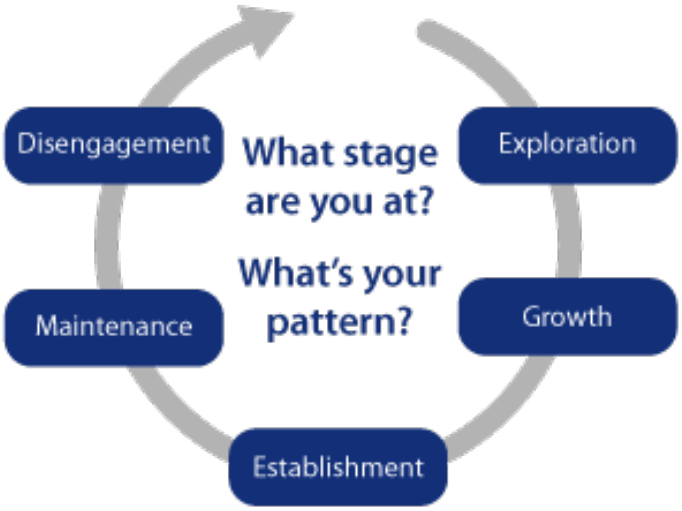
Career Stages

The 5 stages of career development model was created in the 1960s and whilst the theory still holds today, what we tend to see now is that these 5 stages don't just happen once in a person's working life, but happens multiple times. The stages repeat, we see cycles and people go through the stages very quickly, every 2 or 3 years for example. Some enjoy a particular stage i.e. Exploration, and may cut short the full 5 stages and circle round exploration and growth. It is knowing what your career history to date looks like in terms of career stages, knowing your pattern and how quickly you go through the stages that will help you recognise your needs, preferences and manage your future career.



The 5 Stages of Career Development

Career stages was developed by Edgar Schein in the 1960's and identified that people went through 5 stages within their career. Back then, these 5 stages very often happened in one or maybe two companies and progresses over the course of one's full working career.

1. **Exploration:** Late teens and early 20's. We left school, Uni, etc and went into the world of work. We were starting out and learning rapidly.
2. **Growth:** As we moved through our 20's and into our early 30's we grow, gain further qualifications, promotions, more responsibility.
3. **Establishment:** During our late 30's to mid 40's, with 20+ years' service, we are becoming part of the establishment. We are considered senior & likely to have management status.
4. **Maintenance:** From our late 40's to mid 50's we start to cruise. We have our status, we have got our stripes & aren't interested in or looking for further promotion/responsibility.
5. **Disengagement:** Late 50's to retirement, we are starting to slow down, our motivation levels reduce as we prepare to leave the world of work.

Questions to reflect on:

Where do you think you are right now in terms of career stage? Do you know your pattern? Notice, as things are changing – where do you want to be?