



Rural Women's Life-career Patterns across the Lifespan

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Overview

- Why the rural context?
- Demonstration PSMI
- Research results
- Strategies
- Q & A





Why Rural?

- Rural areas: pop. density of fewer than 150 per sq. km
- Impact of globalization
- Decline in the basis of rural economies: forestry, farming, mining, and fishing
- Reduced access to higher & continuing education
- Limited exposure to a range of occupations
- Lack variety of role models

From Canadian Rural Partnership, 2000; Phimister, Vera-Toscano, & Weersink, 2001



Why Rural Women?

- Rural female employment rates lower
- Menial and low-paying work - little or no opportunity for economic advancement (Phimister et al., 2001).
- Underemployment
- Lack of childcare facilities & public transportation
- Urban-based career interventions and models may not represent best solutions

Research Purpose



- How do rural women explore their options, plan their directions, and enter and progress in their chosen life-career paths?



Rural Community

- Pop. 1100 & growth rate of less than 4%
- Accommodation & Food Services; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Retail
- Less than 30% are employed year round
- Average total income for men is 15% higher than the average total income for women
- >75% of women earn less than \$30,000/yr.



Life Path Orientation

- Framework for providing real life narratives
- Story as psychosocial construction
- Internalized and evolving narrative of identity
- Integration of past, current and expected future
- Transition behaviours form an integral part of biography
- Involves negotiation by a reflexive self of potential roles available to them
- Roles are constrained and enhanced by social structures and interpersonal relationships



Research Design & Participants



- Participatory Research design with community engagement
- Multiple data sources: narrative interviews, life-paths, life-space mapping, possible selves
- Focus today is on possible selves maps
- Two women in each of five age categories (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's) who lived in one rural community in BC for a period of 10 years minimum



Possible Selves

- Future-oriented, personalized component of self-knowledge
- Constructed through self-reflection and use of imagination
- Represent the hopes, expectations and fears of people considering their future
- Standards by which one gauges current behaviours or information
- Act as motivators to attain goals and avoid fears
- Procedural knowledge to guide behaviour



Possible Selves Mapping Interview

- Adapted Cross & Markus (1991) questionnaire for adults.
- Use of Visual Aids (yellow / green paper, maps, blank paper, Lickert Scale)
- Tools used in the interview are also kinesthetic and are useful as cues
- Useful from youth to older workers

Possible Selves Mapping

Possible Selves Map

My Hopes

Supported emotionally, financially, physically, spiritually

Work less, play more

Continued satisfaction and confidence

Travel

Maintain physical strength and health

Top Four Hoped For Selves

Supported emotionally, financially, physically, spiritually (6,6)

Work less, play more

Most Capable of Achieving

Work less, play more (5,6)

Expected Hoped-For Selves

Work less, play more!

Current Actions Towards Hoped-For Self

Considering options

Including business partners

New relationship

Negotiating my needs in a relationship



My Fears

Estrangement from family

Ill health

Having to leave my home/area

Top Four Feared Selves

Estrangement from family

Ill health (6,3)

Having to leave my home/area

Most Capable of Preventing

Estrangement from family

Expected Feared Selves

Ill health

Current Actions To Prevent Feared Self

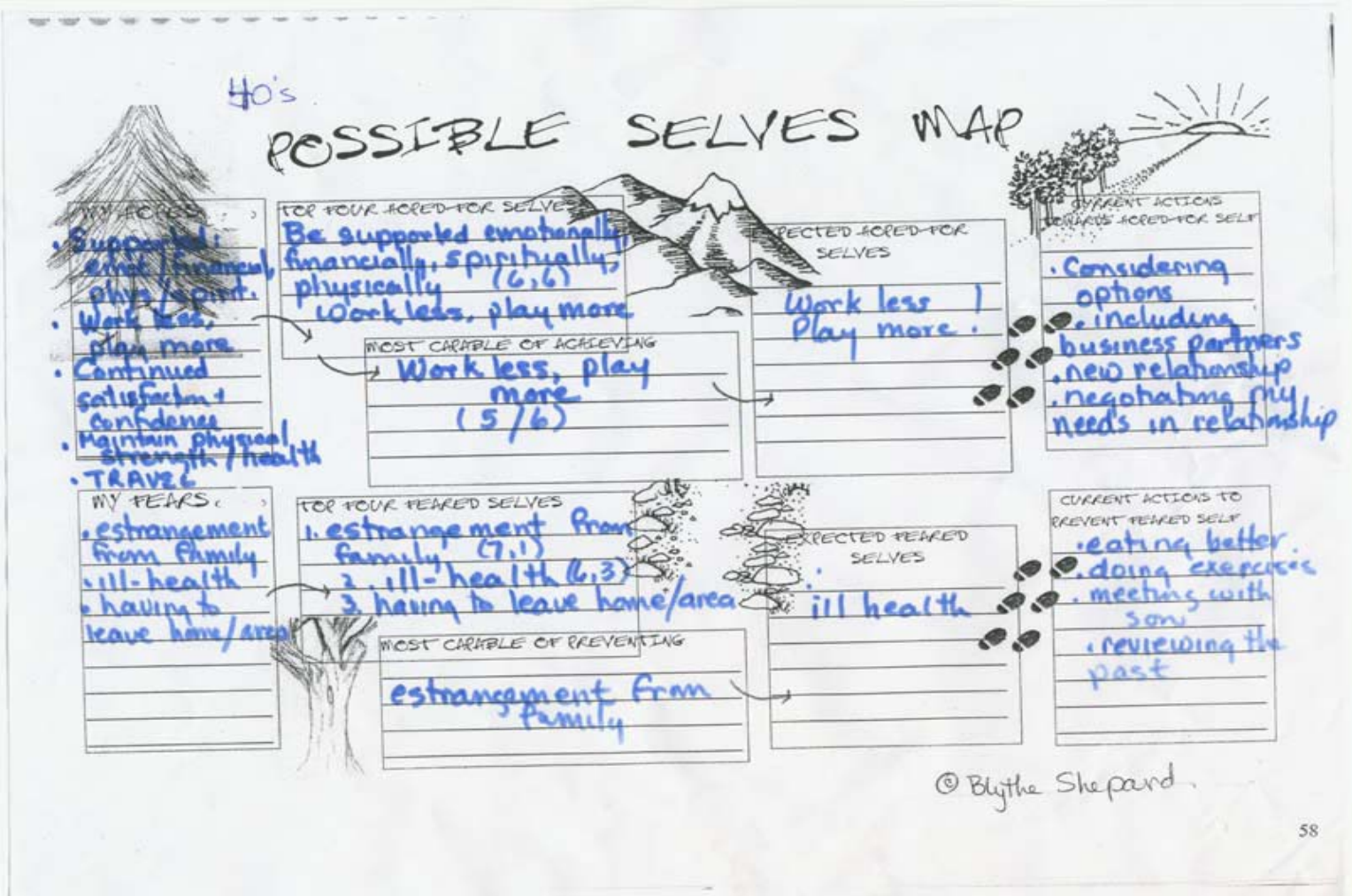
Eating better

Doing exercises

Meeting with son

Reviewing the past

Possible Selves Mapping





Important Hoped-for Selves

		CC	LT
50	Increased personal income from business	5	6-7
50	Separate office for work as health counsellor	3-4	3-4
19	Happy	7	6
19	Happily married	4	5
50	A communicator	n/r	n/r
50	To find food	n/r	n/r
30	Maintain a healthy relationship with son	6	7
30	Really loving effective teacher	7	7
30	Very healthy	6	7
30	Self-sufficient woman	7	7



Important Hoped-for Selves

		CC	LT
20	Spiritual student and guide	5	5
20	Acceptor of life passages	6	6
20	Happy	6	5
20	A mother	7	6
40	Be supported: emotionally, financially, spiritually, physically	6	6
40	Work less, play more	5	6
20	Partner	5	6
20	Mother	5	6



Important Feared Selves

		CC	LT
50	Not having a home	1-2	1-2
50	Business does not work	2-3	2-3
19	Being alone	4	3
19	Dying unhappily	3	3
50	To not find a home	n/r	n/r
50	To die in poverty	n/r	n/r
30	Unable to provide for myself	1	5
30	Remain in an unfulfilling relationship	5	3
30	Sick or unhealthy	7	7
30	A single mother	7	7



Important Feared Selves

		CC	LT
20	Critical illness or death of child or partner	3	3
20	Abandonment by partner	5	5
20	Being lonely	5	5
20	Stop learning	6	1
40	Estrangement from family	7	1
40	Ill health	6	3
20	Have a broken heart	5	2
20	Single	5	3



Possible Future Selves (2- 5-10 years)

- Occupational
- Relational
- Personal
- Material
- Educational
- Creative
- Travel



Participant's views of the future

In my last relationship it wasn't really an option to be here and now it's becoming more of a possibility and I'm seeing that possibility for the first time. It would be nice to be near my family especially if I'm having children. And then in ten years, I imagine hopefully I'll still be around here and helping to take care of my parents (20's)



Participant's views of the future

Pretty much the same, with hopefully a bit less work and a bit more play. I'd like to read more... and develop that intuitive wisdom that I feel like I have... Work on this relationship that I have that's very different than any relationship I've had in the past (40's).



Participant's views of the future

In two years time definitely looking at finding a home, not just a physical house, but the location of the land- Yeah, I sort of feel that that's part of my calling somehow but I don't know how that's going to unfold. And closer family ties. So in five years: doing more to help others, more financially secure and able to travel and speak more easily. And still very active in ten years, but content. Always looking for relaxing, exploring

Age 50



Translating Research into Action

Strategies for Addressing Rural Women's Career Decision Making

- Possible Selves Mapping
- Identifying key relational contexts
- Identifying strengths / barriers related to Hopes for and Feared Selves
- Using exploration tasks that accommodate all of the above



Possible Selves Mapping

- As demonstrated
- A more elaborate process than demonstrated
- Interactive and engaging



Identifying Key Relationships

- What relationships are going to influence her career choice?
- What relationships are going to be influenced by her career choice?
- What relationships does she need in place to make her choices work?



Identifying Strengths / Barriers

- Identifying Strengths:
 - What will support her hoped for selves
 - What will diminish her feared selves
- Identifying Barriers:
 - What will get in the way of hoped for selves
 - What will enhance feared for selves



Exploration Tasks

- What tasks can you use with Laurie to explore her Career choices?
- What tasks can she use to develop her possible hoped for selves?
- What tasks can she use to diminish her feared selves?

Goal Mapping

kids need new shoes / clothes



kids want to go on school trip to Ottawa

part time job sucks

ex-spouse never takes kids – no time for self

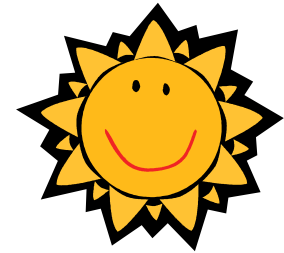
more hours
at part time
job /
better role

new boss

spouse agreed to take kids
two nights a week

joined women's group

found scholarship for
field trip





Q & A

- Any questions
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