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## Career Development Facilitator (CDF) Glossary

**Active Listening** – A technique that involves not only listening to the words someone uses but also taking into account their tone of voice, their body language, and other non-verbal signs in order to gain a fuller understanding of what they are actually communicating.

**Assess** – The suggested first phase in the “Career Planning Process” in which job seekers gain a better understanding of their work interests and preferred work environment as well as discover possible VA job matches in the My Career Fit Tool. With this information, individuals can then begin their research on those job matches in the VA Career Guides. These job matches can also be used to customize a career path in the “My Career Mapping Tool,” which helps individuals reach their career goals.

**Attending** – Behavior that demonstrates you are listening to someone and making them feel heard and cared for.

**Behavioral Indicators** – The skills and abilities individuals need to demonstrate in order to be considered proficient in a competency.

**Career** – The general course or progression of an individual’s working life or professional achievements.

**Career Development** – The progression of jobs throughout an individual’s career, including movement within the same or across fields and taking steps to advance toward an established goal.

**Career Development Barrier** – Any employment policy, procedure, practice, or condition, or facet thereof, that limits or tends to limit employment opportunities for members of a particular group. Barriers can be institutional, individual, or physical.

**Career Development Facilitator** – CDFs serve as a partner to provide you with personalized support and guidance to help you achieve your career goals.

**Career Maturity** – The degree to which an individual is able to manage tasks focused on professional development. In the 1950s, Donald Super proposed that career development was a function of an individual’s level of career maturity.

**Career Planning** – A career management process that includes determining career goals, understanding personal and professional interests, exploring job options, and identifying training and developmental opportunities. VA’s “Career Planning Process” includes four phases: “Assess,” “Explore,” “Plan,” and “Take Action.”

**Coaching** – The CDF function of providing the opportunity for employees to engage in meaningful career conversations with professional career counselors, coaches, mentors, supervisors, and managers.

**Coalition** – An alliance of individuals working together towards a common purpose. The premise behind a coalition is that individuals are more powerful as a group than working alone.

**Community of Practice** – A group of individuals who share a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

**Competencies** – The knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics individuals need to do their jobs well and advance their careers to the next level. Competencies can be observed and measured. They form the basis of employee development efforts and also help individuals to think and talk about performance in a consistent way. VA has “All Employee,” “Leadership,” and “Technical” competencies.

**Competency Gap and Analysis** – The difference between competencies and knowledge areas needed to fulfill the duties of a target job opposed to the competencies and knowledge areas of an individual’s starting job. The gap can be high, medium, or low. The My Career Mapping Tool compares competencies and knowledge areas between a starting job and a target job for internal and external job seekers.

**Connecting** – The CDF function of opening doors to key resources within the organization and its community as well as those external to the organization.

**Cultural Competence** – The combination of knowledge, skills, and awareness pertaining to cultural differences that enable employees and leaders to work effectively cross-culturally.

**Diversity** – According to VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion, diversity includes “all that makes us unique: race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, culture, educational background, socioeconomic status, intellectual perspective, organizational level, and so much more.”

**Effective Responding** – Tactics that increase and clarify your understanding of an individual and make them feel heard and supported.

**Explore** – A suggested second phase in the “Career Planning Process” where internal and external job seekers can receive insight on VA jobs by identifying those opportunities in the My Career Fit Tool that are a great fit for their work interests and preferred work environment. Job seekers can also explore the My Career Mapping Tool to map a long-term career path at VA, both within and outside of their current occupational family.



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**Grade** – Refers to the federal system used to determine the pay scale of a position under the General Schedule (GS) pay schedule or one of the other pay plans used by VA, such as the Federal Wage System (WG, WL and WS), Administratively Determined Rates (AD), and unique pay plans for medical positions (e.g., VN for VA nurses).

**Helping Relationship** – A relationship in which two or more people work toward finding a solution to a problem or set of problems. The core elements of a helping relationship are acceptance and respect; understanding and empathy; trust; warmth and genuineness.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP)** – An individually tailored action plan to develop specific competencies and knowledge areas needed to improve performance in a current job or to prepare for new responsibilities. An IDP is a useful tool that guides development through formal training, education or certification from a college or university, on-the-job experiences, or coaching and mentoring.

**Informing** – The CDF function of letting people in the organization know what a career system is and what it can do for them.

**Job Rotation** – A temporary, developmental opportunity for an employee to perform the major duties of another position. A job rotation can occur within, or outside of an employee's occupational family, duty station, or career level.

**Job Series** – A group of jobs in an occupational family that is similar in terms of qualification requirements and line of work.

**Knowledge Areas** – The knowledge individuals need to do their job well and advance their careers to the next level. Knowledge areas (along with competencies) form the basis of employee development efforts and also help individuals to think and talk about performance in a consistent way.

**Mentoring** – The CDF function of providing access to voluntary relationships to integrate individuals into various career situations, and helping them to connect, grow, and access resources.

**My Career Mapping Tool** – A dynamic online tool that identifies long-term career path options based on an individual's "starting job" or current occupation. Career path options, both within an individual's current occupational family or across different occupational families, will be provided. Once a path is chosen, the My Career Mapping Tool compares the skills and experiences needed to reach the target job from the starting job. Individuals can also select any job in a career path to learn about job competencies and knowledge areas, required education, and job vacancies.

**MyCareer@VA Super User** – A VA employee who is passionate about career development and hosts events (such as meetings, orientations, lunch and learns, trainings, etc.) to share MyCareer@VA resources and functions with other employees.



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**Needs-Based Career Development** – The theory developed by Abraham Maslow in the 1940s that noted motivation is based on progressing through a hierarchy of needs:

- Psychological Needs
- Safety Needs
- Social Needs
- Esteem Needs
- Self-Actualization

Once basic needs are met (psychological and safety), individuals can really start to develop at work, eventually reaching self-actualization.

**Occupational Family** – A group of jobs that are related by functions and have similar knowledge and skill requirements. Examples of occupational families within VA include Human Resources (HR), Nursing, Social Work, and Information Technology.

**Personal Mastery** – A VA All-Employee Competency that helps employees assume responsibility for personal well-being and career goals, demonstrate self-awareness, actively seek feedback from others and take action to improve performance, effectiveness, and resilience, and engage in continuous learning while balancing competing priorities and demands.

**Plan** – The suggested third phase in the “Career Planning Process” in which individuals plan the steps needed to reach their career goals. The “Plan” phase identifies the skills required for a target job and recommends the types of learning and development resources needed to improve those skills.

**Proficiency Level** – An individual’s level of ability to perform a competency. VA’s All Employee competencies have five proficiency levels: 1–Novice, 2–Foundational, 3 – Intermediate, 4 – Advanced, 5 – Expert.

**Psychological Career Development Theory** – A theory developed in the 1960s by John Holland that one’s personality type influences their career choice.

**Rapport** – A relationship that consists of mutual trust or emotional affinity.

**Referring** – The process of connecting employees to career development tools and resources.

**Sociological Career Development Theory** – A theory developed by Albert Bandura in the 1980s that motivation for career development is derived from the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute actions required for development.

**SOLER** – An acronym to help CDFs themselves physically towards another person. SOLER stands for:

- Sit squarely



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- Open posture
- Lean in
- Eye contact
- Relaxed

**Strengths** – Specific areas in which an individual excels or activities at which they are particularly good.

**SMART Method** – A method for writing clear and manageable short- and long-term career development goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound.

**Take Action** – A suggested final phase in the “Career Planning Process” in which internal and external job seekers can use the available resources and guidance to develop the knowledge, skills, and experience identified in the “Plan” phase of the process. Individuals can put their Individual Development Plan (IDP) into action to begin achieving their career goals.

**Training** – The CDF function of assisting employees developing competencies, identifying and clarifying their goals, values and interests through career training designs and meaningful dialogue facilitation.

**Trait-Based Career Development** – The theory developed by Frank Parsons in the early 1900s that individuals have unique characteristics and are most satisfied when there is a good match between those characteristics and the characteristics of their jobs.

**Work Environment** – The environment individuals like to work in, such as inside or outside, in a competitive or supportive environment, or in an environment with little or a lot of time pressure.

**Work Interests** – Work activities that interest individuals, such as interacting with people, thinking up new ideas, or working with their hands. Exploring and experiencing different types of work can help individuals understand the specific roles and opportunities that interest them most.

**Veterans Affairs Talent Management System (VA TMS)** – A state-of-the-art online training and employee development system that allows employees to search and register for training courses, build Individual Development Plans (IDPs) (coming soon), explore career paths, and track their professional development through a single, integrated database. The TMS serves as the official system of record for all training and development activities of VA employees. TMS is an upgrade to the Learning Management System (LMS) and offers improvements to features and functionality.