



# GUIDELINE TO DEVELOPING A CAREER PLAN FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES:

## INTRODUCTION:

This guide to developing a nursing career plan has been adapted from information provided by Health Workforce New Zealand. It is intended for use by registered nurses and midwives who are undergoing postgraduate study funded by HWNZ, nurses who access Hauora Maori Funding, and new graduate nurses who are employed into the NETP programme. Midwives undergoing first year of practice have a career planning process built into their programme. Nurses and midwives who are not part of these programmes are also encouraged to use this document and the career plan template. The guideline and career plan templates are designed to support nursing staff with career development decision making in order to achieve their full potential.

## MANAGEMENT:

### The four step process

There is a range of career planning models and their design features vary. However, most if not all are based on four steps or some variation of them. These four steps can be summarised as:

- Knowing yourself
- Exploring possibilities
- Making choices
- Making it happen.

At each stage of the process it is expected that conversations between the employee and manager and/or other relevant persons will occur:

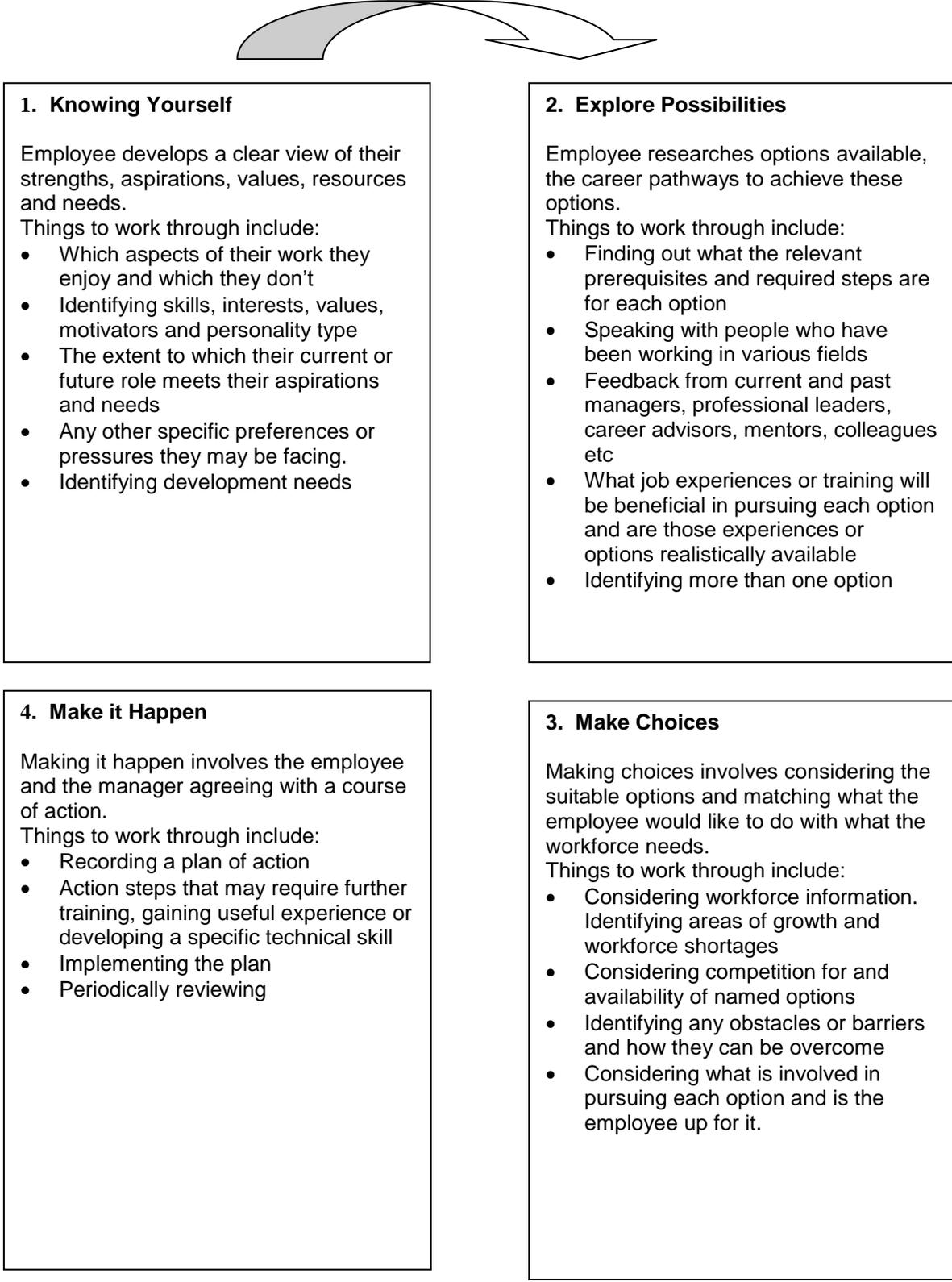
- In the first two stages may be quite brief – the nurse/midwife will be largely responsible for doing the work on “knowing yourself” and “exploring possibilities”. This information does not have to be shared with the manager; however employees are encouraged to discuss possibilities with a variety of people, which may include their manager.
- Manager involvement may need to be more intensive during the third and fourth sections of the career plan: making choices and developing a plan to make things happen.

Career discussions may occur between the employee and one or more of the following: manager, a professional supervisor, a professional leader, an educator, a career development specialist, or people experienced in a particular field.

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**The four steps to career planning – what needs to happen**



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**NOTES:**

**Future proofing and keeping it real**

Career plans will often include future proofing especially early in careers.

Future proofing: many employees select an option but later change their mind. It is advantageous, especially for employees who are considering specialising, for a career plan to keep options open.

It is quite valid, for example, for a new graduate registered nurse to have a career plan that is explicit that the choice at this point is “I don’t know, and I’d like a bigger taste of a range of options” or “I am inclined towards these three or four options, and I’d like to gain experience in these options”

- Keeping it real:
  - In the early stages of a career, it may make sense for an employee to keep options open and look at a range of training and experience options for future proofing reasons (see above)
  - After the early stages, care needs to be taken to ensure that employees are not doing a series of random funded courses (because they “sound interesting”).

**What is in a good career plan?**

The career plan will:

- Briefly record relevant information from “Knowing yourself” and “Exploring possibilities” and “Making choices”
- Specify an agreed (between the employee and the manager or supervisor) course of action covering some or all of:
  - Skills the individual needs to develop
  - Qualifications needed
  - Other learning opportunities to meet agreed goals
  - Possible “stepping stone” jobs
  - Experiences that may be useful
  - Strategies for overcoming any obstacles
  - Networks/information/support needed to achieve goals
- Specify who will do what to implement the career plan
- Specify when and/or in what circumstances progress in implementing the plan, and the plan itself, will be reviewed.

The training plan that supports a career plan may encompass some or all of “on the job” experiences, formal education, informal education and mentoring/coaching/support.

**Responsibilities of managers and employees**

Managers, career planning professionals, coaches, mentors, etc are responsible for:

- Creating a career development culture
- Organising a good career planning process
- Communicating relevant information such as what the career pathways are, and current and future workforce needs
- Highlighting information sources
- Providing opportunities (including on the job experiences, formal and informal training, etc) for exploring options and for development
- Giving advice and support.

Employees/trainees are responsible for doing most of the work (after all, it’s their careers) e.g.:

- Self assessment/awareness and assessing their own needs
- Understanding DHB etc workforce needs
- Gathering relevant information
- Thinking about and assessing options, making decisions, and making things happen.

**REFERENCES**

Wright, B. (2010). *Career planning: Guiding principles*. Heath Workforce New Zealand, Wellington.

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CAREER PLAN  
NURSING**

Career planning is a continuous process of self-assessment and goal setting. This plan incorporates your career and professional development aspirations and aligns these with organisational goals as reflected in your role description. The Directors of Nursing manage HWNZ funding for nurses. A requirement for accessing this funding is to attain the appropriate level of the Nursing Professional Development and Recognition Programme (PDRP) and have an agreed Professional Development and Career Plan (PDCP). Professional development activities require a feedback loop (report on outcomes) as part of the follow-up for activities supported by the organisation. This link provides further information on the career planning process. <http://www.healthworkforce.govt.nz/health-careers/career-planning>.



Before starting your career plan, it's important to work through the career planning process, so that your plan is realistic and achievable for you, taking into account your self assessment (Know Yourself) and your career research (Explore Possibilities). Consider what knowledge and skills you need to fulfil the role description (i.e. clinical competences and professional behaviours) and meet objectives and develop in your career.

<b>Career Plan for:</b>			<b>Date:</b>	
	<b>Career &amp;/or Professional Development Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan to Achieve Goals</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Timeframe for achievement</b>
<b>Short Term (within 1 year)</b>				
<b>Longer Term (up to 5 years)</b>				
I have discussed my short term career plan and my career aspirations, with my manager.		The plan meets the needs of the service and fits with the strategic direction of workforce development within the organisation. I have discussed this plan and agree to support the achievement of these goals.		
<b>Staff Member Sign Off:</b>		<b>Line Manager Sign Off:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Title:</b>		<b>Title:</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Date:</b>		

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