



Counselling Case Study

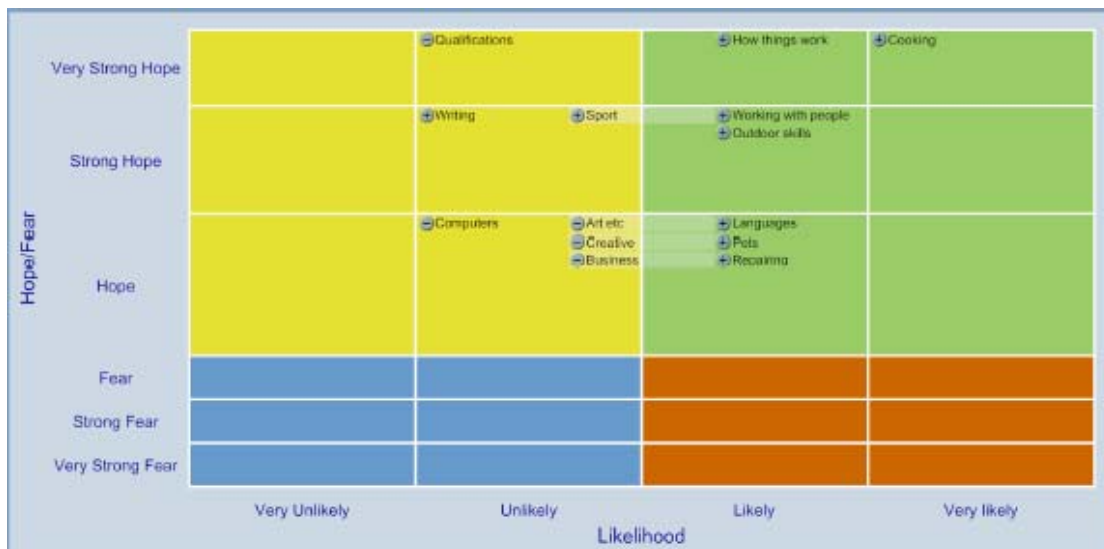
A Youth at Risk

Background

- 17 years old
- Still at school, but no educational qualifications
- Classified by school as at risk because of poor attendance and behaviour

The computerised questionnaire

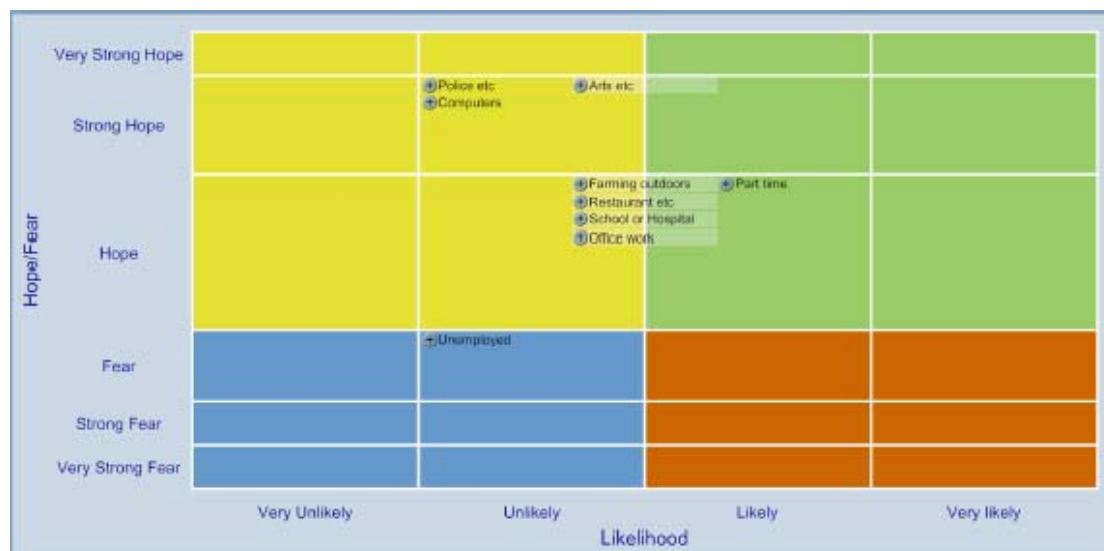
Skills and Interests



The skill and interests section of the feedback showed a range of likely and hoped for skills such as "Cooking", "Outdoor Skills" and "Working with People". These lead to a discussion around what experience he had in them, what he enjoyed about them, and how they might be done more in the future.

A hope rated as unlikely was "Qualifications", of which he indicated he had no past or present experience. He discussed his failure and disillusionment with school, but showed a strong desire to achieve educationally; in a way he didn't feel a failure. He realised and talked about how his behaviour to date had effected his education. In later sessions he explored, and enrolled in, a certificate course in hospitality.

Career Options



His career options showed only one likely hope – working “Part time”. However a range of careers were hoped for, but were classed as "Don't Knows" for occurring in the future. When questioned on this, a discussion evolved around the relationship between his Skills and Interests and Career Options, such as cooking and hospitality, and working outdoors with an agriculture career. Phil came to the conclusion fairly quickly that by focusing on his education now he could actually makes these "Dreams" into likely Career Options.

Two careers were rated as strong hopes but unlikely - "Computers" and "Police etc". "Computers" were rated as unlikely because of a history of poor relationships with teachers, who controlled use of computers. "Police etc" stemmed from dealings with police after crimes he had committed. This lead to a discussion of what values police had, what he liked about them, and ways he could get attention from similar adults without committing crimes.

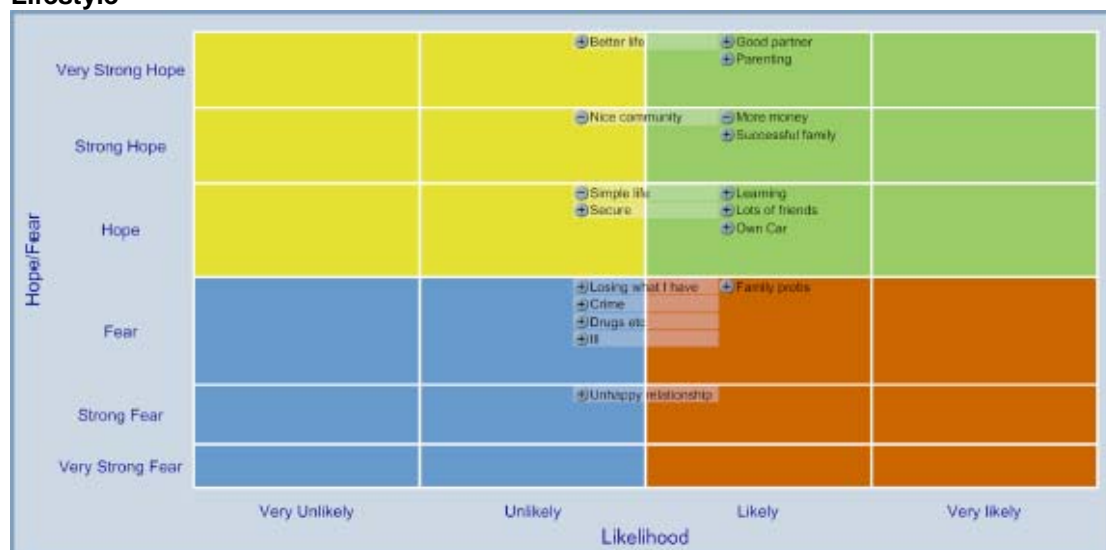
His career related fears concerned being "Unemployed"; rated as past and present selves. This related to his family background where there was high unemployment and he didn't want to end up in the same situation. He talked about how that might have affected his career related behaviours, and what other choices he had.

Beliefs and Values



This section showed strong social themes such as "Caring" (very likely, strong hope), and "Alone" (very likely, fear). Other items showed a fairly even mix of hopes and fears, but usually rated as only likely or unlikely. This indicates both a generally pessimistic outlook, but with a high level of uncertainty around what sort of person he is and will be. The session focused on why his hopes were important, what had stopped him being happy with himself in the past, and what he could do to stop his fears coming true. These were linked to his career aspirations.

Lifestyle



The lifestyle confirmed his hopes of family and a better life. These were elaborated by asking what it meant to him, and how it might come to be reality. However, there were also a number of fears such as "Crime", "Drugs etc", and "Family problems" that may be real barriers to achieving his goals. He said he committed crime as a way of getting excitement and respect.

The discussion then turned to strategies. He also decided that he didn't need to 'be a bum' and that if he did something he was interested in he probably wouldn't find it too hard. The criminal behaviour was something he was cutting down on already - but if he had a longer-term goal it would be easier and in time, might get him respect from his friends in other ways.

Summary and Conclusion

Phil's responses to the FutureSelves tool revealed a great deal of highly personalised and job relevant information - only some of which is discussed here. He also engaged with the tool - because it provided a means to develop, by raising self-awareness and developing plans. Also, by realising that he could mould his future, Phil came out of the initial session feeling quite motivated.

The high number of personal issues, including the instability of the self-concept, fears, and lack of confidence, indicate the need for help to ensure an effective entry into the workforce or training. He subsequently found a part time job, enrolled in a vocational training course, and ceased assaulting other students.