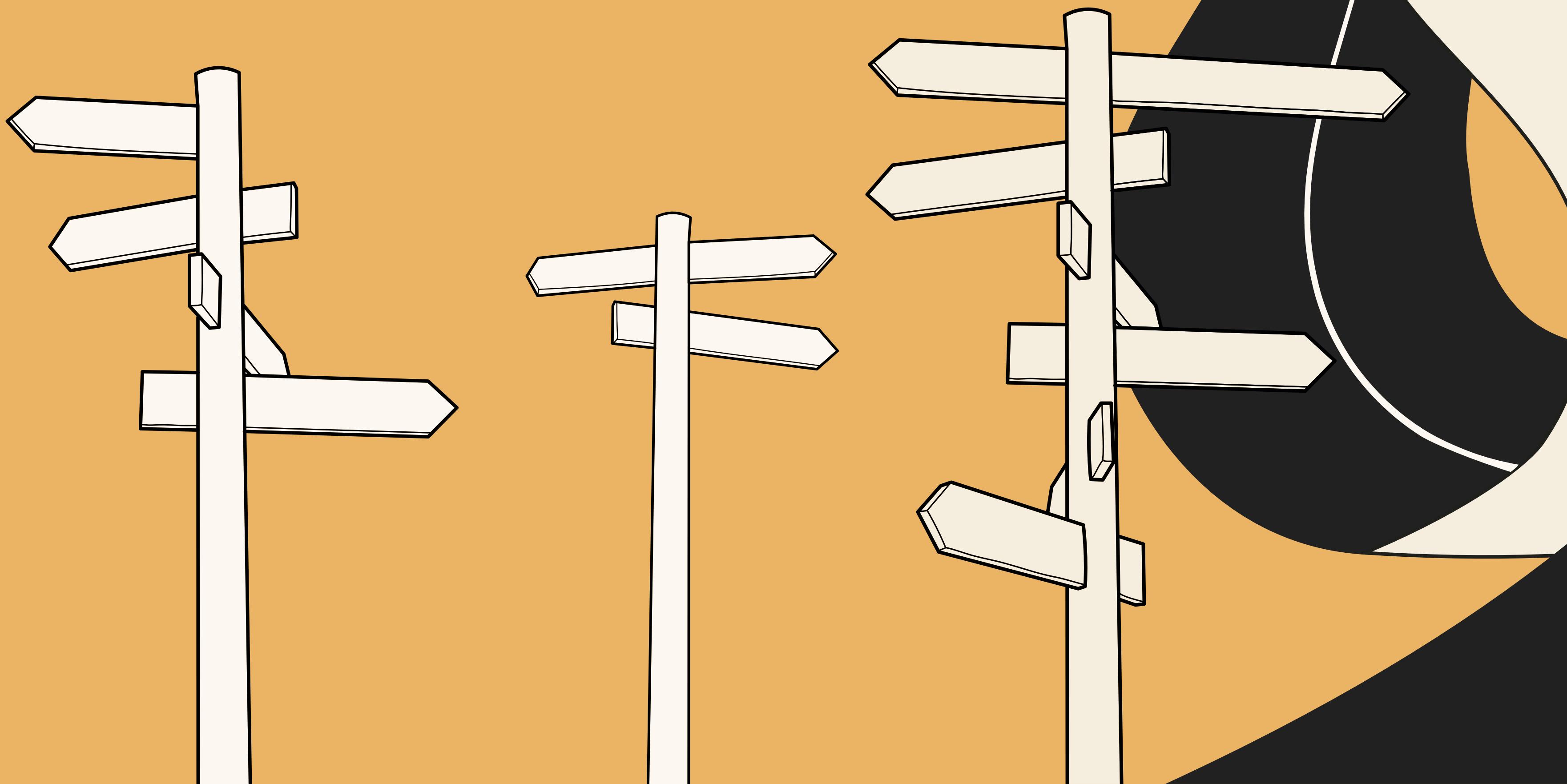


# Career Management Skills

Proposal for a National Framework



# National Framework for Career Management Skills

## What?

The National Framework for Career Management Skills describes what career management skills are, how they are learned and in which life situations these skills are particularly important. It describes for the first time the key content of career management skills at national level in Finland.

## Why?

The National Framework contributes to establishing a common understanding of career management skills among **guidance specialists**, **guidance service providers** and **guidance developers**. The framework supports the Strategy for Lifelong Guidance's objective of providing everyone with opportunities and skills to make informed plans and decisions concerning their education and work career in the ever-evolving world of work.

## When?

The project to promote career management skills put together a working group to help define career management skills at national level. The working group was active from May to October 2023 and it involved a diverse group of experts representing various organisations and professions. In addition, key cooperation networks, including the ELO Forum for Lifelong Guidance and its working group, commented on the intermediate results of the project.



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# Background

The development of the National Framework is based on a report outlining career management skills and the “New DOTS” model developed by Bill Law. The model sees the individual and their decisions in the broader context of a social world. The objectives set in the model are:

- 1) Self-awareness (S), 2) Opportunity awareness (O),  
3) Decision learning (D), 4) Transition learning (T).

The knowledge-deepening learning process described in the model consists of four stages: sensing, sifting, focusing and understanding what is being learned.

(Law 1999, Vuorinen & al. 2023).

## Information and sources

- Definition of lifelong guidance (Council of the European Union, 2004)
- Principles of lifelong guidance (ELGPN, 2015)
- Report outlining career management skills and perspectives for further development (Vuorinen & al. 2023)
- Strategy for Lifelong Guidance 2020–2023
- Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018)

## Where and how can the National Framework be implemented?

The National Framework for Career Management Skills can be utilised for example in the following contexts:

- 1 In different guidance situations, taking into account the age and life situation of the individual
- 2 In the provision of employment and guidance services and in defining service quality and policies
- 3 In the development of curricula and qualification requirements and the implementation of transversal competence requirements
- 4 In basic and further training for guidance specialists
- 5 In the criteria for good guidance and the description of guidance skills.

The National Framework has been prepared in general terms, and its key contents may be adjusted to each service and situation as necessary. The National Framework provides the freedom to define the key learning objectives, learning methods and individual progress evaluation process to suit each service and situation.

# What are career management skills?

Career management skills mean knowledge, skills and attitudes that help individuals of all ages and at different life stages to improve their ability to plan their training and work career paths. These knowledge, skills and attitudes are related not only to planning one's studies and career, but also to personal growth.

(ELGPN, 2015).

## The principles

behind the National Framework for Career Management Skills:

### 1. Career management skills are learnable

Career management skills can be learned and taught. Anyone can develop their career management skills, and everyone benefits from developing them.

### 2. Active involvement of individuals

Acting involves the idea of control over one's life, the experience of inclusion and influence.

### 3. Career management is life management

Career management does not only concern work or study – it concerns one's entire life.

### 4. Structures influence career management

The structures of society and the operating environment influence the way individuals perceive their ability to plan and manage their lives on their own terms.

### 5. Career management is an interactive process

Career management starts with the individual but develops through interaction with other people, networks, and society. For example, there is a dialogue between an individual's values and strengths and their educational and work opportunities.

### 6. Career management skills are needed throughout life

Career management is useful at all stages of life. Career management is also a simultaneous existence of three temporal perspectives: where do I come from, where am I now and where am I going?

# Situations in which career management skills are of particular importance

Although an individual can benefit from career management skills in all life situations, their importance is highlighted in certain contexts. Here are some examples of such situations. These situations are often associated with different transitions and changes in life.

## In working life

- When considering retraining
- On layoff or in the event of redundancy
- If one's working capacity is impaired or it affects one's work
- When planning a change of workplace
- Close to retirement
- In pursuit of career progression

## As a student and a learner

- When completing a qualification
- In further education
- In primary and upper secondary school
- In adult basic education
- When considering dropping out
- As an international student
- When considering further studies

## Outside working life

- As a job-seeker
- As a rehabilitee
- When made redundant
- On retirement
- On childcare or parent leave
- When integrating in society
- When incapacitated for work
- In need of multidisciplinary support
- When reflecting on one's relationship with working life

## As an entrepreneur

- When considering entrepreneurship
- When developing as an entrepreneur
- As an involuntary entrepreneur
- When planning to give up entrepreneurship
- When planning a change in business activities

It is not possible to compile a comprehensive list of all transitional points in life. Many transitions can take place at any point of an individual's life.

Different life situations are usually not isolated but often occur simultaneously. For example, an individual can be an entrepreneur and employed or a student and unemployed at the same time.

With regard to career management skills, significant life situations that are not an unequivocal part of the sphere of working life, unemployment, studies or entrepreneurship include also:

- when moving to Finland or abroad
- in military or alternative civilian service
- in platform work
- when discontinuing their studies
- during a gap year
- when working on fixed-term contracts
- when considering the development of their competence

# Career management skills

The graph on the right lists career management skills, i.e. competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes, that are particularly useful when planning one's education and work career path and executing these plans. The skills are stressed in different ways in different life situations and contexts, and it is not necessary to master everything. The objective of career management is to identify the building blocks of one's own career and life and develop the skills needed to achieve rewarding results.

Some of the skills are related to a person's ability to define themselves **as an individual**. These skills have been listed at the top of the figure. They have been divided into three themes: self-awareness, personal competence and visualising and planning for the future. The development of these skills makes an individual's positive self-image stronger.

Career management takes place in interaction with other people. In addition, individuals reflect their situation against the opportunities society offers. Understanding the many ways an individual can engage with their **communities and society** is part of career management. These skills have been listed in the bottom part of the figure.

## Who am I as an individual?

### Self-knowledge

Personal life story  
Resources and working capacity  
Feelings and working methods  
Values  
Motivational factors  
Interests  
Attitude to work and study

### Building a competence identity

Competence and strengths  
Application of skills  
Areas for development  
Idea of self as a learner  
Learning of new skills

### Future and personal capacity for change

Dreams  
Problem-solving skills  
Creativity  
Decision-making skills  
Goals  
Preparedness  
Resilience  
Tolerance to uncertainty



### Knowledge of the operating environment

Opportunities and boundary conditions  
Labour market  
Education and studies  
Social structures  
Socio-economic factors

### Interaction and cooperation

Expressing one's competence  
Communication  
Social interactions in working life, learning and own networks  
Asking for and accepting help  
Public services  
Job-seeking skills

### Understanding the future of the operating environment

Alternative paths  
Social changes  
Global changes

## Who am I as part of my communities and society?

# Career management skills as a learning objective

Career management skills appear in a different light to different people. The image on the right shows examples of career management skills as learning objectives. These learning objectives are only examples, and the list does not include all possible situations. The learning objectives support the application of the National Framework for Career Management Skills in different contexts.

## Self-knowledge

- I can outline my life story so far.
- I recognise my limits and resources.
- I can identify the underlying factors impacting my ability to work and study.
- I know the role of work and learning in my life.
- I know what is important to me.
- I know what motivates me.
- I can tell internal and external motivational factors apart.
- I know what I am interested in.
- I know my strengths.
- I know the best learning methods for myself.
- I know the factors that make my learning difficult.

## Building a competence identity

- I know what I can already do well.
- I can identify my areas for development.
- I can identify skills that will be useful to me in the future.
- I know which skills I would like to learn.
- I can assess the ways my skills could be used in different contexts.

## Future and personal capacity for change

- I can imagine my future.
- I dare to dream.
- I can identify the things I want to remain the same.
- I can identify the things I want to change.
- I have tools to prepare for change.
- I have tools to tolerate uncertainty.
- I know how to seek and create opportunities that match my goals.

## Knowledge of the operating environment

- I can assess the current situation in the field I am interested in.
- I compare different options.
- I can identify opportunities that match my resources.
- I can recognise different ways of life and alternative ways of working.
- I can recognise and assess critically the impact of structures on my career management.
- I am aware of potential professions and what kind of competence they require.

## Interaction and cooperation

- I can tell others about myself and my competence.
- I can tell others about my dreams and hopes for the future.
- I can give and receive feedback.
- I have influence in networking and job search situations.
- I know how to create applications, portfolios and CVs.
- I can identify my networks.
- I can expand my networks as necessary.
- I know how to act in my networks.
- I know which public services are available to me.

## Understanding the future of the operating environment

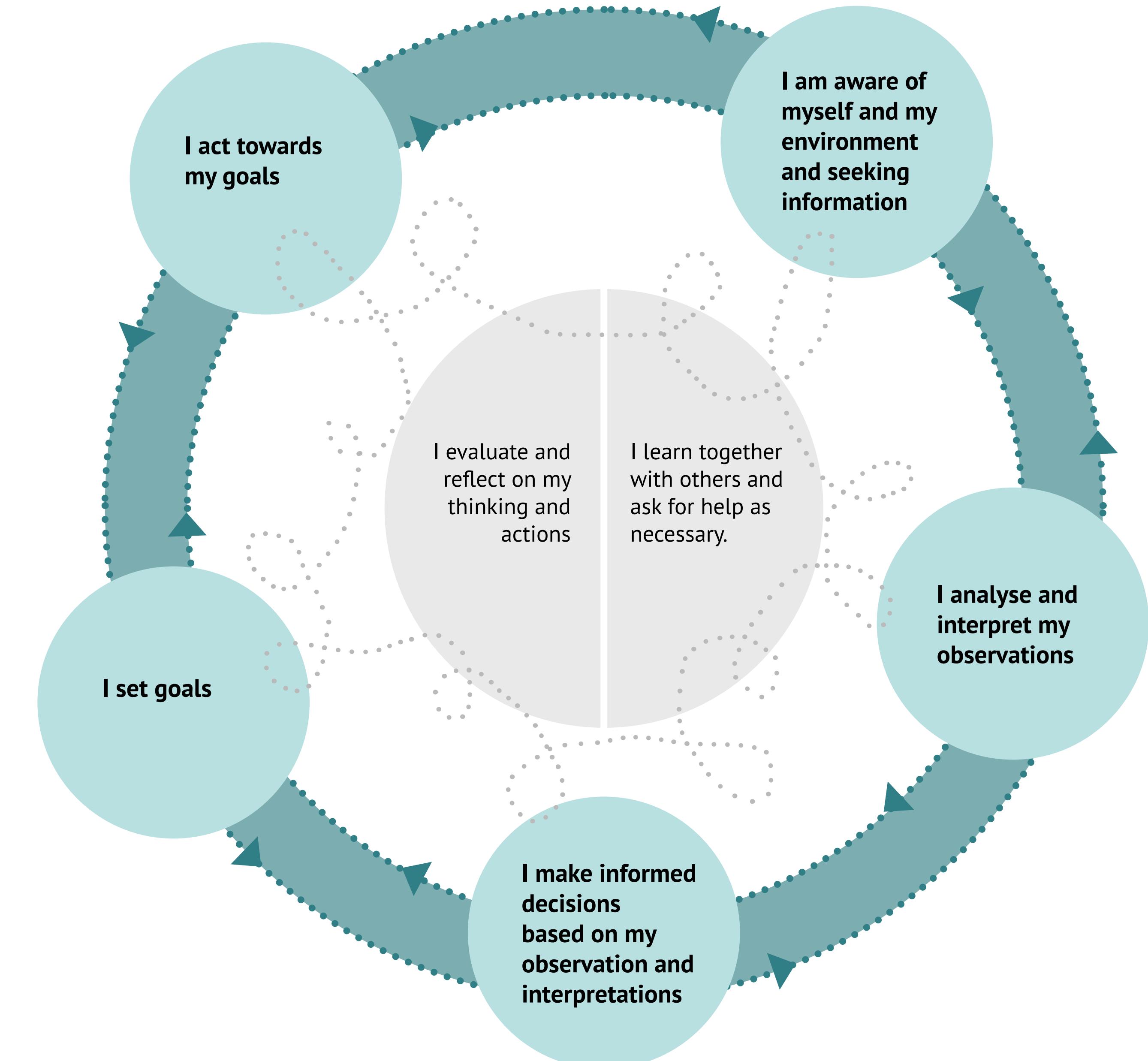
- I can assess how my work or fields that interest me will change in the future.
- I can anticipate and prepare for changes in fields that interest me.
- I can identify social and global developments that impact the future.
- I understand which new skills and competencies will be needed following social changes.

# How are career management skills learned?

When learning each Career Management Skill, an individual needs different skills related to finding and processing information and goal-oriented actions. These skills are general meta-skills which can be applied to all kinds of learning. They are especially important when planning one's career. Skills related to learning and goal-oriented action lay the foundation for all aspects of career management.

During the learning process, an individual moves flexibly between different stages of learning. The processing of new information deepens learning. **Evaluation, self-reflection, learning together with others and asking others for help are an important part of the learning process**, which is why these factors have been placed in the middle of the circle.

These skills can also be set learning objectives. Examples of such learning objectives have been listed on the next page.



### Plan execution, review and revision:

- I execute my plans step by step. I evaluate my progress regularly.
- I can change my direction if necessary.

### Understanding the prerequisites for executing plans:

- I understand what is required of me to execute my plans.

### Anticipation of the consequences of experiments and risks:

- I dare to try new things.
- I take controlled risks.

### Setting a goal:

- I create a plan to achieve my dreams.
- I break down my plan into smaller goals.
- I know how to set short-term and long-term goals.

### Assessment of resources:

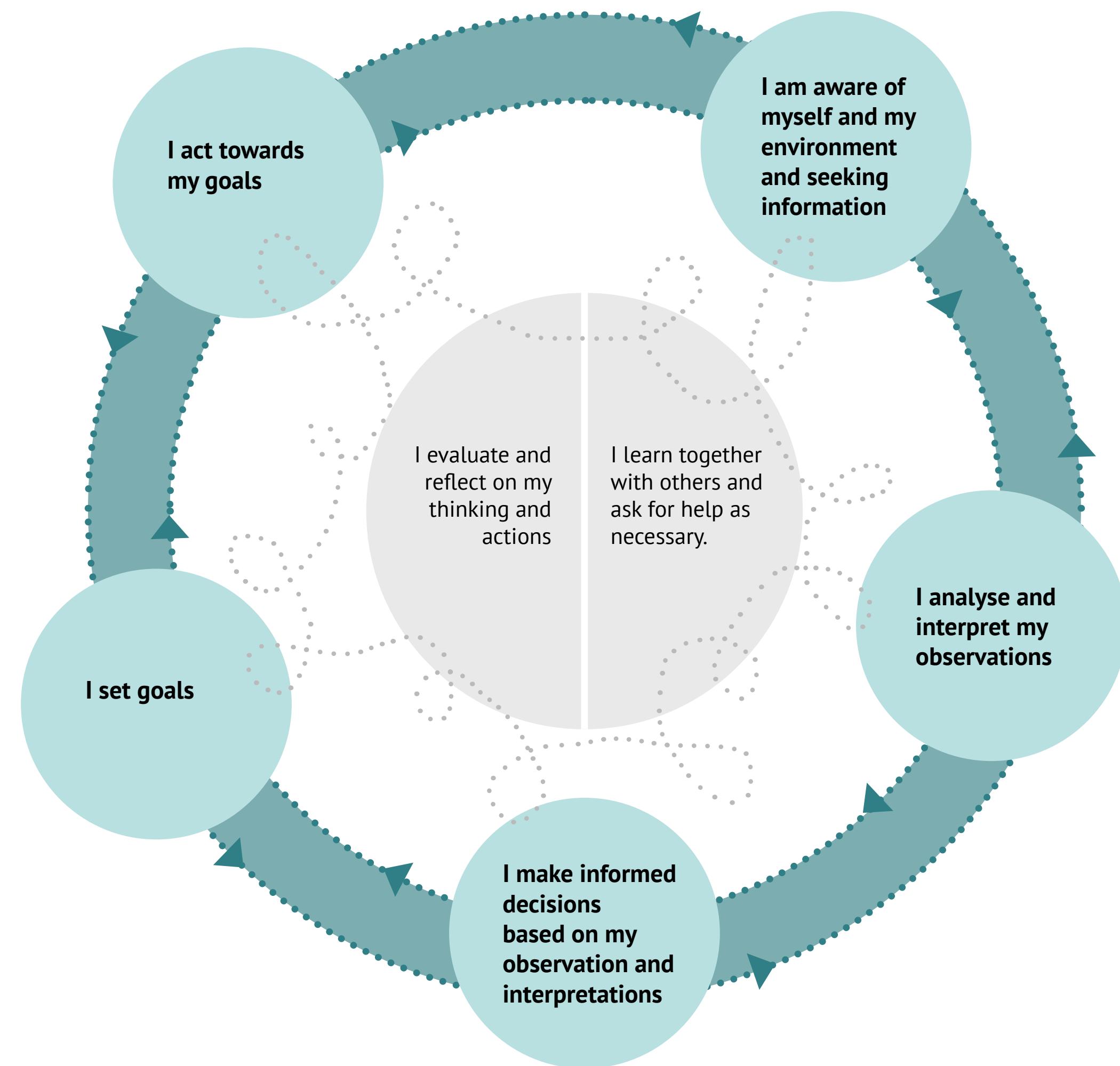
- I can assess whether I have enough resources to achieve my goals.

### Understanding alternative plans:

- I can identify paths towards my dreams.

### Assessment of factors impacting commitment:

- I am committed to my decisions.



### Observation of meaningful things:

- I observe my feelings and thoughts.

### Seeking and compiling information:

- I know where to find information.
- I can find information about different options and opportunities.
- I can find information about society, different study options and the labour market.

### Comparison and prioritisation of different options:

- I analyse and assess sources and information relevant to my situation.
- I compare and prioritise different options open-mindedly.

### Giving a meaning to options:

- I consider what different options mean to me.
- I can identify factors influencing my interpretations and decisions.
- I understand which things I can and cannot affect.

### Understanding personal decision-making style and factors impacting decision-making:

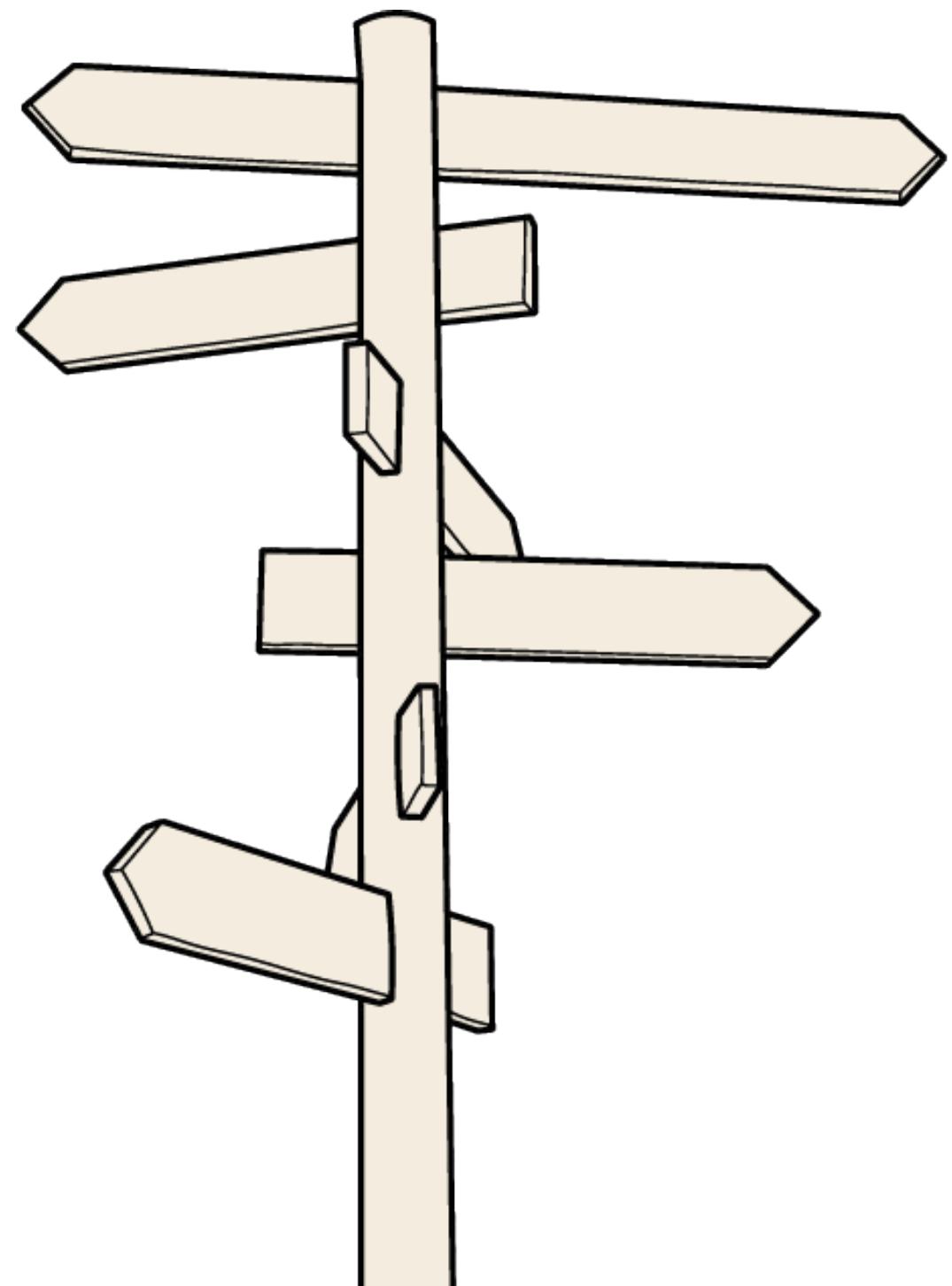
- I understand how I make decisions and know which factors impact my decision-making.
- I know what my decisions are based on.

### Assessment of the consequences of decisions:

- I know how my decisions impact me, my loved ones and society.

# Ideas for developing the National Framework further

The development of the National Framework for Career Management Skills continues. The final materials developed in the project to promote career management skills will be published in 2025 at the latest. The model described herein provides guidelines for the next phase of development. During the project, the working group identified factors that should be paid special attention to in further development.



## 1. Guides and tools to support implementation

In the next phase of development, it would be important to focus on creating concrete materials that could be used broadly in the guidance sector. For example:

- Evaluation-related material
- Guide for guidance professionals
- Tools for customers (incl. self-evaluation)

In the development of tools, the focus should be on clear and understandable language, effective visuals and concrete target-group-specific examples.

## 2. Plan for implementing the National Framework

Even the best national framework cannot work if operators are not aware of its existence. During the next steps of development, it would be important to carefully plan measures to implement the National Framework in contexts where it is the most useful. The plan should, at the very least, include measures related to communication and education.

## 3. Inspiring a wider debate

The wording of the National Framework may become more specific through further development. In the working group, we discussed how the word *planning* impacts our idea of how we navigate different transitions in life. On the other hand, the word *career* is often associated with work, even though career management involves the management of several parallel “careers” in life. The working group encourages everyone working in career management to discuss the terms and wording used around the topic in different forums!

**Thank you  
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