

Sam, a North American in his late 20s, was working in the private sector following a master's degree when he began the PhD. Sam decided to do a PhD in order to pursue intellectual interests and increase his knowledge of the field. When Sam joined this study, he was in the fourth year of his PhD. He took a researcher position at a non-profit organization following graduation, and remained uncertain about his ultimate career goals, but considered finding work near his long-distance partner. What struck us about Sam's story was:

Long-distance relationship; Dissatisfaction with PhD work mental health (work experience) career goals (personal) (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
PhD Year 4	Spent time with partner, who also had a PhD and was working in government. Hoped to finish PhD soon so he could move to same city as partner, a "big motivation" to graduate.	Attended conference not "directly related" to research but "worthwhile" because thinking about transitioning into policy. At conference, "felt more like an academic than a policy- maker" and questioned his plans to go into policy. Started writing thesis and was surprised that he enjoyed it. Invited to meeting to discuss ideas for statistics workshops, and realized he had "applicable experience"; at same time, some doubted graduate students' suggestions. Needed and received "little" feedback from supervisor on thesis. Needed and did not received much help from supervisor on data analysis; instead contacted "other experts" and eventually "figure[d] things out" himself.	Considered career in policy following the PhD. Continued to doubt a career in academia, and while he enjoyed research, wanted to find alternatives to academic work.
PhD Year 5	Went to partner for emotional support. Relocated to new city for his job.	Completed full drat of thesis manuscript Corresponded with statistician who offered "insightful suggestions" for his analysis. Offered Internship at non-profit agency that uses science to inform public policy. Worked full-time for internship, and did thesis on weekends and evenings. Felt like an academic when he recognized statistical methods he used in a Science Magazine article; "more confidence about my own results". Pressured by department to submit thesis; he will "time out" and not be allowed to register past deadline. Felt "overwhelmed" by slow thesis progress; "unsure how to proceed". Contacted recent graduate who gave him "excellent advice" and helped in "maintainingmotivation" to finish. Spoke to supervisor about concerns about quality of work, lack of self-confidence, and did not receive support he wanted. Felt "disconnected from the academic community" when he was teased about being an academic at conference; realized he needed others to tell him his work was valued. Received non-academic job offer, which he was looking forward to. Submitted thesis; concerned about quality of his work due to little feedback; "isolating experience". Began new job as researcher at organization he interned with; reminder that "there is life after the thesis".	Cynical about career in academia; felt "disappointed in achievements" and not sure that academic life work "personal cost". Could still see possibility of working in academia at some point, perhaps after publications.
Post-PhD	Continued to settle in new city,		
Year 1	working out health care and insurance. Struggled with work-life balance. Dealt with "strained" relationship with partner; not comfortable buying how together; but decided to focus on and "renew" relationship". Contacted psychologist for mental health support.	Worked on reviewer comments on papers from PhD work; pressured to publish before "result become too irrelevant". Wanted to focus on finding a new job, as current contract was 1 year appointment. Worked on performance plan, and reflected on whether he wanted to stay in the profession. Worked on public report; took "initiative" on his main project so that others could "make further progress.	Concerned about whether currect contract would be renewed; uncertain about future career. Contract renewed for another year; still unsure about career but will not likely stay with organization long-term.
What struck us	Long-distance relationship; mental health.	Dissatisfaction with PhD work.	Uncertainty as to long-term career goals.





