

# TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of placing clients into job roles. It has become an intricate art of helping clients navigate workplace complexities and interweaving that closely with an individual's beliefs, values and principles. As a career practitioner, you are tasked with the all-important role of helping one find meaning and fulfilment in their career. You are instrumental in their search for a purpose-driven life; for their **TRUE NORTH**.

## WHAT'S INSIDE



### FROM THE CASE CHEST

Persisting Through  
Financial Stress  
And Anxiety



### MAIN ARTICLE

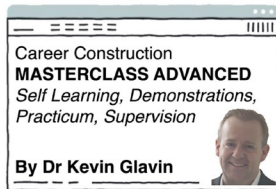
Basic Psychological Need  
Satisfaction, Autonomous  
Motivation, and Meaningful  
Work: A Self-Determination  
Theory Perspective



### A LOOK BACK @ 2022

Strengthening  
Knowledge Through  
Professional  
Development

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30 Jan 2023

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Andrea Fruhling



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30 Jan 2023

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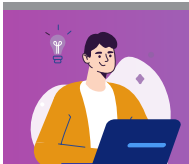
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Conducted by



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**Feb Intake:** 27 Feb 2023  
(Application closes: 17 Jan 2023)

**Mar Intake:** 13 Mar 2023  
(Application closes: 31 Jan 2023)

**May Intake:** 2 May & 15 May 2023  
(Application closes: 3 Apr & 7 Apr 2023)

**Jun Intake:** 12 Jun 2023  
(Application closes: 1 May 2023)

### Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)

**May Intake:** 3 May - 27 Jun 2023  
(Application closes: 3 Apr 2023)

**Jun Intake:** 22 May – 18 Jul 2023  
(Application closes: 10 Apr 2023)

### Career Supervision Programme Assessment Pathway (CSP AOP)

**Mar Intake:** 27 Feb 2023  
(Application closes: 9 Jan 2023)

## COURSE FEE NOTICE

In view of the 8% GST effective from 1 Jan 2023, WSG will be absorbing the increase of GST (1%) for 2023. The breakdown of the course fees (inclusive of GST) will be available on the website.



## FROM THE CASE CHEST

# PERSISTING THROUGH FINANCIAL STRESS AND ANXIETY



### Background

Having lost her job as an Administrative cum Account Assistant of more than 5 years due to the business being affected by COVID, Rose (not her real name) ended up working as a part time retail assistant with no fixed working hours.

Rose was under financial pressure to pay off her debt owed to her aunt and medical bills arising from her asthma. Hence full-time employment with regular income was important to her. However, despite her best efforts, Rose struggled to secure a full-time job. As a result, she became discouraged and unmotivated, and at times emotional when communicating with others.

Rose was eventually referred to Workforce Singapore for assistance and met up with Career Coach Badariah.

### Intervention

To better analyse Rose's situation, Badariah applied Schlossberg 4S Transition Model in her case conceptualisation.

- Situation – The biggest issues Rose faced were with finding a full-time employment and managing the tension with her aunt. Securing a job could help alleviate her anxiety and pressure from her aunt.

- Self – The longer Rose took to secure a job, the more her pressure built and the tension between her aunt and herself grew.

- Support – Rose was single and had little family support. Her relationship with her aunt, whom Rose is staying with, was also quite strained due to the prolonged debt repayment.

With help from Badariah, Rose made a list of her competencies and experiences to better understand her knowledge, skills and attributes.

During the career coaching sessions, Badariah noticed that Rose is blunt in her communications possibility due to her frustration of the job search situation. Badariah highlighted this to Rose and together, they discussed ways to improve Rose's communication skills. Badariah also used role-play to help Rose improve her people relationship management skills and prepare for job interviews.

Badariah noticed that Rose relied heavily on job portals for her job search and introduced her to other job search strategies such as reaching out to her network and attending career fairs. They also worked on Rose's resume to better showcase on her capabilities and achievements instead of her current version which focused only on work experiences.

### Outcome

With her newfound motivation, better clarity and expanded job search strategies, Rose was able to secure a full-time job with a local company as an Administrative Officer. Rose has settled well in her new role and now has a more positive outlook on life.



Contributed by  
**Badariah Bte Amil**  
Career Coach  
Workforce Singapore  
WSG CDF Certified Career  
Practitioner

### FURTHER READINGS:

[Ways to Help Your Clients Cope with Stress & Anxiety](#)

[Career Grit - Structured Job Search Guide](#)

[5 Ways to Find Jobs Without Using a Job Board](#)



## MAIN ARTICLE

# BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED SATISFACTION, AUTONOMOUS MOTIVATION, AND MEANINGFUL WORK: A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY PERSPECTIVE

*This article was extracted from the Journal of Career Assessment, Volume 30. It is accessible to all WSG CDF Credential Holders. Read more about the credentialing benefits here: <https://go.gov.sg/cdf-credential>*



Meaningful work is an important element of what constitutes a meaningful life. Identifying what facilitates meaningful work is essential to understanding the full scope of well-being both in work and other domains of a person's life. Despite the positive outcomes of meaningful work, other than extant literature's identification of the three basic psychological needs outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2002)—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—as strong predictors of meaningful work; no existing studies have examined the intermediate variables that may play a role in the link from these basic needs to meaningful work.

### Establishing predictors of meaningful work has these possible benefits:

- 1) it may inform counselling interventions help people derive greater meaning from their work,
- 2) it may inform organisational policies to create workplace environments that promote meaningful work, and
- 3) it may inform local and national labour policies aimed at making meaningful employment accessible for a greater number of workers.

### Meaningful Work

Current study defines meaningful work as a person's subjective perception that their work allows them to contribute to the greater good, facilitates personal growth, and holds significance (Steger et al., 2012). Previous scholars have identified a host of sources and outcomes. Lips-Wiersma and Morris proposed four sources of meaningful work and proposed that meaningful work experiences involve understanding and addressing the need to fulfil these dimensions of needs. Rosso et al. conceptualised seven mechanisms that facilitated the perception of work as meaningful: authenticity, self-efficacy, self-esteem, purpose, belongingness, transcendence, and cultural and interpersonal sensemaking.

### Theoretical Background

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002) is a macro-level theory of human motivation which proposes three basic psychological needs that are essential for autonomous, self-directed behaviour. Specifically, it conceptualises autonomy, competence, and relatedness as vital aspects of a person's ongoing external and internal regulation of behaviour, psychological growth, and the overall ability to obtain a sense of well-being.

The need for autonomy signifies a person's need to act with a sense of ownership and feeling of psychological freedom. The need for competence refers to a person developing new skills and pursuing mastery over their environment. The need for relatedness refers to feeling cared for, connected, and safe around others within one's community. The satisfaction of these three needs predicts the extent to which a person's behaviours are driven by autonomous forms of motivation and, in turn, their level of well-being.



## Meaningful Work and Self-Determination Theory

**Need satisfaction and work meaning** - previous studies have provided correlational support with significant and positive associations between the two variables. In a study examining basic needs as a moderating variable in the relation from social class to work meaning, results suggested that people who desired meaningful work only experienced it when their basic psychological needs were met, implying that need satisfaction as a critical component of attaining meaningful work.

**Need satisfaction and motivation** - Despite theoretical assertions that basic need satisfaction leads to autonomous motivation, empirical research on this relationship is still emerging. De Cooman et al. (2013) found that workers who reported greater need satisfaction also reported more autonomous motivation. Van den Broeck and colleagues also found that need satisfaction was predictive of more autonomous (e.g., intrinsic, integrated, and identified motivation) forms of motivation, but not of more controlled forms of motivation (e.g., introjected and external regulation).



**Motivation and work meaning** – Broadly, research has shown that autonomous motivation leads to positive outcomes like greater engagement, higher energy levels, positive affect, and general psychological well-being. On the other hand, controlled motivation tends to correlate with psychological distress and lower levels of engagement (Trépanier et al., 2015). Research explicitly examining the relation from motivation to meaningful work is more limited but points to similar findings.

## Present Study

This study aims to explore relations between need satisfaction, motivation, and meaningful work, using a model based on Deci et al.'s (2017) theoretical assertions that satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness, and competence needs predicts greater well-being (operationalised here as meaningful work) via autonomous motivation.

## Results

Overall, the results provided mixed support for the hypotheses and prompted further study of the complex relations between the satisfaction of SDT's three basic psychological needs, work motivation, and work meaning.

The first hypothesis, that autonomy, relatedness, and competence needs would directly predict intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, was mostly supported. Out of the three psychological needs, only competence did not directly affect work motivation, contradicting previous literature on the relations between satisfaction of three basic psychological needs and autonomous forms of motivation.

Competence did function as a direct predictor of meaningful work, partially supporting the second hypothesis. Autonomy and relatedness need satisfaction failed to directly predict meaningful work, but this is not surprising given that they were found to have significant indirect predictors, with mediation analyses suggesting incremental validity of autonomous motivation in these links, supporting the third and fourth hypotheses.

These findings align with extant literature on relationships between need satisfaction and meaningfulness. The three SDT needs have been found to each independently contribute to the perception of meaning in life, even after controlling for the effects of the others (Martela et al., 2018). Steger et al. (2012) found psychological need satisfaction to be correlated with meaningful work, and Kim and Allan (2019) found that autonomy and competence significantly predicted meaningful work in a sample of underemployed workers.

Together, the direct and indirect paths in our hypothesised model explained a substantial portion of the variance in meaningful work. Overall, results suggest that meeting basic psychological needs and increasing one's sense that their behaviour is directed by their values, goals, and inherent pleasure are essential building blocks for experiencing meaningful work.

## Conclusion

In summary, autonomy and relatedness need satisfaction directly predicts autonomous motivation. Competence need satisfaction directly predicted work meaning. Mediation analyses suggested incremental validity of autonomous motivation in the relations between autonomy, relatedness, and work meaning.

### Food for Thought

How can career practitioners in Singapore help clients better discover their psychological need and motivation?  
And what constitute to a meaningful work to them?

**Source:** Autin, K. L., Herdt, M. E., Garcia, R. G., & Ezema, G. N. (2021). Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, Autonomous Motivation, and Meaningful Work: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 106907272110186.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211018647>

## Further Readings



Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, Autonomous Motivation, and Meaningful Work: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective



What Is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) & Why Does It Matter?



Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET)



## A LOOK BACK @ 2022

### Strengthening Knowledge Through Professional Development

Together with the association and service providers – People & Career Development Associations (PCDA), Abundanz Consulting, Avodah People Solutions and Distinctions Asia, WSG has brought a total of 5 masterclasses to the career development community in 2022.

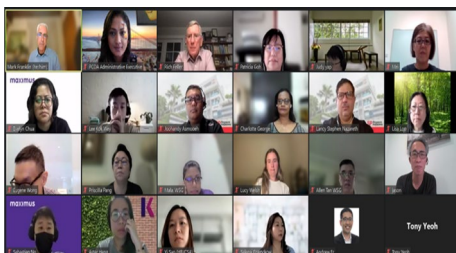
- Who You Are Matters! - **Dr Rich Feller and Dr Mark Franklin**
- Certification in Hope-Action Theory & Practice – **Dr Norman Amundson, Andrea Fruhling and Dr Spencer Niles**
- Solution-Focused Coach Essentials Course (Module 1) - “The Spirit of Coaching” - **Brigit Elisabeth Eichenberger**
- Workplace Big 5 Profile™ Certification (Run 1 & 2) - **Tan WeiXi and Tham CP**

The masterclass by both local and international trainers saw the participation of almost 100 career practitioners from both the private and public sectors.

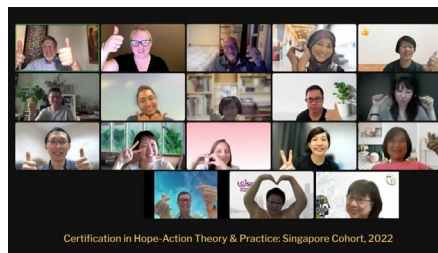


Look out for more Continuing Professional Development events in 2023.

Be sure to join our mailing list to be notified: <https://go.gov.sg/cdf-mailing-list>



“Who You Are Matters” Masterclass in Jul 2022



“Certification in Hope-Action Theory and Practice” Masterclass in Nov 2022



“Workplace Big 5 Profile Certification” Masterclass in Jul 2022



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