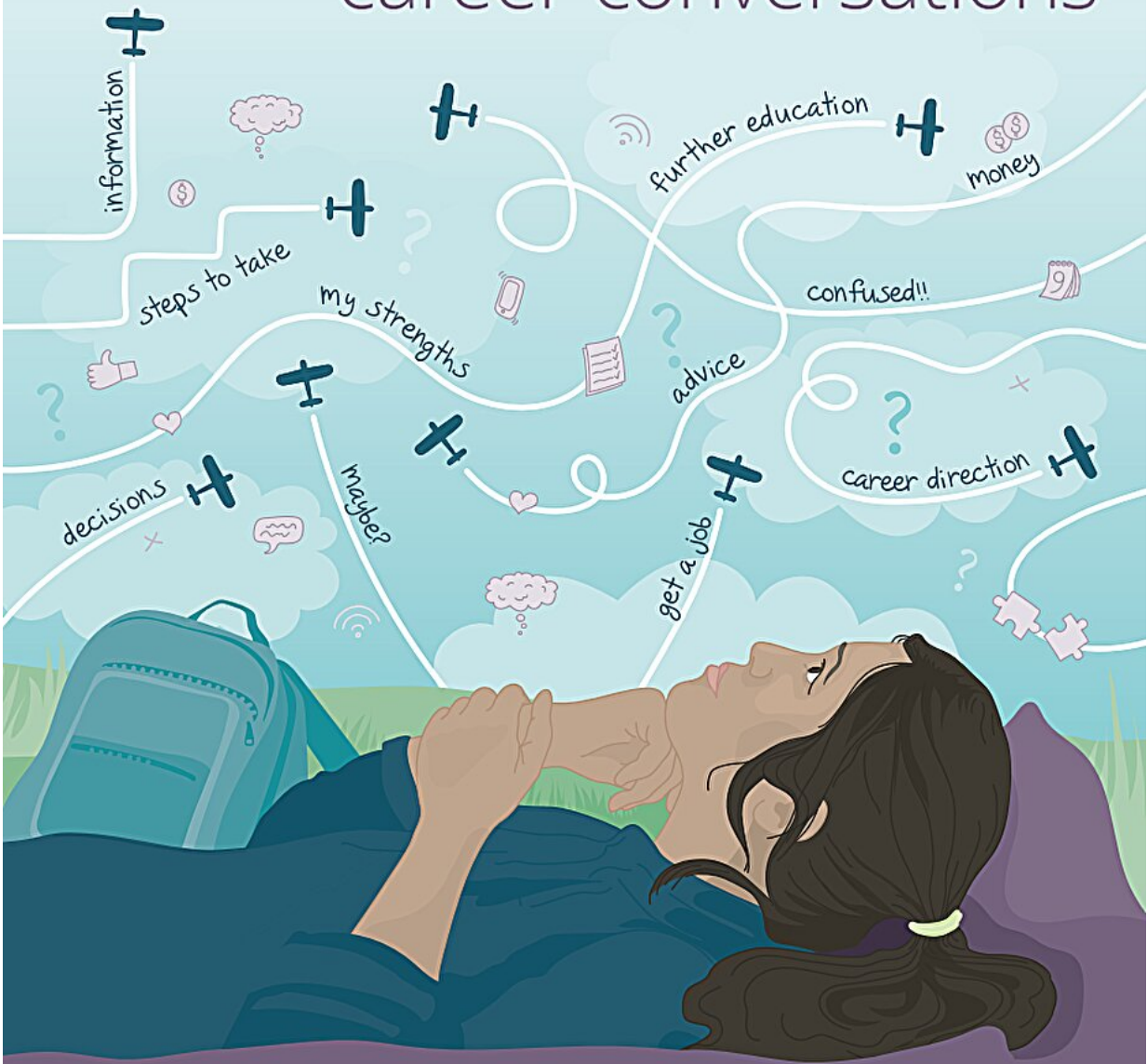


# **Harnessing the power of career conversations and combating increasing career uncertainty**

August 2 2023

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# Managing career uncertainty and anxiety: the power of career conversations



Credit: Monash Center for Youth Policy and Education Practice

Research from Monash University shows that young people's career indecision and uncertainty can lead to helplessness, depression, stress, lack of purpose and despair.

The transition from school to work is becoming increasingly unpredictable, employment markets are more competitive and overall [career uncertainty](#) in [young people](#) is on the rise.

Research from the Monash Center for Youth Policy and Education Practice (CYPEP) has found pervasive feelings of career uncertainty and anxiety. Among nearly 2,800 Australian secondary school students who participated in the study, more than a third (33.8%) of [survey respondents](#) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they did not know what careers best suited them, and another 40.5% of respondents often felt that they had no career direction. This uncertainty and lack of career direction was of high concern to these students.

Lead author, Dr. Jo Gleeson from CYPEP, says career conversations are a valuable way for young people to make sense of career information and choices.

"Our recent [research](#) shows that when young people have conversations with others about their careers, they have lower levels of career uncertainty and anxiety," said Dr. Gleeson.

"These conversations can cover young people's awareness of their own interests and strengths, their [career goals](#) and preferences, their knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success of different

study-career pathways, as well as their ideas about transitioning from education settings into work. They can make a real difference."

To support the research CYPEP, together with myfuture, has also released an interactive insights paper which includes a questionnaire that can help teenagers become more aware of their feelings associated with career decision making.

Co-author of the report and Director of CYPEP, Professor Lucas Walsh, said as transitions from school to work become more unpredictable, and employment markets become more competitive and fluid, career uncertainty in young people is increasing.

"We need to foster better, more productive conversations between career advisors, teachers, parents, caregivers and young people to help them express how they feel about their career choices and the career decision-making processes," said Professor Walsh.

For many young people when thinking about their next step after year 12 there are a variety of mixed emotions.

"Initially, thinking about my next step after year 12 felt overwhelming as I felt a lot of indecision around [career choices](#); however I was fortunate to have the support and resources to explore options allowing me to become curious by different career pathways. I took an extended time to decide what I was going to study as I did feel the weight of the decision in terms of the financial commitment, employability, and future prospects upon finishing.

"Looking back, I think volunteering and casual work experiences helped me understand the interests and strengths that I wanted to further explore through my career and study and lift some of that uncertainty. As a university student, I have had roles as a mentor for secondary students

and believe this sort of mentoring relationship may have eased some of my concerns and indecision," said Riana (pseudonym).

"Once you finish Year 12 there are so many directions you can go and it can definitely be overwhelming to try and figure that out while you are trying to do the best you can in your final year of high school. For me personally, I knew I needed to have a goal before beginning Year 12. Everyone always has an opinion on what you should do, and I always respected hearing people's perspectives. From the traditional and stereotypical competitive fields from my parents, to finding your passion from my teachers and careers advisor it was great to hear each person's experience on how they grew up and how they've ended up where they are now," said Andrew.

**More information:** Managing career uncertainty and anxiety: the power of career conversations. [research.monash.edu/en/publications/over-of-career-conversations](https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/over-of-career-conversations)

Provided by Monash University

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