**What is "Plan B" and Why is it Important?**

A "Plan B" refers to a back-up plan. Developing a solid back-up plan is a good way to approach major/career planning – and life in general! Each year, thousands of individuals apply to health professional programs. Most of these programs are highly competitive and not all qualified or strong applicants will get in. Thus, it is in your best interest to have an equally exciting “Plan B” to consider. Your “Plan B” can be a career path within another area of health or a different industry. Your “Plan B” can also refer to your strategy for what you will do in the short-term if you plan to reapply to a program.

Tips for Developing Your "Plan B" Option

* Develop your “Plan A” and “Plan B” plans at the same time. Always have a backup plan in mind.
* For your “Plan A” program, apply to several professional programs – increase your odds of an admission letter!
* Continually explore your interests, skills, values, and goals.
* Research the “Plan B” option and what it will require (i.e. courses, extracurricular experience, etc.)

If You are Not Admitted to Plan A…

* Contact the program and ask for suggestions to improve your application.
* Ask for admission statistics and profile of admitted class (e.g. GPA average/range, etc.).
* Is your cumulative GPA above or below the averages for the schools you are applying to? (For medical schools: <https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/>)
* Is your science (biology/chemistry), physics, and math GPA above or below the average for the schools you are applying to?
* Be realistic – assess whether or not re-application is in your best interest.  Get feedback from advisors, health professionals, etc.
* If you decide to reapply, target your areas of weakness and intentionally invest resources to improve your next application. You may want to retake a class, study abroad, or volunteer more intentionally – with a particular patient population or with more responsibility.
* Consider non-traditional health care fields. Options include: Public Health, Forensics, and the Scientific and Technical Communication. You can also creating your own major through the Inter-College Program's Health & Wellness program or CLA's Individualized Degree Programs.

Not the End, Just a Detour…

If you are not admitted to the health professional program of your choice, feelings of grief, disappointment, and even rejection are perfectly normal. If you are in this situation, it is important that you understand that your situation, while very disappointing, need not be the end of your career journey. Take time to re-assess your desires and talents. Ask yourself:

* What do I really want?
* What is it about nursing (medicine, physical therapy, etc.) that appeals to me?
* Are there other career options that share these qualities?
* Which of these professions could potentially be a fit?
* How do I find out about them? What are my next steps?

The Health Careers Center is a resource that can help you identify alternative options.

Bibliography:

Explore Your Future Academic Health Careers Center

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