that impact the career development process, as well as their dynamics. *Support and communication skills in counseling* - the third chapter -, introduces under a magnifying glass the communication process, a central tool for connection and exploration in counseling. Tools such as *The ideal counselor profile, 4-S*

Model, Effective Questions, Nonverbal communication. Application on paraverbal elements, Active listening etc. - ensures the practice of essential skills for what an effective communication process means in career counseling and not only - the ability to formulate questions, the habit of active listening, the ability to harmonize the forms of communication - verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal.

Chapter IV, *The Evaluation Process in Career Counseling*, illustrates appropriate ways of exploring the values, preferences, skills, and beliefs considered basic elements of the career counseling assessment approach. Through exercises suggestively entitled *Evaluation Errors, Strengths, and Self-Efficacy, My Preferences, My Values, Success Formula, Limiting Beliefs*, etc., the self-reflection is encouraged, and the process of self-knowledge deepens, ensuring awareness of personal aspects that can be/constitute either strengths or real obstacles/barriers to the process of professional and even personal growth and maturation.

The career intervention process, the fifth chapter, includes useful applications for formulating personal and career goals (*SMART Goals, Personal, and Professional Goals*), for developing appropriate solutions in problematic contexts (*Uncertainty in decision, Obstacles in decision*), or for creating simple career analysis and planning tools (*My Budget, SWOT Analysis, Action Plan*).

The focus of chapter six - *Particular aspects involved in the career development process* - is on the emotional dimension of the career counseling process, which is crucial for the efficiency and success of this endeavor. The exercises circumscribed in this chapter place emphasis on topics such as diversity and multiculturalism, exposure to trauma, limiting beliefs, well-being, etc.

The labor market in the fifth industrial revolution is the title of chapter 7, being dedicated, through the proposed tools, to exploring the profile and challenges specific to a labor market characterized by accelerated dynamics, volatility, and an increased degree of instability and uncertainty. The penultimate chapter - *Ethical and legal aspects in career counseling* - is rich in exercises that allow awareness of ethical and moral principles in the relationship with clients, and of ethical and deontological norms that mark the profession of career counselor. *Confidentiality, Customer Data Protection, Personal Values and Beliefs, Self-Care – Ethical Obligation* are just some of the tools proposed for practice.

Supervision in career counseling – the last chapter of the reviewed work – adds other elements relevant to the complex field of counseling, completing the tools available to the counselor with a set of exercises focused on the partnership relationship of the counselor with a supervisor. Beyond the proposed tools, suggestive case studies are inserted at the end of each chapter, drawn from the professional experience of the author and other career counseling specialists. We appreciate that the exercises presented in this book, self-administered and/or properly applied in career counseling approaches, constantly accompanied by pertinent observations and reflections, personal conclusions - of the counselor, but also of his clients - have motivating, transformative valences, generating not only a deep process of self-knowledge but also one of personal and professional growth and development.

The Career Consultant's Manual. Workbook, strongly anchored in the scientific research related to the field of counseling, is a valuable resource not only for counseling professionals, but also for those active in fields such as human resource development, coaching, therapy, mentoring, supervision, and education.