



Coping Patterns in Decision Making

Janis and Mann (1977) have identified 5 patterns of decision-making. Which pattern is yours?

#1 - Unconflicted Adherence

Pattern of decision making that sticks to an occupational choice already made no matter what happens. This person sticks to the course of action despite signals that it could be a disastrous decision.

- **Characteristics:** indifference, apathy, complacency, and lack of attention to information suggesting the choice is not a good one
- **Emotions:** low degree of stress and anxiety about career decisions in general
- **Motto:** "Till death do us part."

#2 - Unconflicted change

Pattern of constantly shifting occupational goals, without much thought given to the changes in direction. This person is attracted to one occupation for a while but then switches to another, and another and so on.

- **Characteristics:** similar to unconflicted adherence - indifference
- **Emotions:** low degree of stress and anxiety around decision-making
- **Motto:** "Don't look before you leap!"

#3 - Defensive Avoidance

Pattern of avoiding any serious discussion of making a decision and denies there is any problem. This person uses denial to reduce inner conflict of knowing that a decision must be made.

- **Characteristics:** delaying, shifting responsibility onto someone else, exaggerating favourable aspects of the occupational choice to minimize negative consequences
- **Emotions:** low degree of stress and anxiety
- **Motto:** "Don't disturb me now, I'll cross that bridge later."

#4 - Hypervigilance

Occurs when a person is overwhelmed by the need to make a decision but has little time to do so. The person's thought processes are virtually paralyzed and effective decision-making is unlikely to occur.

- **Characteristics:** panic as deadline draws closer, agitation and tension due to pressure of the situation
- **Emotions:** high levels of stress and anxiety
- **Motto:** "There is not enough time!"

#5 - Vigilance

Pattern of decision-making involving openness and flexibility along with a willingness to make a commitment and exercise prudence. This person explores a wide range of occupational choices, gathers information about each option, and carefully evaluates costs, risks, and both positive and negative consequences for each career option.

- **Characteristics:** information gathering, commits to new course of action and sticks with it long enough to evaluate fairly
- **Emotions:** moderate degree of anxiety and stress
- **Motto:** "After careful consideration..."