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# Mothers Looking Ahead

Module 1 – Career Orientation & Goal Setting



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## Module Aims

The aim of this module is to empower mothers by enhancing their knowledge and skills to tackle key challenges such as balancing work and family, limited education, restricted job opportunities in their field, and lack of access to career guidance – issues identified as major concerns during the needs analysis undertaken at the start of the project.



# Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this lesson, participants gain the following

## **Knowledge:**

- Basic knowledge of the career planning tools
- Basic knowledge of the existing goal-setting frameworks, including Short-term and Long Term Goals
- Factual knowledge of the benefits and importance of building a support network.
- Practical knowledge of the effects improved decision-making skills can have on one's career.

## **Skills:**

- Analyse personal strengths and areas for development.
- Applying goal-setting frameworks for achieving realistic and achievable short-term and long-term career goals.
- Adopt decision-making skills through problem solving activities.
- Develop and maintain a necessary support network.

## **Attitudes:**

- Appreciation of a proactive approach to career planning
- Appreciation of the goal-setting process and willingness to follow up on it.
- Openness to engage in problem-solving activities.
- Appreciation for the importance of varied support available.

# Case Study

**Meet Maria, a mother of two who, after a long career break, was unsure of how to re-enter the workforce.**

Before starting her family, Maria worked as an administrative assistant in a small company. When her first child was born, she decided to take a career break to focus on her family. That break turned into a 10-year period away from the workforce, and Maria began to feel disconnected from her career and unsure of where to start if she wanted to return to work.

Maria attended a career orientation workshop similar to this training programme, where she learned about the importance of proactive career planning and discovered new tools and frameworks to help her navigate her journey back into the workforce. This gave her the motivation and knowledge she needed to move forward.

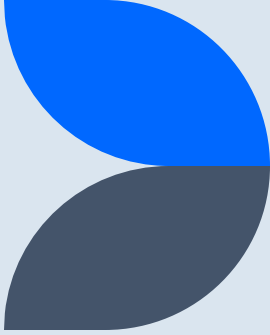


# Case Study

How Maria overcame her challenges -

- 1. SWOT Analysis and Skills Gap Assessment:** Maria completed a SWOT analysis and a skills gap assessment. This allowed her to identify her strengths, like her organisational skills and years of experience, and her areas for development, such as her need to update her software skills.
- 2. Setting SMART Goals:** With the help of the workshop, Maria created both short-term and long-term goals using the SMART framework. Her short-term goal was to complete a digital skills training course within three months. Her long-term goal was to re-enter the workforce as an administrative assistant within a year, with updated skills and a new level of confidence.
- 3. Building a Support Network:** During the workshop, Maria connected with other women in similar situations, forming a supportive network of peers. She also sought out a mentor in her field, who provided guidance on updating her CV and preparing for interviews.
- 4. Improving Decision-Making Skills:** Through various problem-solving exercises, Maria learned how to make more informed career decisions. She evaluated different options for retraining, chose the most cost-effective and relevant course, and planned how to integrate work and family life by negotiating flexible working hours with potential employers.





# List of Topics

By the end of this module, you will be better prepared to analyse your career options, set achievable goals, and make informed decisions about your professional future.

Career  
planning  
tools

Goal-setting  
frameworks

Building a  
support  
network

Improving  
decision-  
making skills



# The Importance of Career Planning

Being proactive in your career planning is essential to staying ahead in today's competitive job market. Here's why it's important:

- You can **anticipate challenges** and prepare to overcome them.
- It helps you **stay focused** on your long-term career vision, rather than getting sidetracked by immediate issues.
- A proactive approach ensures that you're **continuously improving**, staying relevant, and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.



# Career Planning Tools

Career planning tools help you gain clarity on where you are now, where you want to go, and how to get there. Here are examples of some tools you can use:



SWOT Analysis



Career Model Canvas

Competency	Lack	Need to Improve	Competent
Communication			✓
Leadership		✓	

Skills Gap Analysis

*In the induction model, you completed a skills gap analysis!*





# Goal-Setting Frameworks

Setting clear goals is key to achieving career success. A structured goal-setting process keeps you focused and motivated. Here are two essential frameworks you'll explore:

## 1. Short-term and Long-term Goals

- **Short-term goals** are actionable steps you can take in the near future, such as completing a course or updating your CV.
- **Long-term goals** are broader career aspirations, like advancing to a managerial role or starting your own business.

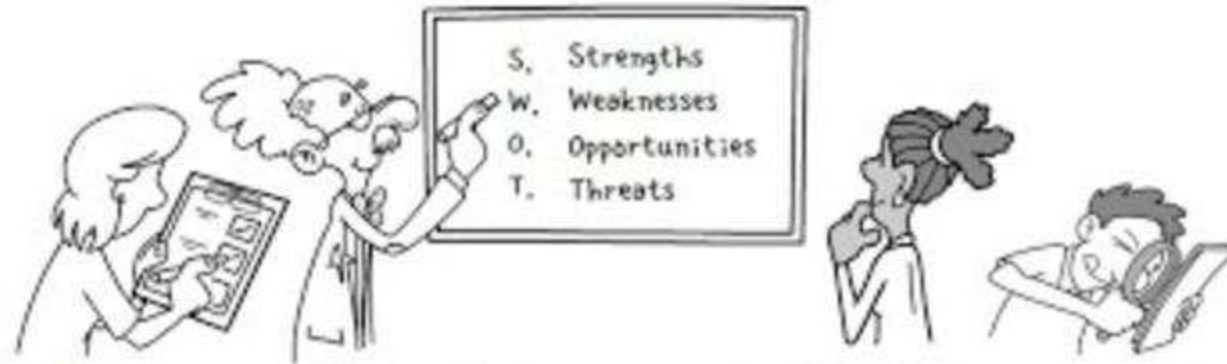
**2. SMART Goals:** Goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound. This framework ensures that your goals are realistic, and you can track progress over time.

# Applying Goal-Setting Frameworks

Practical application is key to making career progress. In this module, you'll be guided on how to:

- Set both short-term and long-term goals using the SMART framework.
- Break down large, long-term career goals into smaller, actionable steps.
- Stay motivated by tracking your progress and adjusting your goals as needed.





## How to do a Personal SWOT Analysis



Alternative link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tCcUsncXpE>

## Activity #1 Personal SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

*What are my strongest skills and talents?*

*What professional experiences or qualifications make me stand out?*

*What do others say I do well?*

### Weaknesses

*What skills or qualifications am I lacking that may be holding me back?*

*What areas do I need to improve to achieve my career goals?*

*Are there personal traits that affect my career progress?*

*This activity will guide you through conducting a personal SWOT analysis to better understand your career strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Self-awareness is a key component of career planning, and this exercise will help you gain valuable insights into where you currently stand and what areas you need to focus on.*

*Find a quiet space where you can reflect on your experiences, knowledge, and skills.*

*Complete the template and answer the question to understand your career goals.*

### Opportunities

*What opportunities are available in my desired field or industry?*

*Are there resources, mentors, or training programmes I can tap into?*

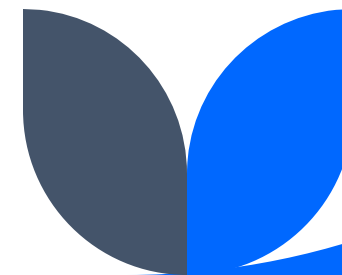
*How can I take advantage of changes or trends in my industry?*

### Threats

*What external factors could hinder my progress?*

*Are there any work-life balance challenges that might impact my career goals?*

*What fears or obstacles could prevent me from achieving my aspirations?*



## Activity #1 Personal SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

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### Weaknesses

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*What areas do I need to improve to achieve my career goals?*

*Are there personal traits that affect my career progress?*

Reflect on your answers and think about what actions you can take to address your weaknesses and threats, while leveraging your strengths and opportunities.

Write down 2-3 next steps based on your SWOT analysis to further improve your career prospects.

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# Building a Support Network

A strong support network can significantly enhance your career opportunities and personal growth, through:

- **Emotional support:** Helps you stay motivated and resilient, especially during setbacks
- **Career guidance:** Mentors and industry contacts can offer valuable advice and insights
- **Networking opportunities:** Expanding your professional network opens doors to new job opportunities, collaborations, and learning experiences.

## Tips for Building Your Network:

- Attend **professional events** (e.g., conferences, workshops).
- Use **online platforms** like LinkedIn to connect with others in your field.
- Seek out **mentors** who can provide career guidance and support.



# Importance of Support in Career Development

A support network doesn't only provide guidance, it also helps you:

- Gain confidence in pursuing new opportunities.
- Keep your career goals in focus, even when challenges arise.
- Create a **sense of accountability**, encouraging you to stay on track.

## Types of Support:

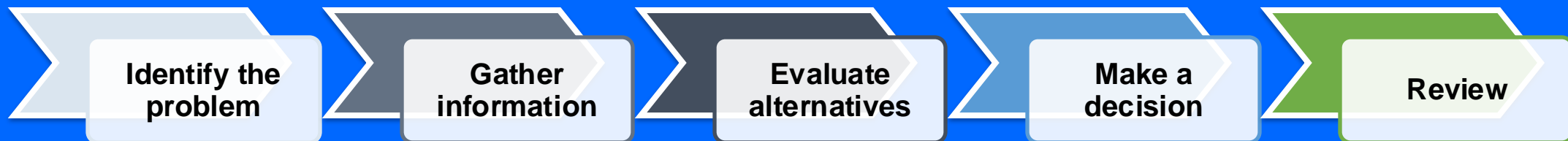
- **Mentors:** Offer career guidance and share their expertise.
- **Peers:** Provide emotional support and practical advice from those facing similar challenges.
- **Family:** Can assist in balancing work and family life by offering support at home.

# Improving Decision-Making Skills

Career decision-making can often feel overwhelming, but with the right approach, you can make more informed and confident choices.

Building your decision-making skills can have a big impact on both your personal and professional journeys:

- It helps you identify the most suitable career paths based on your strengths and values.
- You'll be able to weigh different options and choose the one that aligns with your long-term goals.
- Improves your ability to adapt when faced with unexpected changes or new challenges.



*This is an example of a decision-making framework that you can use to help you make a decision*

# HAVE YOU EVER DREAMT OF A BETTER VERSION OF YOURSELF?

## Analysing Personal Strengths & Areas for Development

Self-awareness is crucial in career planning. Understanding your strengths and areas for development allows you to focus on where you need to improve and leverage what you do best.

To analyse your strengths:

- Reflect on your **past achievements** and what made them successful
- Ask for **feedback** from family, friends, or mentors about your skills and qualities
- Use the **SWOT analysis** to identify your strengths and weaknesses

To identify your areas for development:

- Compare your current skills to the skills required for your desired career
- Set targeted learning goals to **close skill gaps** through training or experience



## Activity #2 Personal Strengths and Development Areas

*This activity aims to help you identify your personal strengths and areas for development, giving you a clearer understanding of how these impact your career planning.*

Take 10 minutes to reflect on your professional and personal strengths. Consider:

- What tasks or skills come easily to you?
- What achievements or experiences have you excelled in the past?
- How do others describe your key skills or strengths?

**Write down at least three to five strengths that you believe are your strongest assets.**



## Activity #2 Personal Strengths and Development Areas

Spend another 10 minutes reflecting on areas where you feel less confident or where you know you could improve. Think about:

- What challenges have you faced in your previous roles or in your daily life?
- Are there any skills or qualifications you lack that would enhance your career?
- Do you struggle with any personal attributes, such as time management or decision-making?

**Write down at least three to five areas for development that you would like to work on.**

**Reflection:** After writing down your strengths and areas for development, take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- How can your strengths help you in achieving your career goals?
- What resources, training, or support do you need to develop in the areas you've identified?
- How do these strengths and development areas impact your current career decisions?





# Developing a SMART Career Plan



Alternative link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU9DOORoQm4>



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# Activity #3 Career Dilemma

*This activity will help you practice decision-making using a structured approach to tackle a career-related challenge. By applying a decision-making framework, you will learn to assess options logically and make informed choices.*

**Read the Scenario Below:** Imagine you've been offered two job opportunities:

- **Job A:** A full-time administrative role in a stable company with a good salary, but it offers little flexibility for family commitments.
- **Job B:** A part-time marketing assistant role in a smaller company with a lower salary, but it offers flexible working hours and potential for growth in a new field you're interested in.

Make the best decision for you by applying the **decision-making framework**.



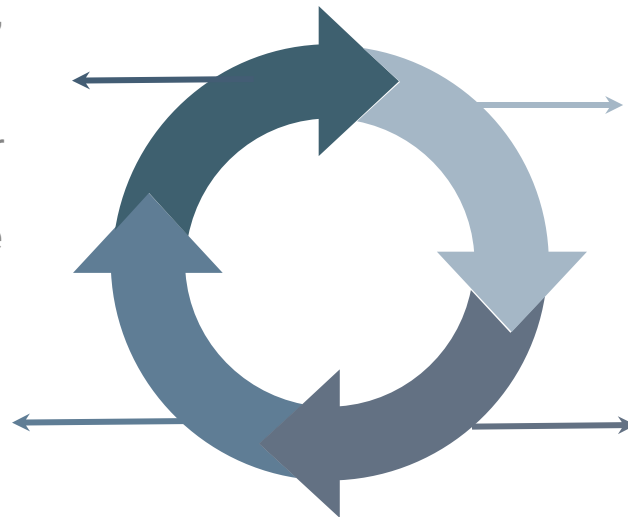
## Top Tips

### Tip 1: Plan Your Career

Take time to envision your career path by identifying your interests, strengths, and long-term aspirations. Research potential careers, roles, and opportunities that align with your vision. A well-thought-out career plan acts as a roadmap, helping you make correct decisions and stay focused on achieving your ideal job.

### Tip 2: Set Your Career Goals

Define clear, actionable goals to steer your career in the desired direction. Set objectives that motivate and challenge you. Whether it's learning a new skill, earning a promotion, or transitioning to a new field, having goals provides you with purpose and direction.



### Tip 3: Review Your Goals

Regularly review and reassess your career goals to ensure they remain aligned with your evolving aspirations and circumstances. Life and employment market changes, so it's essential to adapt. Reflect on your progress, adjust timelines and needs as required to stay on track in achieving ongoing career growth.

### Tip 4: Learn from Setbacks and Celebrate Your Success

Embrace setbacks as learning opportunities that offer valuable insights and build resilience. Analyse what went wrong, refine your approach, and move forward with renewed determination. Equally, celebrate your achievements, big or small, to stay motivated and recognise the progress you've made in your career journey.



## Additional Resources

### Career Orientation and Goal Setting



#### LinkedIn

Career guidance app that can help you build your professional network, find your dream job, and advance your career. LinkedIn allows you to create a profile that showcases your skills, experience, education, and achievements, and connect with other professionals who share your interests, goals, and values.



#### GoalsWon

GoalsWon is an accountability app that pairs you with a real-life coach to help you meet your goals. You get to chat with your coach every day, laying out your plans for the day and getting feedback and encouragement.



#### Coursera

Career guidance app that offers a wide range of online courses, certificates, and degrees from leading universities and companies. Whether you want to advance your career, switch fields, or simply learn something new, this app can help you achieve your goals.



#### lifetick

Goal-setting software that helps individuals and organisations achieve aspirations using the S.M.A.R.T methodology. It features core value identification to align goals with personal priorities and includes journaling for reflective growth.

### Podcasts (in English)



#### Career Happy Mums: The Podcast

Rebecca Amin, mum of two, Career Coach, and founder of the Career Happy Mums Facebook Group, has weekly chats to guests about their experiences of career change, being a working parent, and getting career happy again.



#### How to set the right goals and stay motivated

Scientist Ayelet Fishbach shares a handful of tips backed by 20 years of motivation research, offering surprisingly simple wisdom on how to optimise your goals, set yourself up for success and avoid the tempting calls of procrastination.



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### Useful Articles (in English)



#### 9 Tips for Re-Entering the Workforce

Career tips for stay-at-home parents returning to work, the importance of preparation and best practices on how to re-enter the workforce.a



Medium · Becky Vinton  
120+ likes · 2 years ago

#### Strategies for Career Success for Working Mothers

Article on strategies on how to achieve career success as a working mother. By following the tips in this article, you can create a plan that works for you and your family.



# Ready to test your knowledge?

It's time to put your skills to the test...

[START NOW](#)



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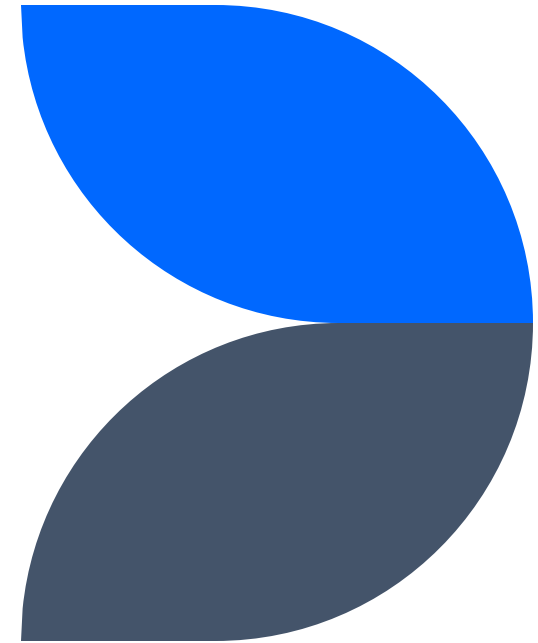
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# Self-Reflection Questions

Q1: What specific career goals do you want to achieve in the short-term?

Q2: Who are the key people in your support network?

Q3: What are your personal values and how do they align with your career goals?



# Conclusion

- **Career Planning Tools:** Empower you to take control of your career path.
- **Goal-Setting Frameworks:** Help you define and achieve your professional objectives.
- **Support Networks:** Provide emotional and career guidance that helps you succeed.
- **Decision-Making Skills:** Enable you to make informed, confident career choices.
- **Proactivity:** A proactive approach is key to overcoming challenges and reaching your goals.

Take the time to reflect on each of these aspects, as they are the building blocks of a successful career journey. You are now equipped to take the first steps in achieving your career aspirations!

**"A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline." — Harvey MacKay**





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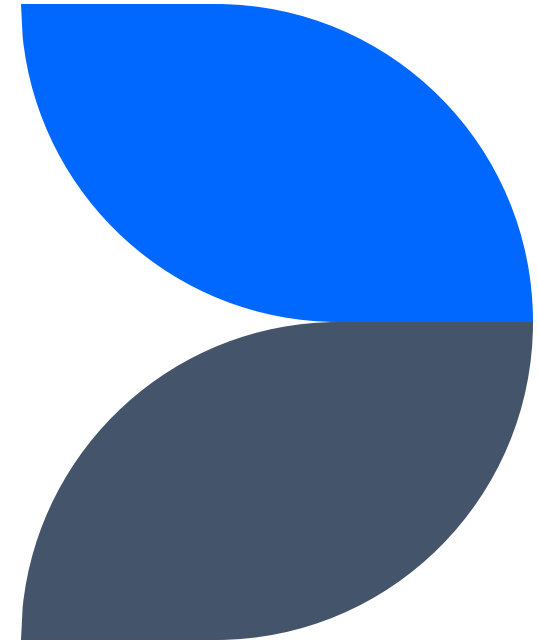
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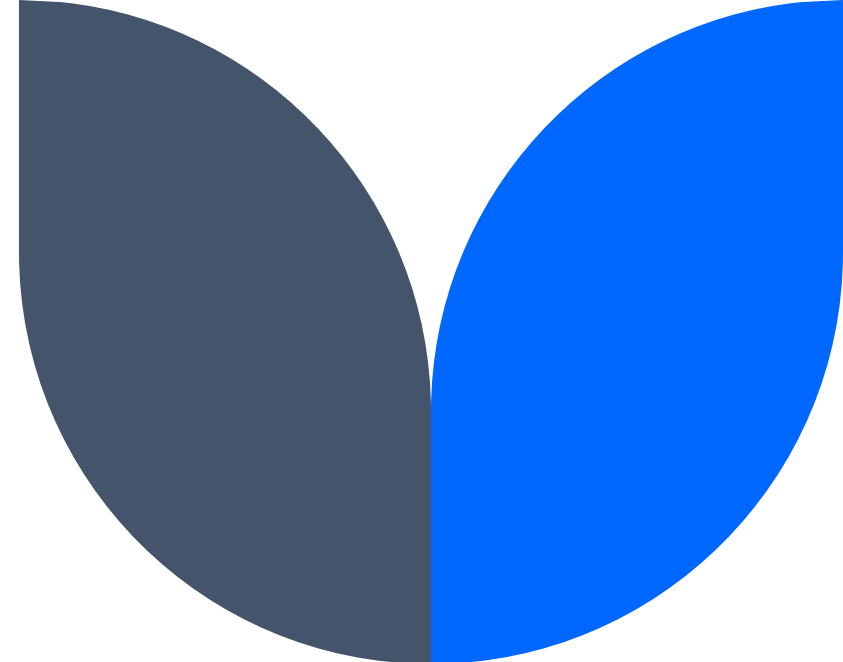
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**Congratulations on  
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