PROMOTING LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN RECEIVING SERVICES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

by

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in

Family and Human Development
ABSTRACT

Promoting Life Management Skills to Enhance Employment among Women Receiving Services from the Division of Workforce Services by Cheryl Cheek, Doctor of Philosophy Utah State University, 1999

Erikson’s theory of identity development and Marcia’s model of identity statuses serve as a framework for this examination of the relationship between women’s identity status and employment. The hypotheses of the study were that women with an achieved identity status would be more likely to obtain and retain employment and that interventions would increase their scores on identity-related subscales.

Phase 1 of this study examined the relationship between identity development and employment among 203 women receiving public assistance. Subjects provided employment and public assistance histories and were categorized into three preferred cognitive styles according to responses to the Bérzonsky Cognitive Style Inventory: Information Orientation (characterized by active searching and evaluation of relevant
information prior to decision making/problem solving); Normative Orientation (characterized by a passive approach to decision making/problem solving which relies upon the opinions of significant others), and Diffuse Orientation (decision making/problem solving characterized by procrastination and avoidance). Information- and Normative-oriented respondents reported just over one year of public assistance (15.05 and 14.21 months, respectively), while the Diffuse-oriented respondents had utilized public assistance in excess of three years (37.20 months). Diffuse-oriented respondents also reported changing jobs more frequently during the previous 12 months than Information- and Normative-oriented respondents, although no differences were found among the three groups in months employed.

Phase 2 of this study used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of interventions to affect employment and scores on the subscales of the Berzonsky Cognitive Style Inventory, as measured by the BCSI subscale scores. Results indicated that there were mixed differences in the pretest and 12-week followup scores of the intervention group on the subscales. However, there were more marked statistically significant differences in the number of hours worked per week and the percentage of the intervention group employed when comparing the pretest and the 12-week postintervention data. The results indicate that while the interventions were less effective in changing identity status than had been hypothesized, they were effective in assisting participants to obtain employment.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank many friends at Davis Mental Health and the Department of Workforce Services in the Clearfield and Salt Lake City, Utah, areas. Thank you for encouraging me to go after this degree and for staying involved in the process through the last three years. Thank you also to the Turning Point program at Salt Lake Community College for working with me in collecting data. A very special thank you goes to Kay Hinckley, who spent hours assisting me in finding and contacting respondents who had moved.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my major professor, Randall M. Jones, for helping me to understand how to do research and how to put a dissertation together, as well as to my entire committee. The members of my committee, Brent C. Miller, Kathleen W. Piercy, Glen O. Jensen, and Leona Hawks, were willing to take the time to answer questions and to give counsel on doing research.

Thank you to my children, Joseph, Matt, and Sarah, who thought it was neat that their mom was in college at the same time they were. Most importantly, thank you to my husband, Wayne, who worked hard to support me in college, who was willing to live alone for half of every week during a 2-year period so I could go to school, who proofread numerous papers, who typed when I got tired, and who never let me forget that I would eventually succeed in completing this work.

Cheryl Cheek
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. .............................................. v

LIST OF TABLES. .................................................. x

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................. xii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................. 1

   Conceptual Framework ........................................... 3
   Research Questions ............................................. 5
   Phase 1 ......................................................... 5
   Phase 2 ......................................................... 6

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ................................. 7

   Phase 1: Characteristics of Identity Development and
   Their Relationship to Employment. ............................ 7

      Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development ............ 7
      Marcia’s Operationalization of Identity .................... 9
      Characteristics of Identity Statuses ....................... 10

      Achieved status ........................................... 10
      Moratorium status ......................................... 11
      Foreclosure status ......................................... 12
      Diffused status ............................................ 13

      Women’s Identity Development ............................. 16
      Factors Influencing the Attainment of Identity ............ 18
      Identity and Employment .................................. 19
      Women, Identity, and Employment ......................... 23
      Identity and Employment in Clients at the
      Department of Workforce Services ......................... 25
      Literature Summary ....................................... 25
Phase 2: Facilitating Identity Achievement Through Group Interventions

The Usefulness of Interventions to Facilitate Identity Achievement
Prior Interventions
Advantages of Group Interventions
Purposes of Group Activities
- Encouraging more active participation
- Providing a safe environment for trying new behaviors
- Teaching new behaviors through modeling

Psychoeducation Defined
How Psychoeducation Affects Those Who Are Unemployed
Aspects of the Interventions and Their Relationship to Identity Formation
- The relationship between career choices and the formation of identity
- The relationship between learning assertiveness and the formation of identity
- The relationship between life management and the formation of identity

How Group Interventions Relate to the Domains of Identity Achievement
- Exploring and making decisions among career choices
- Assertiveness training
- Life management

Literature Summary
Objectives

III. METHOD
Phase 1
Research Questions ........................................... 49
Sample ........................................................... 50
Design ............................................................. 51
Procedure .......................................................... 51
Measurement ....................................................... 52
Information orientation subscale items .................. 54
Normative orientation subscale items ...................... 54
Diffuse orientation subscale items ......................... 54
Reliability and Validity ........................................... 55

Phase 2 ............................................................. 56
Research Questions .............................................. 56
Sample ............................................................. 57
Design ............................................................... 57
Measurement Procedure ......................................... 59
Intervention Procedure ........................................... 60
DWS Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program ................. 61
DWS Steps to Success program ............................... 62
Turning Point Life Transitions program ................... 63
Turning Point Managing Your Life program ............... 64

Threats to Validity in the Intervention ....................... 66

IV. RESULTS ......................................................... .68
Identity ............................................................. .68
Phase 1 ............................................................. .72
Scoring of Measures .............................................. .72
Research Questions .............................................. .73
Phase 1 research question 1a .................................. .73
Phase 1 research question 1b .................................. .74
Phase 2 ............................................................. .77
Scoring of Measures .............................................. .77
Research Questions .............................................. .78
Phase 2 research question 1a .................................. 78
Phase 2 research question 1b .................................. 80
Phase 2 research question 1c .................................. 81

Summary ................................................................. 84

V. DISCUSSION ........................................................ 86

Objectives .............................................................. 86
Discussion of Results ............................................... 88
Limitations .............................................................. 96
Recommendations for Future Research ......................... 101
Summary ................................................................. 103

REFERENCES ......................................................... 105

APPENDICES ......................................................... 114

Appendix A Pilot Study Results .................................. 115
Appendix B Measures Used ....................................... 117

VITA ................................................................. 124
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Characteristics of the Identity Statuses</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Summary of Aspects of Intervention Related to Identity Development</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Characteristics of Female Respondents in Phase 1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comparison of the EOM-EIS and BCSI in Terms of Marcia's Identity Statuses</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Characteristics of Female Respondents in Phase 2</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Summary of Aspects of Interventions Related to Identity Development</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cronbach Alpha Values for Cognitive Style Subscales</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interscale Correlations for BCSI Subscales</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Results Comparing Grouped and Ungrouped Respondents on Demographic Characteristics and Measures of Assistance and Employment</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Percentage Distribution of Cognitive Styles for Subjects at Each Site</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Results Comparing Measures of Assistance and Employment across Cognitive Style Orientations</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Pretest and Posttest Scores on Cognitive Style Subscales</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Pretest and Followup Scores on Cognitive Style Subscales</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Hours Worked Per Week at Pretest and Followup</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Percentage of Group Members Working at Pretest and Followup</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Percentage of Cognitive Styles by Employment Status</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17  Percentage of Cognitive Styles by Number of Jobs .......................... 117
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marcia’s identity statuses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comparison of hours worked</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comparison of employment</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cognitive style and employment</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cognitive style and number of jobs</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Since the 1930s, the federal government has offered services to unemployed citizens which assist them until they again can be employed. This group of services, commonly called welfare, has come to include financial support, supplementary food allowances, housing assistance and medical insurance. In the last few years the welfare program has been under scrutiny with the aim of getting people off welfare and into jobs. William Martin, the director of the Goodwill Work program said, “We start from a moral premise that it is simply unconscionable to leave somebody on welfare. If the goal is to get somebody out of poverty, the only way to do it is to get them a job that pays better” (De Parle, 1997, p. 36).

In 1996, Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, the Personal Responsibility and Work opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This act eliminated the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and replaced it with block grants to states that had federally approved plans for temporary assistance. These plans, abbreviated as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), were designed to give assistance on a short-term basis to low-income families with at least one minor child. In order to receive funds, the TANF programs needed to include mandatory activities involving work-, education-, and job-related skills. This program had the purpose of providing families with temporary assistance to end welfare dependency, preventing and reducing the amount of unwed pregnancy (especially teenage pregnancy), and encouraging two-parent families. The states were given the option to decide the length of time that assistance was to be offered, with the
stipulation that it be under five years. Utah has decided that assistance would be offered for three years, with 20% of the population receiving assistance eligible for extensions beyond the 3-year period. These extensions would be for cases of extreme hardship and those of women coming out of domestic violence situations (Welfarewatch, 1999)

In the three years since the implementation of the new TANF program, the number of women receiving assistance ("welfare") in the Clearfield, Utah, office of the Division of Workforce Services has been cut by nearly 50% (from 1,384 to 790). Women leaving welfare have been able to obtain employment with the assistance of such services as job training and child care. Case workers at the Clearfield office of the Division of Workforce Services have noticed, however, that the clients who remain on the welfare rolls, even with the assistance offered, show self-defeating patterns of behavior which contribute to their inability to retain employment. These include difficulties in work-related behaviors such as making and following through with decisions, having consistent work habits, completing assignments without being monitored, accepting co-workers' personal differences, and so forth.

Workers have noted that many of these clients require inordinate amounts of personal attention, often calling several times a day to ask workers to make decisions for them. They appear to need one-on-one counseling for both major and minor crises, and they have difficulties keeping appointments and following through on assignments. With caseloads ranging from 70-100 people, this type of personal attention is not only
physically impossible, but emotionally draining for the workers, who sincerely want to help their clients, but who find themselves unable to fill these overwhelming needs.

This study examines the hypothesis that the skills needed by these clients to handle their own emotional needs are developmental skills. These skills, when taught in a group setting, can fill the gap between the intellectual skills taught in schools and the employment skills that are needed for consistent job performance.

Conceptual Framework

Erik Erikson (1963) defined identity as a sense of inner constancy involving congruence in one’s self-meaning and the meaning one has for significant others. Ego identity provides structure for a person’s self-understanding, direction, and meaning in life. It also sustains a sense of personal control and free will. Lastly, it gives a structure within which personal values, beliefs, commitments, and goals may be integrated (Adams, 1994).

This inner continuity is achieved after the individual has undergone an identity crisis, or a process of self-searching. The process can be likened to a transition between identity diffusion and identity achievement and can be resolved in either an active or passive form. The passive form is viewed as the individual’s acceptance of either a form of role confusion (Diffusion) or an acceptance of others’ choices and expectations (Foreclosure). Both passive forms of identity are viewed as psychologically and socially restrictive as well as ineffective in psychosocial functioning.
The active form involves searching, making choices, and commitment to the choices made. It was viewed by Erikson as involving mastery of the environment, autonomous and independent functioning, and personal congruence (Markstrom-Adams, Ascione, Braegger, & Adams, 1993).

Marcia (1966) created a paradigm that built on Erikson's theory of identity and operationalized the concepts of crisis and commitment. Marcia's four identity statuses, based upon the presence or absence of crisis and commitment, constitute a hierarchy of psychosocial maturity. Identity Achievement is considered to be the most mature level, followed by Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion (Jones, Hartmann, Growchowski, & Glider, 1989).

Marcia also expanded the domains of identity exploration. While Erikson (1968) focused on exploration in the areas of vocation, ideology, and family, Marcia expanded self-examination into the domains of vocational plans, religious beliefs, political ideologies, sex-role orientation, values, and family roles, such as marriage, parenting, and family/career prioritizing (Archer, 1989).

Marcia's paradigm evolved from Erikson's view that identity is a type of contract that an individual makes with society, a contract that includes commitments to act in certain ways and not in others (Josselson, 1973). Some of these ways include the choosing of a career and the manner in which that career is carried out. Planning for a future career could include behaviors such as getting good grades that would lead to the achievement of that goal. Thus, successful resolution of identity issues may help
prevent drug abuse, premarital sex, and other behaviors that could take people off track to employment goals (Jones, 1994).

However, some women may not be on track to careers and making choices that facilitate identity development. It has been theorized that women are often socialized to forestall identity development so they can merge with their future partners (Erikson, 1968). This, combined with limited career opportunities, poor pay, and covert discouragement of nontraditionality act together to discourage some women from developing their careers as a domain of identity development (Archer, 1993).

Women's formation of identities may affect their ability to obtain and retain employment. With the increased emphasis by government to assist women receiving welfare to become self-sustaining, research needs to be done that studies the factors that inhibit this self-sufficiency. The lack of development in women's identity may be a factor that inhibits their ability to become employed and to emotionally and financially take care of themselves and their families. This study in two phases is intended to explore this unexplored area with the intention of providing an understanding of women's identity and its relationship to the employment of women receiving welfare assistance.

Research Questions

Phase 1

1. Do women's identity statuses play any role in their receiving welfare assistance?
2. Is there any relationship between women’s identity statuses and their ability to retain employment?

Phase 2

1. Will an intervention designed to improve women’s identity-related life management skills change their identity statuses?

2. Will an intervention designed to improve women’s identity-related life management skills improve their employability?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Because this research has two phases, there are two separate sections of the literature review. The first will deal with identity development in general and specifically how it relates to employment. The second section discusses interventions and how they facilitate identity development.

Phase 1: Characteristics of Identity Development and Their Relationship to Employment

Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

According to Erikson (1963), development of emotional and cognitive skills occurs sequentially. Ego identity is a cumulative experience that consists of the internal capital accrued from all the experiences of each stage preceding identity formation (Erikson, 1963). The developmental qualities that Erikson saw as necessary to successfully resolve the identity crisis consist of a balance in the areas of trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, and industry versus inferiority. He also proposed that the adjustment of the adolescent is a reflection of the degree to which an ego identity is established (Heilbrun, 1964).

Just as successful resolution of the first four developmental stages facilitates the resolution of the Stage Five, identity versus identity diffusion, during adolescence and young adulthood, lack of resolution of these earlier stages is detrimental to identity development and the resolution of later developmental stages, namely: Stage Six,
intimacy versus isolation; Stage Seven, generativity versus stagnation; and Stage Eight, integrity versus despair (Jones, 1994). The main task of Stage One involves establishing a basic sense of trust, which evolves from strong mother-infant attachments during infancy. “The firm establishment of enduring patterns for the balance of basic trust over basic mistrust is the first task of the budding personality and therefore first of all a task for maternal care” (Erikson, 1963, p. 249).

Stage Two involves the balance of autonomy and shame/doubt and occurs during the second and third years of life. “From a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem comes a lasting sense of good will and pride” (Erikson, 1963, p. 254).

Stage Three involves creating a balance between initiative and guilt and is important during the fourth and fifth years, as the skills associated with language, movement, and imagination are mastered (Jones, 1994). At this time, the child appears to be self-motivated and has a “surplus of energy that permits him to forget failures quickly and to approach what seems desirable (even if it also seems dangerous) with undiminished and better aimed effort” (Erikson, 1963, p. 255).

Stage Four is the stage in which children learn to balance industry and inferiority. During the elementary school years (ages 6 through 12) children experience feelings of competence if they learn and do well or feelings of inferiority if they do not (Jones, 1994). According to Erikson (1963, p. 260), “This is socially a most decisive stage; since industry involves doing things beside and with others, a first sense of division of labor and of differential opportunity. . . develops at this time.”
Development in Stage Five is aided in Western societies by an unofficial period of moratorium between childhood and adulthood, during which adolescents are expected to form identity patterns (Erikson, 1968). At the end of high school or college, the adolescent is expected to have chosen, and be ready to enter, a career.

Marcia’s Operationalization of Identity

Marcia (1966) theorized that there are four categories of resolution of the identity crisis, based upon the presence or absence of crisis (or exploration) and commitment in value domains. The term “crisis” is used by Erikson in a normative sense. It designates “a necessary turning point, a crucial moment when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery and further differentiation” (Erikson, 1968, p. 16). The combination of the two major dimensions of self-definition, crisis (an examination of alternatives with an expectation of arriving at a choice in the reasonably near future), and commitment (a genuine, stable investment in a given choice) results in four descriptive statuses representing the process of identity formation (Archer, 1985).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
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Figure 1. Marcia’s identity statuses
Characteristics of Identity Statuses

**Achieved status.** Achievers are those who have successfully resolved the dilemma of identity—they have contemplated who they are and what they want, and have committed to their identities. They are the most self-directed of the four identity statuses and are less overwhelmed than persons in other statuses by sudden shifts in the environment or unexpected responsibilities (Grotevant & Adams, 1984). They report themselves as using their energies to seek identity-confirming experiences, while deriving their self-esteem from exploration of their own talents, abilities, and relationships (Read, Adams, & Dobson, 1984).

Achievers are capable problem-solvers who will persevere longer on problems and will maintain realistic levels of aspiration (Marcia, 1966). They are independent, flexible, and capable of tolerating frustration. Achievers are capable of processing large amounts of information in a busy and complex environment while feeling comfortable with their own thoughts and feelings (Read et al., 1984). They have higher levels of integrative complexity, suggesting the ability to organize their world, and themselves in their world, from a self-determined perspective by which they take into account and integrate multiple levels of meaning (Slugowski, Marcia, & Koopman, 1984).

Slugowski et al. (1984) found that Achievers in the classroom could interact with others without hostility and with nondefensive and rational interactive behavior. This flexibility enables them to freely probe others’ positions. Of the four identity statuses, Achievers have the most assertive behavior with the least amount of
deception. They have the ability to take a firm stand without hostility towards others and a willingness to risk social disapproval (Read et al., 1984).

Among female welfare recipients, one could expect to find an Achiever who would be receiving assistance as a result of an unexpected crisis in her life, such as divorce, unexpected job loss, and so forth. She likely needs assistance only long enough to get back on her feet.

**Moratorium status.** Moratoriums are currently involved in the self-reflection process of the identity crisis and are sorting out their beliefs and values, whereas Achievers have resolved this crisis. They are occupied with attempting to resolve what may seem to them unresolvable questions involving compromises between society's demands, their own abilities, and the mores that had been given to them by their parents (Marcia, 1966). They often experience internal conflict and guilt while trying to resolve these issues (Slugowski et al., 1984).

Moratoriums are "information-oriented scientific theorists who actively seek, process and evaluate information before solving problems and making decisions" (Berzonsky, Rice, & Neimeyer, 1990, pp. 252-253). They are also capable problem-solvers, and, while they are in this process, they will be introspective, questioning, and somewhat preoccupied (Marcia, 1966).

Moratoriums are the most introspective, sensitive, and insightful of the four identity statuses. In a classroom study (Slugowski et al., 1984) they were also the most talkative, expressing their feelings immediately and articulately, and the most competitive, vying for the leadership role within the group. When Moratoriums have
resolved their identity crisis, they move into Achieved status. If they fail to resolve it, they may stay in Moratorium or go into Diffused status.

**Foreclosed status.** Foreclosures have not gone through the identity crisis but have made strong commitments based on what they have been taught as children (Berzonsky, 1988). Their motto might be, “My mind is made up—don’t confuse me with the facts.” They are often preoccupied with re-creating family security and carrying out parental values. This status has a higher level of tension than Achievers (Slugowski et al., 1984). They have marked fears of the world outside of the family and often withdraw to avoid scrutiny (Read et al., 1984). Even when they are engaged in risky or self-defeating behavior, they have little ability to see alternative choices as achievable or open to them.

Foreclosures use other-directed problem-solving strategies. They fall apart with ambiguity and expect to be told what to do and what choices to make. Their views are narrow, and they often do not see options and alternatives that are open to them. They do poorly under stress and make unrealistic, unattainable goals for themselves and become frustrated and quit when they do not achieve them (Marcia, 1966).

Foreclosed females use a higher degree of manipulation than Achieved females. Often, their manipulations have a playful, childlike quality (Read et al., 1984). They have a difficult time establishing intimate relationships with others. They often will be defensive in a demanding interpersonal situation (Slugowski et al., 1984). They may use techniques of steam rolling their opinions, interrupting the expression of others’ opinions, sarcasm, condescension, and self-righteous negativism. They may also go to
the other end of the spectrum and may not get involved in the interaction or expend the energy to engage others and defend their positions. This has the effect of keeping the interaction superficial and therefore easy to discount (Slugowski et al., 1984).

An example of a Foreclosure receiving welfare could be a woman who views herself as a stay-at-home mother who is supported by welfare until her children are grown, and who does not see any other option as viable. While staying at home with children may be desirable if she has ongoing support (employed partner, etc.), with the changing economic climate and a 3-year limit on government assistance, the Foreclosure lacks the flexibility to consider alternate ways of supporting herself and her family.

**Diffused status.** Diffusions are those persons who have done little exploration and made few commitments. They are characterized (Marcia, 1966) as having no exploration, no commitment, and consequently, no identity. Erikson (1963, p. 307) quotes a statement made by the character Biff in a scene taken from *Death of a Salesman* as an example of role diffusion. In it, Biff states, “I just can’t take hold, Mom. I can’t take hold of some kind of a life.”

Diffusions have neither decided upon an occupation nor are they much concerned about it. Ideas of possible occupations can be easily discarded for better opportunities because they have little conception of a daily routine and the requirements of keeping a job (Marcia, 1966). Their motto might be, “Live for today.”
Diffusions are highly involved in fantasy and appear seemingly disconnected from their past and future. They neither learn from past mistakes nor think much about future possibilities or consequences of their decisions. Diffusions have a higher rate of substance use/abuse and other risky behaviors than the other three statuses (Jones et al., 1989).

They lack any real involvement in new ways of thinking. In a classroom setting, they volunteer ideas, but the ideas seem impulsively spoken and lacking in depth. When discussing opinions, they can seem superficially agreeable and childlike or inappropriately angry (Slugowski et al., 1984). They rely on others to make decisions for them. Ideologically, they may either be “playboys,” who take the opinion that one ideological outlook is a good as another and they are willing to try them all, or the schizoid personality type, who are uninterested in ideological matters altogether (Marcia, 1966).

Berzonsky (1988) looked at the identity statuses differently from Marcia. His research built on Erikson’s view that identity was a type of self-theory, and people having different identity statuses would have different ways of solving problems and making decisions. Berzonsky found that Diffusions, when faced with problems, will procrastinate and avoid having to deal with them for as long as possible. Foreclosures will look to authority figures to tell them what to do. Achievers and Moratoriums differ in the amount of commitment they have to their decisions, but both use a system of gathering information, planning, and making informed decisions when faced with problems. Based on his findings, Berzonsky reclassified Marcia’s four statuses into
three groups: Information-oriented (Achieved and Moratorium), Normative (Foreclosure), and Diffuse (Diffusion) (Berzonsky, 1988). In summary, the identity statuses represent different thought processes, problem-solving styles, self-concepts, belief systems, and interpersonal styles. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

**Characteristics of the Identity Statuses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th>Moratorium</th>
<th>Foreclosure</th>
<th>Diffusion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thought Processes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Restricted attention focus</td>
<td>Restricted attention focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td>May miss important information</td>
<td>May miss important information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can process and integrate complex information while being comfortable with own thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>Can process and integrate complex information while being comfortable with own thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>Least able of all groups to analyze data from multiple perspectives into all ideas lack depth and seem impulsive</td>
<td>Ideas lack depth and seem impulsive</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Relationships</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondeceptive</td>
<td>May appear bewildered</td>
<td>Focuses on parental values</td>
<td>Superficially diplomatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Has intense affect and introspection</td>
<td>Withdraws to avoid scrutiny</td>
<td>Agreeable or angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can risk social disapproval</td>
<td>Insightful and sensitive</td>
<td>Difficulty with intimacy</td>
<td>Difficulty with intimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has less need to compete</td>
<td>Talkative, competitive</td>
<td>Afraid of the world outside the family</td>
<td>Childlike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Solving Style</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed style</td>
<td>Self-directed style</td>
<td>Manipulative. Uses other-directed strategies.</td>
<td>Deceptive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-organized</td>
<td>Well-organized</td>
<td>Uses sarcasm, stonewalling or &quot;agreement&quot;</td>
<td>Avoids problems possible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathers information and makes a decision</td>
<td>Gathers information and makes a decision</td>
<td></td>
<td>Procrastinates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has own beliefs, even if similar to parents</td>
<td>Attempting to compromise society's demands and own abilities</td>
<td>Dogmatic, rigid</td>
<td>Lacks commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If similar to parents</td>
<td>May feel guilty</td>
<td>Does well with structure but fails apart with ambiguity</td>
<td>Not concerned about job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with Challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseveres Nondefensive. Can handle unexpected setbacks</td>
<td>Currently in crisis</td>
<td>Vulnerable to negative info.</td>
<td>Highly involved in fantasy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Image</strong></td>
<td>Founded in experience association with others. Functions well in past, present and future</td>
<td>Trying to form an identity.</td>
<td>Is becoming what others prepared him/her to be</td>
<td>What self image?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women's Identity Development

Some researchers (Archer, 1985; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Josselson, 1973) have found that, for women, the interpersonal domains of identity are more pertinent than the ideological and political. They theorize that for women intimacy and identity occur together, and hypothesize that this could be because women are socialized to forestall identity development so they can merge with their future partners. Douvan and Adelson (1966) critiqued Erikson's psychosocial stage theory and proposed that the process of identity formation for males and females was quite different. They noted that males constructed their identities around their vocational choices. They also noted that adolescent girls did not ordinarily have this opportunity. Females would "tend to keep identity diffuse and misty" (Douvan & Adelson, 1966, p. 18), perhaps because their identities would, to a substantial degree, be defined by their spouses' identities.

As Archer (1993, p. 77) stated in describing earlier research about females' identity:

Girls' lives were defined in terms of becoming the wives and mothers of others but not "beings" in their own right. Much of who they would become would be dictated by their involvement in their husband's work world and their children's school world. Even vocational plans they might implement at the completion of schooling tended to center around saving money towards "their" family's home. With such role limitations it would not be surprising that any response to identity interview questions during their adolescence, about their purpose and direction in life, would have sounded nebulous and disconnected as they awaited their Prince Charming, who was to define them.

The environment described by Archer has changed. The traditional path of limited opportunities for females has expanded with the increased number of women role models with careers. For example, in the late 1960s, Marcia (Marcia & Friedman, 1970) interviewed a cohort of college women about the potential conflicts of family
and career and obtained consistent foreclosed, unquestioned commitment to family roles. Approximately 15 years later when the questions were asked about spouse, children, and career conflicts, the findings were drastically different (Archer, 1985). More college women were considering career choice as an equally viable path to identity.

However, the continued existence of limited career opportunities, poor pay, and covert punishment for nonconformity to traditional roles makes it likely that many women will continue to use the path of marriage and children as a means of self-definition (Archer, 1993). This is consistent with Erikson’s thinking that males formed their identities based on what they wanted to do in life and females formed theirs based on who they allow themselves to be formed by (Erikson, 1968).

Women who choose to follow a career track face obstacles, both personal and professional, that hinder their ability to make career-related choices. Archer (1985) noted that a major dilemma for adolescent girls appeared to be the lack of support systems that permitted them to operate in the worlds of both occupation and family. Some of the females were attempting to resolve this dilemma by seeking males who would support their dual priorities. Or, if their husbands would not agree to this need, some girls were already discussing the possibility of divorce as a way out. Unfortunately, they lacked knowledge about the hardships of single parenting while maintaining a career (Archer, 1985).

The choice of identity pathway also appears to be more ambiguous for women than for men. Hodgson and Fischer (1979), in their study of male and female college
students, noted that there was not a single male subject out of 50 who was found to be pursuing the prototypic female identity pathway. Women were more evenly distributed among alternative identity pathways and thus seemed to be confronted with several viable choices in developing an identity. Josselson (1996) also stated that there are many domains in which women can find meaning and competence and which can anchor their identities. The importance of work in this respect varies from woman to woman, with some having it as a vital part of their identities, and others seeing it as only marginally important.

Factors Influencing the Attainment of Identity

Most people learn identity-based interpersonal skills in their families of origin and local communities. However, some people who come from homes that are impoverished in these skills (Marcia, 1966), who live in crisis-prone environments or who have had their normal developmental timetables altered by events such as teenage pregnancy (Archer & Waterman, 1983) may not have had sufficient opportunities to form their own identities.

There are many factors that can inhibit the development of identity achievement. These include parental styles of socialization with their children (Adams & Jones, 1981), the lack of viable models in the media (Archer & Waterman, 1983), lower socioeconomic status (Archer, 1982), unclear societal structures defining the period of moratorium, the mobility of families, and worldwide communication at the expense of personal one-on-one communication (Koteskey, Walker, & Johnson, 1990). Other factors include weaker traditional and family relationships, the dissipation of
neighborhoods (Koteskey et al., 1990), living in unsafe neighborhoods, being
depersonalized ("just a number") in society (Callaway, 1990), and image-based
identities encouraged by those seeking profits from teenage consumption of goods
(Cote, 1996). Urie Bronfenbrenner (as cited in Goleman, 1995, p. 234), speaking at a
symposium at Cornell University, stated:

In the absence of good support systems, external stresses have become so great
that even strong families are falling apart. The hecticness, instability and
inconsistency of daily life are rampant in all segments of our society, including
the well-educated and well-to-do. What is at stake is nothing less than the next
generation . . . who in growing up are especially vulnerable to such disruptive
forces as the devastating effects of divorce, poverty, and unemployment.

Yancy (1992, p. 821), in her study of at-risk adolescents and identity formation,
stated a similar finding. She said:

These young people bear a disproportionate burden of such societal problems
as unintended pregnancy and childbearing, academic underachievement, and
early educational discontinuation, substance abuse, and ultimately,
homelessness and more individually and socially costly forms of dependency
(criminal justice, welfare, or mental health systems). It is postulated that their
social maladaptation is reflective of identity disturbances.

Identity and Employment

The outcome of a successful resolution of the identity crisis, according to
Erikson, is fidelity, or the ability to maintain a constant and consistent image of oneself
in many differing circumstances (Erikson, 1963). A behavior that he cited as an
example of a successful resolution is the ability to obtain and maintain employment.

The relationship between employment and identity achievement seems to be a
mutually reinforcing one. Just as the process of choosing a career facilitates the
achievement of identity, so identity achievement fosters characteristics that aid in
successful employment. Researchers (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Sankey & Young, 1996) have cited the domain of occupational values as important in the formation of identity. Penuel and Wertsch (1995, p. 88) stated:

Taken together, commitments to others whom one can trust, to an ideology that promises a place in the world with a hopeful future, and to a career choice that can actualize those promises, form the three important domains of identity formation.

Forming a healthy identity involves the assessment of personal skills and values (Grotevant & Thorbecke, 1982). Included in this sociocultural process is the examination of many individual concerns and conflicts among values that need to be resolved (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Secondly, identity formation involves active exploration of job-related skills and values and different career options. Exploratory behavior in the area of occupations gives information about the work itself, work environments, work-related interpersonal relationships, and how one's abilities, interests, and values relate to work. Raskin (1994) stated that successful early experiences in the world of work assist a person in gaining confidence in his/her ability to succeed and help create a sense of self-efficacy that will lead to tentative and then firmer commitments to the world of work.

Thirdly, identity formation involves commitment to a course of action and coordination of values into a unified set of commitments that prepare the individual for life in an adult world (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Just as career exploration facilitates identity, a clear sense of identity helps in making occupational choices. Career development theorists suggest that the formation of a crystallized identity is linked to the establishment of coherent career goals (Grotevant & Thorbecke, 1982; Sankey &
Young, 1996) and people with achieved identities are more likely to engage in productive adult work and relationships (Archer & Waterman, 1983).

Identity also is a valuable asset in retaining employment. Hall and Mirvis (1995, p. 272) wrote, “It is argued that the contemporary high-speed work environment demands two key competencies: identity development and heightened adaptability.”

New work and family environments require people to have a clear sense of self identity, autonomy, and personal direction while at the same time being aware of the system as a whole in which they are functioning (Kegan, 1982, in Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Characteristics that are associated with identity achievement, such as problem-solving and decision-making abilities (Berzonsky, 1988), are useful in obtaining and retaining employment. Vondracek (Vondracek, Schulenberg, Skorikov, Gillespie, & Wahlheim, 1995) studied identity and career decisiveness in 250 female and 157 male high school and junior high school students. His results were that Achievers had significantly lower career indecision scores than subjects in the other three identity statuses. Surprisingly, Foreclosures, who were presumed to have unquestioningly accepted their parents’ ideological position, were generally no different from the Diffusions in either the amount or type of indecision experienced. The relationships between career indecisiveness and identity status in both genders were similar, although the male levels of overall indecisiveness were higher.

The ability to solve problems, which is related to identity achievement (Berzonsky, 1988), is also useful in the workplace. In a study of employee attributes that were desired by employers, problem-solving ability was among most frequently
mentioned (Wilgosh, Mueller, & Rowat, 1994). The Secretary of Labor’s Report on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991, p. 16, in Sturomski, 1996) also discusses problem-solving abilities as part of a successful transition into the workplace, along with qualities such as believing in one’s self-worth, managing and monitoring goals and progress, and choosing ethical courses of action. All of these qualities are considered to be vital in achieving successful employment, and all are indirectly related to Identity Achievement.

Identity Achievement and Moratorium are also positively correlated with other psychological variables that are considered desirable in a good employee, including autonomy, reflection, self-esteem, postconventional moral reasoning, mature intimacy, cultural sophistication, and an internal locus of control. On the other hand, Foreclosure and Diffusion are related to authoritarianism, preconventional and conventional moral reasoning, an external locus of control, less self-directedness, stereotyped interpersonal relationships, a preference for cognitive simplicity or disorganized cognitive complexity, and impulsivity (Archer, 1989).

Just as identity-related skills aid in obtaining and retaining employment, the lack of these skills hinders successful employment. In studies that looked at the reasons that employees are hired and fired, it was found that production skills are viewed as most important by an employer, and the presence of these skills contributed to employees being hired. However, deficits in these areas do not usually result in employee dismissal. It appeared that employers were significantly more likely to terminate an employee for social than for nonsocial reasons. In other words, skills related to work
production facilitate a worker’s hiring but problems related to character and temperament will most commonly lead to an employee’s being fired (Mueller, Wilgosh, & Steven, 1989; Wilgosh & Mueller, 1993; Wilgosh, et al., 1994). In common language—we are hired for our skills but fired for our personalities.

The dependent style of decision making (used by Diffusions and Foreclosures) has been found to be maladaptive in terms of employment. Its style of procrastination and wanting others to make decisions for oneself is inversely related to the formation of a vocational self-concept (Lunneborg, 1978) and progress in career decision making (Phillips, Pazienza, & Walsh, 1984). In contrast, rational decision making (used by people in the Achieved and Moratorium statuses) has been associated with career decidedness and vocational self-concept crystallization (Lunneborg, 1978).

The use of problem-focused strategies is also related to mental health, high levels of satisfaction with life and feelings of competence (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990). In a study of problem-solving styles and unemployment, individuals who became reemployed within three months of unemployment were compared to those who remained unemployed. Those who found new jobs had significantly higher scores on internal locus of control, self-efficacy (believing that one will succeed), and problem-solving skill (Holmes & Werbel, 1992).

Women, Identity, and Employment

Little research has been done on identity development among employed women. The information that is available on identity characteristics of women related to employment comes from samples of college women. Among this population, Marcia
and Friedman (1970) found that Achievers and Foreclosures chose more difficult majors than Diffusions or Moratoriums. On the other hand, Orlofsky (1978) found that both college men and women in the Achieved and Moratorium identity statuses displayed higher achievement motivation than those in Foreclosure and Diffusion. And Vondracek et al. (1995), in looking at identity statuses and career decisiveness, found that female high school and junior high school students had lower levels of career indecisiveness than male respondents.

In Marcia and Friedman's (1970) study of college women, those who were Achievers scored significantly lower than the other three statuses on the Self-Esteem Questionnaire. Foreclosures, on the other hand, were highest. The investigators speculated that for women, achieving an autonomous identity contradicted conventional sex-role stereotypes and was likely to alienate women identity achievers from their same-sex peers. Conversely, the Foreclosure status might be particularly adaptive for women. At least in 1970 at a large state university (State University of New York at Buffalo), a woman looking forward to taking on the more conventional roles of wife and caretaker might have expected to receive more social support than a woman planning on an autonomous identity and career.

Josselson (1996), in her qualitative study of 30 women, noted that it was not necessarily employment which aided in women’s identity development, but a sense of meaning or competence that comes with the employment. This meaning can be found in many domains and does not necessarily need to come from being employed.
Identity and Employment in Clients at the Department of Workforce Services

Data obtained during a pilot study of female clients at the Division of Workforce Services show a correlation between identity status and employment (see Appendix A). The women in this study who had Information Orientation cognitive style (Achieved/Moratorium statuses), although they had a high unemployment rate (62.9%), had a higher rate of retaining employment than women of either Normative Orientation style (Foreclosure status) or Diffuse Orientation style (Diffusion status). Women Normatives had a very high rate of unemployment (78.9%), although those who had jobs tended to retain them. Diffused women also had a high unemployment rate (63.3%) and tended to change jobs more frequently than the other two identity statuses. Although this study was done with a sample of only 76 clients, it adds strength to the argument that identity status affects employment stability.

Literature Summary

According to Erikson, identity is normally developed in adolescence and early adulthood. Two of the most popular ways to characterize identity are either the identity status concepts developed by Marcia or the cognitive styles developed by Berzonsky. In this study, the cognitive styles of Berzonsky were used.

Identity-related skills can be applied in work settings and can make the difference between success and failure in obtaining and retaining a job. Skills such as the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulse and delay gratification, to regulate one’s mood and keep distress from swamping the
ability to think, to empathize and to hope (Goleman, 1995) all can affect whether a person is a "good employee" or not.

Since most of the research done with adult women in the area of identity has been done with college women, there is little information concerning adult noncollege women and their values and goals related to identity. Even less research has been done with women receiving welfare. This is a population that has problems getting and keeping jobs (De Parle, 1997). It also is at high risk of having multiple problems, including drug abuse, chemical dependency, domestic violence, financial stress, and so forth (personal communication, Kay Hinckley, November 1, 1997).

With the current emphasis on women who receive welfare getting jobs and being self-sufficient, it would be useful to look at possible causes of their joblessness. One hypothesis for their difficulty in retaining employment might be deficits in the formation of identity or the formation of an identity that is inconsistent with full-time employment.

I hypothesize that identity achievement in either of the two areas (employment or interpersonal) acts as a deterrent to behaviors that could divert a person from achieving desired goals. Conversely, the lack of identity in both of these two areas can predispose a person to be vulnerable to outside influences that could sidetrack her into early marriage with a partner who is not suitable for a stable long-term relationship, dropping out of school, drug use, or an unwed pregnancy. Research providing possible insights into identity and welfare dependency is useful and needed.
Phase 2: Facilitating Identity Achievement

Through Group Interventions

The Usefulness of Interventions to Facilitate Identity Achievement

There is support among researchers for the idea that interventions can facilitate identity achievement. Marcia (1989, p. 405) discussed identity interventions and recommended that the basic components of exploration and commitment need to be employed. He stated:

If intervention is to be undertaken to promote identity development, probably the most useful place to start is not with the identity statuses, but with the processes underlying them: exploration and commitment. By exploration, I mean the relatively guilt- and anxiety-free serious consideration of alternative occupational, ideological and interpersonal directions. . . . By commitment, I mean, essentially, the ability and willingness to say “no” to some parts of the array of alternatives—which of course reflects parts of oneself.

Werner (1984), in observing resilient children, noted that they possess the same developmental qualities that Erikson believed were necessary for the resolution of the identity crisis--qualities such as trust, autonomy, initiative and industry. The parallels between resiliency and successful psychosocial development give indirect support for cognitive-based, social-skill interventions (Jones, 1994).

Jones advocated identity-based interventions by arguing that many of the interventions that target problem behaviors (e.g., substance use, academic underachievement, school dropout rates, teen sexual behavior, and adolescent pregnancy) focus on the behaviors in question, to the exclusion of the underlying causes of those behaviors. His alternative, developmentally based premise was that
maladaptive behaviors may be symptoms of developmental deficits, and that to facilitate people in developing more adaptive behaviors, intervention needed to be done at the level of the problem, not the level of the symptoms (Jones, 1994).

Cognitive, skill-based approaches can facilitate the acquisition of skills and experiences. They can include structuring activities that involve exploration in a safe environment, assisting people in solidifying their considered choices, and internalizing strategies of resistance to outside pressure once those choices have been made (Jones, 1994). Waterman (1989), in discussing identity achievement, gave three essential components for interventions:

(a) Stimulating the exploration of a variety of alternative goals, values, and beliefs, in many possible identity-related domains, for example, vocational choice, religious beliefs, perceptions of the role of a spouse. This may include considering possibilities in a domain for the first time in individuals' lives, or may involve the setting aside or questioning of ideas with which they were raised.

(b) Gathering of information necessary for the resolution of identity crises. This involves learning about new ways to look at things and new resources that are available to be considered. Waterman (1989, p. 391) said:

For individuals uncommitted to identity-related goals, values, or beliefs, the wider the range of alternatives to which they are exposed, the greater would appear the likelihood that they will find something to engage their interest that could become a basis for commitment.

(c) Commitments to those goals, values, and beliefs that will give a sense of purpose and direction to life. Especially important is the willingness to make a commitment with the realization that any commitments made may not work out in the
way the individuals desire. It also involves facing the fear that they could be blocked from achieving their goals, possibly for reasons beyond their control, or, that they will attain them and find they are less satisfying than they had once thought.

Prior Interventions

There have been many interventions designed to assist identity achievement and its related characteristics. In this section, some of those most salient to women’s identity and employment are reviewed.

Enright, Ganiere, Buss, Lapsley, and Olson (1983) developed an intervention model of identity formation that used cognitive strategies for enhancing social-perspective-taking, with the belief that by increasing individuals’ abilities to understand the perspectives of others, identity integrity can be increased and identity status can be changed. The Enright model of identity formation used the following assumptions: (a) identity formation starts with an understanding of others; (b) only when the person understands those others is he/she capable of understanding the self in relation to those others; (c) the understanding of self in relation to others must take into account perceived similarities and differences and (d) identity forms when social perspectives are taken so that the individual minimizes confusion (Enright et al., 1983). The groups using this model met for one hour, three days a week for two weeks. At the end of two weeks, the experimental group had a greater score increase on the Rasmussen Ego Identity Scale (which had a continuum of low identity to high identity) than the controls (Enright et al., 1983).
Markstrom-Adams et al. (1993) designed a different type of identity-enhancing intervention consisting of written exercises that encouraged respondents to articulate and organize self-insights in the areas of occupation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle. Questions from the written exercises were used for discussion purposes in the perspective-taking groups that met twice a week for four weeks. The first session of each week consisted of an individual written exercise, and the second session consisted of small group discussions of material from the written exercises. There were no significant changes in identity status among the research participants as a result of this intervention. The authors concluded, "It may be very difficult to create substantial changes in identity formation through short-term training" (Markstrom-Adams et al., 1993, p. 217).

Loeffler and Fiedler (1979) designed an intervention to facilitate women's identity development. The curriculum content for the 10-week (30 hours) intervention consisted of a variety of cognitive and experiential procedures that included awareness and clarification exercises, communication skills, assertiveness training, body awareness, power simulations, cognitive restructuring, goal setting, and support groups. Group participants were also required to read, keep a personal journal, and carry out an action-oriented project. The first two hours of the 3-hour class sessions included instruction on a major topic, using experiential activities and relating the experiences to past and present behavior patterns. The last hour was spent in discussion. During this hour, group members set weekly behavioral goals for
themselves, reported on their progress, and received suggestions and support from others in the group.

Loeffler and Fiedler (1979, p. 56) reported success in their endeavors, but gave such subjective evidence to support their claims that it is difficult to ascertain just how successful they were. They stated:

We have found the women in our courses become more self-identified, not as socially or other identified; therefore, they are more free, less anxious, less burdened by past reactions, more confident, and more interpersonally competent . . . . These women have progressed in all aspects: (a) their attitudes toward themselves (self acceptance and a sense of identity), (b) growth, (c) integration, (d) autonomy (regulation of behavior from within and questioning environmental “shoulds”), (e) freedom from distortion of reality because of one’s own awareness, and (f) environmental mastery (adequacy in interpersonal relations).

Hover, Levy, and Sacks (1971, in Sacks & Eisenstein, 1979) used a model of a force-field analysis to assist women in resolving personal dilemmas. They asked each woman to choose a dilemma (a particular issue that she wanted to change) and to list facilitating and restraining forces in resolving it. During the 2-month period that the group met, the women presented and explained their dilemmas. Common themes among the individual problems were discussed, along with any changes made.

Hover et al. (1971, in Sacks & Eisenstein, 1979, p. 422) also reported success with their intervention, but defined success in subjective terms. They stated:

Using group feedback, the participants found that they perceived their facilitating forces as stronger and their restraining forces as weaker than they had previously believed and thus were able to increase their sense of autonomy with reference to the conflict. After discussion, one participant commented, “As a result of talking and of the group’s support, the negative factors lost some of their power.”
The final intervention discussed in this section used methadone clients and is based on Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving Skills (hereafter referred to as ICPS). ICPS is built on the premise that problems are unavoidable and that appropriate problem-solving skills are important for effective coping and adaptation (Platt, Husband, Hermalin, Cater, & Metzger, 1993).

ICPS teaches the cognitive process of analyzing and resolving interpersonal problems and generalizing skills across many problem areas. It emphasizes problem recognition, the generation of alternative solutions, assessment of consequences of an action, stepwise achievement of goals, understanding cause and effect and understanding others’ perspectives in a problem situation (Platt et al., 1993).

A total of 130 subjects were followed for one year after the intervention. Of the 67 from the experimental group and 63 from the control group, there were no significant differences in demographic, vocational, and treatment characteristics. The experimental group had a significantly higher rate of employment at the 6-month followup, 26.9%; $N = 67$, $\chi^2 = 5.13$, $p < .03$, when compared with the time of intervention (13.4%). The control group had no significant difference in the employment rate during this time. At the 6-month followup, the experimental group’s employment rate was still significantly higher than the control group (26.9%, $n = 67$ versus 9.5%, $n = 63$; total $N = 130$, $\chi^2 = 7.95$, $p < .02$; Platt et al., 1993).

However, the higher employment rate of the experimental group did not hold at the 12-month followup. Employment rates between 6 and 12 months for the experimental group showed a significant decline, from 26.9% to 13.4%, $\chi^2 (N = 67) = $
5.13, $p < .03$, with no significant difference in employment rate for the control group (9.5% at six months and 15.9% at 12 months; Platt et al., 1993).

In summary, the interventions that had been done to increase clients’ sense of identity (in terms of exploration and commitment) had varying results. There is no consensus as to whether these interventions are useful in enhancing identity development.

**Advantages of Group Intervention**

According to Erikson (1963, p. 270), the development of personality through stages is facilitated by social contact. He stated, “The human personality in principle develops according to steps predetermined in the growing person’s readiness to be driven forward, to be aware of, and to interact with, a widening social radius.”

Group process is a powerful means of imparting knowledge and affecting change. Yalom (1985, pp. 76-80) listed benefits that can come from group learning:

- The group’s teaching me about the type of impression I make on others
- Improving my skills in getting along with people
- Feeling more trustful of groups and other people
- The group’s giving me an opportunity to learn to approach others
- Trying to be like someone in the group who was better adjusted than I
- Finding someone in the group I could pattern myself after
- Being in the group was, in a sense, like reliving and understanding my life in the family in which I grew up.
- Being in the group was, in a sense, like being in a family. Only this time a more accepting and understanding family.
- Seeing other group members improve encouraged me
- Learning that I must take ultimate responsibility for the way I live my life no matter how much guidance and support I get from others.
Purposes of Group Activities

Group activities have three general purposes: to encourage withdrawn and isolated members to participate more actively by creating a safe environment; to help members learn to act in ways more satisfactory to themselves by providing an environment in which they can practice new skills; and to help members move to more innovative and creative methods of coping by providing modeling (Fatout, 1993).

Encouraging more active participation. According to Marcia (1989), individuals cannot make new commitments without feeling that there will be support if they let go of some alternatives. That support may come from family, social settings, or from peers—ideally, from all three. Those who would intervene with seriously diffuse individuals must first make a personal connection and provide a secure and respectful relationship. Diffusions will be better able to make commitments if they know that failures can occur in a safe and caring environment that will let them try again.

Providing a safe environment for trying new behaviors. Marcia (1989) spoke of adolescent interventions when he said that group interventions may be superior to individual ones in terms of efficiency and psychosocial validity. Planned group interactions can have the benefit of stimulating thinking and can offer group members additional options on which to base their decisions. Also, in all age groups, the presence of others who are going through the same processes can enhance learning. The presence of peers can make the situation more real. What the facilitator can do is to provide safety, structure, and direction (Marcia, 1989).
Teaching new behaviors through modeling. Waterman (1989, p. 392) talked about the strength of modeling. He said:

When many members of a high school or college cohort are undergoing an identity crisis, this is likely to facilitate the development of such crises in others. . . . The exposure to models of identity questioning may give individuals permission to acknowledge to themselves and others already existing doubts they may have about identity-related matters. It may result in subtle pressures to conform to group norms. And it may stimulate consideration of alternatives through identification processes.

Being in a group may also aid individuals in creating resolutions to their identity crises. Group members can discuss the steps they took in resolving their identity issues and model successful identity formation for others who are not as far along in the process.

In summary, group interventions can help individuals define goals that are meaningful to them. They also increase self-understanding, assist individuals in identifying opportunities, improving their interpersonal skills, and developing the self-confidence necessary to explore and take risks (Raskin, 1994).

Psychoeducation Defined

Psychoeducation is in many ways a hybrid of classroom teaching and group therapy. It resembles teaching in its use of curricula and in its goal of imparting information from the instructor to the students, but it is unlike teaching in three areas. The first difference involves the goals of instruction. Unlike classroom teaching, which has the goal of imparting knowledge to students, the goal of psychoeducation is to change behavior. The goal is not to strictly impart information but to assist participants in using information to gain insight.
Another difference involves the structure of the instruction. Because the goal of the instruction is to change behavior, the size of the group is smaller than an average classroom. This permits more interaction between the group leader and the members than is available in the classroom.

Lastly, because of the interaction between the group members and the leader, the curricula are more flexible and able to be changed with the needs of the group members. The number of concepts taught in the curricula is also reduced from that of classroom teaching, with an emphasis on discussion and experiential learning.

Psychoeducation is like group therapy in the small size of the groups and the emphasis on discussion but has some significant differences. Psychoeducation groups are more structured than therapy groups. Unlike therapy groups, which revolve around the concerns of the group members, psychotherapy groups have curricula and topics to be discussed. The group leader has more control of the direction the group takes than in therapy groups.

In short, psychoeducation groups have many of the characteristics of both education and therapy, and draw from the strengths of each. They have the ability to convey an atmosphere of caring and support while imparting knowledge and increasing the skill levels of the members.

How Psychoeducation Affects Those Who Are Unemployed

In order to understand the power of group psychoeducation in assisting unemployed individuals, it is first necessary to understand the psychosocial aspects of
poverty and unemployment. The social stigma experienced by the unemployed goes beyond the negative stereotypes of being considered lazy and burdensome to society. In Western society, the socioeconomic statuses of its citizens are defined mainly in terms of the types of labor they perform. As a result, the unemployed are often considered to be nonpersons until they return to work and again have a role in society. Until then, they are often considered to be only drains on its resources (Klein, Amundson, & Borgen, 1992).

This negative experience is even more pronounced for those receiving social assistance because of the greater social stigma that they bear. To this are added the increased financial deprivation, loss of self-esteem, and isolation that this population suffers, when compared to the general unemployed population (Klein et al., 1992). Financial hardship, and the stress and tension accompanying it, were the most prominent aspects of the participants’ experience. This financial-based stress was also involved in the other problems including family friction, loss of self-esteem, inability to provide for family, and feeling misunderstood by friends. (Klein et al., 1992).

For the majority of the unemployed, being out of work can be best described as a “flat” experience with relatively few highs and a continual, pervasive string of lows. Klein, in his study of 11 women and nine men who were social assistance recipients, reported that the majority of these chronically unemployed respondents did not have a typical “job loss” experience. Unlike workers who had been laid off, fired, or had quit, many of the respondents had problems remembering their last “real” job. Often, they had long histories of temporary, part-time, or casual work that they had never expected
to retain. As a result, the majority of those interviewed did not seem to have ever grieved a job loss, nor had they had the experience of retaining full-time employment. For the most part, they had given up on finding work (Klein et al., 1992).

The one area of positive significance that many of the respondents related in an otherwise depressing and negative experience was taking a course or joining an employment training program (Klein et al., 1992). Researchers (Admundson & Borgen, 1988; Klein et al., 1992) have found that group employment counseling is particularly helpful in working with the unemployed. The peer support and understanding that came with involvement in this type of program helped the unemployed deal with low self-esteem, shame at being on welfare, and feelings of being discriminated against (Klein et al., 1992).

Fatout (1993) also recommended group therapy to assist the unemployed to overcome the deficits of powerlessness, identity diffusion and lack of self-esteem. The support network of peers, the sharing of information, and assistance in decision-making that is provided by groups are considered by Gibson (1993) as empowering of the formation of identity. Group interaction is also considered by Krumboltz and Shapiro (1979) to be more economical because the facilitator is a change agent for a number of individuals at the same time.

Aspects of the Interventions and Their Relationship to Identity Formation

One component of identity-facilitating interventions that many authors discuss is the making of choices among alternatives. These choices are based on individuals’
personal goals and values. Erikson (1968) suggests that being aware of all possibilities is an important component of identity formation. Marcia (1966) agreed, stating that the criteria used to establish identity status consisted of two variables, crisis (examination of alternatives) and commitment. Berzonsky and Neimeyer (1988) found that information-oriented self-exploration was relevant to identity formation, and Archer (1989) stated that exploration, weighing of alternatives, making choices among options, and reassessing decisions are important parts of forming and refining identity.

Identity decisions can be made in any domain in which values, beliefs, and goals are important. While Marcia (1966) originally focused on vocation, religious and political ideology, the domains have been widened to include sex-role orientation, and recently on family roles--marriage, parenting, and family/career prioritizing (Archer, 1989). Interventions in these domains involve decision making among alternatives that can facilitate identity. The domains highlighted by interventions can include career choices, interpersonal communication (assertiveness training), and life management.

The relationship between career choices and the formation of identity.

According to Bourne (1978), one of the most important components of identity is an individual's basic life commitments. One of these basic commitments is in the domain of employment. Raskin (1994) stated that each element in exploration of career options is represented in the process of forming identity. Acquiring information, trying out occupational roles, and expressing intentions are key elements needed in committing to an occupational identity.
Grotevant (1987) agrees, adding that there is an important connection between exploration and commitment as elements of identity formation. Exploration can involve assessment of occupational skills and values, exploration of career options, and commitment to a particular career (Grotevant & Thorbecke, 1982). It also gives information about the type of work, its environment, work-related social relationships, and how one's values, interests and abilities relate to work.

The relationship between learning assertiveness and the formation of identity.

Identity is related to intimacy. Hodgson and Fischer (1979, p. 47) stated:

The woman’s task in response to ‘Who am I?’ revolves around who she can be in relation to others. Specifically, she confronts questions such as “what is a woman’s (my) role in society and in relation to others?... Her identity issues, therefore, seem to be based on relating, as if her sense of self rests on the success with which she can resolve issues of getting along with others in ways that satisfy herself and those important to her.

Stein and Bailey (1973) argued that the occupational domain was not sufficient to satisfy female identity issues, and suggested that the domain of social and interpersonal skills was a domain in which females express their need to achieve. Josselson, Greenberger, and McConochie (1977) found that females often used different domains for identity-related exploration. They used interpersonal relationships for identity resolution and focused less than males on career goals for self-esteem. Read, Adams, and Dobson (1984) found that women in the advanced statuses (Achieved and Moratorium) had greater interpersonal skills, including assertiveness. They were able to take firm stands without hostility and were willing to risk social disapproval. Theoretically, interventions that teach assertiveness skills may
also facilitate identity achievement. Their facilitation of assertiveness skills may also aid success in an employment setting because the ability to solve work-related interpersonal problems can aid in retaining employment.

The relationship between life management and the formation of identity. Although, in most research, no differences are found between men and women in the frequencies of the different identity statuses, there may be differences in the salience of some domains for either sex: Waterman and Archer (1993) stated that the domains of family and career priorities and parenting roles may be of more salience to females than males. They also stated that women may make more conscious decisions about family/career prioritization in their lives. In order to do this, they use the identity-status decision-making process involving exploration of, and commitment to, alternative choices.

Jones (1994) stated that interventions that promote problem solving, decision making, and coping may assist the identity formation process by encouraging a type of moratorium, or self-examination, in Diffusions and Foreclosures. Interventions may also assist participants who are currently exploring options (Moratoriums) by giving them a structured experience in which to resolve issues and solidify commitments and may facilitate strengthening of commitments made by Achievers. Table 2 summarizes the research related to identity and employment and the common aspects of identity formation that are involved.
### Table 2

**Summary of Aspects of Interventions Related to Identity Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Identity Development</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and making decisions among career choices</td>
<td>Bourne, 1978</td>
<td>Basic career commitments are important to identity development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grotevant &amp; Thorbecke, 1982</td>
<td>The assessment of occupational skills/values, career options and commitment to a career aid identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grotevant, 1987</td>
<td>Exploration of work, work-related social relationships and one’s values aid identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raskin, 1994</td>
<td>Acquiring information and trying out occupational roles, expressing career intentions assist identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning assertiveness in interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Hodgson &amp; Fischer, 1979</td>
<td>Learning one’s role and its relation to others, resolving issues in ways acceptable to oneself and others is related to identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stein &amp; Bailey, 1973</td>
<td>Social and interpersonal relationships are a domain of identity achievement for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josselson, Greenberger, &amp; McConochie, 1977</td>
<td>Women focus on social/interpersonal domain for identity achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read, Adamson, &amp; Dobson, 1984</td>
<td>Achieved women are more assertive than women in other statuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life management</td>
<td>Waterman &amp; Archer, 1993</td>
<td>The domains of family/career prioritizing and parenting roles may be more salient for women than for men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jones, 1994</td>
<td>Learning problem solving, decision making and coping skills can facilitate identity development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How Group Interventions Relate to the Domains of Identity Achievement**

Identity is not a simple, one-dimensional construct. It is multidimensional,
consisting of exploration and commitment in many different domains of interest (Grovetant & Thorbecke, 1982). The association among the various cognitive, social, and behavioral domains reinforces, and is consistent with, Erikson's (1968) description of identity as the person's integration of "self-images." In this process, individuals synthesize the various aspects of their selves into a construct that is one thing and many things at the same time. Both individual characteristics and social contexts influence and are influenced by the identity-formation process (Raskin, 1994).

Just as the different domains influence the formation of identity, so an effective intervention needs to touch different domains. Interventions that are focused in the areas of assertive communication, career exploration, and life management appear to have the characteristics necessary for success in facilitating identity achievement in women.

Exploring and making decisions among career choices. The ability to make choices among different career possibilities is a key factor in the formation of identity (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Sankey & Young, 1996) and interventions in this domain have the aim of increasing group members' understanding of their career identities through their personal choices. Included are instruction in self-exploration of career values, acquiring information regarding possible careers, weighing employment alternatives, making choices among options, trying out roles, and occasionally reassessing previous decisions. Group members learn that the foundation for education and occupational choices is the understanding of one's strengths, values, and preferences (Herr & Cramer, 1979). Techniques are taught that can be used to
overcome barriers and reframing can be used to facilitate group members seeing hitherto hidden opportunities (Chartrand & Rose, 1996). An exploration of interests, values, and skills is facilitated, with the aim that participants will begin to develop a cognitive structure for understanding themselves in relation to the world of work (Chartrand & Rose, 1996).

Group members also learn that individuals have the ability to choose and achieve educational and occupational goals (Herr & Cramer, 1979). For some clients, the process of identifying and verbalizing success experiences can be both new and challenging. Interventions highlight vicarious learning (modeling), social support of healthy risk taking, and celebrating personal accomplishments. Clients are encouraged to identify ways they can structure new learning experiences that could promote positive growth (Chartrand & Rose, 1996).

**Assertiveness training.** Intervention in this domain includes instruction in self-exploration of values in the domain of interpersonal relationships, resolving issues of getting along with others in line with one’s values, and balancing the needs and values of others with one’s own. Group members can be taught the basics of planning and gathering information in problem solving (Sturomski, 1996). Waterman (1989, p. 394) stated:

Curricula that may be having a more direct effect on identity formation are those that help focus student attention on decision-making processes, such as the clarification of values and the teaching of critical thinking skills. While such programs do not explicitly tie their goals to identity development, the processes they are designed to foster are the same as those employed when exploring identity alternatives and seeking to establish identity commitments.
Life management. Intervention in this domain includes instruction in self-exploration regarding values concerning family and career prioritization. It also includes problem solving, decision making, and coping with many demands on one's time. One purpose of this intervention is to develop skills in goal setting and planning, and group members learn that planning is necessary for goal attainment (Herr & Cramer, 1979). They are taught to set goals that are specific, attainable, positively stated, and within their control. Practice is given in dealing with specific short-term and long-term career goals. Group members are asked to identify specific and relevant actions that they could perform to work toward their goals (Chartrand & Rose, 1996). They also learn that change occurs and has future consequences (Herr & Cramer, 1979). Although the final outcome of this intervention is that they will obtain employment, intermediate goals help them clarify their desired outcomes and the consequences of their aspirations. Many women have difficulty formulating aspirations or plans based on their own needs and desires. Because women are socialized to be oriented towards others, many of them know much more about what is rewarding to their children or spouses than to themselves (Krumboltz & Shapiro, 1979).

Another difficulty many women have is rewarding themselves. Although occasionally women attain a goal by merely identifying it accurately, generally change is not that simple. Often, self-arranged rewards are needed to encourage it. This may include enlisting the aid of others in encouraging and appreciating changes. Group reinforcement may assist in the transition from stereotypic reinforcing figures (the woman's boyfriend, husband, or parents) to self-reinforcement (Krumboltz & Shapiro,
1979). These groups assume that women who recognize their own needs, who can
direct themselves, and who can act effectively on the environment will feel more
confident and less buffeted by adversity (Krumboltz & Shapiro, 1979).

**Literature Summary**

The literature suggests that skills related to identity achievement that were not
learned earlier in life can be learned in personal interactions in a group setting. These
skills can facilitate obtaining and retaining employment.

The literature has also been reviewed for the characteristics of interventions that
are likely to be effective in improving identity status. Different interventions were
studied that used samples of college students, women’s groups, and methadone users.
However, interventions that facilitate identity achievement had not yet been used with
women receiving public assistance to help specifically with identity-related life
management/employment skills. The belief was that using an intervention teaching life
management skills might assist women who had difficulty in retaining employment to
develop their identities and to foster the skills that would enable them to achieve
financial and emotional self-sufficiency.

**Objectives**

There were two objectives of this study. The first (Phase 1) was to observe
whether or not there was a relationship between identity development in female clients
of the Division of Workforce Services (“welfare”) and their lack of employment. The
Berzonsky Cognitive Style Inventory was used to classify clients into three groups according to a model of James Marcia concerning the resolution of the identity crisis.

Research questions designed to address the first objective were:

1. Is there a relationship between identity status and employment in DWS clients?
   a. Are there higher percentages of Normative (Foreclosure) and Diffuse (Diffusion) statuses among women who are clients of the Clearfield DWS than in a nonwelfare population with a comparable mean age?
   b. Do Normative and Diffuse women have higher percentages of unemployment and more job turnover in a 12-month period than women who are Information-oriented (Achieved/Moratorium)?

The second objective (Phase 2) examined intervention groups that would assist the females in learning developmental life management skills. These skills were hypothesized by the group facilitators to enable members to obtain and retain employment at a higher rate than they had in the past.

Research questions designed to address the second objective were:

1. Does group intervention affect women's scores on a measure of identity and their ability to obtain and retain employment?
   a. Are the posttest scores on the Information Orientation subscale higher than the pretest scores, with the posttest Normative and Diffuse Orientation scores lower than the pretest scores?
   b. Are the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked?
preintervention?

c. Is the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked at a comparable period of time (12 weeks) by the comparison group?
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Because this study has two parts, the method section also has two parts. The first part describes Phase 1 of the research, which involved the collection of data concerning clients at the sites and their classification into identity statuses. The second part of Chapter III describes Phase 2, which involved assessing the effects of four types of psychoeducational interventions upon scores on a measure of identity and also upon employment. Phase 2 describes 2-week, 3-week, and 6-week interventions and follow-up contacts.

Phase 1

Research Questions

The questions for Phase 1 are:

1. Is there a relationship between identity status and employment in DWS clients?
   a. Are there higher percentages of Normative (Foreclosure) and Diffuse (Diffusion) statuses among women who are clients of the Clearfield DWS than in a nonwelfare population with a comparable mean age?
   b. Do Normative and Diffuse women have higher percentages of unemployment and more job turnover in a 12-month period than women who are Information-oriented (Achieved/Moratorium)?
Sample

The Phase I sample consisted of 203 women at the Utah Department of Workforce Services and the Davis Applied Technology Center. The sites were:

1. Clearfield East Office, that services welfare recipients;
2. Clearfield West Office that services employment seekers;
3. Davis Applied Technology Center that teaches high school students, nontraditional students, and clients of both Clearfield offices.

Women were chosen for this study because they are more likely than men to access social service assistance. During the fiscal year 1995, 87.9% of adult welfare recipients were women (Administration for Children and Families, 1996). Clearfield was chosen because its demographics are similar to national norms and because of its proximity to the researcher. Demographics for the respondents are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Characteristics of Female Respondents in Phase I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Clearfield East</th>
<th>Clearfield West</th>
<th>DATC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>28.87</td>
<td>29.16</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>27.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>17-56</td>
<td>19-48</td>
<td>17-44</td>
<td>17-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% graduated high school</td>
<td>63.90</td>
<td>94.70</td>
<td>63.40</td>
<td>70.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean mos. welfare assist.</td>
<td>26.11</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>18.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number children</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% having preschool children</td>
<td>69.70</td>
<td>29.40</td>
<td>28.90</td>
<td>42.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is possible to see upon examining the characteristics of these groups that there are similarities in age, but differences in the number of preschool children, the months of assistance received, and the years of education. While these groups are not as comparable as would be desired, the differences in the demographics highlights some of the differences between a population of welfare recipients and even those populations judged to be most similar to them.

The women in this phase of the study came from a convenience sample of all women in the waiting rooms at the Clearfield East and Clearfield West offices and those in six classes of the DATC surveyed in one day. It consisted of all women who cared to participate in the study, so there was self-selection involved.

Design

A correlational design was used to examine the relationships between cognitive style and the following variables: current employment/school status, past work history (number of jobs and months worked in the past 12 months) and total months of welfare assistance.

Procedure

Over a month-long period, women coming into the waiting room at the Clearfield East and West offices were asked if they would consent to fill out a questionnaire and employment survey. They were given these by the DWS receptionists, who were paid 25 cents for each survey that was filled out correctly. Neither the women nor the receptionists were told what results were expected from the
surveys. If the women agreed to fill out the surveys, they were given the BCSI, an attached questionnaire, and a pencil. Because case workers at DWS are often on the phone or meeting with clients, the waiting time between a woman’s arrival and when her case worker comes to get her in the waiting room is often 10-15 minutes. During this time, the women could fill out the forms in the waiting room and return them to the receptionists. The forms were picked up by the researcher each week.

The same measures were also given in one day by the researcher to six classes of students at the Davis Applied Technology Center. The information from the self-report demographic questionnaire was hand entered into SPSS and merged with the computer-scanned scores from the BCSI and the data were examined for relationships.

In addition to the surveys, there was another source of data about the clients in Phase I. Because there was concern about the accuracy of memory in asking for work histories, computer records at the Department of Workforce Services (hereafter DWS) were checked by the researcher to verify the accuracy of self-reports regarding work history. It was found that the self-report regarding work history was accurate for all three cognitive styles. Because 25% of the respondents left the question concerning assistance history blank, the researcher decided to use the DWS computer records to supply assistance history information for all respondents.

**Measurement**

Berzonsky’s Cognitive Style Inventory (hereafter abbreviated BCSI), a 40 item Likert-type measure of identity development, was administered to DWS clients. The
computer-scored measures were used to decrease the time needed to both fill out and score the measures. They were also designed with both questions and answers on the same page for increased "user-friendliness."

The BCSI was chosen because it is less focused on the adolescent age range than the EOM-EIS (Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status), which has questions about dating, parents' rules, and so forth (See Appendix B). Table 4 compares the EOM-EIS and the BCSI concerning status classifications.

Table 4
Comparison of the EOM-EIS and BCSI in Terms of Marcia's Identity Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS)</th>
<th>Berzonsky Cognitive Style Inventory (BCSI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved status</td>
<td>Information-oriented style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium status</td>
<td>Information-oriented style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure status</td>
<td>Normative style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion status</td>
<td>Diffuse/avoidant style</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The BCSI measures problem-solving and decision-making styles (Berzonsky, 1988). It assesses problem-solving styles in domains of religion, men’s and women’s roles, politics, education, work, and life plans. According to their preferred modes of decision making and problem solving, respondents were assigned to one of three cognitive styles--Information-oriented (Achieved/Moratorium status), Normative (Foreclosed status), and Diffuse (Diffused status).
Sample items from the measure include:

**Information orientation subscale items.** When I make decisions I take a lot of time to think about my choices. I’ve spend a lot of time talking to people to find a set of beliefs that works for me.

**Normative orientation subscale items.** It’s better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be open to different ideas. I like to deal with things the way my parents said I should.

**Diffuse orientation subscale items.** I try to avoid problems that make me think. When I ignore a potential problem, things usually work out.

Scoring consisted of giving numerical values to each of the Likert-type answers (1 for strongly disagree, 2 for somewhat disagree, 3 for unsure, 4 for somewhat agree, and 5 for strongly agree). Questions were worded so stronger orientations produced higher scores on the subscales. The answers were totaled, and the three scales were compared. The highest score was considered the respondent’s cognitive style orientation. In the case of a tie, the lower cognitive style (Information-oriented was highest, Normative-oriented next and Diffuse-oriented lowest) was given to the person.

In Phase 1, the BCSI was scored with the desire to identify subjects with significantly higher scores on one cognitive subscale than the others. Respondents were selected if they met either of the following criteria: 1) the score in one style was larger than the two others and the largest score was more than one standard deviation above the mean for that style.
2) the score in one style was larger than the two others, the largest score was more than .5 standard deviation above the mean and the other two scores were less than .5 standard deviation above the mean (modified EOM-EIS scoring).

Along with the BCSI, a self-report questionnaire was given that asked respondents' ages, whether or not they were high school graduates, and the ages of their children. The questionnaires also asked their current employment/school status, how many months of assistance they had received, and their employment history during the past 12 months (see Appendix B).

Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) for the BCSI has been calculated at .73 for the Diffuse/Avoidant scale, .66 for the Normative scale, and .62 for the Information scale (Berzonsky, 1992). Evidence for the construct validity of this measure comes from the correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) among the three subscales. Interscale correlations included Information X Normative $r = .54$, Information X Diffuse/Avoidant $r = -.20$ and Normative X diffuse/Avoidant $r = -.14$ (White, 1994).

The BCSI also shows construct validity with the OM-EIS, a shorter version of the EOM-EIS. Using Grotevant and Adams' (1984) research, the two were compared, with the Diffusion status X Diffuse/Avoidant style $r = .62$, the Foreclosure status X Normative style $r = .47$, and the Achieved status X Information style $r = .25$ all being statistically significant. The Moratorium status X Information style was not significant.
\( r = .06 \), but when the effects of commitment were partialed out \( r = - .63 \), the correlation of \( r = .34 \) was generated (Berzonsky, 1992).

Phase 2

In Phase 2, interventions are studied that are anticipated to assist the clients in obtaining and retaining employment. These interventions are also anticipated to raise clients’ scores on the Information Orientation scale and lower their scores on the Diffusion and Normative scales of the BCSI.

Research Questions

The research questions for Phase 2 were:

1. Does group intervention affect women’s scores on a measure of identity and their ability to obtain and retain employment?

   a. Are the posttest scores on the Information Orientation subscale higher than the pretest scores, with the posttest Normative and Diffuse Orientation scores lower than the pretest scores?

   b. Are the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked preintervention?

   c. Is the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked at a comparable period of time (12 weeks) by the comparison group?
Sample

The second phase of this study involved 200 women clients of the Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program, the Steps to Success program, and the Turning Point program. Of these 200 women, 140 were in the intervention group and 60 were in the comparison group (see Table 5). Both samples were convenience samples. The intervention sample came from women enrolled in the intervention programs, and the comparison group came from a one-day distribution of the BCSI and demographic questionnaire in the waiting room at the Clearfield East office.

As can be seen in Table 5, the two groups are similar in many ways. There is no statistically significant difference in their scores on the Information-oriented, Normative-oriented, or Diffuse-oriented scales. There is likewise no statistically significant difference in their ages or in the percentage of people enrolled in school. There is a statistically significant difference, however, in the percentage of people working ($t = 5.57$, $df = 194$, $p < .001$) and in the number of hours worked ($t = 4.63$, $df = 62$, $p < .001$). The comparison group had a (statistically) significantly larger percentage of people working and worked, on the average, more hours each week than the intervention group.

Design

The research design was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention group</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison group</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5

**Characteristics of Female Respondents in Phase 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work</th>
<th>Steps to Success</th>
<th>Managing Your Life</th>
<th>Life Transitions</th>
<th>Total intervention group</th>
<th>Comparison group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td>42.82</td>
<td>38.44</td>
<td>34.19</td>
<td>33.07</td>
<td>31.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>18-60</td>
<td>32-54</td>
<td>19-59</td>
<td>22-49</td>
<td>18-60</td>
<td>16-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in school (&lt;18 yo)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in school (&gt;18 yo)</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>10.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% working</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>45.50</td>
<td>55.60</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>43.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% working and in school</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>14.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% information-oriented</td>
<td>70.20</td>
<td>63.60</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>69.70</td>
<td>72.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean information score</td>
<td>37.69</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>35.67</td>
<td>36.88</td>
<td>37.33</td>
<td>36.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% normative-oriented</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>12.40</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean normative scores</td>
<td>31.28</td>
<td>29.81</td>
<td>30.44</td>
<td>29.81</td>
<td>30.97</td>
<td>31.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% diffuse-oriented</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>27.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean diffuse score</td>
<td>24.59</td>
<td>27.36</td>
<td>23.89</td>
<td>24.75</td>
<td>24.86</td>
<td>22.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clients were in the Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program at six sites of the DWS in the Salt Lake City area, the Steps to Success program of the DWS in Clearfield, and the Managing Your Life and Life Transitions programs of the Turning Point in the Salt Lake City area. There was no random assignment or random selection, and the clients were taken as they were in the classes. A pretest of the BCSI was given to the clients
on the first day of the interventions and a posttest at the end. When the posttest was
given, the participants were asked if they would voluntarily participate in a 12-week
followup. If they agreed, they were informed that they would receive $5 if they would
complete and mail back the BCSI and questionnaire that were mailed to them.

Measurement Procedure

The researcher traveled to the different sites for the workshops and
administered the BCSI on the first day of class. The workshop participants were told
that DWS, in conjunction with Utah State University, was studying factors related to
employment and they were asked if they would voluntarily participate in the study.
They were also told that if they did choose to participate, they would be given a
posttest and a followup would be sent to them 12 weeks after the posttest. When they
returned the followup survey, they would be mailed a check for five dollars to
compensate them for their time. A total of 140 women agreed to participate in the
intervention group.

On the last day of class (end of Phase Five in the Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work
Workshop), the researcher again went to the sites and administered the posttests. The
measures used each time were the same, consisting of the BCSI and the questionnaire
discussed above. If the participants chose to receive the followup, they could put their
addresses on the posttest questionnaire. If they did not put their addresses on them,
they were not contacted. There were 49 women in attendance by the end of the
interventions who agreed to continue with the study.
The resulting data were tabulated in the same manner as that of Phase 1, with the questionnaire answers being hand-entered. The BCSI was also read by computer and the results were hand-entered. All hand-entered data were randomly checked to verify accuracy in data entry.

The procedure for gathering the comparison data was nearly the same as that used for Phase 1. Women who were in the waiting room at the Clearfield East DWS office were asked if they would participate in an employment study and were given the BCSI, a questionnaire, and a pencil. While they waited for their case workers to come, they sat at the tables and filled out the forms. Because they would be mailed their posttest forms, they were asked on the pretest forms to give their addresses, and they were informed (in writing on the questionnaire) that they would receive five dollars each for the posttest and followup forms ($10 total).

Because of the very low response rate from the comparison group mailings (25%), two backup methods of contacting the women participants were used. Reminder postcards were sent and, for the comparison group, which had a response rate of only 15 out of 60, telephone calls were made by a DWS worker and the researcher to the participants' homes to fill out the measures. Permission was obtained from the participants to give the measure over the phone and to call again at followup.

**Intervention Procedure**

There are similarities among the four different interventions involved in this research. Workshop leaders taught women life management skills and attention was
given to assisting group members with clarifying their values, increasing personal
assertiveness, increasing their abilities to solve problems by using information gathering
strategies, and increasing their ability to communicate effectively. The DWS
interventions are based on the Self-Directed Assisted Job Search model. This model
(DWS, 1997, p. 3) uses

a foundation knowledge of self: an understanding of skills, abilities, interests,
apitudes and values direct employment choices. . . . All activities are
employment focused and aimed at increasing self-esteem, motivation to work,
job-seeking and job-keeping skills, and work-life management skills.

The interventions consisted of the following:

**DWS Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program.**

Phase 1: Intake, Assessment and Planning (week 1)

This phase included finding out about interests, motivation, values, and abilities.
It involved taking forced-choice aptitude tests and lasted four hours.

Phase 2: Job Readiness Activities (week 2)

This phase included learning assertive communication skills. It involved three
4-hour days for a total of 12 hours.

Phase 3: Job Search (week 3)

This phase involved learning about networking, the hidden job market, resumes
and interviews. It involved four 4-hour days for a total of 16 hours.

Phase 4: Life Management (week 4)

This phase involved learning personal organization, including “de-junking”
one’s life, time and money management. It involved 20 hours over five 4-hour days.
Phase 5: Job Retention (week 5)

This phase involved learning job retention skills, including teamwork and overcoming fears. It involved five 5-hour days for a total of 25 hours.

Phase 6: Job Club (week 6)

This phase involved an intensive job search and had variable hours.

DWS Steps to Success program. This was an intensive 10-day (80 hour) program that focused not only on decision making, but on the practical everyday behaviors that assist a person in getting and keeping a job. It involved the following:

First Day: Introduction
Goals
Time Management
Decision Making

Second Day: Self-Esteem
Listening
Mock Interviews (Taped)
Networking

Third Day: Applications

Fourth Day: Resumes
Career Center

Fifth Day: Hair/Hygiene Care
Shopping

Sixth Day: UTA
Job Search

Seventh Day: Finance/ Budget
Special Beauty

Eighth Day: WSU Day Care
Facial Care/Makeovers
Employer’s Interviews
Ninth Day: Job Retention

Tenth Day: Wrap-up
Celebration

Turning Point Life Transitions program. This was a 24-hour workshop, consisting of two 2-hour sessions each week for six weeks. It focused on improving communication skills, learning assertiveness, strengthening relationships, and exploring individual career and education options.

Class 1: INTRODUCTIONS
“What can I expect from this workshop?” Syllabus review
“What am I willing to contribute?”

Class 2: IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS
“How do I communicate with others?”
“How do others communicate with me?”

Class 3: ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION
More effective ways to present my point of view
“I can be ‘responsible’ for myself”

Class 4: FEELINGS
“How to express what I am feeling and be more aware of what those feelings are” Take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Class 5: LEARNING ABOUT ME
“How do I act on and respond to my environment?”
Myers-Briggs Assessment and Interpretation

Class 6: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION
“What do my actions and appearance say about me?”
“I’m listening”

Class 7: PERSONAL POWER
“Do I have personal power? What can block that power?”

Class 8: PERSONAL RIGHTS
“I can say ‘NO.’ I can maintain my power.”
Class 9: UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH ANGER
“I do have choices.”

Class 10: INNER PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION
Self-talk for success and understanding

Class 11: CREATING A PLAN FOR CAREER EXPLORATION
COPS assessment and interpretation

Class 12: POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT
Giving a special gift to myself and to others
Sharing what I have learned
End of class activities

Turning Point Managing Your Life program. This was a 12-hour workshop that was held over three weeks. It focused on learning decision making and organization skills. The topics included time management, handling paper flow, dejunking and cleaning one’s home, teaching children to help with housework, meal management, and organization ideas.

There is much similarity among the four programs. They all blend psychosocial interventions to improve identity and self-esteem with practical information for life management, although they vary in the amounts of each that they have. The emphases are on clients’ self-knowledge, learning assertiveness and life management skills, getting to know the job market and how to present themselves for a job. There is also some overlap in the programs.

For example, Phase Four of the DWS Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program is taught by workshop leaders from the Turning Point program. Other similarities are summarized in Table 6.
Table 6
Summary of Aspects of Interventions Related to Identity Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of identity development</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
<th>Aspects of interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exploring and making decisions among career choices</td>
<td>Basic career commitments are important to identity development. The assessment of occupational skills/values, experience of career options and commitment to a career aid identity development. The exploration of work, work-related social relationships and how one’s values relate to work aid identity development. Acquiring information and trying out occupational roles assist identity development.</td>
<td>Day 1 -- Steps to Success Phase 1-6 Phase Welfare To Work Turning Point Life Transitions Day 8 -- Steps to Success Days 1,2 -- Steps to Success Phases 3,5-6 Phase Welfare To Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning assertiveness in interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Learning one’s role and its relation to others, resolving issues in ways acceptable to oneself and others is related to identity development. Social and interpersonal relationships are a domain of identity achievement for women. Achieved women are more assertive than women in other statuses.</td>
<td>Turning Point Managing Your Life Day 9 -- Steps to Success Phase 2-6 Phase Welfare To Work Turning Point Life Transitions Turning Point Managing Your Life Day 9 -- Steps to Success Phase 2-6 Phase Welfare To Work Turning Point Life Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Life management</td>
<td>The domains of family/career prioritizing and parenting roles may be more salient for women than men. Learning problem solving, decision making and coping skills can facilitate identity development.</td>
<td>Turning Point Managing Your Life Phase 4-6 Phase Welfare To Work Turning Point Life Transitions Day 1 -- Steps to Success Turning Point Managing Your Life Turning Point Life Transitions Day 1 -- Steps to Success Turning Point Managing Your Life Turning Point Life Transitions Day 1 -- Steps to Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enright et al. (1983) stated that up to an undetermined point, the longer the intervention, the more developed will be the participants' identity. This study provided
an interesting opportunity to see if longer instruction times would facilitate more of a change in identity scores. It also was the first time that these particular interventions had been subject to research.

Threats to Validity in the Intervention

There were three threats to validity in this intervention:

1. The first threat is one of bias in group makeup. Neither random selection nor random assignment were used in assigning respondents to groups. Although having the intervention group randomly selected would also increase the generalizeability of the findings to other clients in DWS, there is a difficulty in randomly identifying clients that can fulfill the requirements for completing the study. The belief is that this schedule would be so time-consuming that clients would need to be referred by their workers and excused from other tasks, such as job-hunting, while they were in the intervention group. Therefore, although having workers refer group members does threaten generalizeability, it is necessary for the operation of the groups.

2. The second threat is the passage of time between the taking of the pretest and the posttest and the problem of history. There were two to six weeks' time between the taking of the pretest and the posttest, and 12 weeks between the posttest and the followup. This threat to validity was minimized of by having a comparison group that also completed the pretest and posttest at the same time. With both groups having the same passage of time, it was hoped that any confounding factors in the experimental group would also show up in the comparison group.
3. The third threat to validity was the use of several different programs being grouped together into one intervention group. Although they are similar in intent and curriculum, there are enough differences to make it difficult to ascertain the true effects of the interventions themselves. Also, there was difficulty because the four program samples were small. It was difficult, even if one of the programs were successful, to notice its effects because of the smallness of each program sample.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In Phase 1, women receiving welfare were compared to women at an employment center and at a technical school. The sample for this phase consisted of 203 women, with 122 clients at the welfare center, 38 clients at the employment center, and 43 students at the technical school. In Phase 2, the sample consisted of 200 women who were enrolled in 10 workshops of the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program, two workshops of the DWS Steps to Success program, or one workshop each of the Turning Point Life Transitions and Managing Your Life programs.

Identity

Cronbach alpha coefficients for the Berzonsky Cognitive Scale Inventory subscales were generated and were found to be similar to those of previous research (Berzonsky, 1992). The internal consistency for each of the subscales (see Table 7) showed a pattern of the alpha values for the Diffuse Orientation subscale being the highest, with values ranging from alpha = .72 to alpha = .78. The Normative Orientation subscale had the next highest alpha levels, with the range being from alpha = .54 to alpha = .76. The Information Orientation subscale had the lowest levels of internal consistency, with the range being from alpha = .50 to alpha = .68.

These results make sense when considering that people with Diffuse Orientations would be inclined to give answers related to being unsure about personal
values. This would be a global behavior that would touch many domains. Normative Orientation would involve not having explored options and yet having made decisions, which also would be a relatively global behavior. Information Orientation behavior of having both explored and made decisions could vary however, according to the domains the respondent had had the opportunity or the inclination to explore.

Therefore, the answers from Information-oriented respondents could be less consistent.

Table 7

Cronbach Alpha Values for Cognitive Style Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive style subscale</th>
<th>Phase of research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (N = 292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Pretest (N = 189)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Posttest (N = 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Followup (N = 65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information orientation</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse orientation</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative orientation</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability estimates for the IO and DO subscales, generated from this sample of females, are comparable to estimates for all male samples (e.g., adult prisoners, IO alpha = .72, DO alpha = .79, NO alpha = .60 as reported by White & Jones, 1996) and mixed gender samples (e.g., college students, IO alpha = .62, DO alpha = .73, NO alpha = .62).
alpha = .66 as reported by Berzonsky, 1992). Evidence for the construct validity of this measure comes from interscale correlation coefficients (Pearson’s r). Interscale correlations for this research are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Interscale Correlations for BCSI Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Diffused (pretest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diffused (posttest)</td>
<td>.43b</td>
<td>.47c</td>
<td>.17c</td>
<td>-.01b</td>
<td>.11c</td>
<td>-.16c</td>
<td>-.12b</td>
<td>-.01c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Diffused (followup)</td>
<td>.67c</td>
<td>-.07b</td>
<td>.21b</td>
<td>.25c</td>
<td>-.11b</td>
<td>-.02b</td>
<td>.07c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Normative (pretest)</td>
<td>.06c</td>
<td>.09c</td>
<td>.28c</td>
<td>-.01c</td>
<td>-.05c</td>
<td>-.03c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Normative (posttest)</td>
<td>.38b</td>
<td>.63c</td>
<td>.30c</td>
<td>.18b</td>
<td>.23c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Normative (followup)</td>
<td>.59c</td>
<td>.11b</td>
<td>.31b</td>
<td>.05c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Information (pretest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.25c</td>
<td>.12c</td>
<td>.27c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Information (posttest)</td>
<td>.44b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.47c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Information (followup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.63b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Coefficients are Pearson’s correlations.

a = Degrees of freedom 188; b = Degrees of freedom 74; c = Degrees of freedom 64

Comparisons with interscale correlations with male inmate populations (White & Jones, 1996) show that the positive correlation between Normative and Information Orientations is weaker (.30 for female welfare recipients and .54 for male inmates) and the negative correlation between Diffused and Information Orientations (-.16 for
female welfare recipients and -.20 for male inmates) is weaker for these females, while the correlation between Diffused and Normative Orientations is positive for this sample of women (.17) and negative for the male inmates (-.14).

The positive correlation between Information and Normative styles for this sample can be explained in both styles having elements of commitment to lifestyle. Because Information and Diffuse/avoidant styles are on opposite ends of the conceptual continuum (Information style is oriented towards planning and logical decision-making, while Diffuse/avoidant style is oriented towards impulsive, emotion-driven decisions or procrastinating decisions altogether), they are negatively correlated. While the Normative and Diffuse styles could be theoretically negatively correlated because of the high commitment factor of one as opposed to the low commitment factor of the other, they also can be viewed as being positively related because they both involve decision-making without planning or gathering information. They both use other-driven strategies to solve problems, with the Diffuse-oriented person procrastinating in hopes that someone else will solve his/her problems and the Normative-oriented person looking to authority figures to provide solutions. Therefore, although there are some variations in the interscale correlations from the data as compared to previous reports, they still support the theoretical relationships of the cognitive styles. They are also, with only the few exceptions noted above, comparable to previously reported results (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Jones, Ross, & Hartmann, 1992; White & Jones, 1996).
Phase 1

Scoring of Measures

In Phase 1, the respondent’s cognitive styles were compared with their employment and assistance histories using one-way ANOVAs. The percentages of cognitive styles were also compared for the unemployed clients receiving welfare, unemployed clients who have not received welfare and the DATC students. Table 9 presents data comparing respondents who were assigned to a style orientation to those who did not meet the scoring criteria.

Table 9
Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Results Comparing Grouped and Ungrouped Respondents on Demographic Characteristics and Measures of Assistance and Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Ungrouped (N = 87)</th>
<th>Grouped (N = 116)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>27.99</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of children</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>37.54</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>32.98</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance (months)</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>21.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N jobs past year</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months worked (last 12)</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.
As shown, the two groups were statistically similar (i.e., $p > .05$; no statistically significant differences) for all comparisons. Therefore, respondents who met criteria for assigning a preferred style orientation were no different than those who did not meet the criteria, save for their $z$ score rankings and relative comparisons across the three orientation subscale distributions.

Research Questions

Phase 1 research question 1a. Were there higher frequencies of Normative and Diffuse status among women who are clients of the Clearfield DWS than in a nonwelfare population with a comparable mean age?

The sites were selected specifically to identify women who were comparable with regard to demographics (age, ethnicity, marital status, children), yet different in regard to employment and assistance history. With so many similar characteristics, it is understandable that the distributions of cognitive style for each site were statistically equivalent (see Table 10), chi-square ($4, N = 116$) = 4.92; $p > .20$.

Table 10

Percentage Distribution of Cognitive Styles for Subjects at Each Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive style</th>
<th>Welfare center ($N = 72$)</th>
<th>Employment center ($N = 21$)</th>
<th>Technical school ($N = 23$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information orientation</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative orientation</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse orientation</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The technical school had the highest percentage of subjects with a Normative Orientation (52.2%) and the lowest percentage of subjects with a Diffuse Orientation (17.4%). The employment center had the highest percentage of subjects with an Information Orientation (42.9%). The welfare center had the highest percentage of subjects with a Diffuse Orientation (33.3%). Although these variations existed, the first research question was answered in the negative. There was no statistically significant difference in the distribution of the cognitive style orientations among the three sites, although the differences in the distribution of the Normative Orientation subscale scores might have been statistically significantly if there had been a larger sample used.

Phase 1 research question 1b. Did normative and diffuse women have higher rates of unemployment and more job turnover in a 12-month period than women who are information-oriented?

Assistance and employment were compared across the three cognitive style orientations using Analysis of Variance. The independent variable in each analysis consisted of cognitive style (Information, Normative, Diffuse), while history of assistance (i.e., lifetime months of public assistance), number of jobs (i.e., number of jobs held during the past year), and history of employment (i.e., total number of months employed during the past twelve) were the dependent variables. These analyses were generated using data from the entire sample (i.e., Phase 1 women from all three sample sites), and then replicated using data obtained from the public assistance sample only.
As shown in Table II, for lifetime months of public assistance a statistically significant difference was observed across the three cognitive style orientations, $F(2, 100) = 6.43; p = .002$. Women with a Diffuse Orientation reported receiving lifetime public assistance for more than three years (37 months), while women with Information ($X = 15.05$) or the Normative ($X = 14.21$) orientations had received public assistance for just over one year.

Table II

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Results Comparing Measures of Assistance and Employment Across Cognitive Style Orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Diffuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance (months)</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>14.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N jobs past year</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months employed</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance (months)</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>17.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N jobs past year</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months employed</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$ **$p < .01$

A Tukey test for multiple comparisons was used to determine which pairs had statistically significant differences. It revealed no statistically significant differences between the Information- and Normative- oriented respondents ($p = .992$), while both
the Information- and Normative-oriented respondents differed significantly from the Diffuse-oriented respondents ($p = .006$ and $p = .002$, respectively) in terms of months of assistance received.

Results from the welfare center alone yielded similar results. When cognitive style and lifetime public assistance were examined, a similar statistically significant difference was shown, $F (2, 66) = 6.73; p = .003$, indicating that cognitive style orientation is related to how long public assistance is used. The women with Diffuse Orientations at the welfare center reported nearly four years of public assistance ($X = 47.87$), while those with Information or Normative Orientations reported significantly fewer months of public assistance ($X = 22.84$ and $17.05$, respectively).

Among the total sample, women who had Diffuse Orientations reported having held an average of 2.07 jobs during the past year, while women with Information and Normative Orientations had held averages of 1.56 and 1.59 jobs during the same period of time, $F (2, 87) = 3.40; p = .038$. When the Tukey test for multiple comparisons was done with the different orientations, it revealed statistically significant differences between respondents with a Diffuse Orientation when compared with both the Information-oriented ($p = .04$) and Normative-oriented ($p = .05$) respondents. The Tukey test revealed that Information- and Normative-oriented respondents were not statistically different ($p = .991$). Interestingly, using only welfare center data, the differences in the number of jobs held during the past 12 months among women of different identity statuses were even more pronounced: Information Orientation $X = 1.07$, Normative Orientation $X = 1.05$, Diffuse Orientation $X = 1.77$. As with the
analysis that utilized the entire sample, the relationship was statistically significant, \( F(2, 67) = 3.08; p = .05 \).

No statistically significant differences were identified for months employed during the past year, \( F(2, 89) = .20; p = .819 \). Information-oriented respondents reported 8.53 months of employment, Normative-oriented respondents reported 8.03 months, and the Diffuse-oriented respondents had been employed 7.96 of the past 12 months.

For women from the welfare center, no statistically significant differences were observed for employment during the past year across the three cognitive style orientations, \( F(2, 66) = .88; p = .420 \). Not surprisingly, however, the number of months worked for this subsample of women were notably fewer than those for the entire sample (Information \( X = 5.54 \), Normative \( X = 4.43 \), Diffuse \( X = 6.41 \)).

Phase 2

Scoring of Measures

In Phase 2, subjects were compared (pretest and followup) on their scores on the Information, Normative, and Diffuse subscales. There was no attempt to assign respondents to particular overall cognitive orientations. Scoring of the BCSI was done by computer, as in Phase 1, with hand entry of data regarding respondents' school and work status at the time of each period of data collection.
Research Questions

Phase 2 research question 1a. Were the posttest scores on the Information Orientation subscale higher than the pretest scores, with the posttest Normative and Diffuse Orientation scores lower than the pretest scores?

The pretest and posttest scores were compared using paired t-tests to see whether there were statistically significant differences in the matched pairs of scores on the cognitive style subscales. As shown in Table 12 below, the intervention group had a difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the IO pretest and posttest that was not statistically significant with a t value of .58 (df 41, p = .28).

Table 12

Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Pretest and Posttest Scores on Cognitive Style Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Information orientation</th>
<th>Normative orientation</th>
<th>Diffuse orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention group</td>
<td>.58 (df 41, p = .28)</td>
<td>.87 (df 41, p = .19)</td>
<td>2.00 (df 40, p = .03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison group</td>
<td>-.03 (df 34, p = .49)</td>
<td>.37 (df 34, p = .35)</td>
<td>-.55 (df 34, p = .29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 35)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Significance is one-tailed.

The NO pretest and posttest were also not statistically significantly different, with a t value of .87 (df 41, p = .19). However, the DO posttest score was significantly lower than the pretest with a t value of 2.00 (df 40, p = .03). In the comparison group,
none of the subscales (IO, NO, DO) had statistically significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, Phase 2 Research Question 1a was answered with mixed results. In comparing the pretest and posttest scores for the intervention group and the comparison group, the results show that scores on the DO scale decreased (as had been predicted), but both the IO and NO subscales changed very little as a result of the interventions.

However, when looking at the pretest and 12-week followup scores on the same subscales, a slightly different picture emerged. The DO subscale no longer had a statistically significant difference when the pretest and 12-week followup scores were compared, while the IO scale had a statistically significance in the differences between the two scores (see Table 13).

Table 13
Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Pretest and Followup Scores on Cognitive Style Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive style</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Information orientation</th>
<th>Normative orientation</th>
<th>Diffuse orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df 28, p &lt; .05)</td>
<td>(df 28, p = .14)</td>
<td>(df 28, p = .25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.73</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 29)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(df 28, p = .07)</td>
<td>(df 31, p = .20)</td>
<td>(df 31, p = .18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>- .83</td>
<td>-.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 32)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(df 31, p = .07)</td>
<td>(df 31, p = .20)</td>
<td>(df 31, p = .18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Significance is one-tailed
Phase 2 research question 1b. Were the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked preintervention?

The number of hours worked by the respondents was statistically significantly higher ($t = -4.42, df = 31, p < .001$) when comparing pretest and the 12-week followup employment. The mean number of hours for the intervention respondents increased from 5.75 hours per week to 21.67 hours per week. There was no statistically significant change ($t = -1.28, df = 32, p = .21$) in the number of hours worked by the comparison group members with an increase from a mean of 14.83 hours to 18.37 hours worked per week (see Figure 2 and Table 14).

![Figure 2. Comparison of hours worked](image)
Table 14

Degrees of Freedom, t Values, and Levels of Significance for Hours Worked Per Week at Pretest and Followup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>t value (degrees of freedom, significance level)</th>
<th>Hours worked mean</th>
<th>Mean hours worked at 12-week followup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention (N = 32)</td>
<td>-4.42 (df 31, p &lt; .001)</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison (N = 33)</td>
<td>-1.28 (df 32, p = .21)</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td>18.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the percent of group members who were working also changed in the intervention group (t = -3.48, df 31, p = .002), with an increase from 21.88% to 59.38% working at the 12-week followup. This translated to a 271% increase in the percentage of women who were employed in the intervention group.

In the comparison group, there was little change between preintervention and followup with the percentages at 39.39 and 48.48, respectively (see Figure 3 and Table 15). Although there was an increase at the time of the posttest, by the time of the followup, the percentages had fallen to nearly preintervention level.

Phase 2 research question 1c. Was the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects higher at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked at a comparable period of time (12 weeks) by the comparison group?
The mean number of hours worked per week by the intervention group was 5.75 at the time of the pretest and 21.67 at the 12-week followup (see Table 14), compared to comparison group's 14.83 and 18.39 hours. When looking at the number of hours employed each week, it is possible to see that the comparison group had a
small but steady increase in the mean number of hours of employment per week from the time of pretest to followup. In contrast, the intervention group had a slight increase by the end of the intervention and a dramatic increase 12 weeks later (see Figure 3). A repeated measure MANOVA showed a statistically significant improvement, $F(1,63) = 16.74$, $p < .001$, in the increased number of hours worked by the intervention group when compared with the increased number of hours worked by the comparison group. However, it did not show a statistically significant difference when contrasting comparison followup scores and intervention followup scores.

The MANOVA also showed a significant improvement, $F(1,63) = 11.00$, $p = .002$, in the increased percentage of group members employed by the intervention group as compared to the increase in the comparison group. Again, however, when comparing the percentage employed by both groups at the time of followup, there was no statistical significance.

What these results mean is that the interventions appear to have enabled respondents who were "behind" the comparison group members in employment to "catch up" and even surpass those in the comparison group. However, at 12 weeks postintervention, the groups were not statistically significantly different. Therefore, research question 1c is answered negatively. There was not a statistically significant difference in the number of hours worked per week when contrasting the intervention and comparison groups at 12 weeks postintervention.
Summary

Alpha values were generated that showed good internal consistency for the Information Orientation, Normative Orientation and Diffuse Orientation subscales. These alpha values were similar to those found in previous research (Berzonsky, 1992; White & Jones, 1996) and interscale correlations of the subscales provided evidence of construct validity.

Analysis of variance showed a relationship between cognitive style and the number of jobs during the previous year. There was also a relationship between cognitive style and the lifetime number of months of assistance received.

The effect on identity subscale scores by the provision of interventions was found to be modest and mixed. Pretest and posttest subscale scores on Information Orientation and Normative Orientation were highly correlated. The posttest scores were slightly less than the pretest scores on the Diffuse Orientation subscale, as had been predicted. Also, there was found to be a small but statistically significant increase on the Information Orientation subscale at the time of the 12-week followup, with no statistically significant changes in the Normative Orientation and Diffuse Orientation subscales.

A statistically significant effect of intervention was found in the increase in the number of hours worked per week between preintervention and 12-week followup by intervention group members. Likewise, the percentage of group members employed at the 12-week followup when compared to preintervention was statistically significantly higher. There was little comparable change in the comparison group employment. A
statistically significant difference was not found between the number of hours worked and the percentage of the group employed when comparing the intervention group and the comparison group at the 12-week followup.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Objectives

There were two objectives of this study. The first was to investigate whether there is a relationship between identity development in female clients of the DWS ("welfare") and employment status. The Berzonsky Cognitive Style Inventory (BCSI) was used to classify clients into three groups according to a model of James Marcia concerning the resolution of the identity crisis. This model has not been used before with a population of women receiving public assistance. Because it could theoretically identify women who were most likely to use public assistance for a long time, its relevance in the design of intervention programs would seem to increase their effectiveness in enabling women receiving public assistance to obtain employment.

The research was divided into two phases. The first phase examined whether there are greater numbers of certain cognitive styles in this population and explored the relationship of cognitive style to employment. The BCSI was administered in Phase 1 to women receiving public assistance at a welfare center, women at an employment center, and women students at a technical school. In Phase 2, the same measure was administered to women at 10 workshops of the DWS Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work program, two workshops of the DWS Steps to Success program, and one workshop each of the Turning Point Life Transitions and Managing Your Life programs. In addition, women were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire that asked their
ages, whether or not they were currently in school or working, and if they were working, how many hours a week they worked.

The final sample of women in Phase 1 was \( N = 203 \), with the welfare center having \( N = 122 \), the employment center having \( N = 38 \), and the technical school having \( N = 43 \). In Phase 2, the sample consisted of the pretest participants \( N = 189 \), the posttest participants \( N = 83 \), and the followup participants \( N = 65 \). There was a problem with attrition in both the intervention and comparison groups. Of the 129 who began the intervention groups, only 38 finished (with 11 joining to give a total sample of 49). By the time of the 12-week followup, only 30 remained in this sample.

There were 60 comparison group respondents at the time of the pretest, but even with the researcher using individual phone calls at the time of the posttest, only 33 could be located. With financial difficulties and a high rate of domestic violence in this population, it is not unusual for women to “go underground,” or simply disappear in order to escape an abusive and stalking partner. It also is not unusual for women to lose their apartments because they do not have the money to pay rent. When this happens, they often will move in with friends and effectively disappear for a couple months until they resurface.

Of the 60 members of the comparison group, it can be verified that at least 24 moved in a 6-month period, with some moving more than once. The attrition rate of this sample was high, and it was necessary to find many of the respondents. At the followup, there were 32 respondents who were located of the original 60. Of those, some had “gone underground” at the time of the posttests and just resurfaced and some
of the 32 posttest respondents had disappeared. The small sample made it difficult to accurately compare the results of pretest, posttest, and followup data. It also made it difficult to keep a stable sample for all three data collection periods.

Discussion of Results

The question of whether or not women having the Normative and Diffuse cognitive styles had a higher representation in the welfare population than in a nonwelfare one was answered in the negative. The distribution of cognitive styles in the three centers (public assistance, employment, and technical school) was not statistically significantly different. This is not surprising, as the three centers served overlapping populations. While the technical school served high school students and nontraditional students returning to school for retraining, and the employment center served those looking for employment, both centers also served clients receiving public assistance. The effort to find people with similar ages, number of children, and SES, resulted in populations that, to some extent, overlapped. In addition, cognitive style was examined by dividing the sample into two groups: one receiving public assistance and the other not receiving it. There was still no difference in the percentage distribution of the cognitive orientations. This could be due to identity being a developmental phenomenon and therefore, with no interventions provided, simply a product of maturation. With research participants being of similar ages, it is not surprising that they would have had similar identity status/cognitive style distributions.
The question of whether women having the Normative and Diffuse cognitive styles had less employment, more job turnover, and fewer months employed during a 12-month period than the women in the Information-oriented style was answered with mixed results. While the differences in the number of months worked during the past 12 months by women exhibiting three cognitive styles were not statistically significantly different, the differences in the number of different jobs were. Women who were Diffuse in their problem-solving style had more jobs ($X = 2.07$) during the past year than either the Normative ($X = 1.59$) or Information-oriented ($X = 1.56$) women. This would be in accord with Berzonsky's (1988) description of Diffuse persons as having an overall lack of commitment and high impulsivity. Possible scenarios that would involve difficulties in problem solving could involve women having problems occurring on the job, either in the form of home/work conflicts or interpersonal difficulties with their supervisors and coworkers. Because of the difficulties that Diffuse persons have in making decisions and solving problems, they might ignore the problems and hope they would go away or try to get someone else to take care of them. Eventually, the problems would escalate, and they would often quit, not show up for work anymore, or be fired. These possible scenarios would account for the fact that even though Diffuse women desire work, and had the same number of months of employment in a 12-month period, they apparently go from job to job, rather than retaining employment. In other words, the consistency of their employment could be a reflection of their desire to work, while the high number of different jobs is a reflection of their impulsivity and lower level of problem-solving skills.
In examining the lifetime receipt of public assistance of women having the three cognitive styles, another statistically significant difference emerged. Women who were Diffuse receive more months of public assistance ($X = 37.00$) than either the Normative ($X = 15.05$) or Information-oriented ($X = 14.21$) women. When looking at the public assistance center alone, the differences among the three cognitive styles (Diffuse, $X = 47.87$; Information-oriented, $X = 22.84$; Normative-oriented, $X = 17.05$) were even greater.

These findings would be in accord with Marcia's characterization of Diffuse persons as those who have neither decided upon an occupation nor are much concerned about it (Marcia, 1966). Women who are Diffuse in their cognitive styles are also more likely to be dependent in their behaviors (Marcia, 1980), while women who are Information-oriented are more autonomous in their decision making (Grotevant & Adams, 1984) and would be less likely to need welfare assistance for an extended period of time.

In Phase 2, the question of whether the differences in the pretest and posttest scores on the identity measures in the intervention group would be different from those of the comparison group was answered with mixed results. There was no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the Information and Normative Orientation cognitive style subscales. There was only a modest (although statistically significant) decrease in the Diffuse Orientation subscale in the intervention group, when compared with the differences in those subscales in the comparison group. At the time of followup, there was a modest (although statistically significant) increase
in the scores on the Information Orientation subscale and no statistically significant changes on the Normative Orientation and Diffuse Orientation subscales for the intervention group. The comparison group had no statistically significant changes at the time of the followup.

This is in accordance with the mixed findings in past research. Enright et al. (1983) had success in using identity-related interventions, with the intervention group at the end of two weeks having a greater mean score increase on the Rasmussen Ego Identity Scale than the comparison group. However, their findings were not typical of all interventions related to identity. Markstrom-Adams et al. (1993) found no significant changes in identity status among the research participants as a result of their intervention.

Berzonsky (1988) discussed the cognitive styles in terms of their methods of problem solving, and theoretically the results observed in this study are in accordance with his writings. The Diffused intervention group members could be thinking in a manner that is less chaotic as a result of the structured and organized instruction they had received. However, after 12 weeks of not having this structure around them, the effects could have faded. Another possibility is there might be an effect caused by 13 intervention group members who moved and were lost from the study between the posttest and followup. It is possible that those who were the most Diffuse could have been the ones that were missing.

The increase in Information Orientation subscale scores from pretest to followup could be due to the intervention groups having had the opportunity to put
into practice the concepts that they had learned in the group. Also, if the more Diffuse members of the intervention group had dropped out, that could also have the effect of raising the Information Orientation subscale scores.

The modest and mixed change in the subscale scores may also reflect Erikson's (1968) view that identity is developed over a lifetime and is relatively stable. Yancy (1992) stated that identity is developed in relationships and while there may be new identities being encouraged in the group, at the end of the day, the participants still went to homes and neighborhoods that reinforced their old identities. As Erikson (1968) stated, identity is the congruence between what a person thinks of him/herself with what others think of him/her. The pull of the many others may be stronger than the effects of 12-64 hours spent with a group.

There also needs to be the understanding when considering identity change that identity development is a process and not an event. It takes more than simply gaining insight or an episode of clarifying values to change identity. There may not have been enough time to solidify a process of change that began in the group. As Markstrom-Adams said, “It may be very difficult to create substantial changes in identity formation through short-term training” (Markstrom-Adams et al., 1993, p. 217).

Another possibility to consider when looking at the lack of change in subscale scores is whether the present identities of the participants may be, to some extent, functional in their lives. As Waterman (1989) stated, it is important to know what adaptive functions in the intervention recipients’ lives their present identities serve before attempting to alter their identities. While it may seem, in the long run, to be
more functional to some to change identity statuses/cognitive styles, in the short run, there are increased discomfort and lessened productivity.

It is necessary to understand that for many people in poverty, the main struggle is to fill the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing. This constant battle is a drain emotionally, socially, and cognitively on women in poverty (Klein et al., 1992). Taking into account Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, it is easy to understand how identity development could be postponed until the basic survival needs are met. Even the promise of a better tomorrow for one's children could be less salient for women in poverty than the harsh realities of survival today.

An example of this interplay of external forces and the pressure to survive was evident in the scores of one respondent, who went from being Information-oriented at the time of the posttests to Diffuse-oriented at the time of the 12-week followup. Such a change would have been difficult to understand, except in talking to her workshop provider, I learned that she had gone from being in the class and being supported emotionally in her identity development to both working and going to school full-time. The resultant stress could easily have made her question the earlier goals she had set for herself and sent her into Diffuse Orientation.

Also, this is a population with a high incidence of trauma such as domestic violence (Cheek & Piercy, 1999). Living in emotionally draining circumstances is linked to more diffuse identity development (Silverstein, 1996), as energy expended to defend against recurring trauma is unavailable for personal growth and self-understanding.
A last possible reason for the small differentiation in the subscale scores could be that the interventions used were ones already being used by DWS and the Turning Point program. As such, they were not designed specifically to change identity status/cognitive style but primarily to increase employment. It is difficult to know beforehand, according to Waterman (1989), which interventions, or what parts of interventions, are the most effective in facilitating identity development. Perhaps interventions that had been designed specifically to aid identity development might have had greater positive results.

The second question of Phase 2, whether the number of hours worked per week by intervention respondents would be statistically significantly different at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked preintervention, was answered in the positive. There was a dramatic increase in the intervention respondents' mean hours worked per week, from 5.75 to 21.67, which was a statistically significant increase.

This would be understandable because the main emphasis of the DWS interventions was increasing employment and the Turning Point programs were geared toward employment and balancing work/career. Even with little or no change in cognitive style subscales among intervention group members, the group social pressure would be toward employment. So, because people with either Normative Orientation or Diffuse Orientation tend to be more dependent in their problem-solving styles (Berzonsky, 1988) and external in their locus of control (Blustein & Phillips, 1990), they could be inclined to get jobs simply because others in the group were getting them.
This group influence could also be a factor in the rise in the percentage of intervention group members who were employed, with a rise from 21.88 to 59.38% employment at the 12-week followup.

The third question, whether the number of hours worked per week by intervention subjects would be different at 12 weeks postintervention than the number of hours per week worked at a comparable period of time (12 weeks) by the comparison group, was also answered in the negative. The rise from a mean of 5.75 hours per week to 21.67 hours was statistically significantly different when compared with the increase from a mean of 14.83 to 18.39 in the comparison group, but the means of 21.67 and 18.39 themselves were not statistically significantly different.

It is interesting that the comparison group had an increase in the percentage of group members employed at the time of the posttests, but a decrease at the time of the followup. This would be logical because the comparison group was recruited from the waiting room at the Clearfield East DWS office. They would have been there for primarily two reasons. If they were working, they would have had a regularly scheduled meeting with their case workers, and if they were unemployed, their case workers would be meeting with them to assist them in getting jobs. At the Clearfield DWS offices, unemployed clients are given information concerning current job openings, and are often referred directly from the DWS office to interviews.

It would be understandable that employment would rise, and it would also be understandable that it would fall back again to the preintervention levels in the comparison group. Without the training and support offered by the interventions, it
would be a natural course for the members of the comparison group to go back in their comfort zones or to use the same maladaptive coping mechanisms that led to job loss. It is also possible that in another two months observers could see a higher percentage again employed as the respondents in the comparison group go through the “hire-fire” cycle again.

It is hoped that the intervention group will be able to maintain its higher level of employment. In past research it was shown that gains in employment made after interventions are not always sustained. For example, an intervention based on Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving Skills (ICPS) found a statistically significantly higher rate of employment at six months after intervention in the experimental group than the comparison group. However, the higher employment rate of the experimental group did not hold at the 12-month followup, with a decline to levels that had no statistically significant difference in employment rate for the two groups (Platt et al., 1993).

Limitations

This study has weaknesses that affect its internal and external validity. Because its external validity limitations are more easily described, they will be described first.

Generalization of the results to other populations receiving assistance would be hindered by the use of a convenience sample (giving forms to women as they waited for their workers at the employment and public assistance centers, and using classroom
students at the technical school). Because the research did not use random selection, the findings are applicable only to these particular women at this place and time.

Another hindrance to external generalizability would be the small amount of ethnic diversity in the chosen sample. Although it reflects the lack of diversity in the population living in the geographic area, it would be impossible to generalize to other parts of the United States or to different ethnic populations.

The internal validity of this study is a more complicated matter, and is affected by a number of procedural flaws:

1. Although the researcher talked extensively with intervention leaders and read the written literature on the interventions, there were important details of which I was unaware. Firstly, because the Steps to Success and Six-Phase Welfare-to-Work programs were geared toward employment, participants did not have to stay to complete the interventions if they found jobs. This contributed to a higher dropout rate than was anticipated. It also artificially lowered the percentage of intervention group members who would have taken the posttest and followup BCSI measures and would have been counted as working.

2. Another contributing factor to the low percentage (32.68%) of women finishing the interventions was the number of participants who simply dropped out of the interventions. Because one program did not want its participants identified by more than their first names (no last names, addresses or telephone numbers), all the pretest forms used that standard. Therefore, when participants dropped out between the pretests and posttests, there was no way of contacting them. Because of this, it was
not known why they dropped out. Knowledge of the reasons for dropping out would
have helped to understand why, for example, Information-oriented respondents would
not continue the intervention as expected.

The ages of the children of participating women could have been a factor
affecting their ability to attend the intervention workshops. Therefore, the attendance
history of the intervention groups may be due to factors such as the single mothers’
values in rearing children rather than their cognitive style. The difficulties in working
and rearing children as a single mother would be in accord with Penuel and Wertsch’s
(1995) statements concerning the many separate concerns and conflicts that would
need to be resolved and coordinated into a unified set of commitments in order for an
individual to be prepared for adult life. It is difficult to have a sense of personal
direction that is needed occupationally (Kegan, 1994, in Hall & Mirvis, 1995) while
trying to juggle the roles of provider and nurturer of children at the same time. For
example, this population tends to have a higher than average rate of sick children and
children who need to be hospitalized (personal communication, Debbie Garretson, May
21, 1999). It is difficult to attend group sessions when children are sick. It is also
difficult to have the internal locus of control that accompanies identity development
(Archer, 1989) when many factors, such as children’s illnesses, schedules, and needs
are often out of one’s control. All of this is only speculative because it was not
possible to contact those who dropped out of the interventions.

3. The third procedural flaw was involving four different, though similar, interventions.

In an effort to increase the sample size, different programs were used that had slightly
different expectations of their participants, and of the researcher. This led to a “least common denominator” approach that may have led to the research losing some of its effectiveness. If the study were being designed again, only one program would be followed, but it would be followed over a year’s period of time.

4. Another limitation, related to the one above, was the lack of standardization of the curricula among the programs. A more standardized curriculum, with equal emphasis on employment and identity development, and with leaders trained to facilitate identity development as much as they are trained to facilitate employment, might have yielded different results.

5. Another procedural flaw was that this study was done on too small of a scale. It would have been much more effective if done on a state, rather than the local level. With cooperation at the state level, there could have been a team working on this project instead of one person traveling from one site to another (there were more than 50 site visits over an area with a 60-mile radius and over a 6-month period). A coordinated team effort at the state level would have been better organized and would possibly have yielded a larger sample and hopefully more sensitive results.

6. The final procedural flaw was a lack of a systematized method in terms of posttest and followup BCSI measures and questionnaires. In this study, mailing measures to participants was not an effective way of getting data. In a population that is suspicious of government agencies and one that dislikes being “hassled,” there was a response rate of only 25%, and virtually no improvement with reminder postcards. The most effective way of getting data was with telephone calls made by the researcher. With
telephone calls, the response rate was 100% of all respondents who were able to be contacted. With the use of telephone contacting as a standard procedure, there would have been larger posttest and followup samples.

The final limitation is not one of procedure, but one of theory. It lies in the question that is raised, “Does welfare receipt come from having a Diffuse Orientation, or does a Diffuse Orientation come from receiving welfare?” A case could be made just as strongly that women who receive public assistance may become more Diffuse in their thinking over time. Because this research is a “snapshot” of the women and not a longitudinal study, it is unknown how long they had been Diffuse, or whether they are even still in the same identity status. Marcia (1976, p. 118) described the identity statuses as “coming from somewhere and going to somewhere,” or, in other words, identity status adapts and modifies itself as persons develop and have new experiences. Therefore, a woman who was diffuse last year may have changed to become Information-oriented (or even Normative-oriented!) today.

Although identity is not rigid and can be altered, the factors facilitating change need to be more powerful than the forces preventing change. Although group intervention may support and encourage change, forces outside of the group setting may inhibit change. Factors such as lower socioeconomic status (Archer, 1982), the mobility of families (Koteskey et al., 1990), living in unsafe neighborhoods, and being depersonalized (“just a number”) in society (Callaway, 1990) can affect identity change. Because of the chronic nature of unemployment in this population, short-term interventions may be less likely to cause permanent change, and an ongoing support
program would be needed to assist group members in generalizing the skills learned in the group to the workplace setting (Klein et al., 1992). Unfortunately, because of the instability of this population, as evidenced by frequent moves (personal communication, Kay Hinckley, June 10, 1999) and the dropout rate in the interventions studied, such long-term intervention is difficult to provide.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are linked to the limitations discussed in the previous section. Limitations regarding the lack of diversity in the sample could be counteracted by the use of samples from different areas of the United States in order to represent different populations. One option would be having several different locations involved in a single study so different samples could be compared.

Another recommendation would be the use of random selection and random assignment to intervention and comparison groups. This would increase the strength of the findings and their generalizeability to other samples.

The limitations of having a large dropout rate in interventions and having conflicting demands that affected the women’s ability to attend the workshops could both be addressed by different procedures of gathering data. If the intervention were done on a state level, the sample would be larger. If there were a questionnaire with more comprehensive questions used, information could be gathered concerning the number and ages of children, the availability of transportation, and the existence of other barriers that could inhibit attendance. A procedure of telephoning absent women
could be instituted that would track those who drop out of interventions and would be able to ascertain the factors contributing to dropping out of interventions. It would also give understanding about the correlation between cognitive style and these factors. Allied with this is the suggestion that qualitative studies could also be useful in identifying more closely the individual factors that can affect a woman’s ability to obtain and retain employment.

The limitation of the inability to track changes in identity status/cognitive style could be addressed with a longitudinal research design that covered a longer period of time than 18 weeks. This design could be useful in following any changes in identity status/cognitive style over time. With a more long-lasting longitudinal design, it would be possible to include followup groups that theoretically might facilitate the retention of positive changes. While this would be difficult to do with a population as wary of others and as changing as this population is, the results would be worthwhile.

Research that increases understanding of the variety of individual situations will make it easier to tailor interventions that will help this population to be self-sufficient. At this point, blanket interventions that are given to all welfare recipients may not be sensitive to the individual skill needs and situations, and outside factors could inhibit women from following through with their commitments to attend group interventions. However, interventions that are tailored to the needs of this population, and that are carried out in a sensitive manner could conceivably have greater success in increasing problem-solving and decision-making skills that would assist in the retention of employment.
Summary

I chose to do this research because I saw, in my work with women receiving welfare, frustration on the part of the case workers and the clients related to the difficulties clients had in obtaining and retaining employment. I saw that even though the women wanted better lives for themselves and their children, there were factors that seemed to inhibit their abilities to obtain and retain employment.

I wanted to help them, and saw that, even with the many interventions offered at DWS for assisting with job searching, preparation for interviews, writing resumes, and so forth, there was still a gap in the skills possessed by the clients and those needed for success in the workplace. This study was done with the hope that those skills could be identified and some questions answered concerning what could be done to assist women in developing those skills.

This research seems to have answered some of those questions, but has raised many more, such as: “What types of interventions really help in developing identity skills?” “How does identity in the domain of motherhood affect identity in the domain of employment?” These questions, and others, will need to be answered by future research.

However, one positive outcome of this research is the knowledge that identity development is linked to success in employment. Another positive finding is the knowledge that interventions are successful in helping women on public assistance to become employed and that interventions aimed at increasing employment in this population are useful and need to be continued. For this, I feel content that this
research has made a contribution and may be of use to both case workers and clients at DWS in their efforts to have clients become employed.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Pilot Study Results
In a pilot study, 76 women clients of DW S were given the BCSI along with a demographic questionnaire which asked the respondents' ages, the ages of their children, whether they graduated from high school, whether they were currently in school or employed, the number of total months of assistance received, and the number of jobs held during the past 12 months.

This information was examined using crosstabulations and it was noted that different cognitive styles have different patterns of current employment status and the number of jobs held during the past 12 months. Information Oriented respondents are more likely to be employed (see Table 16 and Figure 4) and are more likely to stay with one job than the other two cognitive style orientations. Diffuse Oriented respondents are more likely to be unemployed, are more likely to lose their jobs and go from job to job. Normative Oriented respondents are the most likely to be unemployed, but when they get jobs, are more likely to keep them. They have a rate of staying at one job that is nearly equal to that of the Information Oriented respondents (see Table 17 and Figure 5).

![Figure 4. Cognitive style and employment](image-url)
Table 16

Percentage of Cognitive Styles by Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Cognitive style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed</td>
<td>37.1 (N = 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently unemployed</td>
<td>62.9 (N = 22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Cognitive style and number of jobs

Table 17

Percentage of Cognitive Styles by Number of Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Cognitive style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>17.1 (N = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 job</td>
<td>42.9 (N = 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 jobs</td>
<td>20.0 (N = 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 jobs</td>
<td>14.3 (N = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more jobs</td>
<td>5.7 (N = 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Measures Used
Employment Survey

In order to better help our clients in obtaining employment, the Department of Workforce Services, in association with Utah State University, is sponsoring a study of factors which influence employment.

Please help us by answering the following questions and completing the attached survey.

Since the survey is of opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you have the right to not participate if you choose.

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. NOT EVEN YOUR WORKER WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE RESPONSES YOU PROVIDE.

1. Name (first name only) __________________________________

2. Your date of birth (day, month, year) ___/___/___

3. What are the ages of your children?

4. Did you graduate from high school?

5. How many months have you been receiving assistance? (Payments, Food Stamps, Medicaid, etc.). (For example, 2 years would be listed as 24 months, 1 ½ years as 18 months, etc.)

6. Are you currently in school?

7. Are you currently working?

   How many months in the past 12 months have you been working?

   How many different jobs have you had in the past year?

8. Please put the last 4 numbers of your social security number on the top of the computer sheets (these will be used for identification by the computer and will NOT be released to anyone).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I know what I believe about religion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I've spent a lot of time thinking about what I should do with my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I'm not sure what I'm doing in life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I set the way I do because of the values I was brought up with.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I've spent a lot of time reading and/or talking to others about religious ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When I talk with someone about a problem, I try to see their point of view.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I know what I want to do with my future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I don't worry about values ahead of time; I decide things as they happen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I'm not really sure what I believe about religion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I was brought up to know what to work for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I'm not sure which values I really hold.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I know where the government and the country should be going.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>If I don't worry about my problems they usually work themselves out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I'm not sure what I want to do in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I feel like the work I do (or have done in the past) is right for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I've spent a lot of time reading and/or trying to understand political issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I'm not thinking about my future now—it's still a long way off.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I've spent a lot of time talking to people to find a set of beliefs that works for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I've never had any serious doubts about my religious beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I'm not sure what job is right for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I've known since I was young what I wanted to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I have a strong set of beliefs that I use when I make decisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>It's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be open to different ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>When I have to make a decision, I wait as long as I can to see what will happen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>When I have a problem, I do a lot of thinking to understand it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26. It's best to get advice from experts (preachers, doctors, lawyers) when I have a problem.  
27. I don't take life too seriously. I just try to enjoy it.  
28. It's better to have one set of values than to consider other value options.  
29. I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can.  
30. My problems can be interesting challenges.  
31. I try to avoid problems that make me think.  
32. Once I know how to solve a problem, I like to stick with it.  
33. When I make decisions I take a lot of time to think about my choices.  
34. I like to deal with things the way my parents said I should.  
35. I like to think through my problems and deal with them on my own.  
36. When I ignore a potential problem, things usually work out.  
37. When I have to make a big decision, I like to know as much as I can about it.  
38. When I know a problem will cause me stress, I try to avoid it.  
39. People need to be committed to a set of values to live a full life.  
40. I would rather get advice from friends or family when I have a problem instead of figuring it out myself.
Employment Survey

The Department of Workforce Services, in association with Utah State University, is sponsoring a study of factors which influence employment.

Please help us by answering the following questions and completing the attached survey.

Since the survey is of opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you have the right to not participate if you choose.

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

1. Name (first name only) ___________________________________ Male ___ Female ___

2. Your date of birth (day, month, year) __/__/____

3. Are you currently in school?

4. Are you currently working? How many hours a week?

5. The last 4 numbers of your social security number are ___ ___ ___ ___. These will be your confidential identification number. Please put them in the last 4 spaces at the top of each page of the survey.

We would like to mail a follow up questionnaire to you in 12 weeks. If you would be willing to fill it out, please give us your name and address. You will be given $5 for your time.

Name__________________________________________

Address________________________________________

______________________________________________
Questionnaire (Phase 2 pretest and followup)

**Employment Survey**

The Department of Workforce Services, in association with Utah State University, is sponsoring a study of factors which influence employment.

Please help us by answering the following questions and completing the attached survey.

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**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.**

1. Name (first name only) ______________________________ Male ___ Female ___

2. Your date of birth (day, month, year) ___ / ___ / ___

3. Are you currently in school?

4. Are you currently working? How many hours a week?

5. The last 4 numbers of your social security number are ______ ______ ______. These will be your confidential identification number. Please put them in the last 4 spaces at the top of each page of the survey.
VITA

Cheryl Cheek

September 20, 1999

Address
8029 Lofty Heights Dr.
Waynesboro, PA 17268
(717) 749-7856

Education
Oct 1999  Ph. D. Family and Human Development: Utah State University. 
            (anticipated)  Dissertation Title: Promoting Life Management Skills to Enhance 
            Employment Among Women Receiving Services From the 
            Department of Workforce Services 
            (Major Professor: Randall M. Jones, Ph. D.) 
            Area of emphasis: adult development and aging

            Area of emphasis: gerontology

1990  B. S. Psychology: University of Utah

1974  B.Mu Music Education. Brigham Young University

Employment and Related Experience
1999-present  Instructor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 
            the Pennsylvania State University at Mont Alto.

1998-1999  Research Associate: Department of Family and Human Development. 
            Kathleen Piercy, Ph. D. (supervisor)

1996-1997  Research Assistant: Department of Family and Human Development. 
            Randall M. Jones, Ph. D. (Supervisor)

1997-1999  Lecturer: Department of Family and Human Development. Logan, Utah
Awards and Fellowships

1999 Family and Human Development Department Teaching Assistant of the Year, College of Family Life Teaching Assistant of the Year

1996 Presidential Fellowship: Utah State University, Logan, Utah

1994 Member Phi Kappa Phi (scholastic honorary society)

1974 Member Pi Kappa Lambda (scholastic honorary society)

1974 Graduated cum laude

Manuscripts Submitted for Publication


Professional Presentations


Cheek, C. (1993, October) Psychosocial Aspects of Illness and Disease. Presented at the pastoral care department inservice, HCA St. Mark's Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah.


Research

Promoting Life Management Skills to Enhance Employment Among Women Receiving Services from the Department of Workforce Services (dissertation-quantitative)

Women, Identity and Welfare: The Roots of Welfare Dependency (current research—qualitative)

Other Research Interests

Adult development. I am particularly interested in identity development in adult and aging populations. As people live longer, healthier lives, they have the opportunities to “reinvent” themselves many times. I believe that there is a variety of paths to identity in adulthood and older age that have not been studied yet.

Escaping affluenza and voluntary simplicity. This is a grass roots movement that seems to be rapidly gaining popularity. I would like to study different people’s motivation for changing to more simple lifestyles. Also I would like to study whether there are common patterns in this simplicity, or whether living in different parts of the country would cause it to take different forms.

Clinical Experience

1994-1999 Mental health therapist: Davis Mental Health, Layton, Utah
Liaison between Davis Mental Health and Department of Workforce Services in providing psychotherapy for clients. Facilitated treatment groups for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Created a new curriculum for domestic violence group instruction and wrote a new handbook for emergency services.

1990-1992  Rehabilitation Specialist: Utah Independent Living Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. Worked with clients having many types of disabilities. Co-facilitated two Multiple Sclerosis support groups. Evaluated and documented client's needs for assistive equipment, housing, counseling, etc. Documented progress in meeting those needs for federal and state programs. Learned sign language to aid communication with the deaf.

Teaching Experience
Undergraduate:  Families in Crisis (FHD 412-quarter)  
( theories of family stress and crisis intervention)
Marriage and the American Family (FHD 120-quarter) 
( marriage and family developmental stages, diversity of family forms)
Family Crisis and Intervention (FHD 4220-semester) 
( family stress and family therapy theories)

Adult Education:  Life Skills Development 
Stress Management 
Communication Skills Development 
Domestic Violence 
Psychosocial Healing From Abuse

Professional Memberships
Society for Research on Adolescence 
National Council on Family Relations 
Teaching Family Science Conference