

Career Assessments: A Wise Investment
by [David R. Parker, Ph.D.](#)

Since its founding, CRG has conducted comprehensive assessments to help clients and their families make individualized and data-based decisions. We believe that testing is the foundation for a realistic plan for success. Career assessments have become increasingly popular over the past few years as college costs have risen and job opportunities have shrunk or become more specialized. In past decades, it was common for teenagers to take career exploration classes and/or hold down part-time jobs in high school. These pursuits often [help students](#) explore their interests and strengths and make decisions about college majors and careers based on work experience. In the past decade, academic demands, service learning requirements, and the popularity of SAT or ACT prep courses have restricted high school students' opportunities to explore the world of work. Consequently, many students go off to college now with limited insight about the kinds of majors or careers for which they are best suited.

After becoming a [Myers-Briggs](#) Personality Indicator (MBTI) Step I & Step II Certified Practitioner last fall, I have had the great pleasure of conducting [CRG's career assessments](#). This service consists of two 1-hour appointments. First, the client comes in for an intake meeting. They complete our Career Assessment Intake Form in advance and discuss their responses with me. They use the rest of the hour to take two online assessments: the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator© and the Strong Interest Inventory©. The first assessment tool identifies their personality type, describes how they make big decisions, and maps out their preferences for interacting with others. The second assessment identifies occupations and work environments in which that person is likely to thrive based on their personality type and gender. Combined, the assessments identify careers, college majors, and even specific colleges the client is encouraged to consider.

The client and a family member/friend are then scheduled to return a week later for another 1-hour appointment. We spend that time discussing the 30+ page report that unpacks their assessment results and implications. In fact, the two assessment results are so detailed that I create a 4-5 page cover report to summarize key points. I draw upon nearly 20 years of experience running LD/ADHD services at three universities to inform my recommendations. Having another person accompany the client helps them absorb the wealth of information, ask questions, and briefly talk about their reactions to the report's findings. All of this information can help students and their families make highly personalized decisions about colleges, majors, and careers, thus saving time and money as students try to create a realistic and successful path to career success. In addition, CRG's [College Search](#) and [ADD/Life Coaching](#) Services can then help students and their families take action on the career report's recommendations.

CRG's co-founders, [Dr. Julie Steck](#) and [Dr. Ray Kinder](#), offered additional insights into the history, purpose, and benefits of our career assessments. Their comments follow.

Why did CRG decide to offer career assessments?

Dr. Steck: We decided to expand services at CRG to include College and Career Assessments in the mid-1990's. This was shortly after CRG was started. We had begun to recognize that many of the students we served struggled with completing college. Most of these students had ADHD and learning disorders. In many cases, high school had been difficult but the demands of college

were almost overwhelming. We recognized that many of these students floundered with choosing a major and finding the right college fit. Thus, we felt that the College and Career Assessment process could greatly assist with the transition from high school to college.

Dr. Kinder: What Dr. Steck and I realized early on, was a sense of responsibility to not only accurately assess students' ability levels, skill sets and potential interfering factors, but also to outline a "game plan" for that individual and their parents that would guide them successfully into the future. An extension of that became what was known as our College/Career assessment. We were also in a unique position to see students return from college unsuccessfully because they did not have the right roadmap/game plan to guide them. From a mental health perspective, issues such as depression and anxiety can be induced or significantly exacerbated by a college/career derailment, not to mention the significant financial cost. We found that the more information we could give individuals and their parents regarding the "right fit" for a college major or career path exploration, the more likely they would have an improved outcome.

What kinds of people are most likely to benefit from a career assessment?

Dr. Steck: Most everyone could benefit from a career assessment toward the end of high school or early in their college experience. Similarly, adults in transition would benefit. The Career Assessment assists individuals in better understanding who they are, what motivates them and how their strengths might be best used.

What if anything makes CRG career assessments unique?

Dr. Kinder: I really feel that any high school student could benefit from a career assessment but those who are in the best position are individuals who have also had a psychoeducational evaluation at our office. This allows us to guide an individual, not only on the basis of their interests and personality, but also on the basis of their learning strengths and weaknesses as assessed by objective measures. I think CRG is uniquely positioned to do these types of assessments when they can be combined with cutting edge measures of intellectual abilities, processing strengths and weaknesses and academic skills.

Why might a career assessment be more helpful now than ever?

Dr. Steck: As the costs of postsecondary education have risen and the stress placed on a college degree has increased, it is even more important for young adults to have a clear path toward success and job satisfaction. Young adults do not have the luxury of trying to find the right major and dabbling in different areas that was once thought to be part of the transition to adulthood. In addition, for those who have struggled in school, the risk of failure is too great. A Career Assessment at CRG can assist the young adult in identifying a path toward success rather than experiencing another dismal school experience.

Do you find that career assessments are more helpful for the client or his/her family?

Dr. Kinder: Ultimately career assessments are a primary benefit to the individual receiving them. That said, it is also tremendously beneficial to parents because they may be guiding their son or daughter on a path that they think is in the teen's best interest but in actuality may not be. It could be based on false assumptions, parents' own perspective of their child's strengths and weaknesses, parental hopes and wishes for their child, or some other factor.

Specifically, how can career assessments at CRG help clients enhance their resilience and grit?

Dr. Steck: Career assessments are meant to focus on a client's strengths and positive traits. There is no "good" or "bad" outcome. Dr. Parker does an excellent job of engaging the client in looking at their results as positive and focusing on the possibilities that lie ahead. Resilience and grit are borne out of success and pride in one's accomplishments. When our clients find the right path, they are much more likely to experience success and accomplishment despite the challenges along the way.