





Intersectional

approach to career guidance and social justice: Fatima's case

Material for career guidance practitioners working with immigrants

The online summer school of career guidance and social justice at
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Introduction- intersectionality

Term intersectionality:

Intersectionality is a term introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) which describes how different orders of power and societal categories (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, religion etc) in persons life and identity intersect with each other in various contexts and ways.



How can intersectionality address the *social justice issue* in career guidance of immigrants? → An intersectional approach helps us to consider several social factors/ categories simultaneously and be aware of how these social factors/ categories affect our clients agency in their career planning.

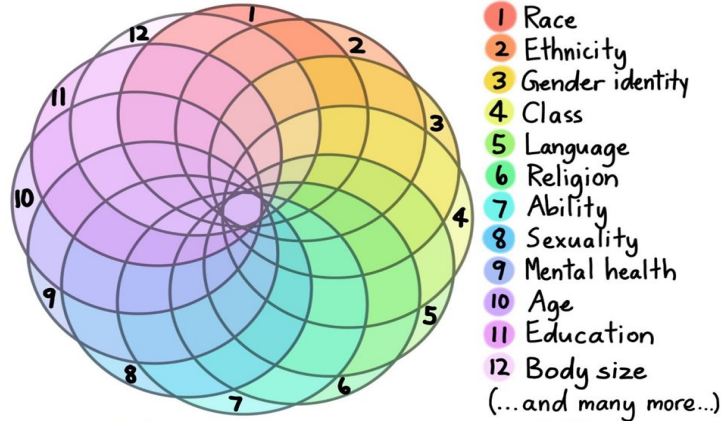
Why intersectionality?

- A gap in research in career guidance, we need to raise awareness
- A possibility for clients to make more norm-challenging career choices
- The ways of oppression are different when considering several social factors at once
- It is part of ethical guidelines: career guidance should support less privileged individuals

→ The effort should thus be combined, the interventions should be adapted.

“The wheel of power”- a model to visualise the approach and power structures

INTERSECTIONALITY

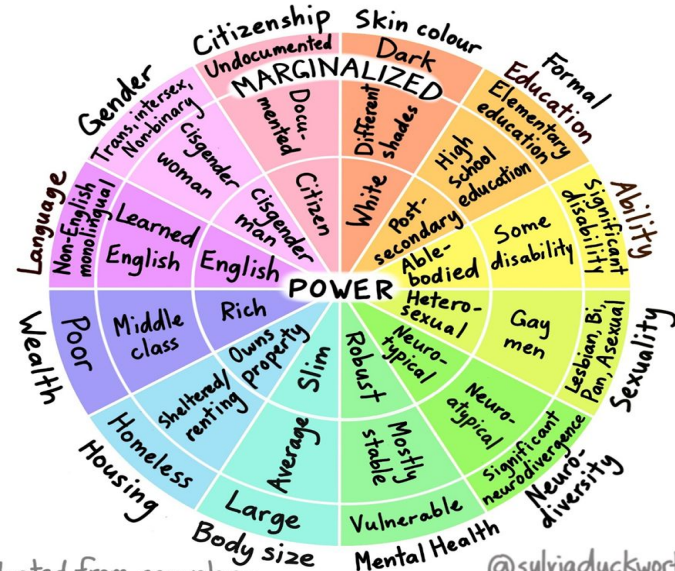


Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

@sylviaaduckworth

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

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Example - Fatima's case

Fatima 35 years old, moved recently to a Nordic/ Western country because of the socio-economic situation in her own homecountry. She visits career counsellor Eva who only knows some things about Fatima from the CV (mainly information about education and job experience in homecountry) which was sent to her before meeting. Through an open approach in their dialogue it comes out that Fatima feels it is very frustrating that she cannot communicate in the way that she would like with others in the new country. She explains that she got ADHD diagnosis before she moved to the new country and she has poor English and an unsafe part time job at a restaurant that she found by her contacts from the same country. She tells she has experiences harassment (because of her ethnicity, gender and religion in being a catholic etc.) there. Fatima is afraid to react because she needs money. Fatima feels like: "I am different, I will never be accepted to the society. Will I ever adapt here? Am I too old to study at university? etc." Fatima has informed the teachers about her diagnosis but they always find excuses and do not fix special pedagogical material for her. She also experiences misunderstandings in her communication with the new country's society partly because of insufficient command of the official languages used in the new country and because she has difficulties in expressing her feelings and body language because of her diagnosis. (Note: In this scenario the counselor, Eva, works only some hours during the week with the school of adults where Fatima learns the local language)

How can an Intersectional perspective in Eva's approach contribute to social justice in career guidance? How can Eva (or you) **build awareness** about how to **apply this approach towards immigrants** in her (or your) everyday work?



Applications

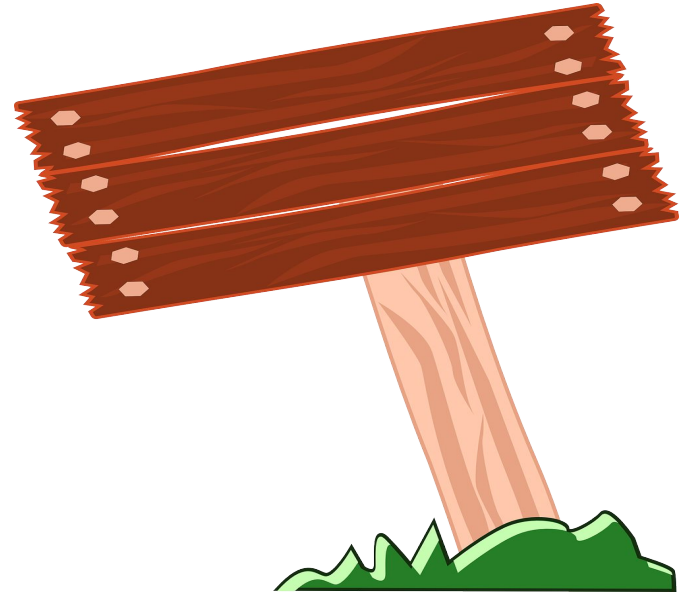
In this section we will give suggestions for Fatima's case based on the Five Signposts based on Hooley et al. (2019) work.

1. Build critical consciousness.
2. Name oppression.
3. Question what is normal.
4. Encourage people to work together.
5. Work at a range of levels.

To learn more:

Hooley, T. & Sultana, R. G. & Thomsen, R. (2019). *Career Guidance for Emancipation. Reclaiming Justice for the Multitude*. New York: Routledge.

Hooley, T., Sultana, R., & Thomsen, R. (2021). *Five signposts to a socially just approach to career guidance*. *Journal of the National Institute of Career Education and Counselling*, 47, 59-66.



Application (1)

Signpost 1: Build **critical consciousness**

HOW?

- Be aware of your own status in social and other hierarchies (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, religion etc) → Try to position yourself in The Wheel of Power (see slide 3) to reflect on your privileges
- What is the situation like for your client?
- Think...is there anybody who benefits from the structures?

Case example:

The counsellor, Eva can position herself as white, woman, belongs to the upper middle class, has higher educational degree etc.

The structures and norms that have put Fatima in that situation are economy, harassment at workplace, idea of a young student, eurocentrism etc.



Application (2)

Signpost 2: Name oppression

HOW?

- Recognise the specific needs of the badly treated group and help the group see the oppression
- Set a plan in solidarity with them so as to increase the possibilities of reaching a sustainable career

Case example:

Eva can recognise the oppression (inequity etc.) and name what it is that Fatima has experienced; different treatment because of Fatima's intersecting social factors (ethnicity, religion, diagnosis etc.).

They can look together for Fatima's rights as an employee and as a student with special needs.



Application (3)

Signpost 3: Question what is normal

HOW?

- Be sensitive and careful with your words (husband or wife → partner or spouse; mother or father → guardian)
- Not making assumptions of clients' ethnicity or nationality based on their appearance, for example language
- Relocate the geographical context so as to encourage client to speak for other possible societal factors more freely
- Discuss and question with client: why/how do they feel different?

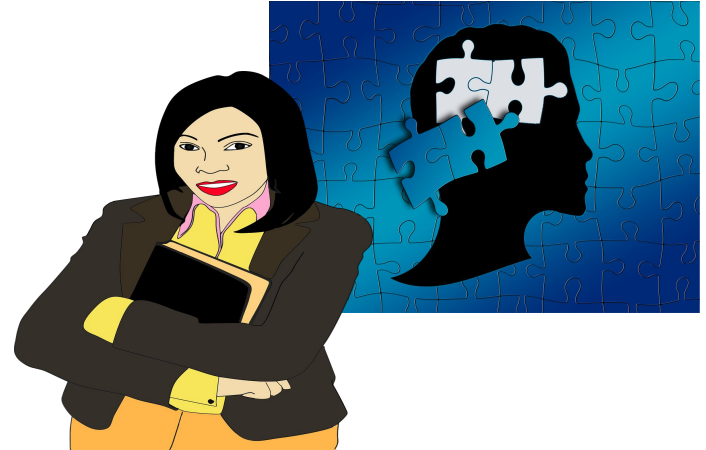
Case example:

Eva can use more neutral terms when talking about family relations with Fatima.

Eva can start the conversation with Fatima in the local language and change to English, if needed.

Eva can meet with Fatima for a walk to discuss things outside the school environment.

Eva can discuss with Fatima that having diagnoses and studying in later age is actually normal (widen the perspective)!



Application (4)

Signpost 4: Encourage people to **work together**.

HOW?:

- Through online tools, like social media, engage with other career counselors with these issues so that they are aware if they also see them at their own workplaces
- Organize a mentoring/ support group

Case example:

Eva can address problems to the director of the school.

Eva can speak with special pedagog. Is there any? If not, she can communicate with the community services and ask for help.



Application (5)

Signpost 5 : Work at a **range of levels**.

HOW?

- If motivated, get politically active (join political parties to start initiatives)
- Do more research/ engage with researchers concerning intersectionality in career guidance
- Participate in social media, discussing with colleagues about the right of people who come to other countries to study even if older. How to widen perspectives? That validation of prior education for non-European citizens can be not favourable for the individual. How can it be changed?

Case example:

Eva can, with colleagues from other schools for adults, engage in a union and take up these issues in an intersectional approach (non-European immigrants, women etc.).



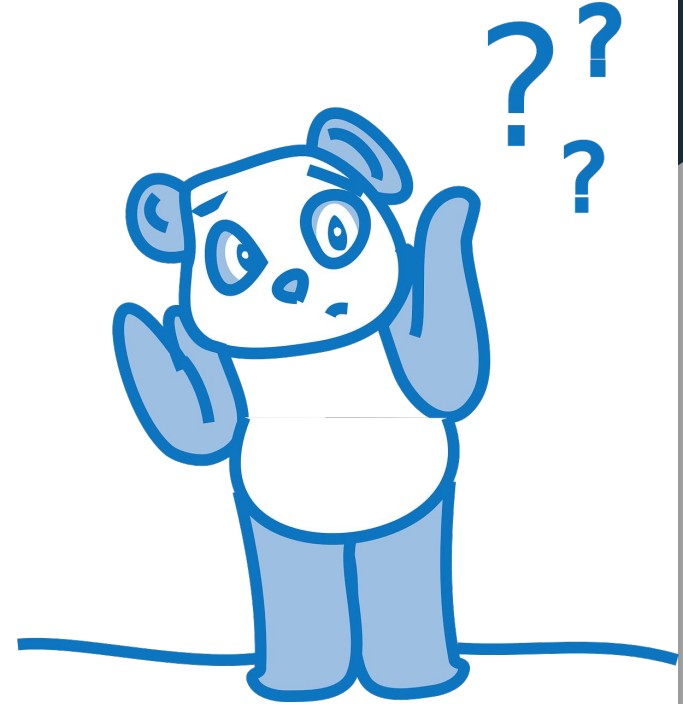
Challenges and notes

Remember to keep a balance when:

- Avoiding making assumptions vs. acknowledging the social factors of the client.
- Empowering the client vs. pointing out the power structures affecting their career.

Note:

- Intersectional approach, Five Signposts and their applications can be implemented and adjusted to other client groups as well!



References

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Images

-Duckworth, S. *Intersectionality*. [Infographic] & *Wheel of power/privilege*. [Infographic]. Accessed 2 september 2022, from <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign/chapter/positionality-intersectionality/> (slide 3)

-Pixabay (slides 2 & 4-11)