

# ORCHESTRATING A RESEARCH CAREER

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# Intellectual Roots

Care, N.S. (1984). Career choice. *Ethics, 94*, 283-302.

Dalton, G. W., Thompson, P. H., & Price, R. L. (1977). The four stages of professional careers: A new look at performance by professionals. *Organizational Dynamics, 6*, 19-42.

Dutton, J. A., & Crowe, L. (1988).  
Setting priorities among scientific  
initiatives. *American Scientist*, 76,  
599-603.

Seligman, M.E. P. (1991). *Learned  
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Knopf.

# Overview of Presentation:

- What does it mean to orchestrate a research career?
- What are the activities that will engage you throughout your career?
- What are the key transitions in a career?
- What can be done to sustain career optimism?

# What does it mean to have a career, and not just a job?

A career is "...a long-term project through which self-realization and service to others may be achieved."

N. S. Care (1984)

# Characteristics of a **career**:

- Work that one anticipates doing and staying with over a significant period of time
- An overlap between personal values and professional goals
- Work that changes you over time

- A commitment to lifelong learning
- Increasing levels of responsibility
- Doing a good job is not the endpoint—skills are exercised in service to larger goals
- A responsibility to nurture subsequent generations and shape the future

# What will engage you throughout your research career?

- Knowledge development
- Knowledge dissemination
- Knowledge utilization
- Resource development
- Information technology

Knowledge Development—the point of a research career is developing a **program** of research that will eventually provide “answers” to important clinical questions

- Every study provides insights for the next one
- With experience, one becomes more nuanced in conceptualizing the issues

Knowledge Dissemination—findings are expected to be disseminated to other professionals, policy makers, and the public as appropriate

- **Refereed** presentations and publications are important
- Disseminate work to interdisciplinary audiences for maximum influence

# Knowledge Utilization—findings need to be incorporated into curricula and into protocols and policies

- Teaching, research and practice are truly intertwined
- Developing a research team is important because one person cannot do it all

Resource Development—the researcher must develop resources to carry out program of research

- Part of research is building a team
- Networking is a form of resource development

Information Technology—in each career phase, mastery of IT will be important to career success

- IT is important to the research process from online searching to data collection to data analysis
- IT is important to networking (document sharing) and teaching

# What will engage you throughout your career as a leader?

- Self-knowledge
- Strategic vision
- Risk taking and creativity
- Interpersonal and communication effectiveness
- Inspiring and leading change

RWJ Executive Nurse Program

# Leadership

- ...working with others to achieve shared goals in a complex/changing world
- Leadership: communication, collaboration, building morale, understanding the demands of the larger environment, thinking in a fresh way about issues, strategizing, designing processes to achieve goals, obtaining resources, evaluating outcomes, and using any successes in furtherance of the next round of goals

Self-Knowledge—“the ability to understand self in the context of organizational challenges, interpersonal demands and individual motivation”

- Build on strengths
- Use others to shore up limitations

Strategic Vision—“the ability to connect broad social, economic, and political changes to the strategic direction of institutions and organizations”

- Learn the art of the environmental scan
- Be properly opportunistic

Interpersonal and Communication Effectiveness—“the ability to translate strategic vision into compelling and motivating messages”

- Connecting with people is at the heart of all effectiveness
- The leader has to stay on message for others to hear the message
- Link achievements to strategic plan

Risk Taking and Creativity—“the ability to transform self and organization by moving outside the traditional and patterned ways of success”

- If you only do what's been done before, you won't be able to address in the future the problems created in the past
- There is never just one way of doing things

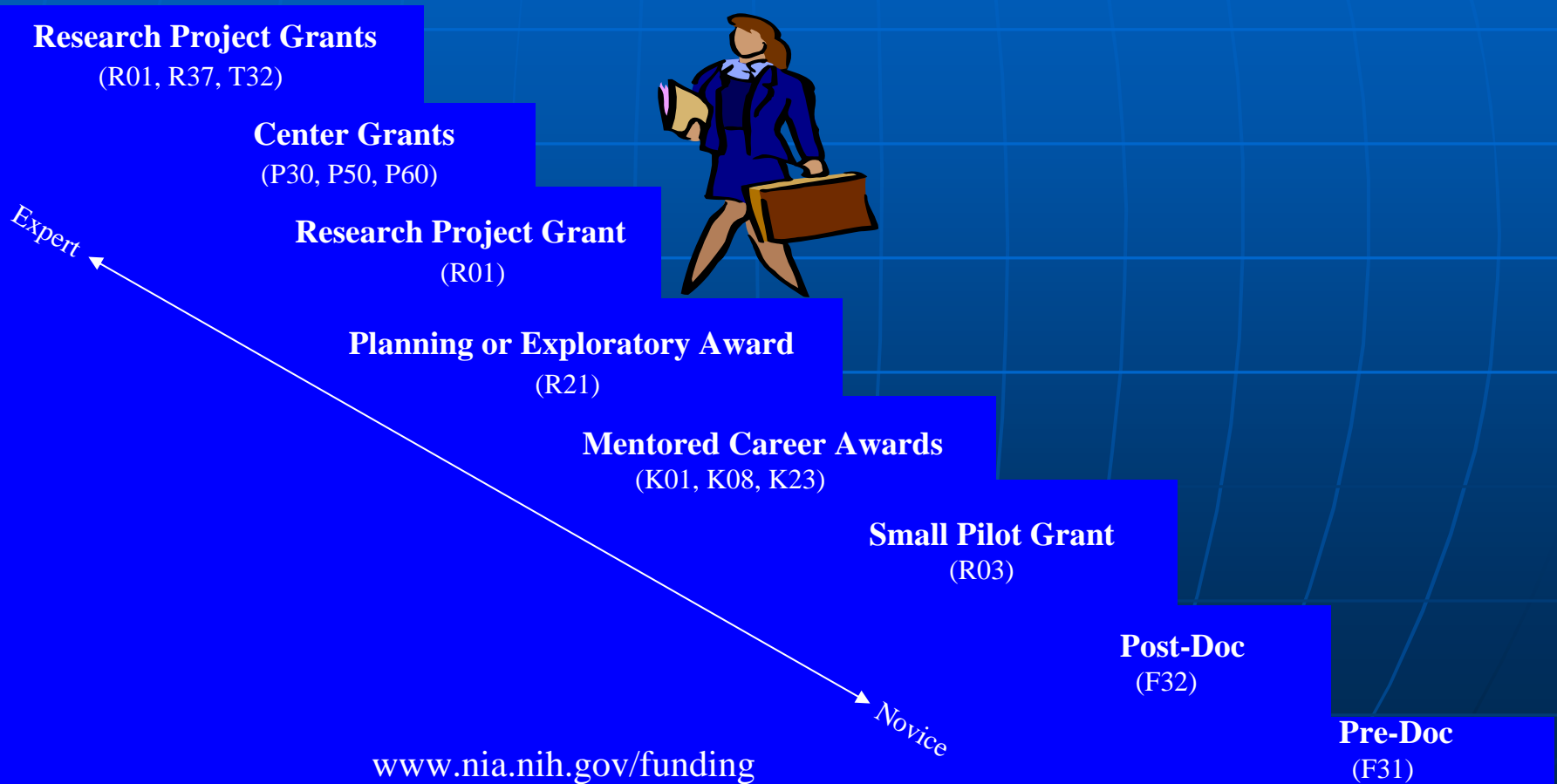
Inspiring and Leading Change—“the ability to create, structure, and effectively implement organizational change in a continuous manner”

- Inspiration won't lead to change without perspiration
- Incremental change doesn't mean the increments cannot get bigger over time

# What are the key transitions in a research career?

- Preparation
- Independent Contributions
- Program Development
- Development of Field
- “Wise Person” Stage

# National Institute on Aging Career Steps from Novice to Expert



# Stage I. PREPARATION

**Central Activity: Learning**

**Primary Relationship:**

**Student, Research and/or  
Teaching Assistant**

**Major Theme: Assimilating  
values, knowledge base,  
and inquiry skills important  
to a research career**

# PREPARATION

- Obtain formal education (undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral research training) and appropriate additional credentials
- Seek socialization experiences, including joining appropriate professional organizations and working as a research and/or teaching assistant

- Develop the habits of precision (e.g., time management, bookmarking internet sites, organizing files and lists of contacts)
- Observe/analyze the successful, and seek their mentoring

- Find workable strategies for personal stress management, so you can manage the “long run”
- Analyze strengths and limitations
- Seek “validating” outcomes, e.g., funding, refereed presentations and publications, honors

# Stage II. INDEPENDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

**Central Activity: Moving from fledgling to competence**

**Primary Relationship: Colleague**

**Major Theme: Dealing with the inevitable gap between ideals learned and the realities of work setting**

# INDEPENDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

- Build collegial network and research team
- Take full advantage of strengths, opportunities, and aspirations of home setting
- Learn to give and get criticism

- Join “discourse community” of field as a first (or sole) author and a peer reviewer
- Obtain needed resources, e.g., funding as a PI
- Learn to articulate the “meaning” of your work in a range of groups

# Stage III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

**Central Activity: Facilitating home institution**

**Primary Relationship: Mentor, Administrator, Supervisor, Teacher**

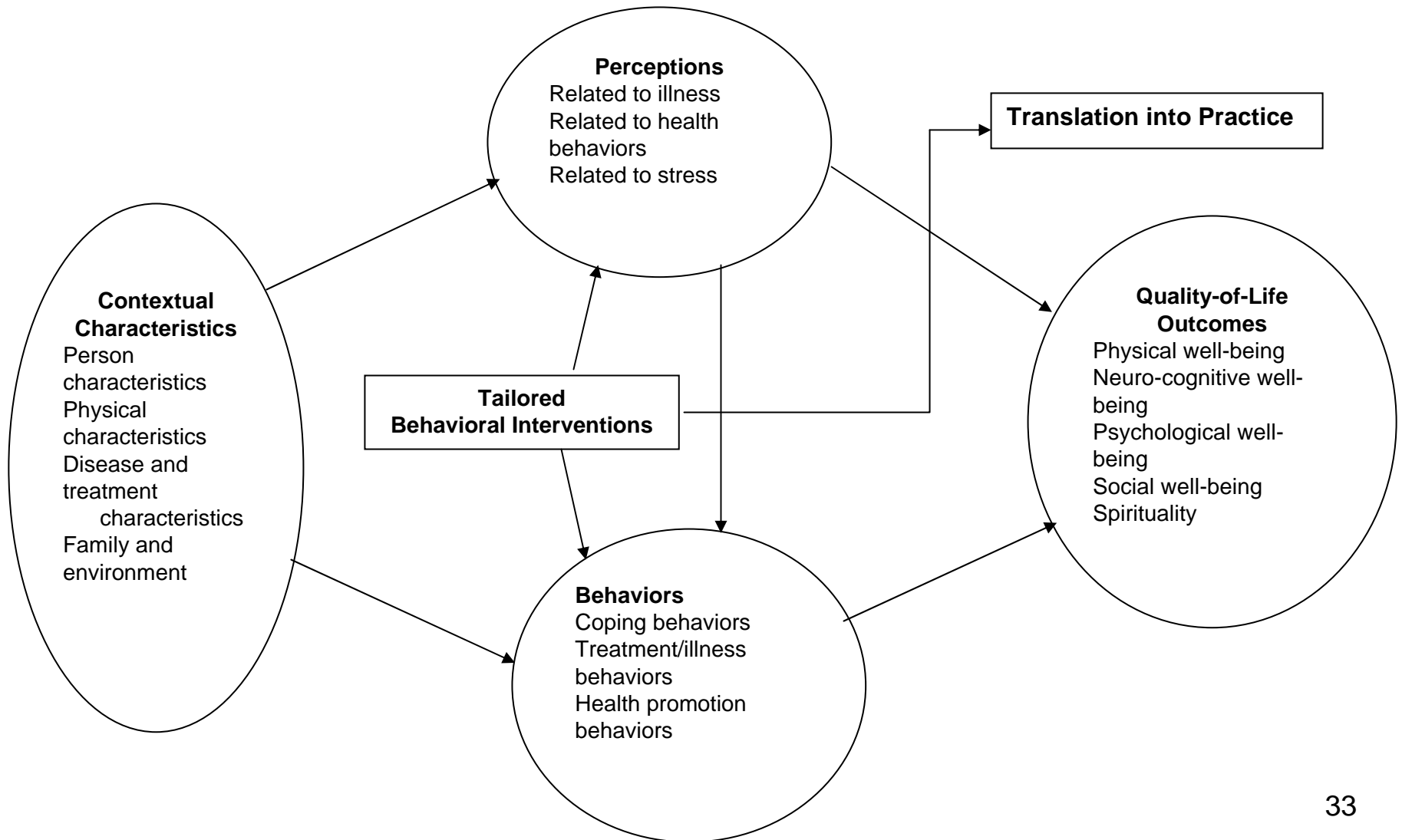
**Major Theme: Assuming responsibility for development of others and of setting**

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Nurture colleagues in earlier career stages
- Build home setting's infrastructure and resources
- Engage in strategic planning around research development of home institution

- Build program(s) on home setting's strengths
- Learn to juggle multiple grants
- Develop political savvy and a tolerance for ambiguity
- Expand purview of own work, e.g., establishing multi-site and/or multidisciplinary collaborations
- Build institutional image

IU Center for Enhancing Quality of Life in Chronic Illness: **Umbrella Conceptual Framework**



## Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Formal Links Between Nursing and Other Fields

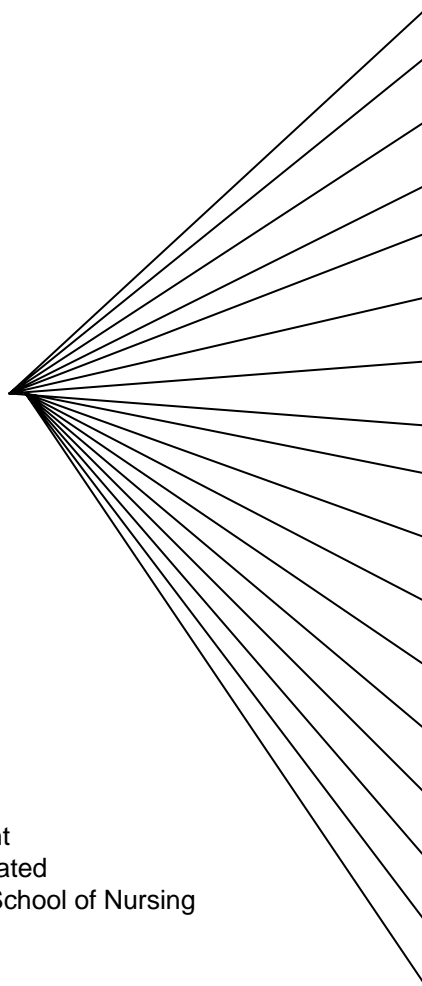
### CENTER FOR ENHANCING QOL IN CHRONIC ILLNESS

- Institutional Research Training Grant in Health Behavior Nursing
- Mary Margaret Walther Program in Oncology Care
- Behavioral Cooperative Oncology Group

\*= formal role/CEQL

\*\*= formal role on research training grant

+ = formal role on another research-related committee or project of School of Nursing



### Regenstrief Institute for Health Care

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Dr. Susan M. Perkins\*+

### Clarian Health Partners

Dr. Steven Ivy\*      Dr. Ora Pescovitz\*

### IU School of Medicine, Children's Health Services Research

Dr. Nancy Swigonski\*

# Stage IV. DEVELOPMENT OF FIELD

**Central Activity: Shaping  
profession and health care**

**Primary Relationship: Leader**

**Major Theme: Exercising power of  
authority and creating a vision  
for the future**

# DEVELOPMENT OF FIELD

- Serve as advisor to regional, national, and/or international efforts and organizations
- Build field's infrastructure/resources
- Work with other fields to achieve common goals, e.g., electronic health record

- Articulate research agenda of specialty or field
- Link research to policy formation
- Prepare successor generations
- Establish reputation/legacy, e.g., new programs within a professional association
- Build image of field

- Consider whether you will seek positions that go beyond the discipline specific, e.g., program officer, vice president for research
- Prepare for multidisciplinary leadership

# Stage V. “WISE PERSON” STAGE

**Central Activity: Continue to shape profession and health care**

**Primary Relationship: Advisor, Coach**

**Major Theme: Exercising power of authority when no longer constrained by institutional obligations**

# “WISE PERSON” STAGE

- Serve as a consultant to regional, national, and/or international efforts and organizations
- Speak and write **provocatively** about issues of the day, and how issues of the day are embedded in history of field and of health care

- Function as a wise, affirming (wo)man, e.g., recommending colleagues for honors/special experiences
- Take on special projects that require synthesizing skills and high-level integrative abilities
- Coach the next generation of leaders

# What can be done to sustain career optimism?

- Cultivate “hardiness”
- Monitor cognitive constructions
- Build on strengths
- Associate with optimistic people
- Learn the art of reframing
- See self as an executive property deserving to be well maintained

# Cultivate “hardiness”:

- COMMIT to important professional goals
- Act as if you can CONTROL your destiny in key respects
- Recognize that CHANGE is not inherently negative
- Stay connected to COMMUNITY

# Monitor cognitive constructions:

- Overgeneralizing failure
- Not owning success
- Discounting positive
- Ignoring neutral

- Ruminating on the negative
- Obsessing about global problems (think globally but act locally)
- Holding on to irrational beliefs, e.g., you can do it all or be loved by all

# Build on strengths:

- Education/socialization
- Special talents
- Life experiences
- Network of colleagues
- Strengths of home setting

# Associate with optimistic people:

- Seek out successful/positive colleagues
- Celebrate marker events
- Join professional organizations
- Honor achievements of colleagues/field

# Learn the art of reframing:

- “I’m so grown up that I cannot tell the difference between failure and life experience”
- “Remember that insoluble problems are just opportunities masquerading in disguise”

- “The bright know what the ideal might look like, so it is not surprising that they regularly feel inadequate in the current situation”
- “A *no* can be helpful in the next round of negotiations”

# See self as executive property deserving to be well maintained:

- Attend to basics—nutrition, exercise, sleep, relaxation, stress management
- Cultivate body listening
- Obtain needed support services
- Plan for financial future

# CAREER

Career . . .

Résumé lines,

But more than a long list.

What's core is the sum total of  
Meaning.

Mentored,

Then mentoring.

The challenge is to give

Away self as you build substance

In place.