

Apprise Timeline of HANNA

Hannah was a health care professional before starting her PhD which was funded by grants from a Research Council and the university, and employment income. She joined the UK study whilst writing up her thesis in her final year of doctoral study; she graduated that same year aged 40. Hannah envisaged pursuing a 'hybrid' career in which she could maintain her practice and do research. She had a partner and three children. What struck us about Hannah's story was:

Family considerations and her partner's health (personal)

Financial burden of doing a PhD and not being able to do the work she desired (work experience)

Seeking the job she desired and changing job to match her expectations (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
PhD Final Year	Worried about finances and family commitments, but family supportive. Family life impacted time for studying and added to pressure of undertaking a PhD.	Worked late writing up. Felt she could not manage the stresses and strains anymore but supervisors very supportive.	Justified PhD as doing it for the family who would enjoy the benefits one day.
Post-PhD Year 1	Family most important factor in career choices; wanted secure, well-paid local work but this limited career options. Job 40 miles from home; considered moving nearer to job.	Difficulty coordinating meetings of 3 supervisors and obtaining consistent advice. Submitted thesis and passed viva. Began newly-created role in health care organisation as facilitator of research and development.	Took charge of decisions, gained confidence, determined what was 'good enough'. Missed clinical aspect of previous work.
Post-PhD Year 2	Wanted to be successful because family supported her during PhD.	Settled, proactive, had strengths in job; developed strategy and relationships; knew key people, priorities, and culture. Enjoyed job but underestimated the challenge of moving to a new and non-academic environment. Actively sought research opportunities – links with PhD university, research visit grant, publications.	Had not anticipated this role during PhD but felt PhD was valued and recognised. Created job from start; identity an issue – role did not follow conventional developmental pathways. Employer did little to support her research aspirations. Imagined a future in her organisation as top-level management.
Post-PhD Year 3	New job in home city; able to remain at home. Partner suffered serious health problem; 2 children dropped out of university.	Job moved away from her research interests – reached a 'crossroads'. Accepted new job as head of research in a professional organisation; had worked there previously in a junior role. Successfully published from her PhD, planned other articles, on editorial board of an academic journal. Cancelled research visit abroad.	Recognized networking and track record as important for advancing her research. 'My dream job' – to build research capacity and do own research. 'Life just doesn't happen around work' but aspired to top-level role with an established research profile.
Post-PhD Year 4	More settled; partner well; children finding suitable careers; still important to be earning for family security.	Enjoyed 'dream job' with increased demands and opportunities, in a supportive environment. Developed networks, applied for funding, developed strategy for role. Time management an issue; hoped to get grants to hire a research assistant.	Passionate about sharing her research, evidence and practice with other professionals
Post-PhD Year 5	Wanted work-life balance – avoided taking work home at weekends. Bereavements and elderly relatives led to reflection on what was important. Children settled so could consider jobs further afield, nationally and internationally; not ruling anything out.	Responsibilities increased, learned to delegate, undertook leadership training, seen as someone who could deliver. Obtained 'first real post-doc' research funding and research assistant. Applied for promotion but not upgraded	Confidence grew through how others saw her, despite an 'in-built imposter syndrome'. Objectives and aspirations clarified, saw possible next steps at regional or national level.
Post PhD Year 6	Quality of life improved: moved closer to work; family doing relatively well. Life and work continued, not quite as expected but she was grateful	Research portfolio expanded; progress made with objectives; role vital to success of others. Took on further responsibilities; represented organisation at regional meetings and international conferences.	Saw own development as PI moving slowly but at a steady pace. Open to further development opportunities and roles; monitored and tried to fill gaps in CV,
What struck us	Family considerations. Partner's health.	Financial burden of a PhD. Unable to do the work she desired.	Seeking the type of position desired. Changing job to match expectations.



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