



Growth-based Career Planning: The Kawa Model Approach

Dr Kee Hean Lim, Associate Professor in
Occupational Therapy, St Mary's University,
London, UK

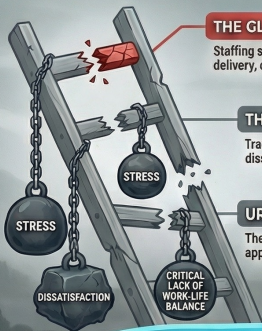
Ms Jou Yin Teoh, Honorary Senior Lecturer,
Brunel University, London, UK

Dr Stephanie Tempest,
Stephanie Tempest Consultancy Ltd



Occupational Therapy Career Pathways: From Ladders to Rivers

THE CRISIS OF THE TRADITIONAL LADDER



THE GLOBAL OT SHORTAGE CRISIS

Staffing shortages are actively impacting service delivery, clinical practice, and the quality of patient care.

THE BURDEN OF LINEAR GROWTH

Traditional vertical paths often lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and a critical lack of work-life balance.

URGENT NEED TO TRAIN & RETAIN

The current model is failing, requiring a new approach to keep therapists in the profession.

“A career ladder creates no value except except for the person climbing it, while a career river feeds an entire ecosystem...”

“I'd rather live in a professional world of rivers, where we all can go with the flow together.” (Thereson, 2021)

GROWTH-BASED CAREER PLANNING

EXPLORE, DEVELOP, ENRICH

A river pathway allows for individualized plans across service, research, and effective practice.



EMBRACING PROFESSIONAL VARIETY

Career rivers allow for shifting priorities, including family goals and personal development.



A FULFILLING & BETTER FIT

Fluid pathways promote work-life balance by letting therapists make choices about their professional “flow”.



SERVICE

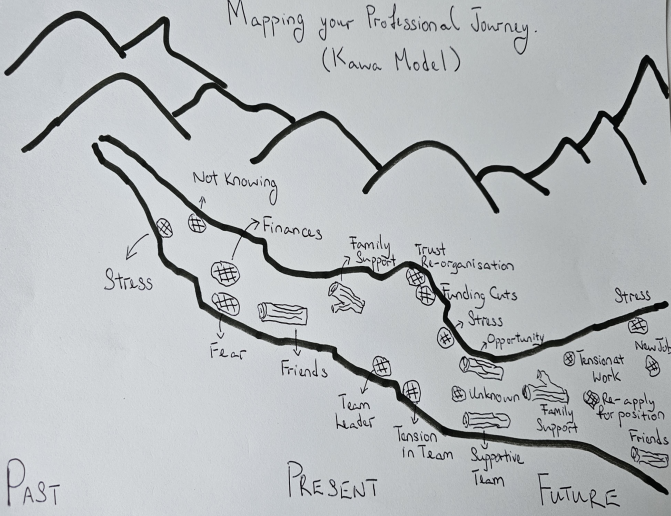


RESEARCH

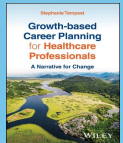
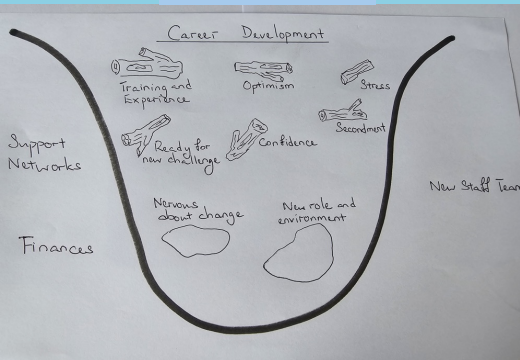


CLINICAL PRACTICE

Mapping your Professional Journey. (Kawa Model)



Point in Time



Keehean.lim@stmarys.ac.uk

