Career Decision Making/Goal Setting

The time and effort you devote to goal setting will pay off when you write your applications and interview for graduate programs.

**Step 1: Identify your goal or objective.**
Ex. Decide if I'm going to grad school.
Ex. Decide which programs to apply to.

**Step 2: Determine your options/alternatives.**
Ex. Should I look at a Master’s program or Ph.D? Should it be a Counseling Psychology or a School Psychology degree?

**Step 3: Research. Explore. Gather information.**
Ex. What do people with a master's degree in school psychology go on to do? What can I do with a master of education in counseling? How do they differ? What faculty research is done at this institution? Am I willing to live the lifestyle that goes with this career?

**Step 4: Evaluate the pros and cons of making this choice.**
Ex. Am I likely to find a job? Am I willing to relocate? Can I live on the salary I will be offered after I graduate? Am I willing to learn the skills needed? Will my ultimate path be consistent with my values, interests and skills?

**Step 5: Make a Realistic Action Plan.**
Develop a timetable and write the steps you will take to accomplish the goal, given other commitments (current classes, campus activities, jobs, etc.). (see the Suggested Timetable for Applying to Grad School in this guide)

Worksheet
Putting your goals in writing will help ensure that you will proceed toward them.

**Step 1: Identify your goal or objective.**

**Step 2: Determine your options/alternatives.**

**Step 3: Research. Explore. Gather information.**

**Step 4: Identify potential barriers and steps to avoid/overcome these.**

**Step 5: Evaluate the pros and cons of making this choice.**

**Step 6: Make an Action Plan.**

I will complete this process by: ________________

Signature

(By signing and dating the worksheet you are more likely to follow through - give yourself that added incentive!)

If at a future date you decide to change your mind, begin the process again using this experience as added information to consider when you do Steps 2, 3, and 4.

Tip: If you prefer to talk rather than write, you can discuss the steps with a listening partner (friend, career counselor, etc.) and ask that person to write down the main points of what you talk about.)