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**About the Presenter:**

Jane Westergaard is Programme Director for the Foundation degree 'Working with Young People and Young People's Services' and Course Director for the Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Supervision Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University in the United Kingdom.

Jane has a particular interest in guidance and counselling practice, both one-to-one with clients and in group settings. She is a firm believer that the group experience can be a powerful learning tool that is often under-used in the guidance context.

Jane's most recent publication, 'Effective Group Work with Young People' focuses on group work delivered in the guidance context. She has spoken on this topic at both national and international conferences.

**Title of Paper:** **Guidance in groups: Using the Experiences of Clients in a Group Setting in Order to Optimise Career Learning Outcomes**

**Abstract:**

The key learning outcomes of guidance interventions are focused on the personal learning and development of the recipient in relation to self awareness, opportunity awareness, decision making and transitions (Law, 2002). Engagement in one-to-one interventions with career counsellors can enable this process of personal learning and development to take place. However, an alternative approach to the work exists, which focuses on enabling clients to enhance their personal learning and development (PLD) in a *group* context (Westergaard, 2009). This encapsulates the concept of 'giving in order to receive' as group members share their experiences and learn from each other.



This presentation will explore how reflection on the experiences clients share with each other in a group context can be effective in optimising career learning outcomes. It focuses on the following:

- Identifying the career learning outcomes of group work
- Examining ways in which clients learn about themselves and make decisions about their lives within a group context
- Evaluating the ways in which being part of a group can lead to positive outcomes for individuals
- Analysing the role of the career counsellor in facilitating career learning in the group context

The ideas discussed offer career counsellors an opportunity to reflect on their interventions and to consider how group work could enhance career learning outcomes for their clients. Group work may provide a new model for guidance interventions that will encourage clients to share their experiences and learn from each other, thus making informed decisions concerning their lifelong career path.