

Ep #79: When You Fail Both AANP and ANCC



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sarah Michelle

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hey everyone, welcome back to another episode. Today I'm going to touch upon a topic that I find is not spoken about a lot, but is truly nothing to be embarrassed about or feel ashamed about. And that topic is what to do if you fail both AANP and ANCC. We talk about what to do if you fail one exam, but what if you find yourself taking and failing both?

And I want to stop right here because I know that statement probably just sent everyone's anxiety through the roof. I want you to really listen up again, most people pass their exam. The official statistics released this year are that about 87% of people pass their ANCC and about 84% of people pass their AANP. So overwhelmingly most people will pass.

But for those who didn't, I hope that today's podcast will help alleviate any anxiety you're feeling because you will be a real deal nurse practitioner. I have absolutely no doubts.

So let's start with that happens when you fail both AANP and ANCC. I think a lot of students worry that failing one will affect the other, but AANP and ANCC are not connected in any way. ANCC does not know if you have failed AANP and vice versa. The same goes for your state board of nursing or even your future employer friends, they will only know if you pass or fail if you alert them. And even if you do fail, it does not hurt your application for licensure when you do pass.

But I do want to stop here and remind you that if you are unsuccessful on the exams, it is just a small bump in the road, and you absolutely will get to where you need to be to pass. But I also want to provide you with a rundown of what happens when you fail each exam because I find that the more factual information is, the easier it is to navigate the uncertainty.

A question I get asked a lot is are you more likely to pass one if you've already failed the other or if you're more likely to fail both if you failed one?

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And truthfully there is no good way to measure this because there are so many factors involved with testing. It might have just been an off day.

There are sometimes external factors like a noisy testing center, malfunctioning computers, or just not having a great anxiety plan in place. And again, this means absolutely nothing about the wonderful provider you will be if you fail one or both exams.

So let's talk about what to do if you find yourself in this situation. The first thing I want you to do is try as hard as you can to avoid any negative self-talk. It can be super devastating to fail both exams, and I understand the feeling. We have all been there either in nursing school, our NP programs, or on our boards. No one gets it right 100% of the time. But in the end you are a competent and worthy soon to be NP, and I really want you to remember that.

The amount of amazing providers who failed their exams the first or even the second time around is more than you think. It's sometimes hard to remember that failing one or both exams is not the end of the story for you, but it absolutely is not. It is just a page of one chapter of your story, and a little bump in the road that you can overcome. I implore you to take a few days off, reset your mind, reassure yourself that you absolutely can and will pass. And remind yourself of how far you've come.

The next thing, and if you are in our Facebook group you see our team say this all the time, is email our team. And we don't just say this as some sort of generic blanket statement to everyone, we say it because it is truly the best way for us to help. Our team will then send you our failing questionnaire, which will give us insight of how to best guide you.

The failing questionnaire will ask about how what exams you took, how you studied. And by the way, it is fine to email even you did not use any of our courses. We are here to help everyone. The questionnaire has sections about how many practice questions you did, your scores on them, and anything else like anxiety, content, or a crazy testing experience that you felt like contributed to your testing day.

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This is a really good time to self-reflect and ask yourself what you felt during your exams. Did you feel like the non-clinical on the ANCC threw you off? Or were the wordier AANP questions harder for you to navigate? Definitely think about what you were feeling during the exam because this can help our team with a plan.

Our team takes everything into consideration and usually recommends resetting your practice bank and will recommend whatever courses they feel fit your needs and your timeline. I always think a one on one session is a fabulous way to get back to studying as well, as you can talk through your exams with a member of our NP team, ask any questions, and again, there is nothing to be ashamed about. We are here to help you every step of the way.

Logistically there are some rules about taking either of the exams again. AANP allows you to retest after completion of 15 contact hours, and will only allow you to test twice in one calendar year. ANCC does not have a contact hour requirement, but they do have a 60 day waiting period before you can test again. And ANCC does not have a cap on how many times you can test in one calendar year.

So those are just some logistical questions you should ask yourself as well. Do you want to earn contact hours? Do you want to just wait out the 60 days? Whichever you choose, again, there is no wrong answer. And remember, your previous fail does not affect anything with your next exam or anything with your passing certification nor your future license.

You will also receive a score report in the mail from AANP and ANCC. This is majorly helpful in seeing what areas you can improve upon before you test again. It will give you your score, and an important note here is that ANCC will only ever give you your score if you're unsuccessful. It's just kind of a weird tidbit about them.

But along with your score you will also see a breakdown of the areas you scored best and worst in. These score reports can be really helpful in

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guiding how you study, especially when you are doing practice questions. You can even filter the questions in the SM question bank by domain.

So say you scored lowest on assessment, you can go in and choose the assessment domain and really practice questions that fail under the category so that you are better prepared. Of course, we want you to do all of the questions still, but it can be super helpful to choose the area you were weakest in to get that extra practice.

After you email our team and start out with a new plan and you're practicing the areas where you were weakest, it is important to think about if you preferred one of the exams over the other or if you want to try both again. While they largely cover the same content, as you know, they do have some differences in testing interfaces, question format and focus.

Some students really prefer the testing interface of ANCC because it allows you to highlight portions of the questions and cross out things you do not think are pertinent. For some testers these are super useful, but for others they do not feel like they are as handy. There truly is no better test, the best test to take again is the one you felt more comfortable with.

AANP has an older black and white testing system, but also only has multiple choice questions, which some students prefer. A big note here, however, is that recent ANCC testers have said that they've had a reduced amount of or even no select all that apply questions. So that can be a nice change for testers who felt like the select all that apply questions threw them off.

AANP does not have pictures, while we know the ANCC can include some. Some may take their scores into consideration as well and see which one they felt they were closer with. An important thing to note with the scores though, is that they are weighted and there is not a tried and true way to see how close or not close you were to passing. So I would not base my entire plan off score alone.

Before we end, friends, I want to touch on the anxiety aspect, as always. As when you are a repeat tester it sometimes can spike that pesky anxiety.

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Anyone who has taken our courses or been a part of our Facebook community knows how important a good anxiety plan is.

This can truly make or break your exam day so I want you to really think about how you can support you. What works best? Did you try anything during your first testing attempts, and it did not work? Did you feel like your anxiety spiked when you least expected it? How can you better tackle anxiety on exam day so this time around you are calm, cool, and collected as you pass?

This is another thing our team can help work with you on. They are absolute experts in test anxiety and can offer support and coping mechanisms to help you.

So that's all for today, friends. I truly want you to know that whether this is your first, second, or fifth time testing, you are so worthy and so capable of being a real deal NP. I know that sometimes when you fail it can feel like the world is crashing down, but know that me and our team, we're here for you and you will pass. Until next time.

As an extra bonus, friends, if you're looking for support, no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in, I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs, visit stressfreenp.com. See you next week.