SARAH AL POTTER, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
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GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

CNL-525 CAREER COUNSELING
DR. JAMES ABOLARIN
DECEMBER 3, 2025



HELPING LI MEI BLOSSOM

Brief Overview of Li Mei's Case

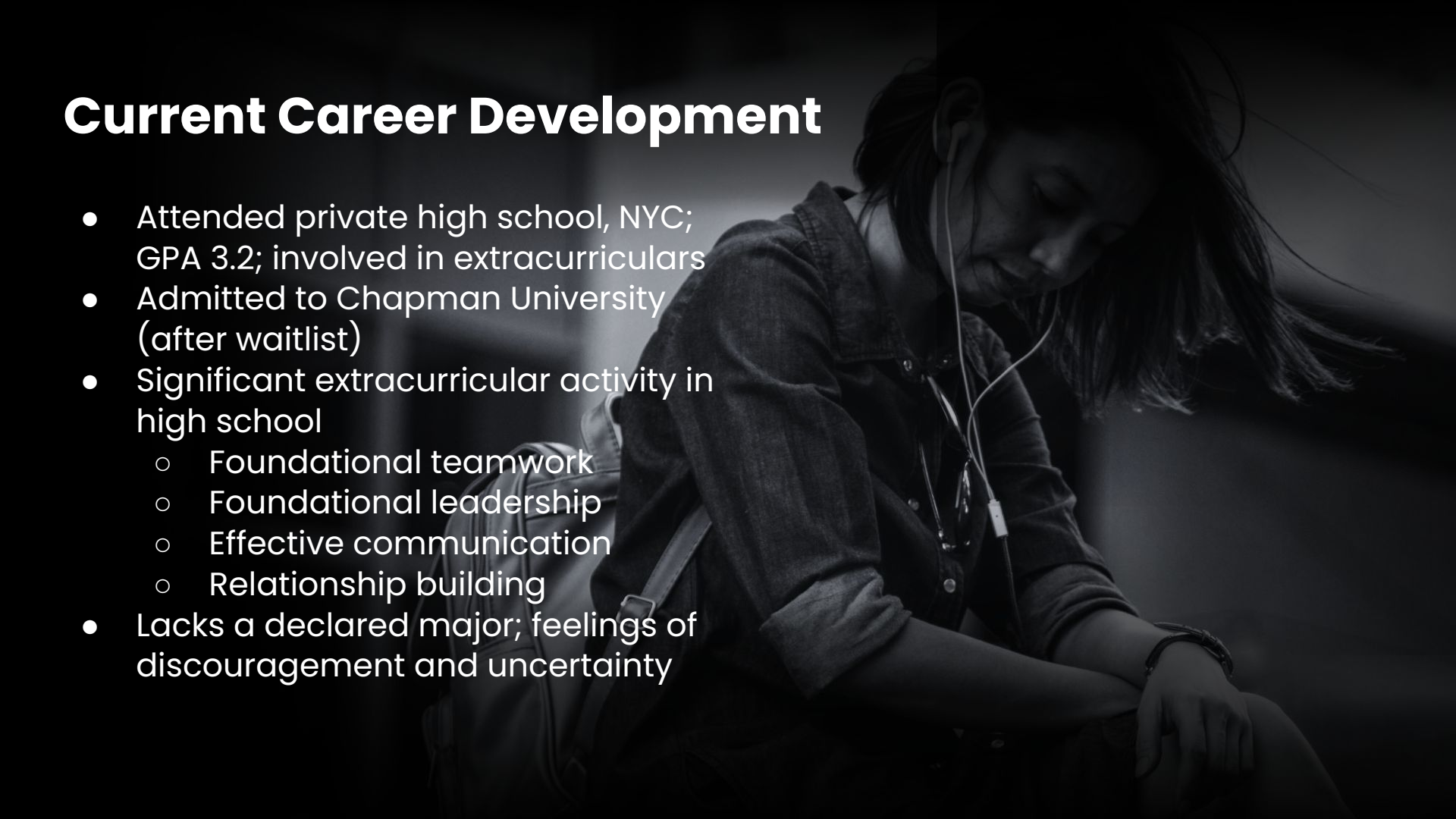
- **Demographics**
  - **Name:** Li Mei Huang
  - **Age:** 19
  - **Sex:** Female
  - **Race/Ethnicity:** Taiwanese-American
  - **Education:** Sophomore at Chapman University

- **Client Highlights**
  - Attended a rigorous, private high school with a 3.2 GPA.
  - Gained admission to Chapman University, albeit from a waitlist, illustrating academic resilience amidst strong competition.
  - Internalized familial and cultural messages that equate self-worth with high achievement
  - Lacks clarity about declaring a major and future career trajectory, reflecting career indecision.
  - Li Mei's symptoms of discouragement and low motivation, rooted in familial invisibility, are intertwined with her career indecision and impede the development of a positive vocational identity (Kim & Choi, 2019; Murdock, 2017).



Current Career Development

- Attended private high school, NYC; GPA 3.2; involved in extracurriculars
- Admitted to Chapman University (after waitlist)
- Significant extracurricular activity in high school
    - Foundational teamwork
    - Foundational leadership
    - Effective communication
    - Relationship building
- Lacks a declared major; feelings of discouragement and uncertainty



Reasons for Seeking Career Counseling

Internal:

- Persistent sleep issues, headaches, lack of energy
- Feelings of inadequacy and invisibility in family
- Low motivation to be curious about identity and its relation to career
- Uncertainty about career direction and major

External:

- Family expectations and comparisons to accomplished siblings
- Physician referral due to physical symptoms not explained by medical tests

Unique Problems/Situations Impacting Counseling

- **The Core Issues**
  - Persistent somatic symptoms suggest underlying depressive or anxiety-related concerns (Murdock, 2017).
  - Familial comparisons create invisibility and erode self-worth (Kim & Choi, 2019).
  - Cultural stigma impedes mental health help-seeking (Kallivayalil, 2007).
  - Vocational uncertainty undermines self-efficacy and academic engagement (Kim & Choi, 2019).
  - Intersectional pressures demand trauma-informed, socially just counseling approaches (Kallivayalil, 2007).

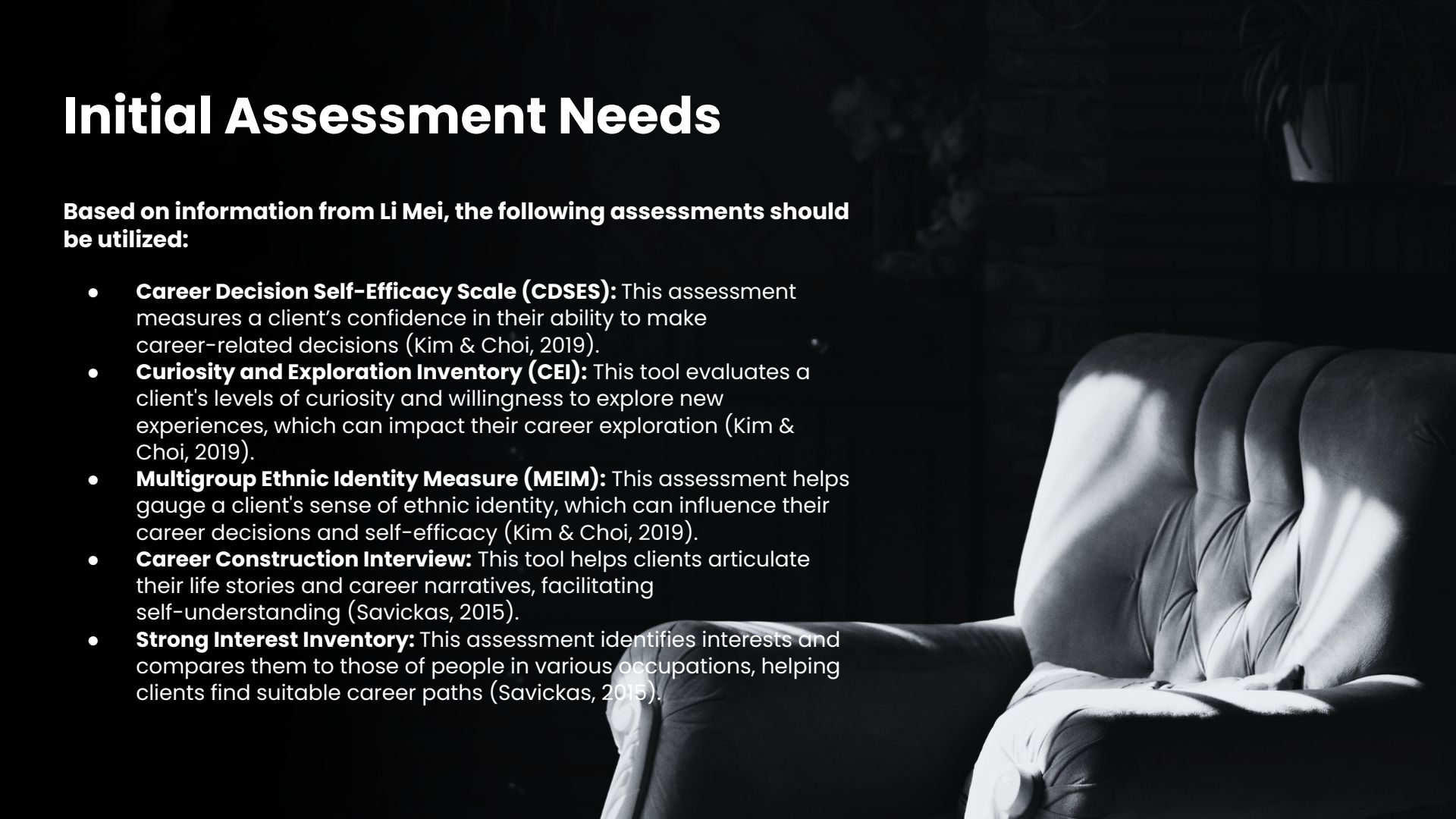
Contextual Issues: Culture & Family

- Asian family structure: high parental expectations, emphasis on achievement (Kim & Choi, 2019)
- Li Mei's struggle with ethnic identity and career decision self-efficacy (Kim & Choi, 2019)
- Impact of patriarchal norms, parental disappointment (Kallivayalil, 2007; Murdock, 2017)
- Feminist-informed Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Career Construction Theory seek to challenge these internalized and external pressures

Initial Assessment Needs

Based on information from Li Mei, the following assessments should be utilized:

- **Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSES):** This assessment measures a client's confidence in their ability to make career-related decisions (Kim & Choi, 2019).
- **Curiosity and Exploration Inventory (CEI):** This tool evaluates a client's levels of curiosity and willingness to explore new experiences, which can impact their career exploration (Kim & Choi, 2019).
- **Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM):** This assessment helps gauge a client's sense of ethnic identity, which can influence their career decisions and self-efficacy (Kim & Choi, 2019).
- **Career Construction Interview:** This tool helps clients articulate their life stories and career narratives, facilitating self-understanding (Savickas, 2015).
- **Strong Interest Inventory:** This assessment identifies interests and compares them to those of people in various occupations, helping clients find suitable career paths (Savickas, 2015).



Career Theories Through a Feminist Lens

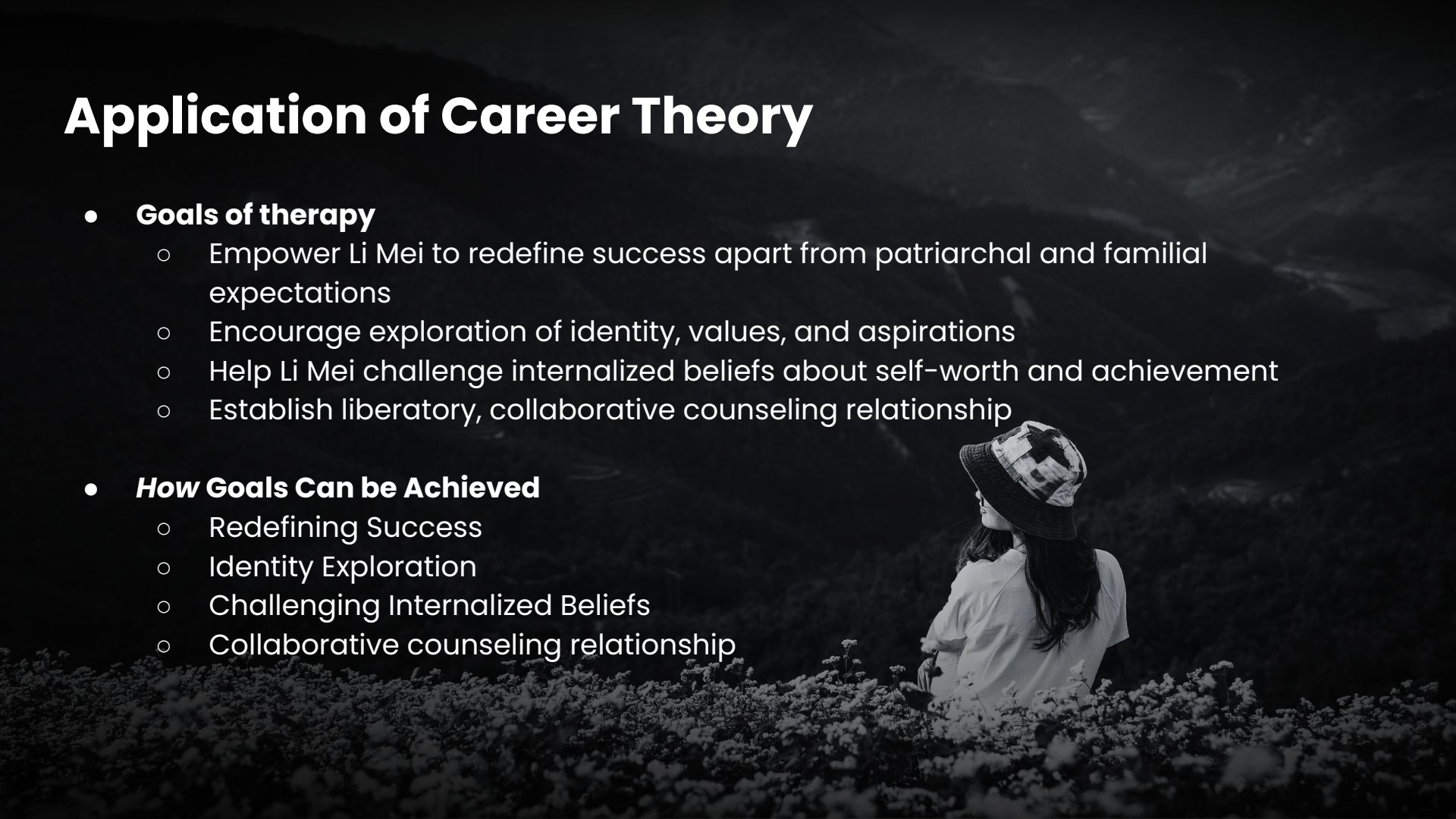


- **Major Theories**
  - **Feminist therapy (FT)** aims to challenge patriarchal systems, address oppressive realities, and foster personal growth (Murdock, 2017).
  - **Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT):** Addressing her low self-efficacy, stemming from persistent familial comparisons and feelings of inadequacy, by enhancing her confidence can help her develop a more positive self-image, motivating her to explore various career options (Kim & Choi, 2019).
  - **Career Construction Theory** emphasizes the importance of identity in career development. Engaging in activities that promote curiosity about her identity will empower her and deepen her self-understanding (Kim & Choi, 2019).
- **Major Concepts to Challenge:** Gender roles, power, oppression, sociocultural context, empowerment, non-oppressive relationships, community connection and support, self-image and efficacy, understanding of ethnic identity in relation to self.

Application of Career Theory

- **Goals of therapy**
  - Empower Li Mei to redefine success apart from patriarchal and familial expectations
  - Encourage exploration of identity, values, and aspirations
  - Help Li Mei challenge internalized beliefs about self-worth and achievement
  - Establish liberatory, collaborative counseling relationship

- ***How* Goals Can be Achieved**
  - Redefining Success
  - Identity Exploration
  - Challenging Internalized Beliefs
  - Collaborative counseling relationship



Defining Li Mei’s Career Development Process Pt. 1

- **Self-Assessment**
  - CDSES, CEI, MEIM, serving as critical self-reflection tools to uncover ways familial, cultural, and patriarchal narratives influence Li Mei's self-concept
  - Counselor relationship validates Li Mei's experiences, acknowledging her intersecting identities.
- **Exploration**
  - Li Mei is empowered to explore a spectrum of career interests and possibilities through a variety of activities centering community connection, campus clubs, and counselor-initiated informational interviews.
  - Counselor relationship challenges internalized scripts of inadequacy and reframes acts of curiosity as resistance of patriarchal familial constraints and sociocultural burdens.
- **Decision-Making**
  - Through Career Construction interviewing and self-analysis of interest profile, Li Mei collaborates with her counselor, discussing career options that consider market trends and Li Mei's identity based on Li Mei's metrics of success.
  - The counselor relationship serves as a sounding board, a collaborative liberatory environment modeling egalitarian decision-making and mutual respect.



Defining Li Mei’s Career Development Process Pt. 2

- **Action Planning**
  - Counselor and Li Mei co-create a realistic action plan aligned with Li Mei's self-determined goals incorporating skill-building, education, community engagement, and coping/engagement strategies to address ongoing pressure from family
  - Counseling relationship is firmly grounded in feminist empowerment principles that reinforce healthy boundary-setting, support-seeking, and self-empowerment
- **Implementation**
  - Li Mei and counselor co-create a scaffolded system for implementing Li Mei's academic, career, and self-determined plan.
  - Counselor relationship focuses on actively advocating for Li Mei within institutional systems, connecting her with resources, supports, mentors, and systems affirming of Li Mei's identity.
- **Evaluation and Adjustment**
  - Upon implementation, the plan is regularly evaluated together, and the counseling relationship shifts toward collaborative goal and strategy adjustment based on Li Mei's continued lived experience, evolving with her self-efficacy.
  - The counselor relationship continues to foster an egalitarian environment supporting Li Mei in critically assessing the systemic barriers she experiences accompanied by reinforcement of Li Mei's strengths to sustain self-confidence so as to amplify her voice in all decisions.



Career Resources Adapted to Li Mei

Online:

1. **O*NET Online:** Career exploration and job analysis (onetonline.org)
2. **My Next Move:** Easy-to-use site for career exploration (mynextmove.org)
3. **Asian American Feminist Collective**: grassroots racial and gender justice group based in New York City engaging in intersectional feminist politics https://www.asianamfeminism.org/resources

Local:

1. **Chapman University Career and Professional Development Office:** On-campus career guidance, internships, workshops
   a. https://www.chapman.edu/campus-services/career-professional-development/index.aspx
2. **Chapman University Clubs & Organizations**
   a. https://www.chapman.edu/students/life/clubs-organizations/index.aspx
3. **Asian Pacific Student Association:** Student group for cultural connection and peer support
   a. https://www.instagram.com/chapmanapsa/?hl=en

Ethical & Legal Considerations

- **Confidentiality and Informed Consent:** Clearly explain informed consent, disclosure limits, professional qualifications, and session structure. Strictly maintain confidentiality, except in cases of imminent harm or legal requirement (NCDA, n.d.).
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Integrate Li Mei’s cultural identity and intersecting oppressions into counseling approaches free from Western-centric frameworks (Mullan, 2023; NCDA, n.d.)
- **Competence and Self-Reflection:** Engage in continual self-assessment regarding competencies, seeking consultation or referral when Li Mei's needs surpass the counselor's competence (Murdock, 2017).
- **Empowerment and Non-Pathologization:** Center Li Mei's agency, strengths, and aspirations prioritizing empowerment over pathologizing and assimilationist approaches (Mullan, 2023).
- **Advocacy and Social Justice:** Advocate for Li Mei within institutional contexts, actively challenging discriminatory structures, connecting her to affirming resources (Mullan, 2023).

Final Thoughts For Li Mei



- Counseling must be culturally responsive through ethical, feminist praxis.
- Empowerment and agency must be centered above all else to break through oppressive systems limiting Li Mei's self-efficacy
- Support Li Mei in challenging and dismantling systemic barriers both internally and externally so she may take on institutional and sociocultural barriers impeding her.
- Provide identity-affirming resources and referrals to campus networks, organizations, and peer-led support groups.

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