# OCEAN Cards Sort – Brief User Guide

OCEAN – Cards Sort (© S. Rochat, 2019)
Printable version – Online version

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| ***Purpose*** | Personality refers to the enduring pattern of an individual's characteristics and behaviors (APA, 2015). It is relatively stable over the course of life, although this stability is not established until adulthood. |
| ***Background*** | The OCEAN instrument is based on the Big Five personality model developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). The model distinguishes five broad personality dimensions and 30 specific facets that describe these tendencies in detail: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. |
| ***Rationale*** | OCEAN aims to support the career counseling process by helping participants to:<br>• Describe their usual ways of perceiving, feeling, thinking, and acting in a flexible, nonjudgmental way.<br>• Identify work environments that may value these tendencies.<br>• Identify potential sources of mismatches or tension between a personality profile and a work context.<br>Personality can also be explored using tests, but sorting cards encourages dialogue, collaboration, and reflection rather than assessment. |
| ***Process*** | With reference to the 5As model of career counseling, the OCEAN instrument is particularly relevant during:<br>• Activating the introspection: promoting self-awareness by exploring salient personality characteristics and opening up reflection on the fit between the person and their environment. |
| ***Content*** | The OCEAN instrument contains 30 cards, each corresponding to a facet of Costa and McCrae's model and expressed as a descriptive adjective. |
| ***Administration*** | 1. Invite the participant to sort the cards according to how strongly they identify with each adjective.<br>2. Invite the participant to distinguish whether the selected adjectives describe them more in their personal life or in their professional life.<br>3. Explore together the possible connections between these descriptions and the participant's career aspirations, as well as the work environments being considered. |
| ***Interpretation*** | The letters and pictograms on each card can help identify patterns: O = openness; C = conscientiousness; E = extraversion; A = agreeableness; N = neuroticism. |
| ***Further Reading*** | • Mapping career counseling interventions (Chapter 5.2).<br>• Les 5As du conseil en orientation (Chapter 4.1). |
| ***References*** | American Psychological Association. (2015). *APA dictionary of psychology.* Author.<br>Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Normal personality assessment in clinical practice: The NEO Personality Inventory. *Psychological Assessment*, *4*(1), 5–13. |