

Explore



Decide



Camper Van Career Choice

A Self-help Tool

Introduction

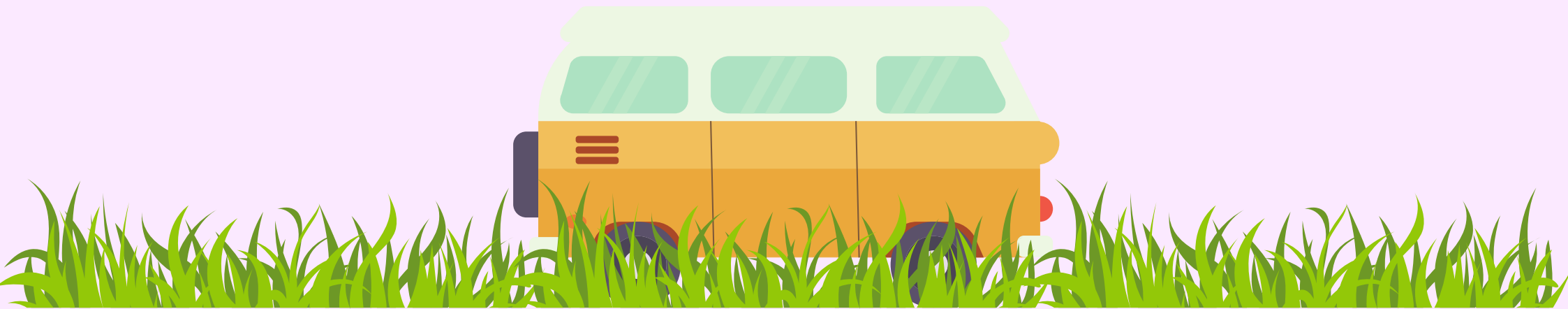
It is easy to get fixated on choosing the career that you will do. We can worry: 'should I know by now what career I want to do?' We may even be asked by our families 'Why have you not chosen your career yet?' These expectations can be stressful and energy sapping. We may even feel a general sense of anxiety about the whole 'careers thing'. Ironically the pressure of choosing a career can make it harder to focus your thinking effectively about careers!

This tool provides a simple but effective safety valve to take some of the heat out of the situation and take the pressure off you.

It asks you to pick a career as a temporary choice.

It is based on the fact that career decisions come in different shapes and sizes. There are the big decisions when we pick the career we want to stick with long term. Then there are the smaller decisions that we make along the way. Understanding the differences can help us to manage the process more effectively.

We can think of the difference between a temporary career decision and a permanent one as being like the difference between having a camper-van and a house. Your house is fixed in one place. But a camper-van can move around. You can park your camper-van where you like and stay in that area for as long as you want. Who knows - you may even decide to settle down in that area long term.



This tool is designed to...

- Help you make a temporary career decision.
- Provide a way to explore a career idea for a while and see how it feels.
- Reduce the pressure and stress that comes from not having chosen a career.

Consider using this tool if you...

- Feel that the anxiety of choosing a career is stopping you from finding out about careers.
- Find yourself going around in circles with several career ideas and not getting anywhere.
- Need to feel that you have chosen a career, even though you are not sure which is best.

How to use this tool:

1 First, note down the career ideas that appeal to you.

Keep the list focused on career ideas that most appeal to you, these are just the ones you are actively considering but cannot choose between. Please do not brainstorm a long list.

2 Second, select one where you want to 'park' your camper-van.

There are many ways you can pick one career idea, and for this approach to work it does not really matter how you do it. However, one approach that is especially suitable is the Diamond 9 Self-help Tool.

The key is that you are not trying to make a firm or final career choice. So, there is no need to do a complex list of pros and cons. These can be useful, but are not needed on this occasion. The important thing is to pick one that you are interested in. It is 100% up to you which one you pick. It will probably be the one you most like the sound of. But it could potentially be another option that you would like to check out in more depth.



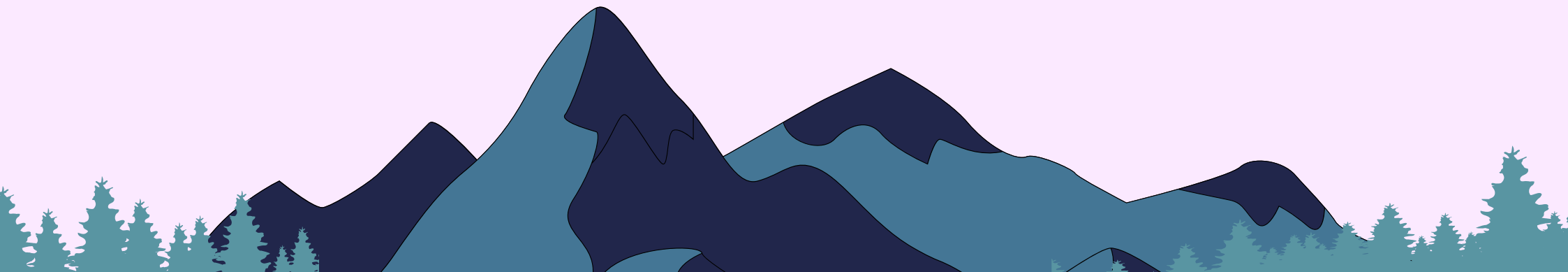


Third, explore the area where you have parked your camper-van for a while.

You can now tell yourself that you have made ‘a (temporary) career choice’. Congratulations! The pressure is off. That gives you breathing space.

Now that you have arrived, your task is simple. Live with your new temporary choice for a while. We would suggest a month. Use that time to explore the occupational area and find out more about that career.

You do not have to go over the top, but you should aim to deepen your insight and engagement with your career choice over that period of time. The following page shows some suggestions - how much you do will depend on your situation and motivation.



- Is there a workshop or employer presentation at the Careers Service that you can attend, or maybe a webinar you can watch?
- Is there a podcast or video you can find about the career?
- Which companies offer relevant employment opportunities? Perhaps an organisation is running an insight day that you could attend?
- Can you find a news article or careers report on a relevant sector?
- Try to talk about your career choice with friends or family. Talking will help you process your ideas and reactions. You can explain that you have made a temporary career choice and that you are wanting to test it out. What do they think of the choice?
- If you are super keen, you might do a bit of volunteering, spend a day work-shadowing, or undertake an Informational Interview.

The point is to find out things about that career. You can ignore all the other options for now and focus on this one.



Pause, Reflect, Act.

- At the end of the month, see how things have landed.
- What have you learnt?
- How does the career choice feel now?
- Does it fit you like a glove, or does it feel more uncomfortable than when you started?
- Do you want to stick with your temporary career decision for a bit longer, or do you want to park your camper-van somewhere different?
- What can you learn from this?
- What do you want to do now practically to take forward the insights from this exercise?
- Who could help you with this?
- Which other Self-help Tools would you like to look at next?

NB: Because everyone is different, this tool may not work for you, so please also look at our other Self-help Tools.

If this exercise has been uncomfortable to complete, or has simply raised issues you wish to consider further, you are welcome to talk through your feelings with a member of the Careers and Employability Service in a confidential setting by booking a careers appointment via the CES website, or by using the Wellbeing Services.

References and Resources

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking Fast and Slow. (1st ed.). Allen Lane.

Prospects.ac.uk provides the widest range of graduate career profile and information on different job sectors.

Target Jobs provides a wide range of graduate careers information.

Dave Stanbury, Feb, 2023



If you are a member of staff from another educational organisation and want to use a limited number of our Self-help Tools with your students, we would love to hear from you and share good practice. We would ask that you retain references to University of Huddersfield as a matter of courtesy and acknowledge the other sources we have used. Thank you.