



Preface

Career planning is an aspect of life that most people don't spend a lot of time thinking about—except, perhaps, when they become frustrated with their job, encounter more challenges than wins at their workplace, and/or experience signs of burnout from work. The “real world” of work often takes over and precludes any focused attention on planning for the next position or a new career pathway.

Unfortunately, pharmacists are not immune to being unfulfilled with their career choice. Despite being exposed to career-based profiles and assessments before and during pharmacy school, pharmacists often find themselves in a position or practice setting that becomes a source of disappointment and disillusionment not only with their work situation, but with the entire profession of pharmacy. This dissatisfaction has been a source of research and is often expressed through various social media platforms. The career discontentment of some pharmacists has also contributed to their discouraging students from becoming a pharmacist, which is very unfortunate as our current and future society need the talent and contributions of pharmacists in many ways that the profession provides.

As pharmacists at different phases in our career, we believe that a focus on and commitment to career planning is important in all phases during a pharmacist's career. This planning starts while in pharmacy school and continues through the last position held before officially retiring (and even post-retirement, as many decide to continue to work on specific areas of professional or personal interest). We also believe that a refocus on one's career, especially during a period of career discontentment and/or unhappiness, can provide

new perspectives, plans, and ideas that can contribute to career enhancement, repurpose, or change.

The purpose of this book is to provide information regarding concepts and perspectives pertaining to pharmacist's career planning. The book also provides resources and actionable planning steps for pharmacists throughout their career journey. In addition, this resource will focus on important aspects pertaining to the whole person, both the work/professional side and the nonwork/personal side. Career planning involves thoughtful reflection, commitment, and time. A very important element of this process is knowing and being honest with yourself as to what brings fulfillment and completeness in all aspects of life. Although we have chosen pharmacy as a career, there are aspects of our nonwork, personal self that influence our careers. We cannot, and should not, separate our personal and professional selves, but rather appreciate the role that each has with the other. (Although there are environmental, regulatory, and other aspects in pharmacy and health care that influence pharmacist's individual career preferences and choices, this book will not explore these areas.)

This book is divided into 3 sections: planning for your career, planning for the progression of your career, and planning for the maximization of your career.

The section on planning for your career includes 3 chapters focused on fundamental aspects of career planning for pharmacists. This includes information on the career planning process and its influencers; opportunities for pharmacist career development, enhancement, and options; and information regarding continuing professional development (CPD), continuing professional education, and their application in career planning.

Meanwhile, the section on planning for the progression of your career is comprised of 4 chapters that provide information on influential individual contributors to careers. This includes professional branding, well-being and resiliency, networking, and goal setting.

The final section of the book, which covers planning for the maximization of your career, is comprised of 3 chapters that explore complex attributes that influence career planning. Information in this section includes topics such as work-life balance/work-life integration, career contentment, and managing multiple aspects that influence career advancement and planning.

Each chapter concludes with key takeaways as well as questions, reflections, and exercises for the reader designed to assist with reinforcing information and contributing to career planning. They also conclude with pharmacist profiles that address questions pertaining to their career. These pharmacists, who are in various points in their career and practice in diverse settings, provide unique perspectives and advice for pharmacists, new practitioner pharmacists, and student pharmacists. They also reinforce the fact that each career is a unique journey and can often lead into an area(s) that was/were not part of the initial professional plan or aspiration.

There are several underpinnings throughout the book that should provide guidance regarding career planning and evaluation. First, career planning is a lifetime process, as we are always learning and growing; therefore, our interests, plans, and goals continue to evolve. Second, career planning is important for the professional and personal aspects of life. The individual aspects of life may influence others—including the work or career side. Third, there are many tools and resources that can assist with various aspects of career planning, including the CPD model; developing specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART) goals; and utilizing a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. (These can be used separately or together for various aspects of planning.) Finally, career exposure, opportunity, and planning can be enhanced by utilizing avenues that allow you to collaborate and connect with other professionals within and outside of the pharmacy profession. This includes networking; collaborating with others through mentoring and/or coaching; and becoming involved in local, state, national, and/or international associations or organizations.

Congratulations on choosing to focus on yourself and your career! Best of luck to you and happy planning! It is our hope that the information in this book assists you now, throughout your career journey, and when you need to (re)focus on aspects that contribute to your career.