

Mid-career Transitions

Interim Report

December 2024

Blueprint

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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About the Future Skills Centre

The [Future Skills Centre](#) (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and The Conference Board of Canada, and are funded by the [Government of Canada's Future Skills Program](#).

About Blueprint

[Blueprint](#) was founded on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change.

Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively generate and use evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.





About this report

This report presents learnings from the **co-design and prototyping phase** of the *Mid-career Transitions* project, led by the **Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT)** in Winnipeg, MB and **Douglas College (DC)** in Greater Vancouver, BC.

Following a [needs assessment](#) conducted from February to May 2023, MITT and DC undertook a rapid co-design and prototyping process with two cohorts of mid-career workers from April to November 2023. Partners arrived at two novel prototypes designed to support workers' mid-career transitions.

This document describes that co-design process, the two service models, and early learnings from prototype testing with both workers and Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) who delivered the services. This phase focused primarily on the worker service components and associated learning; partners' experiences working with employers and additional cohorts of workers will be captured in the *Final Report*.

Our work is organized into six sections:

- **Introduction (pgs. 8–9)** outlines the policy and labour market contexts to which the *Mid-career Transitions* project is responding.
- **About the Mid-career Transitions models (pgs. 10–16)** introduces the models' co-design and prototyping approach, user journeys, and iteration process.
- **Methodology (pgs. 17–20)** presents Blueprint's evidence generation approach, learning agenda, data sources, and limitations.
- **Findings from the DC service model (pgs. 21–32)** and **Findings from the MITT service model (pgs. 33–45)** present findings from prototype testing: the participant samples, their experiences and early outcomes, and recommendations for implementation from both participants and CDPs.
- **Conclusions (pgs. 46–47)** describes next steps for the project and the Final Report.

Executive summary

This report offers findings from the prototyping phase of the Mid-career Transitions project, co-led by Douglas College (DC) and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT). Following a [needs assessment](#) (conducted from February to May 2023), MITT and DC set out to design a dual-client model aimed at serving both workers and employers with their career and workforce development needs. Both organizations undertook a rapid co-design and prototyping process, focusing first on developing services for the worker side of the model. These services were tested with two cohorts of mid-career workers from April to November 2023. Partners arrived at two novel prototypes, each designed to support workers' mid-career transitions.

This document describes that co-design process, the two service models, and early learnings from prototype testing with both workers and Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) who delivered the services. Findings are based on survey data, workshops with participants, and interviews and debriefs with CDPs and other staff at the two institutions, collected from April 2023 to October 2024.

About the service model prototypes

- Each prototype engaged mid-career Canadians seeking career transitions in two cohorts; both sought to instill confidence, identify viable and desirable career opportunities, identify upskilling pathways, and provide tailored guidance. Trained and experienced CDPs co-designed and delivered services using insights from the needs assessment phase.
- The prototypes were initially quite distinct. The DC model targeted individuals with at least five years of Canadian work experience and involved a series of group workshops delivered over 12 weeks. Time-limited, one-on-one career counselling was available on an as-needed basis. The MITT model was a one-on-one, individualized counselling service delivered over six-to-eight-weeks and focused on newcomers, longer-term immigrants, and Canadian-born workers.
- Both models relied on continuous feedback loops from participants and facilitators to refine services. By the end of the prototyping phase, the models had iterated to adopt some features of the other. Each delivered facilitated group workshops, independent resources, and one-on-one counseling from CDPs. Specifics on workshops, counselling, and toolkits are detailed in [Section 2. About the mid-career transition models](#).

Participant demographics, needs, and rates of satisfaction

- Both the DC and MITT participants were predominantly women, highly educated, employed full-time, and within a similar mid-career age range. Both included a significant proportion of immigrants. Other demographic details varied, emphasizing the need for CDPs to be adaptable in their approaches and knowledgeable of various contexts.
- **Sixty-eight percent** of DC exit survey respondents noted the model addressed either all or much of the needs they originally surfaced, and **90%** of MITT respondents reported it addressed the exact career support needs they presented to their CDPs.

- DC exit survey respondents reported **high rates of satisfaction** with much of the career development workshops, ranging from **84%** to **96%**. Nearly all (**92%**) respondents engaged in one-on-one counselling with CDPs. Those who did found the sessions informative, positive, and customized to their needs, noting they **supported them** “a lot” or “somewhat” in percentages ranging from **75%** to **95%**.
- MITT respondents also reported **high rates of satisfaction** with service components, ranging from **90%** to **100%**. Respondents indicated high levels of utility with the career exploration services (in rates from **76%** to **100%**). All (**100%**) rated the career services as very effective in creating a safe, supportive environment, and **100%** found the services effective in fostering positive relationships with CDPs.

Early participant outcomes

- Respondents reported that the prototypes helped them achieve awareness and/or knowledge of career development strategies; confidence to navigate career transitions; changes in mindsets about their career and career transitions; and motivation to make transitions, re-evaluate employment, and/or pursue training or education. In the exit survey, respondents reported high rates of agreement with questions related to desired outcomes, ranging from **72%** to **84%** (DC) and from **86%** to **95%** (MITT).

Participant feedback for improvement

- DC participants suggested expanded LMI on career options, employee vs. contractor roles, required skills, and alternative career paths; guidance on preparing for work disruptions; additional mental health resources; extended workshop lengths and more in-person sessions for peer engagement; increased one-on-one counseling for personalized support; and post-program follow-ups to ensure alignment.
- MITT participants suggested information on financial aid, budgeting, and literacy for managing training expenses; resources on professional branding and employability, such as LinkedIn profile creation; greater employer engagement through mentorships and industry insights; more in-person group sessions for networking and peer learning; and a longer program duration to deepen relationships with peers and CDPs.

CDP assets and suggestions for improvement

- DC CDPs highlighted the importance of extensive experience serving mid-career clients, thorough screening and onboarding processes, and combining self-paced with group-based learning to tailor content and scale services effectively. They also noted limited time for one-on-one counseling and follow-ups, which constrained their ability to monitor participant action plans and support next steps, post-program.
- MITT CDPs emphasized understanding participants' diverse experiences, making referrals for non-career challenges (e.g., mental health, financial issues), and using a strengths-based approach to highlight skills. They noted the need for ongoing services to help participants move beyond 'survival jobs' and navigate barriers as newcomers.

- Both DC and MITT CDPs stressed fostering independence while maintaining one-on-one support. They proposed additional self-guided tools to build participant skills independently, allowing CDPs to focus their sessions on reviewing progress, promoting self-reliance, and managing workloads to support more participants.

What's next?

- Our upcoming *Final Report* will focus on adaptations made to the model in 2024 and 2025. As new cohorts experience the models, new learnings will emerge, and adjustments will be made in response to feedback received.
- This phase also focused primarily on the *worker* service components and associated learning; partners' experiences working with employers and additional cohorts of workers will be captured in our *Final Report*.

1. Introduction

Canada's labour market is changing, but our learning ecosystem is falling behind.

The rise of globalization and automation, an aging population, and the impacts of COVID-19 are driving significant changes in Canada's labour market. Frequent job transitions are becoming the norm—by 2030, one in 16 workers may need to switch occupations.¹ However, mid-career workers and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—which compose 99.7% of Canadian businesses and employ over half (54%) of working individuals²—lack the supports they need to navigate these transitions effectively, leading to a significant skills mismatch in our workforce that affects both workers and employers.

There are critical gaps in Canada's career development ecosystem.

Research shows career development services can help people make informed decisions, gain skills, and achieve better job satisfaction and economic outcomes.^{3,4,5} Yet, little research has focused on SME employers or those who are *already* employed. This knowledge gap is particularly evident in Canada, where there is a profound systems gap that perpetuates it.

As discussed in our report, [Reimagining Career Services and the Future of Work](#), as well as in the [Advisory Council on Economic Growth's Learning Nation Report](#), a linear path of learning is no longer tenable. Today, individuals seeking to upgrade their skills and/or make career transitions must embrace the roles of both worker and learner simultaneously. In other words, they must engage in a continuous cycle of skill development throughout their working lives. Traditional employment services designed primarily for unemployed individuals require people to 'fail first,' leaving a glaring gap for those seeking to upskill and reskill while remaining employed.

We are missing a crucial 'third pillar' in Canada's learning ecosystem: skills development and career services for working-age, employed Canadians. On the employer side, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack the workforce planning expertise to define what skills their organizations need, now and in the future, and aren't getting the support they need from government-funded employment services.

Future-proofing mid-career workers and SMEs is critical to a resilient labour market.

Helping both parties proactively anticipate and navigate labour market disruptions has the potential for significant economic impacts. Ensuring that workers have access to the right opportunities for career growth and mobility while navigating dynamic labour market landscapes can unlock their full economic potential. By equipping SME employers with the right tools and resources to nurture their employees' development alongside their business needs, we can help them address economic challenges and build their resiliency to face future disruptions.

1 Lund, S., Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Smit, S., Ellingrud, K., & Robinson, O. (2021, February). *The future of work after COVID*. McKinsey Global Institute. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19#/>

2 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2024, March 18). *Key small business statistics 2023*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/key-small-business-statistics/key-small-business-statistics-2023>

3 Reese, R., & Miller, C. (2006). Effects of a university career development course on career decision-making self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 14, 252–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072705274985>

4 Bimrose, J., & Barnes, S. A. (2006). Is career guidance effective? Evidence from a longitudinal study in England. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 15(2), 19–25. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/103841620601500205>

5 Harrington, T. F., & Harrington, T. A. (2006). Practice and research in career counseling and development – 2005. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 55(2), 98–167. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00010.x>

The *Mid-career Transitions* project is responding to these opportunities.

In response, Blueprint partnered with the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) in Winnipeg, MB and Douglas College (DC) in Greater Vancouver, BC (see **Box 1**) to launch the *Mid-career Transitions* project. Funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), the project is co-designing and testing innovative dual-client career service models with mid-career workers and SME employers to benefit both sides of the labour market.

In the first project phase (February to May 2023), MITT and DC conducted an extensive needs assessment to understand the perspectives and career transition and development needs of mid-career workers currently seeking career transitions, and the attitudes and needs of SME employers hoping to develop their workforces. Our partners distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews with both groups with evidence generation support from Blueprint. Our [Needs Assessment Report](#) (June 2024) presents learnings from this period.

Building and testing career development services through co-design.

Then, from April to November 2023, partners engaged workers and SME employers from the needs assessment phase in a collaborative process to design and test career development service models. Using a rapid prototyping approach, each partner developed initial service prototypes, delivered them to participants through two cohorts, and iterated the models based on participant feedback. By the end of this phase, MITT and DC developed two distinct service models tailored to support mid-career transitions for workers.

This *Interim Report* analyzes the co-design and prototyping phase, highlighting lessons and progress in developing innovative career service solutions. Our upcoming *Final Report* (November 2025) will include data from additional participant cohorts and from employer engagement in the prototype.

Box 1 | Project partners

The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) provides certificate, post-graduate, and diploma-level technical training for career-oriented post-secondary and secondary students in four clusters of specialization: information and business technology, health care, human services, and skilled trades. MITT has deep collaborations with industry to identify skills gaps, both technical and soft (Success@Work Skills), and to deliver focused industry training.

The Training Group at Douglas College in Greater Vancouver, British Columbia delivers government-funded training and employment programming for individuals and employers alongside a range of other services, including essential skills training, language services for newcomers and self-employment training. The Training Group has significant experience and expertise in program development, implementation and improvement within BC's publicly funded employment services system, as well as in demonstrating new innovations outside of it.

2. About the mid-career transition models

MITT and DC set out to design a dual-client model aimed at serving both workers and employers with their career and workforce development needs. Both organizations undertook a rapid co-design and prototyping process, focusing first on developing services for the worker side of the model.

Both DC and MITT service models were designed to support **mid-career, working Canadians hoping to explore and plan career transitions rather than simply change jobs or receive basic job search support**. The needs assessment revealed that participants entered the program lacking confidence to make career transitions and were feeling stuck. They came to the program to receive support with navigating transitions; align their skills, personal values, and work experience with new career opportunities; identify upskilling and training pathways to achieve their goals; and receive career guidance to enter or re-enter mid-career positions in a field, industry, or sector that they previously worked in (this was especially the case for immigrants).

Both models engaged trained CDPs—with experience in public and private practice—to co-lead the design, produce materials based on themes emerging from the needs assessment, and deliver the services.

Anticipated outcomes for participants included demonstrated improvements in career self-efficacy and ability to navigate their careers, independently and with intention; ability to access more career development tools and supports; a more positive mindset toward, better knowledge of, and capacity to manage career transitions; a better understanding of their values, purpose, and strengths and their impact on career transitions; and a pliable action plan to guide their growth.

2.1. The Douglas College service model design

2.1.1. Recruitment, service journey, and outcomes

For **cohort one (July to Sept. 2023)**, program staff invited individuals who participated in the needs assessment phase to test the initial prototype. For **cohort two (Sept. to Nov. 2023)**, staff recruited from the greater Vancouver area through DC social media channels and alumni networks. Staff conducted intake interviews with applicants to ensure eligibility and program suitability. DC refined the model's **target demographic** described above to individuals with at least five years of Canadian work experience.

The model consisted of a series of facilitated workshops, independent resources, and access to one-on-one career counselling, delivered over a 12-week period, outlined in **Table 1**.

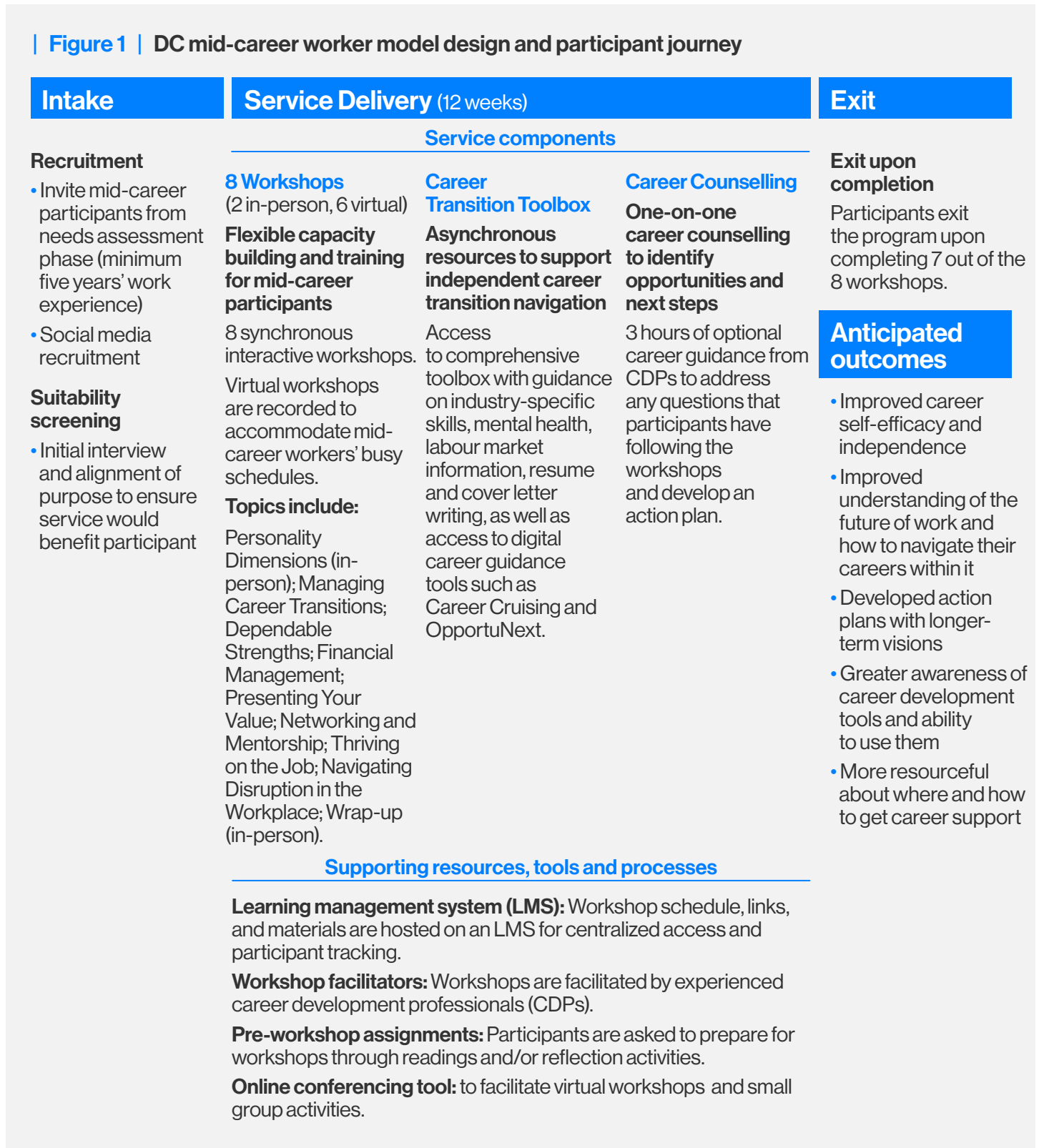
Table 1 | Service model components

Component	Description
Facilitated workshops	Participants engaged in eight group workshops, designed to enhance model scalability and replicability (with two delivered in-person and six virtually) and informed by career theories ⁶ and change management theory ⁷ to acknowledge that career transitions are challenging for many people, regardless of education or profession. Workshops began by building participants' career self-awareness and confidence to navigate uncertainties, moved to building specific skills relevant for career transitions (such as networking and financial management), and concluded with a wrap-up session, allowing participants to network and reflect as a group about their progress. Participants received pre-workshop readings and assignments via a learning management system (LMS). In-person sessions were timed strategically to provide opportunities for relationship-building between peers and facilitators. They were delivered in the evenings (when mid-career workers were often available) and recorded for asynchronous access.
“Career transition toolbox”	During and after the program, participants accessed a “career transition toolbox” offering mental health resources, guidance on resume and cover letter writing and industry-specific skills, and labour market information (LMI) featuring employers in high-demand sectors. It offered access to digital career guidance tools, such as Career Cruising and OpportuNext , designed to support identification of viable career transition pathways and encourage participants to think proactively about transitions.
One-on-one career counselling	Participants needing further support could access up to three, one-hour counselling sessions led by CDPs, designed to answer questions and help develop action plans. By sequencing the sessions, the program provided time to discuss and follow-up on participants' concerns, recognizing that mid-career workers were at various stages of their career journeys and levels of self-efficacy, requiring different intensities of individualized guidance.

6 Robertson, P. J., Hooley, T., & McCash, P. (Eds.). (2020). *The Oxford handbook of career development*. Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190069704.001.0001>

7 Phillips, J., & Klein, J. D. (2022). Change management: From theory to practice. *TechTrends*, 67(1), 189–197. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-022-00775-0>

Figure 1 depicts the model, workshop topics, and delivery modes.



2.1.2. Innovation and iteration

The model evolved through iterative co-design and continuous feedback. Surveys co-developed with Blueprint assessed participant outcomes and gathered input, while facilitators adapted content based on reflections and observations. Post-program surveys provided additional cohort feedback. DC's improvements to the initial prototype during this phase are outlined in **Table 2**.

Table 2 | Iterations to prototype model (April to November 2023)

Iteration	Description
Expanded access	The Canadian work experience criterion was lowered from ten to five years, expanding access to recently migrated mid-career professionals.
Personalized support	Optional counselling time was standardized to be up to three hours for all participants.
Workshop enhancements	Staff streamlined group workshops from ten to eight ⁸ sessions to foster relationship-building, collective career reflection, and networking. Some skills-based workshops (such as financial management) were split into smaller sessions to optimize facilitator-to-participant ratios. Participants reported that updated workshop content was equally relevant to them. Based on this finding, workshops shifted from an à la carte model to required attendance at a minimum of seven of eight modules.
New tools and platforms	DC introduced the “career transitions toolkit” to support participants with independent, flexible, and asynchronous learning options. All content was integrated into a LMS to centralize resources, facilitate scaling, and enhance future testing and delivery.

See **Appendix A** for a visual illustration of the changes made to the prototype during this phase.

2.2. The MITT service model design

2.2.1. Recruitment, service journey, and outcomes

Both of MITT's cohorts (delivered **April to July** and **August to October 2023**) included participants involved in the needs assessment. For **cohort two**, staff also recruited participants living in the Winnipeg area through CDP and MITT social media channels and MITT's website and alumni network.⁹ Upon intake, participants received one-on-one consultations with an assigned CDP, who identified career transition needs and readiness and commenced building a collaborative working relationship. MITT's model **target demographic** engaged a diverse range of newcomers, immigrants, and Canadian-born workers with varied education and employment

⁸ Based on participant feedback, content on career transitions was reduced from two to one session. The Thriving in the Global Workplace workshop was removed.

⁹ Three participants in cohort two were referred to the program by MITT's employer partners; these participants received services that supported them and their employers in charting career paths within their organizations (e.g., getting a promotion, identifying opportunities for growth, etc.) rather than transitioning into a different job or career altogether.

backgrounds; in particular, MITT believed the model might address a key service gap for immigrants: services to help them transition from survival jobs to commensurate employment.

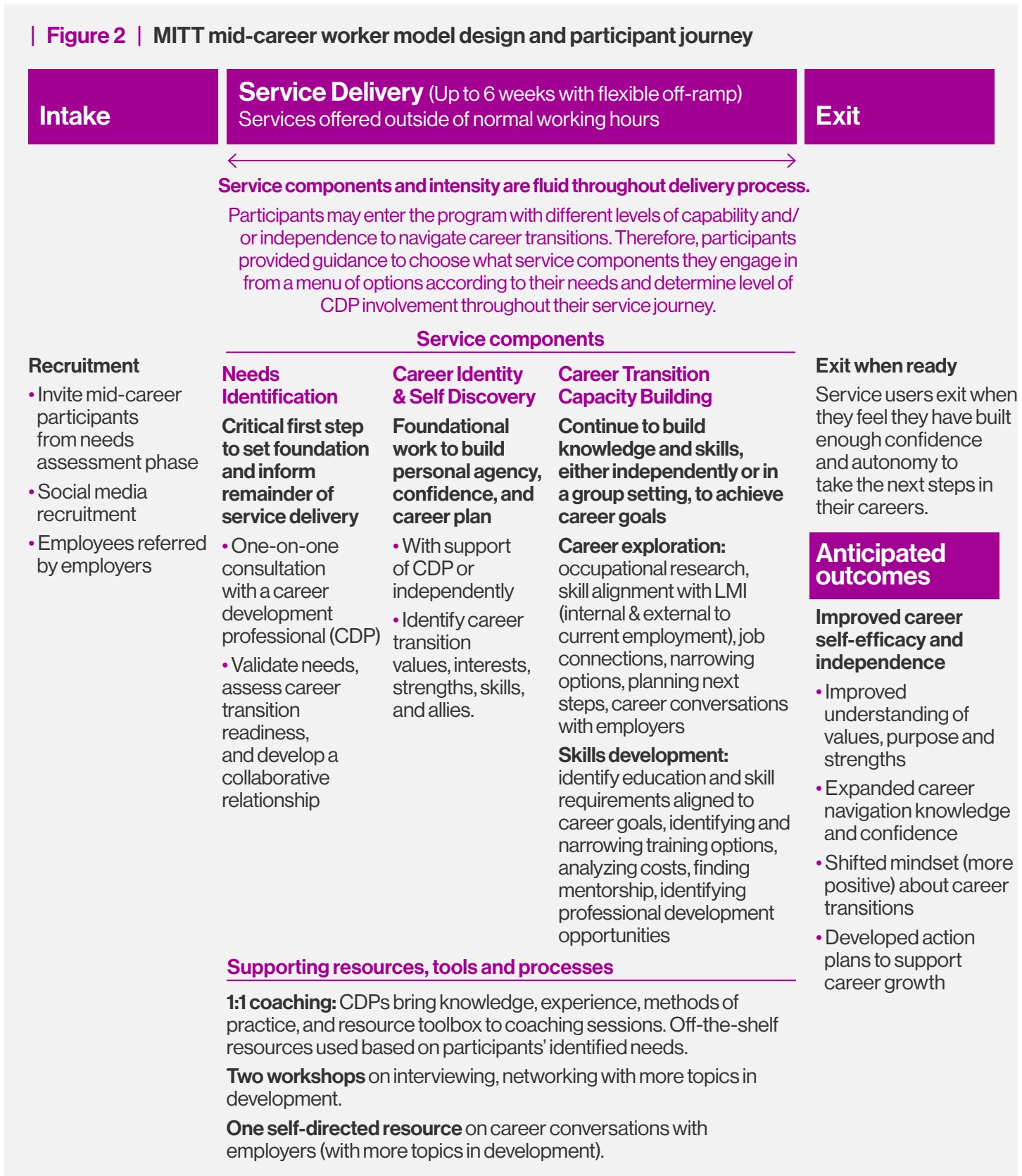
MITT's prototype provided personalized, one-on-one career transition services tailored to individual needs over six to eight weeks. Based on feedback, the second cohort had increased flexibility for extended support. The program used an 'exit-when-ready' approach, letting participants transition out once they felt confident to pursue their career goals. Its flexible, non-linear design let participants navigate service components as their needs evolved, with CDPs guiding them based on their unique levels of self-efficacy. Service components are described in **Table 3**.

While servicing mid-career participants during cohort two, MITT staff began to engage employers to inform the design of employer service components. MITT conducted in-depth consultation with eight SME employers to better understand employer needs, language (i.e., the specific terminology and phrases employers use), and potential intersection points to enhance the employer-employee relationship from a career/workforce development perspective. Working with employer participants helped MITT refine elements of the model for workers (e.g., coaching workers how to communicate more effectively with employers). Likewise, MITT informed their employer service model with what they learned from worker participants.

Table 3 | Service model components

Component	Description
One-on-one coaching	Participants selected career coaching support from a menu of options, divided into career exploration, skills development services, and job connection and with guidance from their CDP. Career exploration activities allowed participants to engage in self-identity work, looking at their values, strengths, skills, and interests; use LMI to research jobs and occupations; and explore options in their current workplace through research and career conversations. Skill development activities gave them access to information about education and training options for developing their skills and support from CDPs in making crucial decisions. Job connections supported the identification of job possibilities aligned with competencies and effective search strategies. CDPs incorporated off-the-shelf resources and brought their knowledge and practice methods to help individuals navigate the process based on their identified and emerging needs. Throughout the service, CDPs cultivated a growth mindset within participants. The model incorporated various theoretical approaches and utilized an educational focus to enhance participants' sense of ownership and agency.
Group workshops	Two in-person group workshops on interviewing and networking were available for any interested participants. The workshops focused on skill-building, and post-workshop activities were encouraged to solidify learning and increase confidence. Where requested, additional one-on-one support was provided to address individual needs.
Self-directed resource	Participants were offered self-directed resources complementary to the support provided by the CDP. Based on an identified need, a specific resource was developed to support career conversations in the workplace, to bring together employers and individuals to embrace internal employee growth and progression.

Figure 2 depicts the model, workshop topics, and delivery modes.



2.2.2. Innovation and iteration

MITT's service model was the result of a flexible, user-centred co-design process and continuous feedback loop to improve the program in real-time. Staff exchanged feedback and enabled rapid identification of service needs. Participants gave feedback through surveys, reflections, and conversations with their CDPs. The focus on co-design gave CDPs a heightened awareness of need variation across participants and helped them provide a personalized service. Drawing on feedback channels, MITT made two notable adjustments, described in **Table 4**:

Table 4 | Iterations to the model

Iteration	Description
Group workshops	In the needs assessment phase, participants indicated that they would prefer one-on-one supports to help them focus on career self-reflection and ensure CDPs were responsive to their career needs and life circumstances. Throughout service delivery, however, participant and staff feedback revealed a common set of needs and interests (beginning with interviewing and networking), leading to two group workshops on these topics.
Career conversations	CDPs noted a recurring gap while working with workers and employers: neither group understood the other's needs and perspectives. Workers were often unable to see or navigate opportunities within their workplace; employers were unaware of the hidden skillsets of some employees and made assumptions about their needs and desires for internal mobility, resulting in a struggle to recruit and retain them. To address this issue, 'career conversations' resources were developed to enhance communication between both groups, increase understanding of each other's perspectives, goals, and needs, and foster win-win situations. Designed to support career discussions in the workplace, these materials encouraged collaboration between employers and employees, promoting internal employee growth and progression while also tackling employer skill gaps and retention challenges.
Increased service delivery flexibility	CDPs extended service delivery beyond eight weeks to accommodate individuals' life circumstances and career transition needs.

See **Appendix A** for a visual depiction of the changes made to the prototype during this phase.

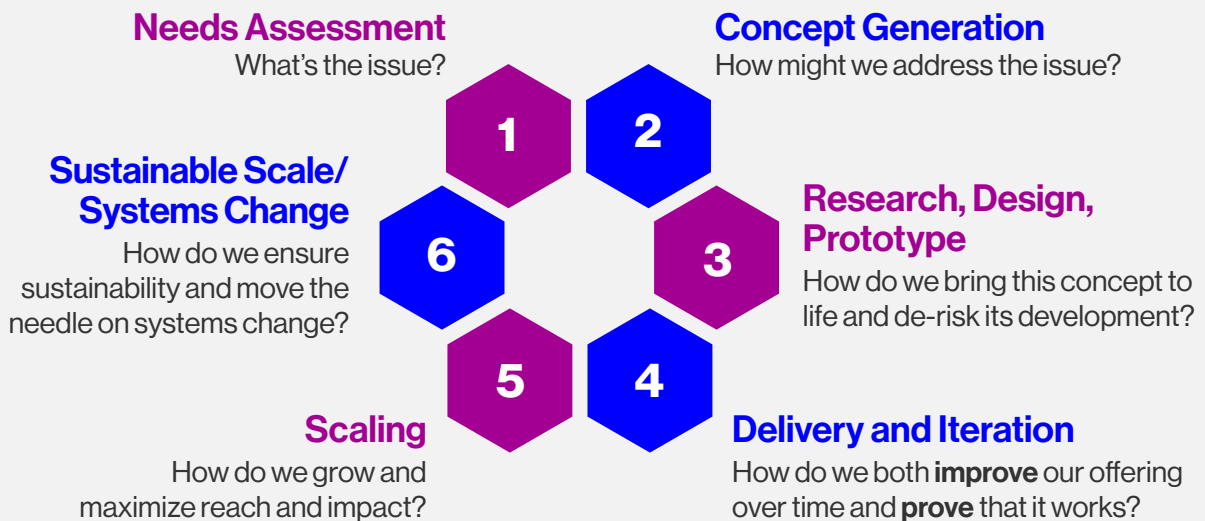
3. Methodology

3.1. Blueprint’s evidence generation approach

Blueprint has developed a novel approach to evidence generation that fits within the six stages of the innovation cycle to support the scaling-up of promising interventions. By understanding an intervention’s stage of development, we can determine the most appropriate tools to advance it to the next stage. **Box 5** of the [Scaling Design Report](#) provides more details on our evidence generation approach.

The *Reimagining Career Services* projects are currently in Stages 1 to 3 of the innovation cycle. This means our emphasis is on co-designing models with partners and end users and developing and testing multiple iterations. Our evidence generation approach aims to move each project through Stages 3 and 4 via a better understanding of user needs and data-driven, continuous improvement. Interventions typically progress to Stage 4 when they are deemed full models, meaning they are developed with all anticipated components and future changes are expected to focus on continuous improvement.

Figure 3 | The Six-stage Innovation Cycle



3.2. Learning agenda

The prototyping phase focused on the following questions:

- **Participant sample.**
 - Who were the participants?
- **Participant experiences.**
 - What service components did participants engage in (for the MITT model only)?
 - Did the service model meet their career transition support needs?
 - How satisfied were participants with the model?
- **Early participant outcomes.**
 - What early outcomes were participants experiencing? Specifically, did participants achieve increased awareness and/or knowledge of career development strategies, increased confidence to navigate career transitions, changes in their mindsets about their careers and career transitions, and increased motivation to make career transitions, re-evaluate current employment, and/or pursue additional training or education?
- **Implementation and iteration.**
 - What iterations and improvements did participants suggest for the model?
 - What CDP characteristics, resources, and assets were required to deliver the model?
 - What constraints affected CDPs' capacity to deliver the model?

3.3. Data sources

Blueprint gathered quantitative and qualitative data to answer our questions. We used a combination of survey data (including open text responses), data collected through workshops with participants, and interviews and debriefs with CDPs and other staff at the two institutions (staff offered administrative support and were responsible for the design and delivery of the program). **Table 5** outlines our data sources and responses for each.

Table 5 | Data sources

Data source	Dates	Description	MITT sample size	DC sample size
Intake data	MITT: April and August 2023 DC: April and September 2023	Interview (MITT) and online survey/form (DC and MITT) capturing demographic information: age, gender, employment, education, income, etc.	30 Cohort 1: 14 Cohort 2: 16	47 Cohort 1: 27 Cohort 2: 20
Exit survey	MITT: July and October 2023 DC: October and December 2023	Online survey collecting data on participants' satisfaction with program components and perceived effectiveness.	73% (22/30)	53% (25/47) ¹⁰
Co-iteration workshops	Oct. 2023	In-person workshops at each institution to allow participants and CDPs/staff to share their experiences of the service journey and ideate for future iterations. Participants and CDPs took part in small group discussions and interactive activities to share reflections.	Participants: 43% (13/30) CDPs/staff: 8	Participants: 38% (18/47) CDPs/staff: 5
CDP/staff debriefs	Oct. 2023	Following the co-iteration workshop, Blueprint staff met with CDPs/staff at each institution to record their perspectives on the workshop and working with participants.	8	5
CDP/staff interviews	Oct. 2024	Semi-structured interviews with CDPs and staff to learn about the set up and early implementation of the model content, methods of delivery, adaptations, and logistics.	4 CDPs 1 Staff	1 CDP
Participants' qualitative responses on DC's module-specific surveys	Administered following each module: Cohort 1: July–Sept. 2023 Cohort 2: Sept.–Nov. 2023	Responses to open-ended questions on DC's module feedback surveys to understand participant experiences and satisfaction with specific elements.	N/A	36% (17/47)
Partner Meetings	Ongoing	Bi-weekly meetings with project partners to discuss model adaptations and track project progress.	N/A	N/A

10 The DC exit survey was administered only to the 34 participants who completed the full program to assess their experiences. When considering those who completed the program only, the response rate was 73% (25/34).

3.4 Data limitations

The findings in this report should be interpreted within the context of certain limitations:

- **Limited generalizability of workers' needs.** MITT and DC invited a limited cross-section of participants from the needs assessment phase to take part in the prototype. Findings emerging from this stage will require further validation with a larger sample.
- **Limited generalizability of DC model findings.** Only 25 of the 47 workers who participated in the DC prototype testing completed the exit survey. The survey was administered to the 34 workers who completed the full program (giving us a survey completion rate of 73%), but this represents only 53% of all prototype participants. This limits our ability to generalize findings about user experience and early outcomes to all participants. Blueprint is collaborating with DC staff to improve future response rates.
- **Inability to assess effectiveness of service marketing and recruitment.** Given the significant commitment required to engage in the co-design and prototype activities, participants were provided an incentive to compensate them for their time. While this was considered important for promoting participation, as a result, it is difficult to know how readily participants would engage in the service model in a scenario where there was no incentive offered.

4. Findings from the DC model

For a summary of the DC service model, see [Section 2. DC service model design](#).

4.1. DC participant sample

Who were the participants?

DC engaged 47 participants, most of whom were highly educated, immigrants, women, aged 35 to 54, and employed full-time. Table 6 provides a demographic breakdown. According to participant intake data:

- Most were highly educated (**78%**); **36%** held a bachelor's degree, **17%** held a postgraduate credential, and **25%** held a master's degree or PhD or beyond.
- **Seventy-four percent** were women.
- **Eighty-two percent** were between the ages of 35 and 54.
- **Eighty-two percent** were employed on a full-time basis.
- **Sixty-five percent** were immigrants: nearly half (**46%**) were naturalized citizens and **19%** were permanent residents living in Canada for five or more years.

Other demographic details varied. Canadian work experience ranged from between **five to over 10 years**. Most (**65%**) had an annual personal income ranging from \$40,000 to \$80,000, **18%** had incomes over \$80,000, and **10%** less than \$40,000. Roughly half (**53%**) were primary caregivers of at least one household member aged 17 years or younger. Participants were employed across several sectors, with the majority in healthcare (**19%**) followed by social services (**14%**), education (**12%**), and utilities (**10%**). A quarter (**26%**) had one or more additional job(s).

Table 6 | DC participant demographic characteristics

Sociodemographic characteristics		% and no. of participants
Gender	Woman	72% (34/47)
	Man	25% (12/47)
	Prefer not to respond	2% (1/47)
Age	25 to 34 years	10% (5/47)
	35 to 44 years	48% (23/47)
	45 to 54 years	34% (16/47)
	55 to 59 years	4% (2/47)
Primary caregiver of household member 17 years old and under	Yes	53% (25/47)
	No	44% (21/47)
	Unknown	2% (1/47)
Citizenship and immigration history	Canadian-born	34% (16/47)
	Naturalized citizen	46% (22/47)
	Permanent resident living in Canada for over five years	19% (9/47)
Highest education level attained	University degree (bachelor's degree)	36% (17/47)
	Postgraduate certificate or diploma	17% (8/47)
	Master's degree or PhD or higher	25% (12/47)
	College, non-university certificate or diploma	14% (7/47)
	Unknown	4% (2/47)
Employment circumstances (respondents selected all that applied)	Canadian work experience for five or more years	100% (47/47)
	Working full-time for an employer	82% (39/47)
	Working part-time	12% (6/47)
	Freelance/on-call/temporary job	2% (1/47)
	Has one or more additional job(s)	26% (12/45)
	Unknown	2% (1/47)
Personal annual income before taxes and deductions	Under \$20,000	2% (1/47)
	\$20,000–\$39,999	8% (4/47)
	\$40,000–\$59,999	34% (16/47)
	\$60,000–\$79,999	31% (15/47)
	\$80,000–\$99,999	10% (5/47)
	\$100,000 or more	8% (4/47)
	Unknown	4% (2/47)
Most common sectors and/or occupations	Healthcare professional	19% (9/47)
	Non-profit (social services/public)	14% (7/47)
	Education	12% (6/47)
	Utilities	10% (5/47)
	Accounting and finance	8% (4/47)
	Food service	6% (3/47)
	Engineering and design	4% (2/47)
	Other (transportation, automation, customer service, etc.)	19% (9/47)
	Unknown	4% (2/47)

Source: Intake survey.

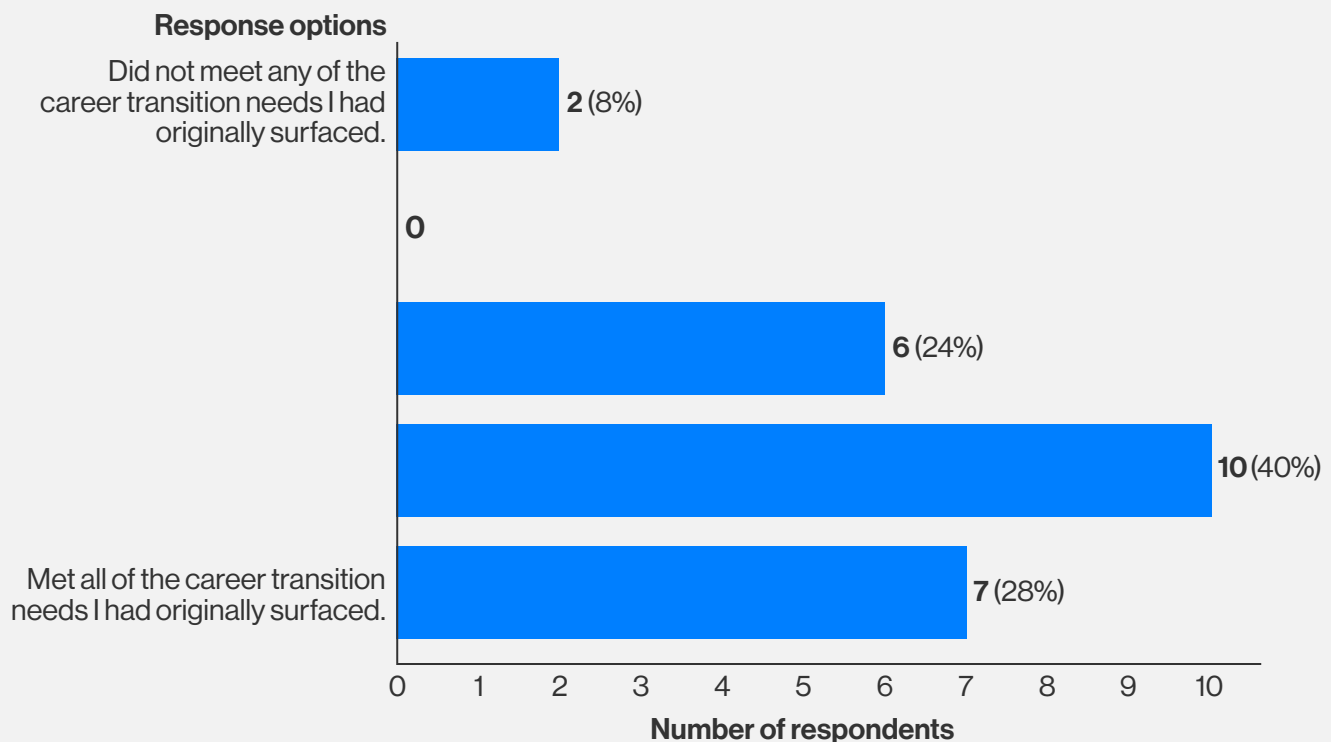
4.2. DC participant experiences

Were respondents' needs met?

Most respondents indicated the service largely met some or all their needs, but some had unmet needs. On the exit survey, respondents were asked: "Thinking back to the needs assessment interview you had with facilitators, to what extent do you think the Career Development workshops addressed your career development needs and questions before the program? (e.g., wanting more clarity around career next steps, mentorship, or support from an employer)."

Participants rated their experience on a five-point Likert scale with labeled endpoints: 1) "Did not meet any of the career transition needs I had originally surfaced" and 5) "Met all the career transition needs I had originally surfaced." **Figure 4** shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 4 | Were respondents' needs met?



Source: Exit survey.

- **Seven respondents (28%)** selected 5, reporting that the model met all their career transition support needs, and 10 respondents (**40%**) selected option 4, indicating the program met their needs to a large extent. In the survey’s open-ended questions, respondents elaborated:

“The needs and learnings I identified [in the needs assessment] were addressed during the workshops. More importantly, learnings or outcomes [presented] in the workshop that I attended which I had not identified turned out to be beneficial for me.” — **DC participant**

“The workshops answered my question about my next steps by allowing me to explore what I really want and need at this time.” — **DC participant**

“The workshops helped me how to address my employer regarding my career needs and how to improve my presentation to other employers in case I want to leave my current employer. Also, one of the facilitators connected me with professionals from my field to get mentoring, which is great!” — **DC participant**

“The workshops answered my question about my next step by allowing me to explore what I really want and need at this time.” — **DC participant**

- **Six respondents (24%)** selected 3 (the middle-point answer), indicating that the service partially responded to their needs. Comments highlighted some areas for improvement:

“I would have liked more resume and cover letter building resources. Some of the workshops were interesting but did not apply to career transition as I view it. With that said, I am very specific as to what career I want to transition into.” — **DC participant**

“I actually find my 1-on-1 with a facilitator more helpful than the workshops in terms of helping me sort out my next steps.” — **DC participant**

- **Two respondents (8%)** selected option 1, indicating that the program did not meet any of their career transition support needs. As one respondent explained:

“I told the facilitator I had no idea what I wanted to do, and I still have no idea what I want to do. There have been zero improvements.” — **DC participant**

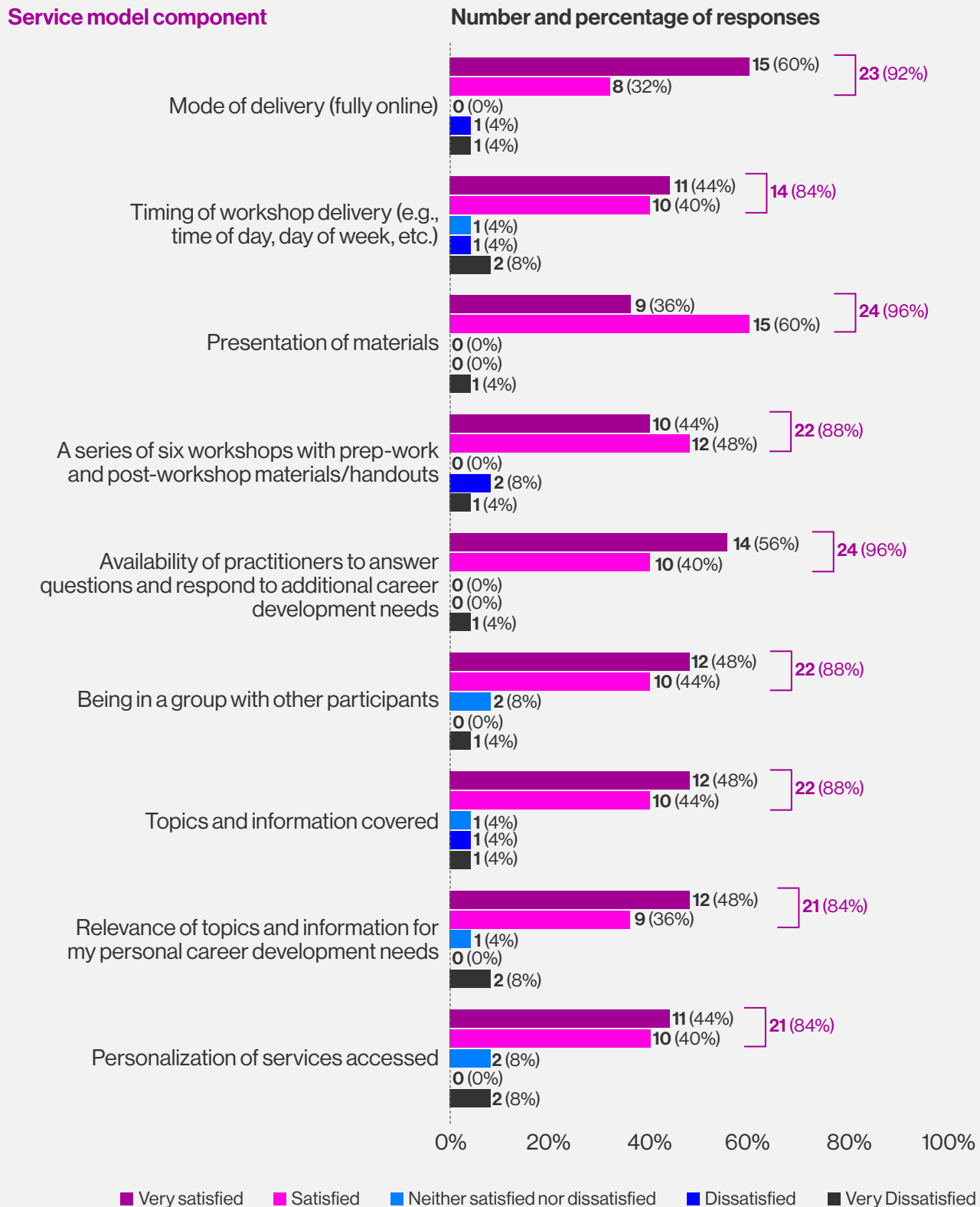
How satisfied were participants with the model?

Exit survey respondents were highly satisfied with the career development workshops. Below, we summarize feedback from the exit survey, its open-ended questions, and the co-iteration workshop:

- **Relevance of workshop topics, tools, and information:** Eighty-four percent of survey respondents believed the topics were relevant and personalized for their needs and **88%** were satisfied with the information they covered. Open-ended responses indicated that the tools helped participants identify skills, personal strengths, values, and career options that aligned with them; respondents highlighted gaining new knowledge that would help them in various aspects of their careers and personal lives.
- **Mix of theory and hands-on learning (case studies and pre- and post-session activities) and learning materials:** Open-ended responses noted this blend of theoretical and experiential learning was quite helpful. Respondents found the materials were clear, informative, and easy to understand; in the survey, **96%** were satisfied by the presentation of the materials, and **88%** were satisfied with the prep-work and post-workshop materials/handouts.
- **Scheduling of the workshops and delivery modes:** Open-ended responses indicated that respondents felt the online workshops were highly interactive, giving them an opportunity to create positive relationships with others. In the survey, **92%** of respondents were satisfied with the online format and **84%** were satisfied with the evening sessions. We heard these aligned with their work schedules and life commitments (such as caregiving responsibilities) in the open-ended responses.
- **Interaction with practitioners and peers:** Ninety-six percent of survey respondents were satisfied with the availability of practitioners. Open-ended responses indicated that the peer-interaction elements provided a safe and inclusive space to share and receive feedback, and **88%** of survey respondents were satisfied with the group-work environment. During the co-iteration workshop, participants noted they felt less alone and could speak freely about the challenges of career transition without judgement. A small number still felt shy in the group setting, however, and reported being anxious about expressing themselves.

Figure 5 shows responses to the prompt, “thinking about your experience with the Career Development Workshops, how satisfied were you with the following?”

Figure 5 | Were respondents' needs met?



Source: Exit survey.

Nearly all (92%, or 23/25) exit survey respondents engaged in one-on-one counselling with CDPs. Those who did described the sessions as informative, positive, and customized to their needs in the survey and co-iteration workshop:

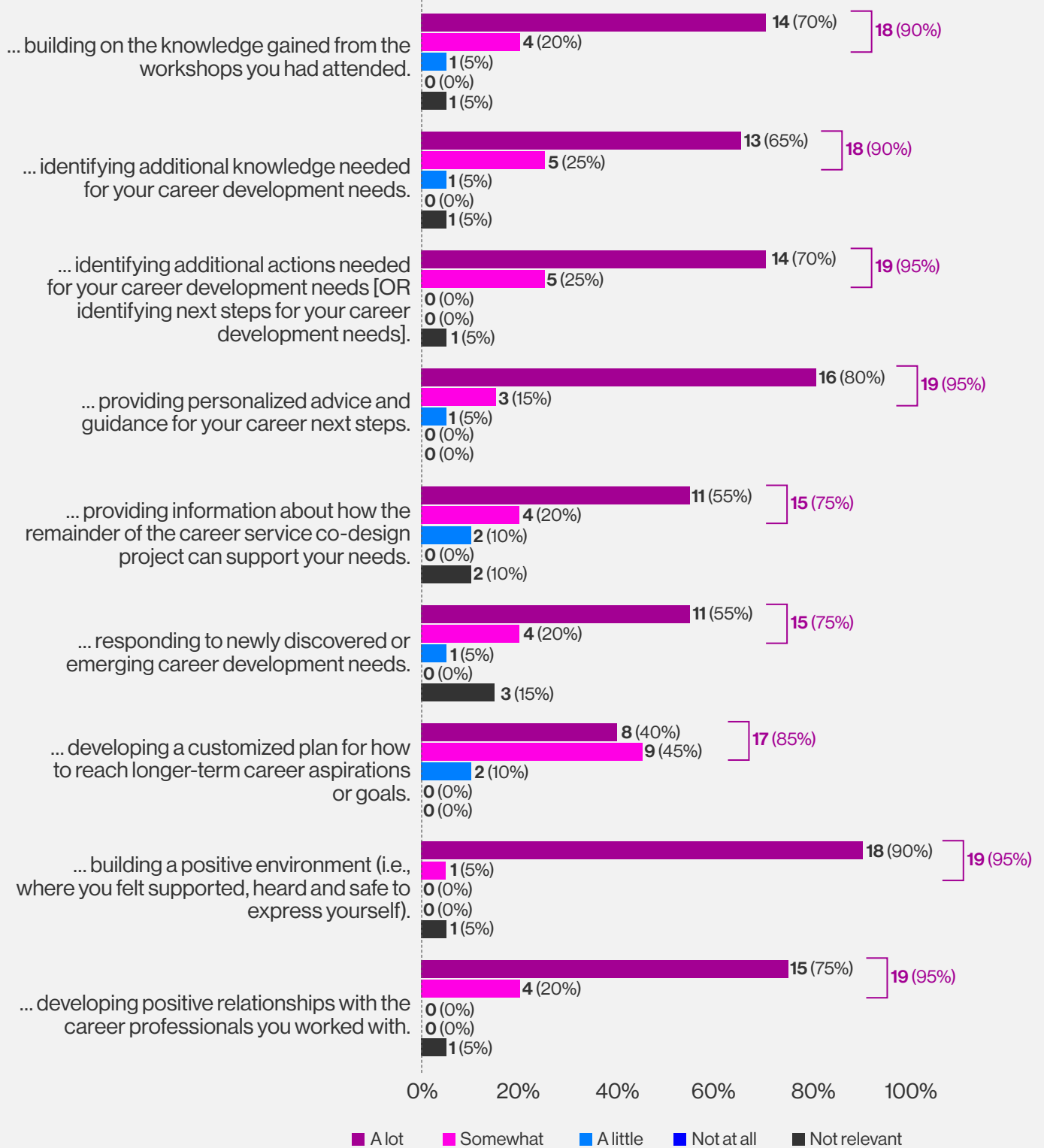
- Open-ended exit survey feedback indicated that CDPs helped address career needs by diving deeper into the workshop topics; **90%** of respondents felt the counselling built on knowledge gained from the workshops.
- Likewise, open-ended responses detailed how the counselling offered additional knowledge and resources, enabling participants to reflect on and perceive their strengths and values and identify career opportunities that best suited them.
- In the co-iteration workshop, we heard that CDPs helped participants build “personal recipes” or strategies for the next steps for their career development. These sentiments were echoed in the exit survey, where **95%** felt the counselling offered personalized guidance, **95%** felt it helped them identify further action to take or to identify next steps, and **85%** felt it helped them develop customized plans to reach longer-term goals.
- Overall, **95%** of survey respondents noted the counselling built a positive environment (i.e., where they felt supported, heard, and safe to express themselves) and helped them develop positive relationships with CDPs.
- More modest numbers felt it provided information about how the remainder of the project would support their needs (**75%**) or felt it helped them respond to newly discovered or emerging career development needs (**75%**).

Figure 6 presents responses to nine prompts regarding overall experience with the counselling service, each beginning with the phrase, “thinking about the one-on-one career counselling sessions, to what extent do you feel the career services you accessed were effective at...”

Figure 6 | Experience with one-on-one counselling services

Effectiveness of counselling services

Number and percentage of responses



Source: Exit survey.

4.3. DC early participant outcomes

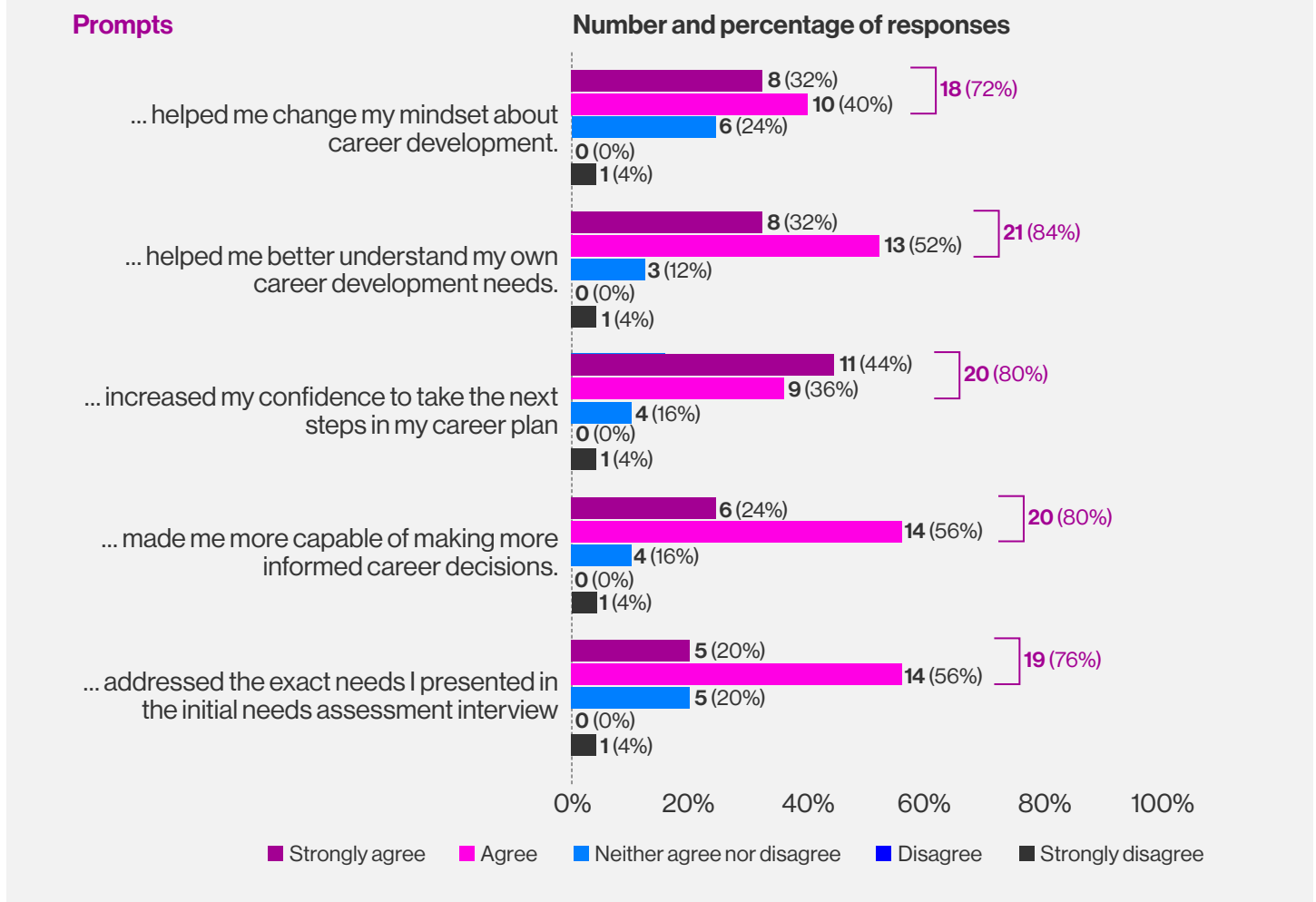
What early outcomes were participants experiencing?

Most respondents reported that the prototype helped them achieve or make progress toward targeted outcomes. Below, we summarize feedback in the exit survey:

- **Increased clarity on career development needs:** 84% felt it helped them better understand their career development needs. Respondents wrote that workshops and tools helped them self-reflect and increase their understanding of their unique abilities, personalities, and values. This enabled them to determine values-aligned career goals—such as promotion, work-life balance, upskilling, or reskilling.
- **Increased capacity to make informed decisions about career transitions:** 80% noted feeling more capable of making informed career decisions. Respondents valued building plans to achieve their long-term career goals and aspirations and strategies to network with and introduce themselves to employers.
- **Improved confidence to take action to achieve career goals:** 80% of survey respondents felt it helped them build confidence to take the next steps. In open-ended feedback, respondents shared that the one-on-one support from CDPs boosted their confidence as they realized their potential and professional value. After joining, most reported feeling more confident about taking next steps in their careers; some felt ready to discuss career advancement with their employers.
- **New perspectives on career transitions:** 72% felt the program helped them change their mindsets. Respondents shared that they could reframe and better see their career and life challenges as commonplace and surmountable. They were also willing to rework their career action plans by taking a step back and reassessing their readiness to transition or advance in their careers.

Figure 7 presents responses to five prompts regarding outcomes from the service, preceded by the phrase, “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your overall experience receiving career development services.”

Figure 7 | Overall experience with services



Source. Exit survey.

4.4. DC implementation and iteration

What iterations and improvements did participants suggest for the model?

In the co-iteration workshop, participants offered two sets of recommendations:

On including additional career-related information:

- **Provide additional LMI.** Participants desired more LMI about the benefits and disadvantages of employee vs. contractor arrangements; employment trends; skills needed in different positions; and viable and/or alternative career options.

- **Discuss future work disruptions.** Participants desired more information about how technology could disrupt their careers and how to prepare proactively. One participant described this as “shifting from ‘job security’ to ‘professional security.’”
- **Address mental health issues.** The participant toolkit contained some resources for mental health, especially burnout. Participants saw an opportunity to include more information about the impacts of negative work experiences on their confidence to pursue growth and how to engage in self-care and mindfulness practices.

On increasing service intensity and duration to ensure continuous support:

- **Increase the number and duration of in-person meetings.** Participants recommended increasing the length of the workshops and number of in-person sessions to allow for more in-depth engagement with other participants. This would allow them to share struggles and support each other with their career development goals and spark new ideas about career transitions.
- **Increase one-on-one time with CDPs.** Participants recommended adding more time for one-on-one counselling sessions for more tailored advice and support to apply the workshop learnings to their career goals and plans.
- **Add opportunities for post-program follow-ups.** Participants recommended adding more time for follow-ups after program completion to ensure alignment with their career plans and address any difficulties with implementing their next steps.

What CDP characteristics, resources, and assets were required to deliver the model?

Practitioner knowledge of and experience with mid-career workers was critical for delivery. In interviews, CDPs discussed their long-standing experience assisting mid-career transition workers—clients who often lacked confidence to make career decisions and needed support finding careers aligned with their interests and aspirations. CDPs were able to leverage this experience—and the information from the needs assessment interviews—to design a program tailored to address these specific needs.

Comprehensive participant screening and on-boarding processes ensured suitable participants and clear expectations. In interviews, CDPs noted that participant screening was a two-step process. The first involved self-screening; marketing emails detailed the service, eligibility, and time commitments to help participants self-screen effectively. The second involved 15-minute, one-on-one virtual interviews with candidates to speak about the service in detail and ensure they were eligible and could commit. Participant on-boarding was then conducted through an in-person meet-and-greet event for participants across BC, designed to familiarize participants with the service objectives, format, and delivery. Various activities, including sharing stories of

career satisfaction, served as opportunities for participants to engage with each other and speak openly about their career goals and challenges. CDPs described this as a successful event that set expectations for continuous peer interaction and self-reflection throughout.

The combination of self-paced and group-based learning allowed CDPs to tailor content to participants' needs and offer opportunities for program scalability. As discussed, the curriculum was designed to offer both synchronous and self-paced learning through pre- and post-workshop activities and a toolkit that participants could access independently. CDPs reported that this helped them focus on delivering workshops and offering customized support—as well as focus on streamlining the program to make it replicable and scalable. CDPs used participant feedback to modify the curriculum and align topics with the most pressing needs.

What constraints affected CDPs' capacity to deliver the model?

Some CDPs reported that a lack of time—namely, for one-on-one counselling and post-program follow-ups—limited their ability to develop career action plans with participants and track their progress after completion. As described above, CDPs were allowed to deliver up to three hour-long counselling sessions. In interviews, CDPs shared that the time allocated for one-on-one sessions was insufficient and limited their capacity to build on successes in the workshops and apply them toward participant action plans. As the program ended with formulating next steps, there was no time allotted for follow-ups on action plan progress. CDPs noted that participant follow-ups post-program would help them track outcomes and assist participants with difficulties in implementing next steps.

5. Findings from the MITT model

For a summary of the MITT service model, see [Section 3. MITT service model design](#).

5.1. MITT participant sample

Who were the participants?

MITT engaged 30 mid-career participants, most of whom were women, highly educated, between the ages of 25 and 54, and working full-time. Table 10 provides a demographic breakdown. According to administrative data collected during the needs assessment phase:

- Almost two-thirds held an undergraduate, master's, or PhD degree (**63%**).
- **Seventy percent were women.**
- Eighty-two percent were between the ages of **25 and 54**.
- More than half were employed full-time (**60%**). Almost half (**45%**) were working in more than one job.

Other demographic details varied: **46%** were permanent residents, non-residents or did not specify their status. Participants held diverse employment backgrounds: the largest proportion were employed in the non-profit sector, including social services and environmental protection (**30%**), followed by healthcare (**10%**), construction (**7%**), and IT (**7%**). About one quarter (**23%**) reported a mix of occupations (such as human resources, education, and retail). Annual income levels also varied: **36%** reported an income of less than \$60,000, **20%** reported between \$60,000 and under \$100,000, and **20%** reported \$100,000 or more. Twenty-three percent did not report their employment field or annual income.

Table 7 | MITT participant demographic characteristics

Sociodemographic characteristics		Percentage of Participants (n=30)
Gender	Woman	70% (21/30)
	Man	26% (8/30)
	Prefer not to respond	3% (1/30)
Age	20 to 24 years	3% (1/30)
	25 to 34 years	46% (14/30)
	35 to 44 years	10% (3/30)
	45 to 54 years	23% (7/30)
	60+ years	3% (1/30)
	Unknown	13% (4/30)
Primary caregiver of household member 17 years old and under	Yes	26% (8/30)
	No	63% (19/30)
	Unknown	10% (3/30)
Citizenship and immigration history	Citizen and naturalized citizen ¹¹	54% (16/30)
	Permanent resident (including newcomer and immigrants)	30% (9/30)
	Non-resident or unspecified status	16% (5/30)
Highest education level attained	University degree (bachelor's degree)	7% (2/30)
	Postgraduate certificate or diploma	56% (17/30)
	Master's degree or PhD or higher	13% (4/30)
	College, non-university certificate or diploma	13% (4/30)
	Unknown	10% (3/30)
Employment circumstances (respondents selected all that applied)	Canadian work experience for five or more years	60% (18/30)
	Working full-time for an employer	13% (4/30)
	Working part-time	3% (1/30)
	Freelance/on-call/temporary job	45% (11/24)
	Has one or more additional job(s)	3% (1/30)
	Unknown	20% (6/30)
Personal annual income before taxes and deductions	Under \$20,000	13% (4/30)
	\$20,000–\$39,999	23% (7/30)
	\$40,000–\$59,999	7% (2/30)
	\$60,000–\$79,999	13% (4/30)
	\$80,000–\$99,999	20% (6/30)
	\$100,000 or more	23% (7/30)
	Unknown	4% (2/47)
Most common sectors and/or occupations	Nonprofit (social services, environmental protection, etc.)	30% (9/30)
	Healthcare	10% (3/30)
	IT	7% (2/30)
	Construction	7% (2/30)
	Other (HR, transportation, accounting, education, retail, etc.)	23% (7/30)
	Unknown	23% (7/30)

Source. Needs assessment interviews.

11 In cohort one and two, MITT data do not distinguish between citizens and naturalized citizens. This has been amended for future cohorts.

5.2. MITT participant experiences

What service components did participants engage in?

We recorded uptake of the two main service components: **individual** and **group sessions**. **One-on-one support was far more popular: 100% accessed one-on-one support and 45% attended group sessions.**

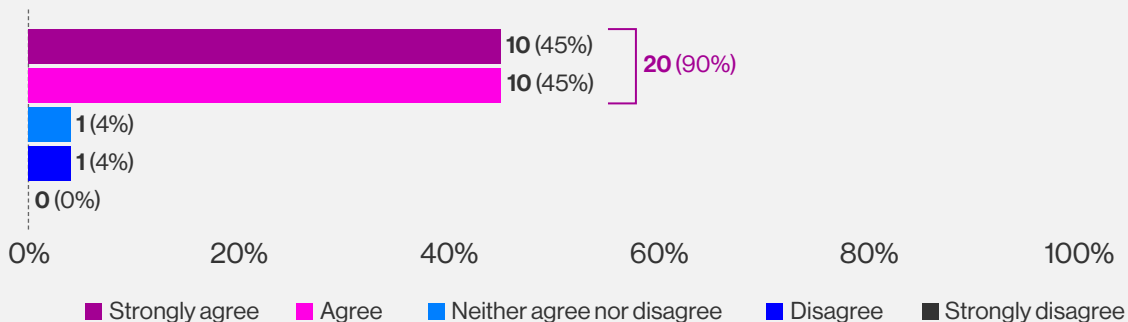
Participants were allowed to move toward independence at their own pace; while the majority (**91%**) accessed between three and six one-on-one sessions, a few (**9%**) needed seven or more sessions. Of the **16** individuals who attended group sessions, **10 (62%)** attended the interview session and **six (38%)** attended the networking session.

Did the service model meet their career transition support needs?

Most (90%) respondents ‘strongly agreed’ (45%) or ‘agreed’ (45%) that the prototype addressed the exact career transition support needs they presented to their practitioners. Figure 8 shows responses to the prompt in the exit survey, “Career services addressed the exact needs I presented to the practitioner.”

Figure 8 | Respondent needs

Number and percentage of responses (n=22)



Source. Exit survey.

These responses were echoed in the survey's open-ended questions; respondents indicated the model was responding to their needs in a positive, supportive environment where they felt heard and validated, allowing them to be open and honest with their CDPs. As two commented:

“This career development service was well-planned, and it has helped me a lot. First, it identified my career development needs and provided tailored guidance in meeting those needs. Now, I know the steps I need to take, and I am more confident that taking those steps will help me achieve my career goals. Already, there are positive signs indicating that I am on the right track. Therefore, in all, this career service has served its purpose for me. I believe that everyone who desires career growth will benefit from a tailored service like this. The career professional who worked with me was very supportive. She provided valuable materials, guidance, and feedback which has helped to boost my confidence in pursuing my career goals. I really appreciate this career development program.” — **MITT participant**

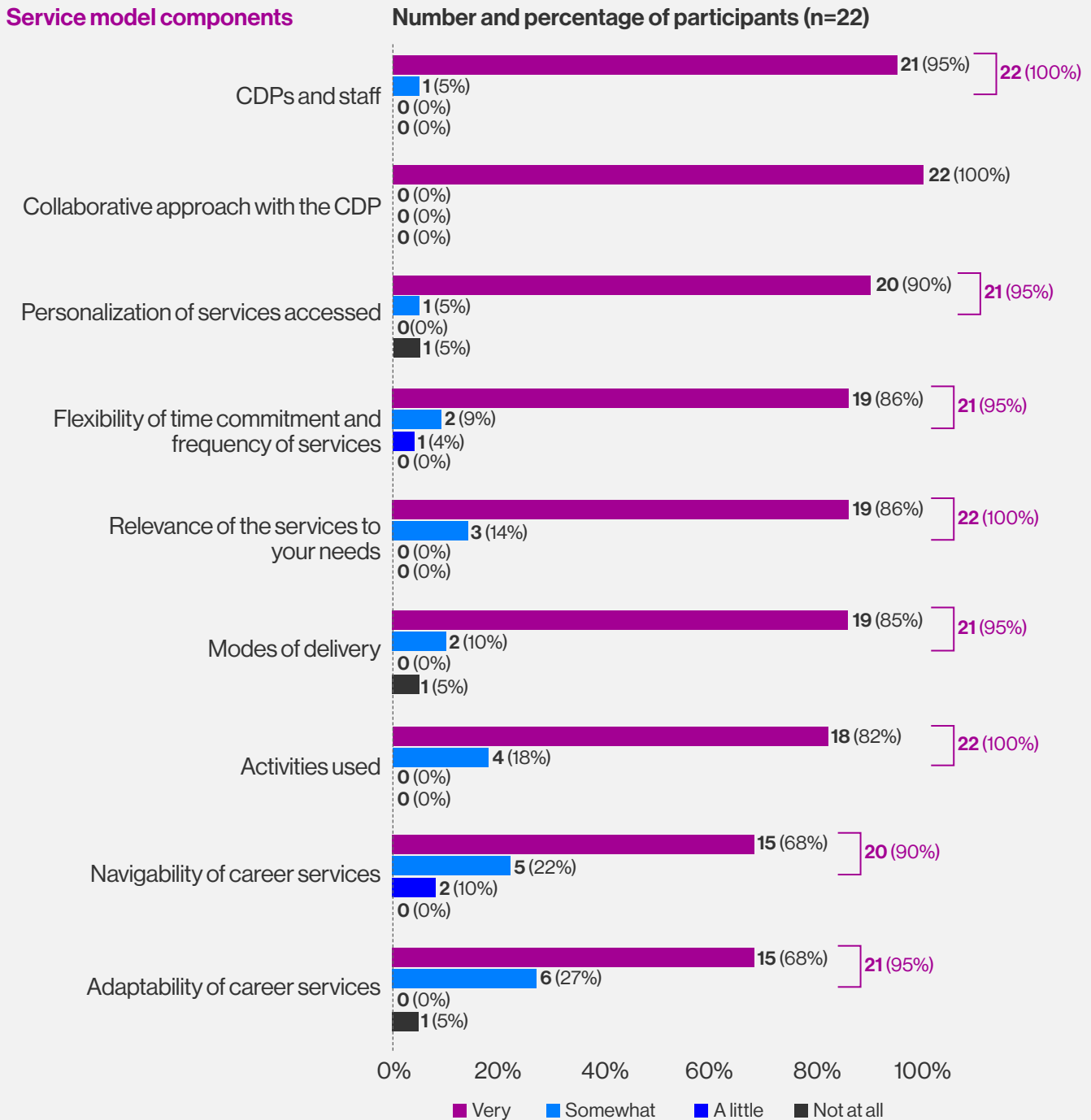
“My goals are specific to finding work in the government. The practitioner gave more insights and helpful tools that I wouldn't have known if I was working alone.” — **MITT participant**

How satisfied were participants with the model?

We explored respondent satisfaction across three measures: **overall satisfaction** with components; **perceptions of utility** with the career exploration and skills development services; and **perceptions of efficacy** of building positive, safe, supportive environments and in building positive relationships with CDPs.

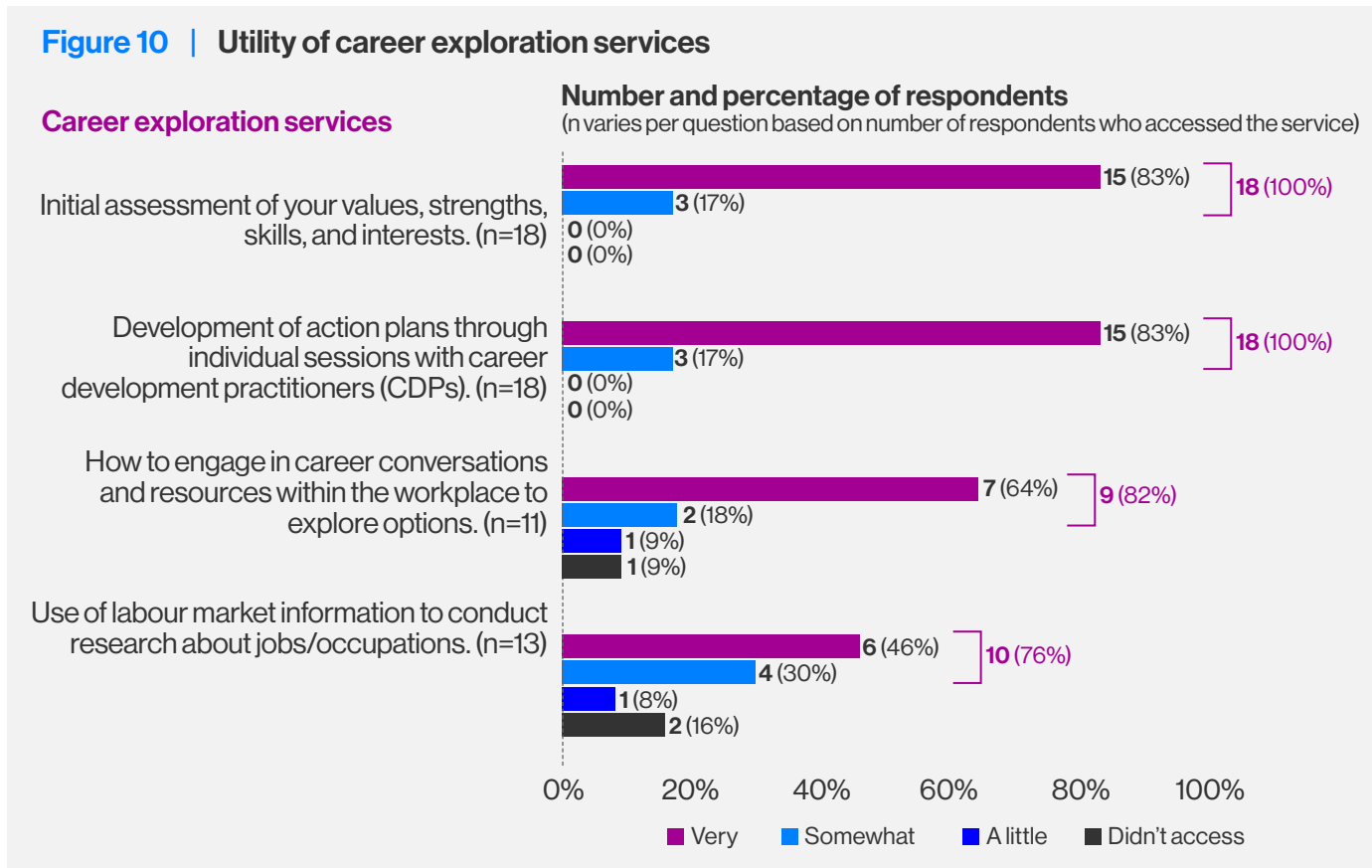
Respondents were highly satisfied with various components of the service model. Exit survey respondents reported they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied with CDPs and staff (**100%**); the personalization (**95%**), relevance (**100%**), adaptability (**95%**), collaborative approach (**100%**), and navigability (**90%**) of the services; the flexibility of the time commitment and frequency of the services (**95%**); modes of delivery (**95%**); and activities used (**100%**). **Figure 9** provides responses to the prompt, “Thinking about your overall experience receiving career development services, how satisfied are you with the following areas?”

Figure 9 | Satisfaction with service model components



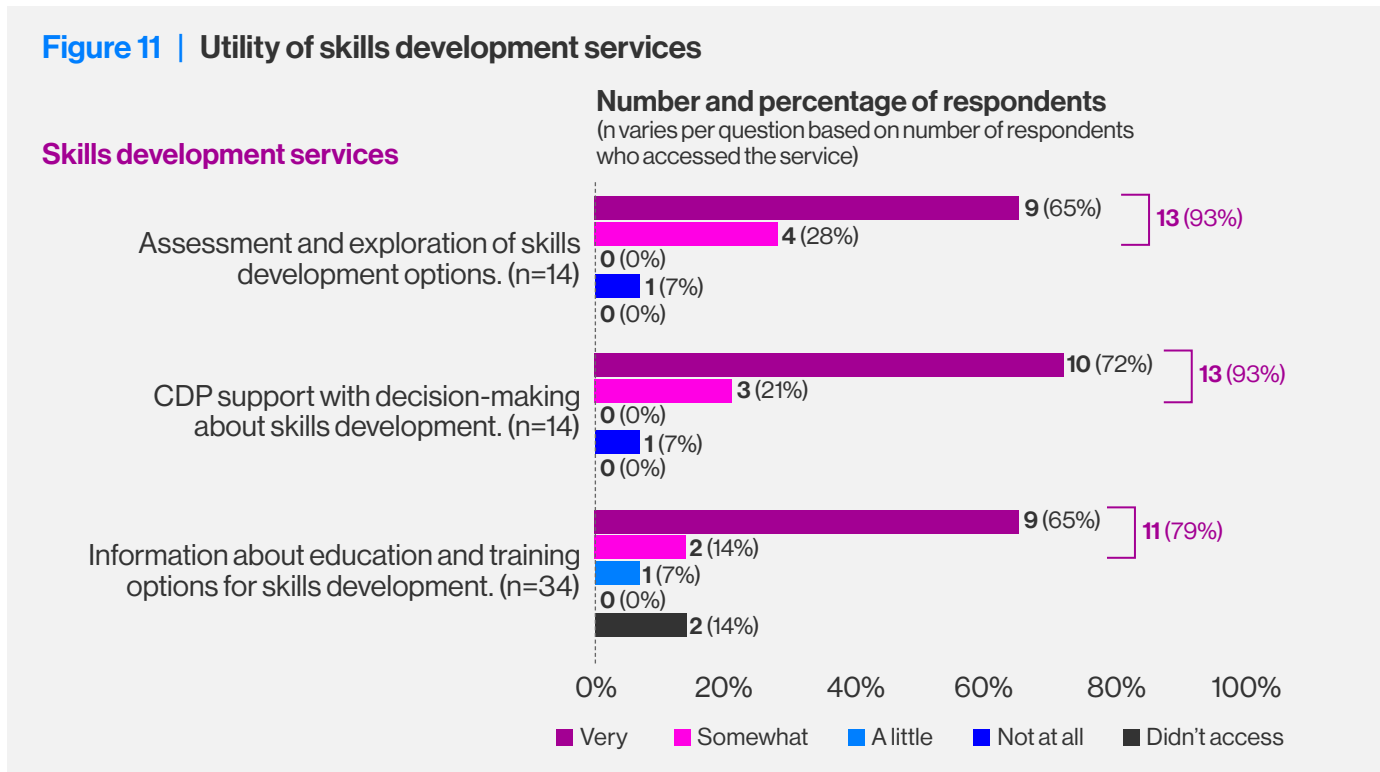
Source: Exit survey.

Exit survey respondents indicated high levels of utility with the career exploration services. These included the initial self-discovery component to assess values, skills, strengths, and interests (100% thought it was ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ useful); the development of action plans through one-on-one sessions with CDPs (100%); learning how to engage in career conversations in the workplace (82%); and use of LMI to conduct job research (76%). **Figure 10** shows responses to the prompt, “Please indicate how useful each of the activities were in navigating your career/employment journey.”



Source: Exit survey.

Exit survey respondents also indicated high levels of utility with the skills development services. These included assessment and exploration of skills development options (93% thought they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat useful’); CDP support with decision-making about skills development (93%); and information about education and training options for skills development (79%). **Figure 11** shows responses to the prompt, “Please indicate how useful each of the following activities were in navigating your career/employment journey.”



Source. Exit survey.

All respondents reported that the career services were highly effective in fostering a positive, safe, and supportive environment. Additionally, the quality of the relationship with the CDPs was identified as a key factor in participants’ overall experience and satisfaction. On the exit survey, 100% of respondents rated the career services as ‘very’ effective in creating a safe and supportive environment. Similarly, 100% of participants found the services ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ effective in fostering a positive working relationship with their CDP—a factor that supports the delivery of personalized, responsive career services (see **Figure 12**, below).

These results were echoed in the co-iteration workshop. Participants described receiving emotional support, encouragement, and validation from CDPs while sharing deeply personal reflections of their struggles. In open-ended comments, respondents highlighted the importance of having a professional CDP assisting them. They emphasized that the relationship they built was instrumental in helping them gain confidence to pursue their career goals.

“I LOVED working with my career professional.

She was truly amazing and helped me a lot!”

— **MITT participant**

“It was a great and pleasant opportunity to work with my career professional! I felt heard and it was a safe environment. My career professional helped me so much with research and networking tools. I appreciated my career professional’s insight and [they] cleared a lot of my doubts regarding different types of training and education.”

— **MITT participant**

“I really enjoyed working with the career professionals. I felt positive and safe environment.

They prioritized my wellbeing and actively listened to my needs. I have received the necessary guidance and encouragement to navigate my career path.”

— **MITT participant**

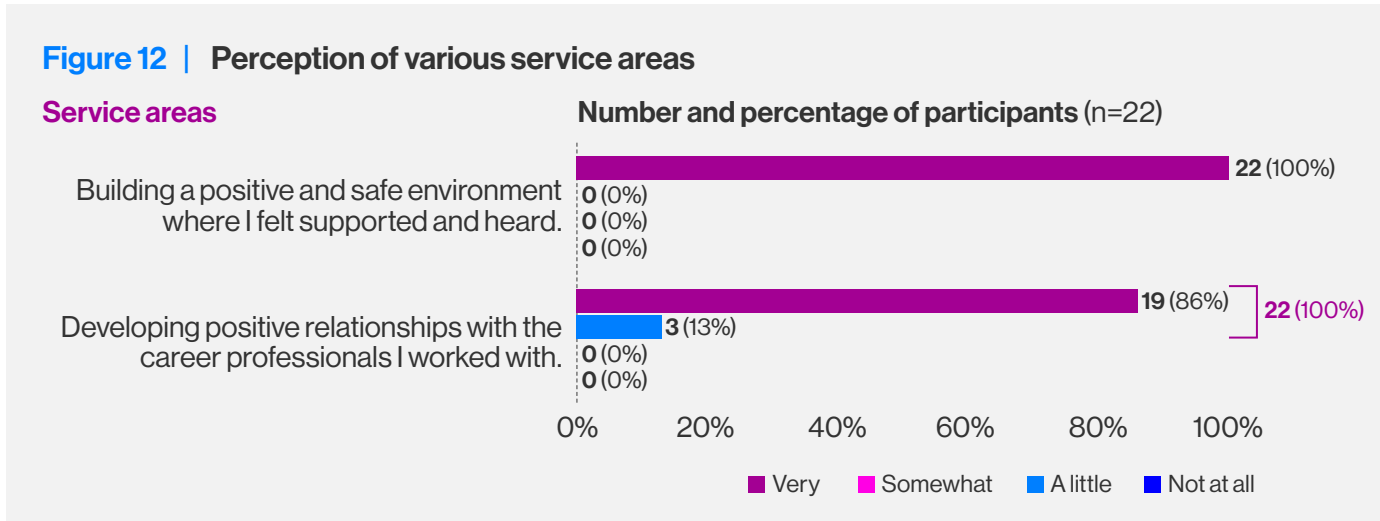
“The discussions that I had with my coach regarding how to progress internally were very helpful and gave me hope and confidence to keep applying for better positions within my organization. Prior to starting the program, I was feeling stuck at my work, and although I was applying for jobs internally, I could not get through the screening process. I know that I have the education and work experience for the job, but I was being overlooked by the HR or the automated screening process. My coach reviewed my resume and cover letter, as well as the jobs that I was applying for, and helped me to realize that it was not my fault for not being chosen for the positions. This gave me more motivation to keep going. I also learned to give closer attention to the job description to help me with cover letters.”

One self-described newcomer praised the specialized supports and how the service model helped them connect with others and make progress:

“This career development program has benefited me. I can only think of how it can benefit others, especially numerous newcomers like me who can contribute immensely to the economic development of the province. Therefore, I would like to suggest that this program can consider the possibility of connecting with skilled newcomers who desire career growth and provide tailored solutions to meet their career needs.”

— **MITT participant**

Figure 12 shows responses to the prompt, “to what extent were all the services you accessed effective in the following areas?”



Source: Exit survey.

5.3. MITT early participant outcomes

What early outcomes were participants experiencing?

In the exit survey, most respondents reported that the prototype helped them achieve or make progress toward targeted outcomes (described on pg. 9).

For example, **90%** of survey respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the services helped them change their mindset about career development, and **86%** stated that the services helped them better understand their career development needs. **Ninety-five percent** of respondents indicated that the services increased their confidence in taking next steps in their career plans, and **90%** agreed that the services made them more capable of making informed career decisions (see **Figure 13**, below).

In the co-iteration workshops and exit survey, participants underscored they have more self-confidence, specifically around articulating their skills, values, and abilities:

“This workshop helped me identify my needs as I haven’t ever actually [taken] the time to see what else I am good at and what else my career may apply to. I felt like identifying what I am good at within my current job helped me realize that I could take it to the next level—or even change up my position and look to work elsewhere.”

— **MITT participant**

“Knowing my personality traits, values, and strengths has given me insight into how I work, why I feel the way I do about my work and what I may be better suited to do. I have learned a lot about myself and my skill sets. I am going to continue my career exploration on my own with the tools [my CDP] provided me.”

— **MITT participant**

“During my journey with [the CDP], I managed to excel at a job interview, build post-interview rapport with a recruiter, and engage in meaningful discussions with my employer for a counteroffer. My sessions equipped me with a toolbox to apply in whatever situation or context I was in.”

— **MITT participant**

“I was given the confidence to pursue my own career further within my current employment setting.”

— **MITT participant**

Survey respondents also believed that the career exploration services were equipping them with knowledge to make ongoing decisions about their career paths (94%) and increased their understanding of how to identify opportunities aligned with interests, skills, and values (88%) (see Figure 14, below).

These thoughts were echoed in the co-iteration workshops and open-ended survey questions, where respondents noted they will continue to adapt and be unafraid to reach out and network with others due to the services they received.

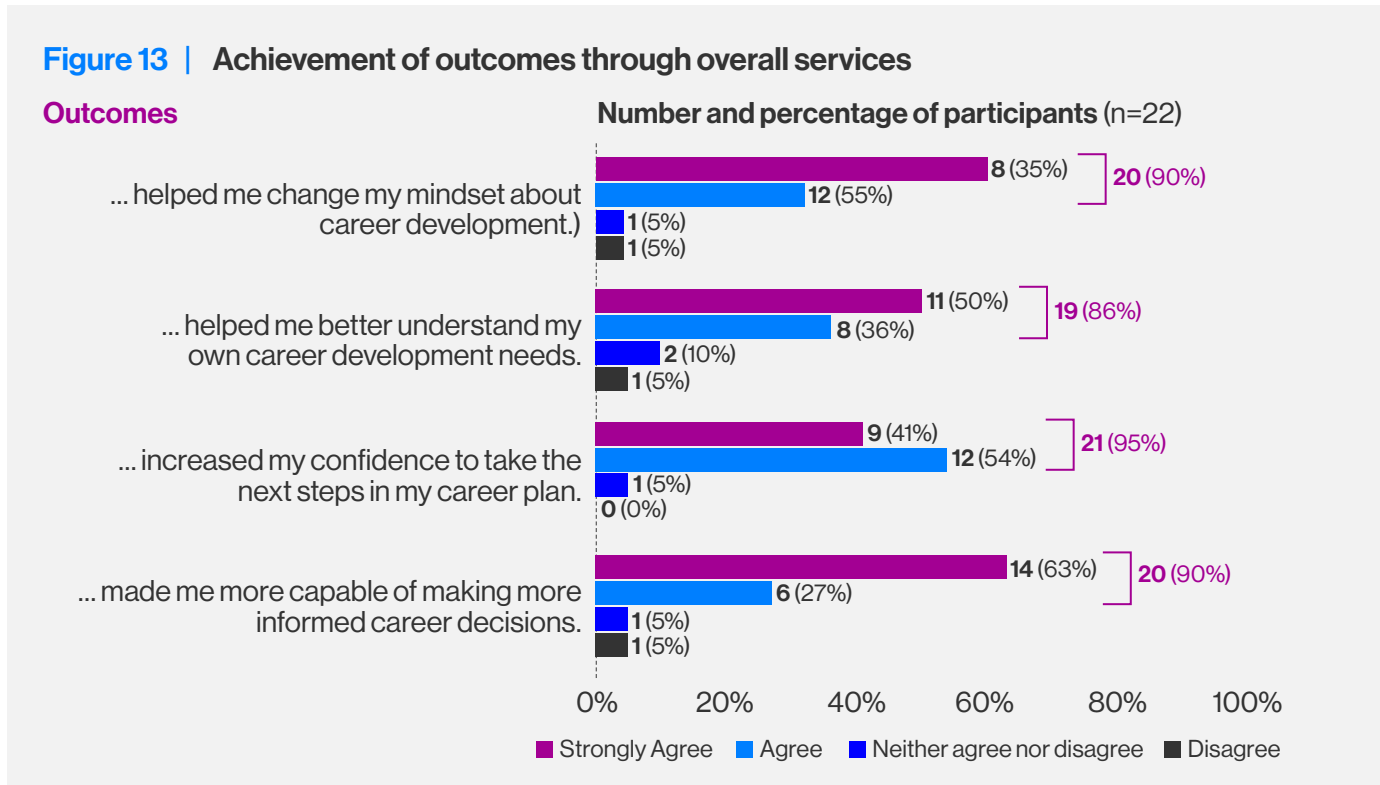
“Through the testing and discussions, I was able to clearly identify my strengths and areas that I am not as strong in ... and assess how my current job is aligned with my skills and talk about how my current skills/experience can transfer into other career options. I finished feeling like I could clearly identify my options and like I know how to make a plan for changes.”

— **MITT participant**

“I was provided numerous links to job search websites, which helped me to understand what opportunities are out there and if my skills would be a good fit. I have learned a lot about myself and my skill sets.”

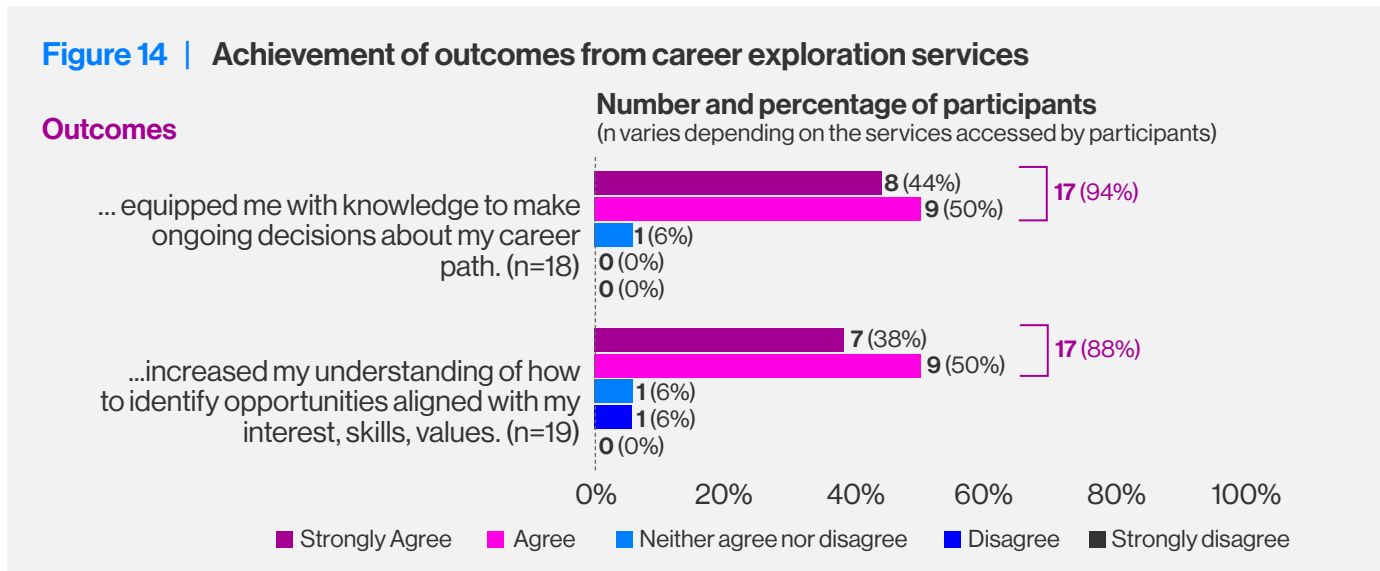
— **MITT participant**

Figure 13 presents responses to five prompts regarding outcomes from the service.



Source: Exit survey.

Figure 14 shows responses to the prompt, “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the career exploration services you accessed.”



Source: Exit survey.

5.4. MITT implementation and iteration

What iterations and improvements did participants suggest for the model?

In the co-iteration workshop and exit survey, respondents shared ideas for additional supports and resources they would find beneficial. These included:

- **Greater employer engagement.** Participants voiced a desire for more touchpoints directly from employers and industry professionals and expressed an interest in sector-specific mentorships.

“Overall, it was really good, but ... maybe we could talk to some employers and businesses to see their side of the career services, what they are looking for and how they are attempting to accomplish those goals. That way, we could have a better understanding of what they are looking for when it comes time for us to have an interview for a position with these employers.”

— MITT participant

- **Help with professional identity and branding.** Participants sought assistance with creating their profiles on platforms like LinkedIn to help them market themselves to employers.
- **Additional group sessions, networking opportunities, and longer timeframes.** During the needs assessment phase, participants stated a preference for solo work, but discovered during the prototype testing that group interaction was also beneficial. Respondents shared a desire for more in-person group sessions to allow for more opportunities for networking, learning from peers about their experiences and perspectives, and having opportunities to practice skills, such as interviewing. Some participants expressed a desire for a longer engagement period (or that the experience could last longer) based on the positive relationships they built with peers and CDPs.

“I had a fantastic experience. I wish it was longer!
Ongoing support always needed.”

— MITT participant

What CDP characteristics, resources, and assets were required to deliver the model?

In interviews, CDPs highlighted the following approaches as important for providing effective support:

- **Showing understanding and empathy.** CDPs emphasized the importance of understanding participants' diverse backgrounds and experiences. Many participants came into the program with doubts about their strengths, so empathy was critical for building trust and helping them move forward. As one CDP interviewee mentioned:

“I’ve always said my secret sauce as a coach was because I was career confused for so long myself. I have done a million wonderful crazy things [in] my own career. So, I have a really good sense of the world out there. I have touch points with lots of different work contexts.”

— MITT CDP

Making referrals for non-career-related challenges. CDPs recognized when participants needed support beyond career services, such as help with mental health or financial issues. Addressing these challenges was crucial; participants struggling with them often couldn’t fully engage with career development efforts.

- **Understanding the immigrant experience.** CDPs highlighted the unique barriers faced by newcomers to Canada, such as cultural differences in workplace communication or unrecognized credentials. Their experience working with immigrants allowed them to coach participants on overcoming these obstacles and building confidence.

“I had a [participant] from [another country]. And the thought of having a conversation with his boss about his vision for his career and ... what he was really wanting to get more exposure to ... He thought I was crazy. ‘Are you kidding me?’ We looked at little steps forward and he ended up having this conversation and he was blown away. He just couldn’t believe that.” — MITT CDP

- **Focusing on strengths.** CDPs used a strengths-based approach to help participants recognize and value their skills, even those they initially didn’t see as marketable. This approach was especially helpful for immigrants whose credentials were not recognized; these participants often felt undervalued, hesitant to promote their qualifications, and held negative perceptions about their potential to be hired, even after landing an interview. CDPs worked to shift these participants’ mindsets, helping them see their unique abilities as assets.
 - One CDP noted working with an immigrant who was not comfortable declaring their ability to speak a foreign language or list it on their resume, fearing judgment. The CDP was able to shift the participant’s perspective effectively. Another characterized the situation as follows:

“You know, we have people [who] arrive with the skills and the talent, and you know, we set up different programs and they’re supposed to support them, especially when we think about the professional streams [to help] professionals get back into their professions ... but they get that first survival job in Canada. And then that’s where the supports go away, right? ... And so now we have these people with talents and these skills who are ... floundering because they’re really stuck in this loop of survival jobs, whereas we should really be providing these ongoing services to help them move into their professions.”

— **MITT CDP**

- **Helping participants break out of survival jobs.** Many immigrants find themselves stuck in low-paying “survival jobs” after arriving in Canada, with little support to transition into careers that match their skills. CDPs stressed the need for ongoing services to help participants move beyond these jobs and into roles that align with their professional experience. In an interview, one CDP explained that public employment services typically withdraw support despite the critical need for assistance in transitioning from survival jobs and underemployment to meaningful, career-aligned work.

What constraints affected CDPs’ capacity to deliver the model?

CDPs emphasized the need to help participants become more independent while providing one-on-one support. Providing one-on-one coaching, while time-consuming, was essential for establishing the confidence and commitment needed for participants to effectively utilize the self-directed resources. Throughout the process, CDPs prioritized helping participants gain independence as quickly as possible. For future iterations, CDPs suggested assembling and creating tools and assessments that participants could use to hone career management skills and continue building confidence. Self-guided resources would allow participants to engage in more independent work, which could then be reviewed during their one-on-one sessions and continue to be used following service delivery to manage their future career transitions. This approach would help participants become more self-reliant and ease the workload for CDPs, making it feasible to expand the program to support more people.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of findings

This report captures early insights from the *Mid-career Transitions* project, which explores innovative approaches to addressing the evolving needs of mid-career workers and their employers in navigating career transitions. By leveraging service models developed by Douglas College (DC) and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT), the project has demonstrated promising outcomes: participants are reporting increased career self-efficacy, confidence, and clarity about their career paths.

Each prototype initially reflected distinct approaches to career development services. At the onset, DC's 12-week prototype focused on group workshops, flexible, self-directed resources, and offered one-on-one counseling as needed, whereas MITT's six-to-eight-week prototype focused on individualized support from CDPs with workshop sessions developed and evolving based on the needs of the participants. By the end of this phase, both incorporated a menu of one-on-one counselling, group-based work, access to self-directed resources, and follow-up supports.

Despite differences in provincial contexts and marketing strategies, both prototypes attracted similar participant profiles. Participants were predominantly mid-career professionals, highly educated, and employed full-time, with a significant proportion identifying as immigrants. Newcomers to Canada have been highly engaged in other initiatives within the [Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio](#), reflecting their unique need for tailored support to navigate the Canadian labour market and achieve meaningful transitions. However, aside from a few notable examples (such as AspireAtlantic and EDGE UP 2.0), many of our [10 Scaling Up Skills Development projects](#) focus on younger Canadians,¹² and the majority focus on *unemployed and/or underemployed* Canadians¹³—indicating the Mid-career Transitions project is reaching and providing value to a segment not often reached by other skills training and workforce development programs.

For future prototyping, it is worth noting how suggestions from CDPs and participants converged. CDPs from both institutions reported inadequate time for one-on-one supports and requested additional time for individual attention—to get participants independent quicker, or to offer adequate follow-up assistance with action plans. Participants also requested additional customized attention from practitioners. Across services, participants responded positively to practical, actionable guidance—both in terms of career-based supports (e.g., LMI, employer engagement, support with personal branding and networking) and for more personal issues (e.g., support with mental health and financial management). Respondents from both institutions also appreciated and requested more in-person events and workshops, and longer project timeframes, more generally.

These workforce development interventions remain early-stage innovations, tested with small cohorts. While initial findings may indicate that a combination of one-on-one attention, group-based activities, self-directed

12 Some focus on youth explicitly – these projects include ADaPT, NPower Canada, Reboot Plus, and Lift/Future en tête.

13 Several other scaling projects service individuals who are unemployed at intake as indicated by either our most recent reporting or our *Final Reports*. For example, in AspireAtlantic, 67% of participants were unemployed at intake; in EDGE UP 2.0, 81% were unemployed; in NPower Canada, 60%; in IM&M+, over 80%, in Reboot Plus, 86%; in Lift/Future en tête, 78%; in Material Handling 4.0, 74%; and in ESAT, 82%.

resources, and follow-up supports may be effective, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions about the ideal model, precise balance, and optimal duration of these components.

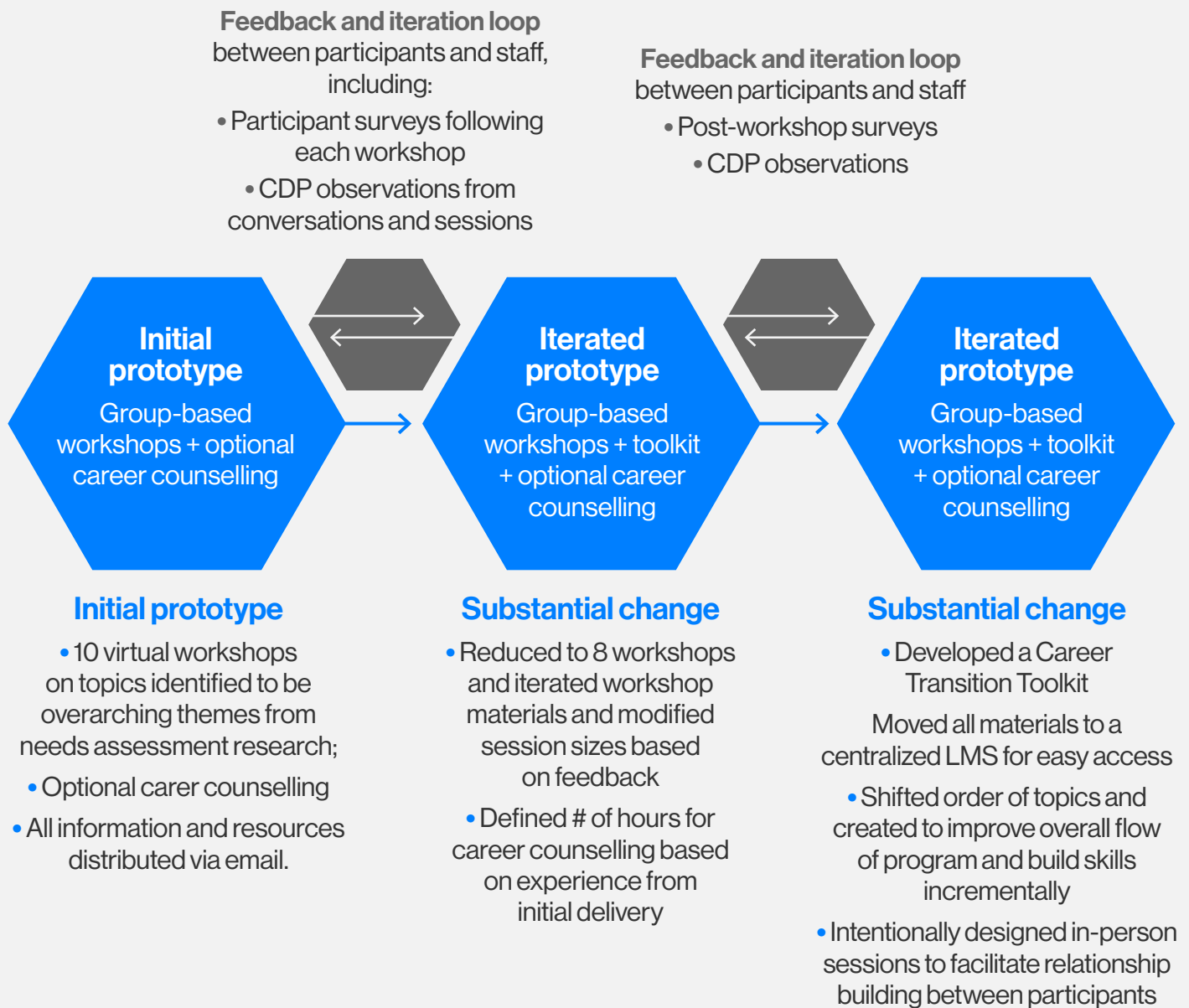
Moving forward, further research is needed to refine the optimal blend of services for meeting diverse participant needs. Both models underscore the value of iterative design, adapting services based on participant feedback to enhance relevance, scalability, and responsiveness. Future phases will focus on incorporating new cohorts and employer engagement activities to enhance and validate these evolving models.

6.2. Future project reporting

Our upcoming *Final Report* will focus on adaptations made to the model in 2024 and 2025. As new cohorts experience the models, new learnings will emerge, and adjustments will be made in response to feedback received. The employer engagement for both partners gained momentum in 2024 and will continue into 2025. We will also continue to explore outcomes for both worker and employer streams, as well as how outcomes may change as the models are iterated.

Appendix A

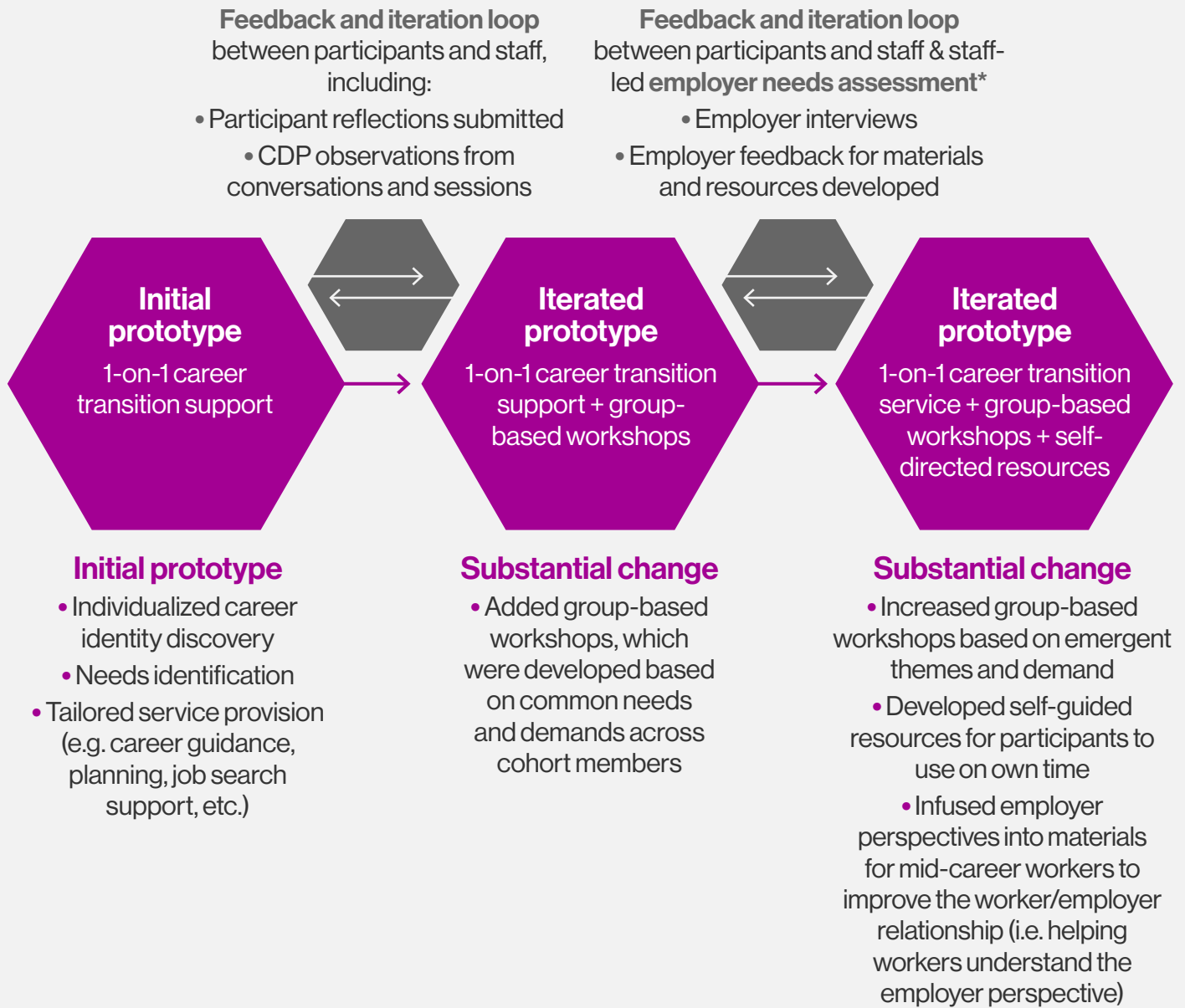
Figure A1 | Improvements made to the DC service model



Core principles

- Provide participants with foundational knowledge and skills to achieve career self-efficacy
 - Ongoing and continuous learning and iteration based on participant feedback
 - Constant communication and idea exchanges between staff

Figure A2 | Improvements made to the MITT service model



Core principles

- Person-centred, tailored, and fluid approach to service delivery
- Commitment to continuous learning and iteration in response to emergent needs and demands
 - Constant communication and idea exchanges between staff and participants

