

# Career Planning

**G**OOD CAREER EXPLORATION begins with assessment and ends with the recording of what was discovered. It is an ongoing process. The career plan is a formalized mechanism or document for capturing and recording the career development process.



## Objectives:



1. After defining values, aptitudes, and interests, explain how they relate to health care careers.
2. Formulate a career plan based on the identification of personal values, aptitudes, and interests.

## Key Terms:



aptitudes  
extrinsic values  
interests  
intrinsic values  
transferable skills  
values

## Job Satisfaction and Success

On a hot, muggy day in August, Steve's mother asks him to mow the lawn and water the flowers. He tries to get out of doing the chores. When she insists, he grumbles and complains. The mosquitoes are thick in the yard, and they drive him crazy. Steve does the chore quickly and carelessly to finish as soon as possible.

A little later that same day, Steve's best friend asks him to go canoeing. He quickly packs his gear and goes canoeing with his friend for the rest of the afternoon. When he returns home hours later covered in mosquito bites—that he never even noticed—with his muscles tired and aching from hours of paddling, he tells his mother he had a great time. What factors may have influenced Steve's attitude, behavior, and effort?

Personal interests and values can influence the choices we make as well as our attitudes and behavior. Interests and values can be motivating factors. When you possess a skill in a particular area, it can influence whether or not you enjoy a particular activity or chose to participate in it. This concept of applying strengths and interests also relates to choosing appropriate careers. When you assess your own values, interests, and skills, you can make career choices that will be more likely to result in job satisfaction and success.

## VALUES, APTITUDES, AND INTERESTS

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Values, aptitudes, and interests all play a vital role in determining the correct path for your future. Most career counselors will tell you that identifying personal values, aptitudes, and interests is an important step in choosing appropriate career options and in developing a career plan.

### Values

**Values** are ideas or beliefs considered special or important. They are desirable concepts or things that have merit or worth. Values are held in high regard. People have many values, and value sets are unique to each individual (though we may have some values in common with others). Although values change over time, they tend to permeate and influence all facets of our lives. For instance, work-related values are important to us in terms of our jobs; they are often described as “intrinsic” and “extrinsic.”

#### Intrinsic Values

**Intrinsic values** are values important in and of themselves. They are aspects of a job that have worth, merit, or importance in their own right or for their own sake. Intrinsic values may be the benefits of the work, or they may be aspects of the work that bring inner satisfaction. Examples are helping others, contributing to society, and having a sense of accomplishment.

#### Extrinsic Values

**Extrinsic values** are important conditions or benefits that result from a particular job. They are the “fringe benefits” or external features of a job that some people may consider important (e.g., salary; power and authority; and flexible hours).

### Aptitudes

**Aptitudes** are inherent abilities, inclinations, or skills. They are attributes or personal characteristics that give you potential. Aptitudes often represent a capacity or potential for learning or a natural tendency to acquire a skill. Everyone has a unique set of aptitudes or skills, many of which are transferable. **Transferable skills** are portable skills acquired as a result of education, volunteer or work experiences, hobbies, sports, and/or other life experiences that can be used and applied in other jobs. When considering potential career choices, take into account your aptitudes or skills with things, people, and information.

## Interests

**Interests** are subjects or qualities that spark our curiosity or capture and hold our attention and enthusiasm. Most people have many interests. People enjoy doing what they are interested in and, conversely, tend to be very interested in activities they enjoy. So it is no surprise that research has shown people tend to have greater job satisfaction when performing jobs that include duties or tasks they are interested in or enjoy. Identifying personal interests is an important step in formulating a career plan.

## RELATION TO HEALTH CARE CAREERS

It is often helpful to match values, interests, and aptitudes to one or more Career Pathways to narrow down career options that may be most appropriate. Career Clusters are broad occupational groupings. They are an organizing tool defining education for post-secondary education and careers using 16 broad clusters of occupations and 79 pathways. They use validated standards that ensure opportunities for all students regardless of their career goals and interests.

## Pathways

Health care careers are categorized according to service areas or pathways. These pathways include the following:

- ◆ Therapeutic Services—This pathway focuses on providing direct patient care over time.
- ◆ Diagnostic Services—This pathway focuses on creating a picture of a patient’s health status at any given time, usually through short-interval patient contacts.
- ◆ Health Informatics—This pathway focuses on the collection, documentation, and processing of patient information. It typically involves limited direct patient contact.
- ◆ Biotechnology and Bioinformatics—This pathway focuses on the application of computers and technology to medicine and information. It typically involves limited or no patient contact.
- ◆ Support Services—This pathway focuses on providing a supportive environment in which to deliver health care. It typically involves limited patient contact.



**FIGURE 1.** Identifying personal interests is an important step in formulating a career plan.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Individual Career Plan (ICP)

If you have not already made an appointment with your career counselor to document your career planning activities, now is the time. Your career counselor is there to assist you with assessment of your values, aptitudes, and interests. Your counselor can further assist you with the fine tuning of your career selections and can facilitate some real world career exploration opportunities (e.g., job shadowing and internships). Your career counselor works with your health care instructors to create opportunities for you to find your niche.

The health care careers website at <http://www.learntocare.org/careers/medical-doctor-physician/> is a useful resource for learning more about specific health care career opportunities.

## OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY TYPES

John L. Holland, a prominent psychologist at John Hopkins University, believed work environments are often populated with individuals who have common values, skills, and interests. He categorized job seekers into six major occupational personality types: conventional, enterprising, social, artistic, investigative, and realistic. Each occupational personality type has a particular mix of values, aptitudes, and interests associated with it. Most people identify with more than one occupational personality type. You may find it helpful to identify your occupational personality types and use that information to choose careers that seem suited to those types.

For further study of career options and pathways, examine the document at <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/44471193/National-Healthcare-Pathways-and-Sample-Careers>. Also, see <http://free-doc-lib.com/book/preparing-for-career-success-in-health-science-1.pdf>.

### Individual Career Plan

Many of us think about our academic futures and career aspirations. However, unless there is a formalized mechanism for capturing those thoughts, the views can go missing or unfinished. A personalized plan can help chart your progress.



**FIGURE 2.** The formal career plan is a tool for recording the career exploration process.

## FORMULATE A CAREER PLAN

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The first step in a career plan is to complete a self-assessment of values, interests, skills, and personality using one of several methods. You could journal on your own and create a list; take written assessments available through high school advisors, career counselors, or local librarians; or use online self-assessment tools.

Match self-assessment information to potential career options. Research the indicated career options. You can seek advice and recommendations from parents, school guidance counselors, teachers, and professionals in your fields of interest. Your career counselor can help you with your specific career plan, outlining the required academic coursework according to a program of study to achieve your career goal. The Individual Career Plan (ICP) should be reviewed and revised as needed.

### Summary:

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Personal interests and values can influence the choices we make as well as our attitudes and behavior. Interests and values can be motivating factors. When you possess a skill in a particular area, it can influence whether or not you enjoy a particular activity or chose to participate in it. This concept of applying strengths and interests also relates to choosing appropriate careers. When you assess your own values, interests, and skills, you can make career choices that will be more likely to result in job satisfaction and success.

Career Clusters are broad occupational groupings. They are an organizing tool defining education for post-secondary education and careers using 16 broad clusters of occupations and 79 pathways. They use validated standards that ensure opportunities for all students, regardless of their career goals and interests. In addition, the career plan is a formalized mechanism for capturing and recording the career development process. The Individual Career Plan (ICP) can help map your progress.

### Checking Your Knowledge:

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1. Define aptitudes.
2. Define extrinsic and intrinsic values.
3. Explain why assessment of your interests is important to the career exploration process.
4. Explain how a person's values can influence the career exploration process.
5. What is a career plan?

## Expanding Your Knowledge:

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Interview three people to learn what career they think would be the best fit for you and your personality. What reasons did they offer as to why they thought you would be successful? Did the three interviewees generally agree in their assessments of you, or was there a wide difference? What are your thoughts on their ideas?

## Web Links:

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### **Vocational Information Center**

<http://www.khake.com/page22.html>

### **Career Exploration**

<http://www.iseek.org/>

### **Self-Assessment**

<http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/cdc/identify/self-assessments>