



APhA

Career Pathways
Program

Facilitator's Guide

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Welcome to the APhA Career Pathways Program Facilitator's Guide

This resource has been developed to guide you as you facilitate the APhA Career Pathways Program workshop. Specific detailed notes for each slide are part of the slide deck notes section. Exercise, notes, and information are based on several years of experience conducting workshops for student pharmacists and extensive research on pharmacy careers and practice settings. Trained facilitators who offer the program also provided valuable input for the revision of presenters notes in the slide deck.

The APhA Career Pathways Program workshop is highly interactive, and the students do much of the work. Your role is to facilitate the process for the students. Facilitating is different from teaching. Teaching involves using your expertise and communicating information from a specific body of knowledge. Facilitating involves sharing your expertise about a process and guiding the students to use their own self-knowledge. The specific tasks of the facilitator include:

- Introducing and clearly explaining key concepts.
- Guiding discussions and interactions to ensure coverage and appropriate emphasis on key points.
- Keeping the workshop “on schedule.”
- Orchestrating and connecting the various workshop segments into a cohesive, interesting whole.

These facilitator's notes are designed to assist you in communicating these concepts to students and to support you in conducting a positive and effective workshop.

Materials/equipment necessary

The materials and equipment needed for the workshop include the APhA Career Pathways Program:

- Briefing Document
- Workshop Workbook
- Follow-up Materials
- Slide deck
- Dry erase board and markers (optional)
- Projector/laptop (slide presentation)

Room arrangement

If possible, the room should have enough tables to form a 'U' with the chairs arranged around them both inside and outside the 'U'. To provide an optimal environment for discussion, it is recommended that the class size be limited to a maximum of 24 students.

APhA Career Pathways Program Workshop Detailed Agenda

Steps of Vigilant Decision-Making Process	Activity	Duration (min)	Total Time
I. Appraising the Challenge	I-A: Facilitator/Program Introduction	2	02 min
	I-B: Introduction to Materials/Career Options	7	09 min
	I-C: Program Focus	6	15 min
	I-D: Presentation of Decision-Making Model	4	19 min
	I-E: Appraising the Challenge Exercise	13	32 min
	I-F: Summary for Appraising the Challenge	1	33 min
II. Assessing Yourself	II-A: Introduction to Self-Assessment	2	35 min
	II-B: Self-Assessment Exercise	10	45 min
	II-C: Introduction to Critical Factors	10	55 min
	II-D: Summary for Assessing Yourself	1	56 min
Break		10	1 hr 6 min
III. Surveying Alternatives	III-A: Introduction to Career Option Profiles	5	1 hr 11 min
	III-B: Career Options Profile Exercise	15	1 hr 26 min
	III-C: Summary for Surveying Alternatives	1	1 hr 27 min
IV. Evaluating Alternatives	IV-A: Introduction to Decision Balance Sheet	10	1 hr 37 min
	IV-B: Decision Balance Sheet Exercise	20	1 hr 57 min
	IV-C: Summary for Evaluating Alternatives	1	1 hr 58 min
V. Achieving Commitment	V-A: Introduction on Achieving Commitment ¹	5 (varies)	2 hrs 03 min
	V-B: Summary for Achieving Commitment	1	2 hrs 04 min
	V-C: Description of Follow-Up Materials	5	2 hrs 09 min
	V-D: Workshop Evaluation	5	2 hrs 14 min
	V-E: Closing Remarks	1	2 hrs 15 min

¹ Optional expanded activities are available for this section.

Decision-making model

The basic decision-making model outlined below provides the framework for the APhA Career Pathways Program. The model shows what steps are needed to be a vigilant decision maker. The vigilant decision maker is alert, thorough, open, and persistent in looking at and evaluating different possibilities. This includes your documenting the pros and cons of your experiential experiences and perhaps any work experience you have had in pharmacy.

Please study the model and the explanatory paragraphs about the model:

The Vigilant Decision-Making Process

Step I. Appraising the challenge

- Determine the importance of informed decision making.
- Acknowledge the consequences of making a “passive decision.”
- Can you decide on your first role without actually seeing the environment?

Step II. Assessing yourself

- Conduct a thorough self-analysis; assess your goals, values, strengths, skills, interests, and preferences.
- Who else is important to talk with about your self-assessment?

Step III. Surveying alternatives

- Explore a wide range of alternatives.
- Especially those that you never heard about.

Step IV. Evaluating alternatives

- Search for new information.
- Take account of added information, even if it does not support the course of action you initially preferred.
- Match your self-assessment with career options.
- Consider both positive and negative consequences of all alternatives.

Step V. Achieving commitment

- Decide the best course of action, including a contingency plan in case your first choice does not work out.
- Analyze both short- and long-term career goals.

The Vigilant Decision-Making Process

Step I. Appraising the challenge

Your first step is to recognize the importance of taking an active role in making career decisions, rather than just assuming things will work out or attending job fairs at our school without ever visiting the environment you may be interested in. You also should recognize the difficulty of thoughtful career decision making, including the amount of time needed to do it well. Problems occur when you underestimate the demands of the task or postpone tackling it out of reluctance to look at the issues involved.

Step II. Assessing yourself

Good career decisions require an unusual degree of self-knowledge. For many people, self-examination is the hardest part of the decision-making task. But you must understand what your goals, values, strengths, interests, and abilities are if you are going to make the career decision that is right for you. Too many people today take a “job”—remember, as a student, you are looking for the first step in your career, the path to professional success and personal fulfillment.

Step III. Surveying alternatives

Because there are a lot of career paths to choose from, you may be tempted to rule out options right from the start. You may feel you do not have the time, energy, or resources to review them all, or you may feel you already know what you want to do. But you might overlook an exciting possibility if you are not sufficiently active and open at this step.

Step IV. Evaluating alternatives

In many ways, this is the heart of the matter: matching your preferences and priorities to the options attractive to you. The challenge is to remain open and objective even when what you discover about a given career—or about yourself—runs counter to your expectations. This part of the decision-making process requires an ongoing effort—you may well have to revisit steps II and III.

Step V. Achieving commitment

After all the relevant factors have been identified, explored, and weighed, you must reach a conclusion—the decision to take that first step in your career. Part of the challenge of this stage is that you must use both intuitive as well as analytic thought. You should also consider alternatives should your first choice not be available at the time you are looking.

Exercise 1: What Led You to Pharmacy?

Goals: (what the profession of pharmacy will enable you to accomplish—personally and professionally)

Interests: (what personally attracted you to the profession of pharmacy)

Other Factors: (any other factors that led you to the profession of pharmacy)

Appraising the challenge exercise:

Turn to exercises 1 and 3 in your Briefing Document. In exercise 1, you described the goals, ideas, and interests that led you to choose a career in pharmacy. In exercise 3, you described the steps you have taken toward choosing a career option within the pharmacy profession.

Activity: Pair with a partner and take turns discussing your answers to these questions. Specifically, share with your partner:

- What led you to pharmacy?
- What major decisions will you have to make while you are in pharmacy school (or in practice)?
- How are you going to make these decisions?

Be an empathic listener by asking questions for clarification rather than making your own points. When finished, reverse roles and continue the conversation.



Exercise 2: What Are Your Career Options?

Use the Career Options for Pharmacists Chart in the **Briefing Document** to orient your thinking about career options for you. The chart is designed to depict the major categories and environments with a reasonable level of detail.

Where the same career option exists in more than one environment (e.g., clinical/cardiology), it is repeated on the chart. In other instances, where an option more typically pertains to one environment (e.g., pharmaceutical industry), it has been listed in the area where it is usually found.

Instructions: When you have reviewed the Career Options Chart, list the options in one of the following three columns on page BD-10:

Understand: Career options you know enough about to either consider or reject as possible career options for you. Consider how much of the daily routine you actually know. Do you know much time is spent on direct or indirect patient care versus administrative responsibilities?

Aware: Career options you may be aware of superficially but know too little about to reject or consider as career options.

New career option: Career options that have been introduced to you on the chart.

Exercise 3: Status of Your Decision

What steps have you taken toward choosing a career option within the pharmacy profession or in changing your career path? Perhaps you have spent time and effort investigating various kinds of opportunities. Have you worked in a pharmacy or does your family have pharmacists and healthcare providers that provide your exposure to their role? Or maybe you have not begun to investigate different options or have only some vague hunches.

What steps have you taken so far in investigating possible career options?

What pharmacy career options do you think are most likely for you? (Note: You may wish to refer back to the list of options on the Career Options for Pharmacists in the **Briefing Document**).

Exercise 4: Decision-Making Style

A significant aspect of self-knowledge is to recognize that each of us tends to use a particular decision-making style: analytical (thinker), emotional (feeler), or action oriented (doer). It will be helpful for you to become more aware of your own decision-making style and the possible effects of distinctive styles.

Thinkers are primarily analytical. They use an objective approach to decision making and run the risks of ignoring their feelings and over-analyzing an issue rather than acting.

Feelers primarily rely on their emotions in making decisions. They use a more subjective approach to decision making and run the risk of ignoring the importance of rational evidence.

Doers are driven by the need to act. While they are not encumbered with over-analyzing a decision, they may ignore both considered analysis and emotional input in order to act swiftly.

Self-assessment exercise:

Turn to exercises 4 and 6 in your **Briefing Document**. In exercise 4, you indicated your primary decision-making style (thinker, feeler, or doer). In exercise 6, you indicated the relative importance of a number of critical factors that will enter into your career decision.

Activity: Pair with a partner and take turns discussing your answers to the following questions. Specifically, share with your partner:

- Your decision-making style—thinker, feeler, doer—with an example of a major decision you have made in the past.
- Which one of these styles is your primary way to make decisions?
- The five critical factors you feel are most important to you—and why.



Exercise 5: Rating Critical Factors

The following items describe important aspects of the work of pharmacy professionals. These “critical factors” provide insight into your career decision. Your rating of these critical factors will help you assess your goals, values, strengths, likes, and dislikes.

Instructions: Highlight your rating on the continuum for each critical factor below, and/or go to www.pharmacist.com/career/career-pathways and click on “Online Assessment Tool” to complete this online.

These critical factors have been developed to help you assess your own preferences; however, they do not imply or suggest any judgment about you or your choices. Each pharmacist and student pharmacist are unique. It is quite normal to like certain aspects of a particular pharmacy area, as well as to dislike other aspects. Some statements refer to the degree that you have in a work environment. Consider what you would like to have versus what any current experience may be.

- Discuss the guide to numerical scales as noted on slide 20.

Exercise 6: Career Option Profile Exercise

Have the students read through the profile and complete the exercise at the end that provides them process to look at five factors for the exercise.

- Were there any surprises?

Exercise 7: Decision Balance Sheet

Answer the questions provided in the workshop on gaps and inconsistencies, questions to ask, most questionable career options listed

Once completed, explain that a score closer to zero appears to be a better fit, however you cannot do career planning only by numbers. By doing this for several profiles they can see a trend of what is a “better” fit.