

# Mapping Career Pathways: Implications for Data Analysis and Policy

Jessica Santos, PhD

Misti Jeffers, M.A.

# Agenda

- Conceptualizing Career Pathways
  - Developing a New Methodology
  - Implications for Data and Policy
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# **BACKGROUND: CONCEPTUALIZING CAREER PATHWAYS**

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# HPOG-UP Grant

- Health Professions Opportunity Grant
    - Support employment service providers in training people for entry-level jobs and moving them into employment
  - Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (HHS)
  - University-Service Provider partnership
    - IASP & The Health CareRx Academy, Bridgeport, CT
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**CAREER Pathways**

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## About Career Pathways

Career Pathways programs provide post-secondary education and training that is organized as a series of manageable steps employment opportunities in growing occupations.

### Overview: What Is a Career Pathway?

Career pathways programs provide post-secondary education and training that is organized as a series of manageable steps leading to successively higher credentials and employment opportunities in growing occupations. Each step is designed to prepare individuals for the next level of employment and education and provide a credential with labor market value. To effectively engage and retain trainees, and facilitate learning of a diverse population, programs integrate promising instructional strategies, supports, and employer connections.

Although steps in actual programs vary with their target populations, focal occupations, and service strategies, the broad training and employment step levels are shown in the figure. The bottom two steps (I and II) represent so-called "on ramp" and "bridge" programs, designed to prepare low-skilled participants for college-level training and lower-skilled jobs with a career focus. Basic skill levels differentiating these two steps

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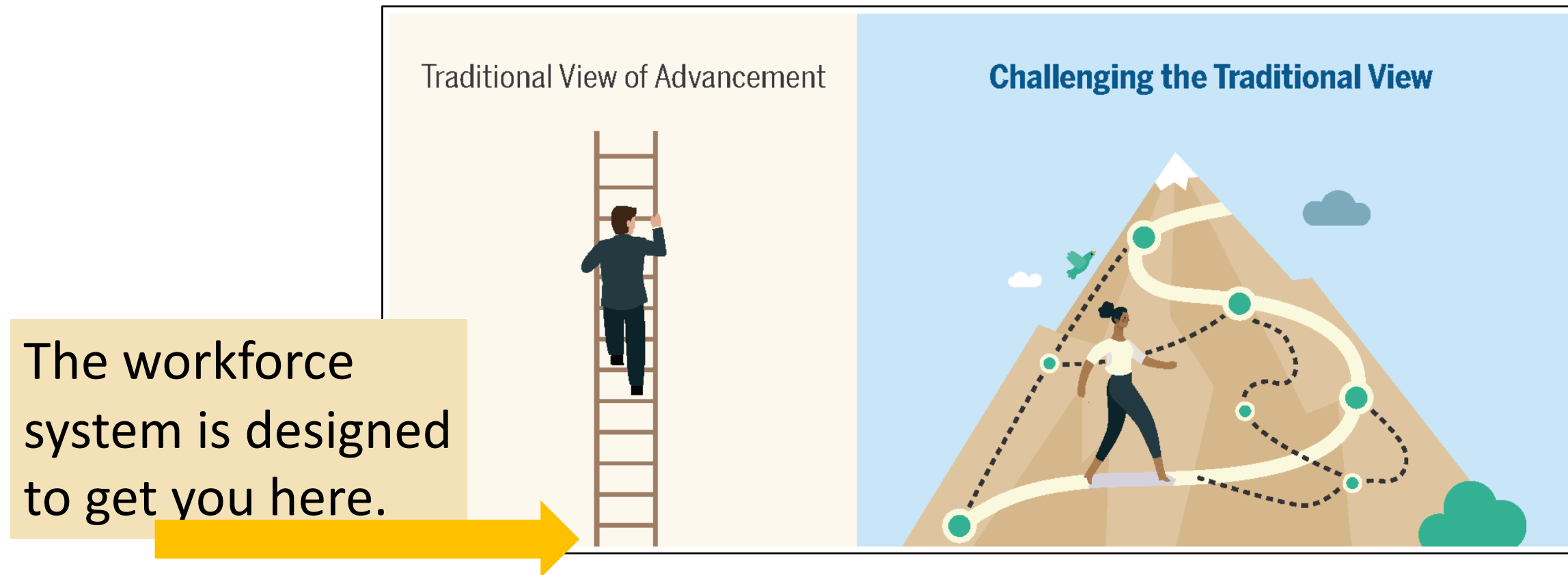
### Welcome to the Career Pathways Community

The Career Pathways Community helps workforce development leaders, practitioners, and policymakers expand state and local career pathways efforts currently underway or being planned. The community provides a platform to enhance your knowledge, skills, and expertise in building effective career pathways.

Featured Content

Release of the Career

# Career Pathways: A Flawed Assumption



# Expanding Career Pathways Research

- Career Pathways Design Study<sup>1</sup>
    - **Career Pathways Research and Evaluation Synthesis**<sup>1</sup>: few initiatives focus on multiple levels of training
    - **Evaluation Design Options Report**<sup>2</sup>: outlines four categories of research priorities: program impact on participant outcomes; workers' career trajectories in the economy; the role of the public workforce system in career pathways initiatives; and cost analyses
  - HPOG evaluations
    - **Career Prospects for Certified Nursing Assistants**<sup>3</sup>: demand for CNAs is growing, but advancement is challenging and wages are low
    - **Measuring Career Progress**<sup>4</sup>: illustrates the use of multidimensional measures of career pathways progress (education and earnings) for assessing individual outcomes and program performance measurement
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# Research Questions & Design

- Why are people not advancing?
    - Qualitative in-depth interviews with low-wage healthcare workers to understand catalysts and traps for advancement
  - Why does the workforce system continue to design programming around the ladder view of career pathways despite evidence to the contrary?
    - New methodology for illustrating the actual career paths of low-wage healthcare workers
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# **DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY**

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# Methodology for:

- 1) Illustrating the overall shape of the career path of each worker
  - 2) Examining the distance between aspirations and jobs
  - 3) Identifying key transition points that act as catalysts or traps for career advancement
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# Step 1: Code Interviews Thematically

Code	Code Definition	Code Group 1
UPWARD CAREER MOVE	responses pertaining to an upward career move	Upward Career Move
ability to save	movement results in ability to save	Upward Career Move
better benefits	movement results in better benefits	Upward Career Move
better pay	movement results in better pay	Upward Career Move
better schedule	movement results in better schedule	Upward Career Move
closer to home	movement results in job closer to home	Upward Career Move
education	movement results in receiving education	Upward Career Move
job stability	movement results in more job stability	Upward Career Move
financial stability	movement results in more financial stability	Upward Career Move
full-time	movement results in full-time employment	Upward Career Move
having options	movement results in having options in career trajectory	Upward Career Move
Entry HC to CNA (EDITED FROM HHA to CNA (RESTRICTIVE))	moving from HHA to CNA	Upward Career Move
home care to facility	moving from home care to working in a facility	Upward Career Move
hourly instead of live-in	moving from live-in work to working hourly	Upward Career Move
more hours	movement results in working more hours	Upward Career Move
more responsibility	movement results in having more responsibility and having responsibility is considered a positive thing	Upward Career Move
more time with family	having more time with family	Upward Career Move
More variation in work duties	movement results in more variation in work duties and variation is considered a good thing	Upward Career Move
steady cases/patients	movement results in steady cases/patients	Upward Career Move
DOWNWARD CAREER MOVE	responses pertaining to a downward career move	Downward Career Move
termination from job	movement results in termination from job	Downward Career Move
becomes underemployed	movement results in becoming underemployed	Downward Career Move
becomes overworked	movement results in becoming overworked	Downward Career Move
more responsibility	movement results in having more responsibility and having responsibility is considered a negative thing	Downward Career Move
became unemployed		
downward opportunity		
termination from education		
STAGNATION	responses pertaining to explaining stagnation including factors facilitating stagnation	Stagnation
lack of experience	lack of experience kept participant from making an upward move	Stagnation
stagnation discrimination	discrimination based on race, gender, class kept participant from making an upward move	Stagnation
educational costs	costs of education kept participant from making an upward move	Stagnation
Barriers to training	general barriers to training not including financial costs kept participant from making an upward move	Stagnation
inflexible scheduling		
unpaid responsibilities		

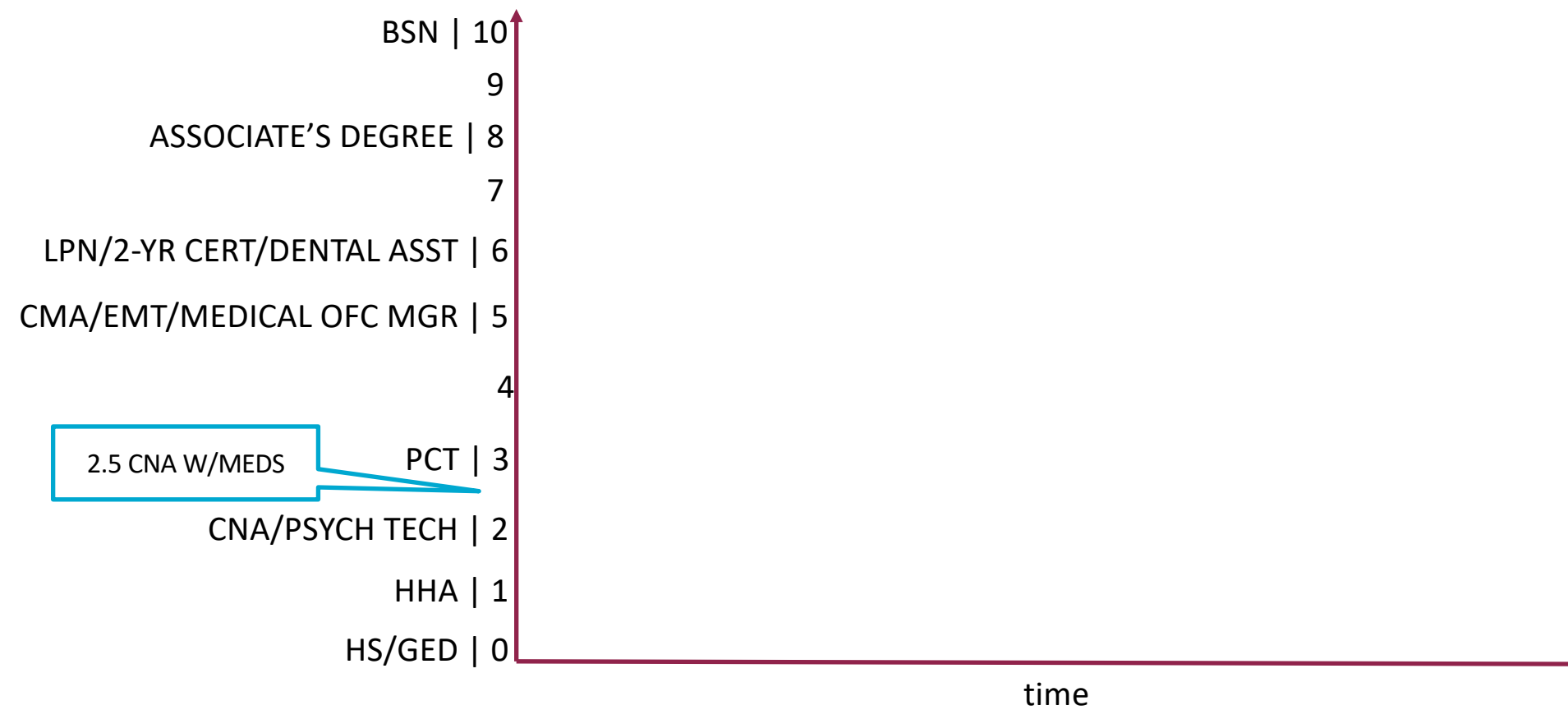
# Step 2: Code Interviews Longitudinally

Demographics: Female; 31; White; Language: English; HH: 2 adults 1 child; Some college; Income: \$25,000-\$49,999			
Year	Work Experience/ Education/Other Event (MOVEMENTS)	MOVEMENT CODES	CODING NOTES: COULD NOTE THINGS LIKE STRATEGIC DOWNWARD MOVE
began age 16 (2002-2005)	Waitressing/hosting	workforce entry	
	2004 HS graduation	upward moment	education
2004-2005	1.5 semesters at Central Connecticut State University	upward moment	education
	Left CCSU	DOWNWARD moment	termination from education
age 19 - 21 (2005-2007)	Receptionist/office manager at chiropractic office; also ran weight loss program for the office	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry
age 21-23 (2007-2009)	Receptionist for eye doctor office; also ran pre-tests with patients	LATERAL CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry
age 23 - ? (2009+)	Experienced a tough time (participant describes going down a "bad path"), became pregnant with her daughter and was out of work	DOWNWARD CAREER MOVE	became unemployed
2012 or 2013	Enrolled in HCA; CNA training at Griffin	upward moment	education
2012 or 2013	Hired as a housekeeper at Benchmark Senior Living (assisted living facility)	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry
	Completed CNA training and certification	upward moment	
2012 or 2013	; hired to do "Signature Services" (step below CNA) at Benchmark; part-time to full-time	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed as HC; full-time; BUT BELOW CREDENTIAL
six months after CNA completion (sometime in 2013)	Phlebotomy training at Griffin (also paid for by HCA)	upward moment	education
sometime in between 2013-2017	Promoted to CNA at Benchmark	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	Entry HC to CNA; better pay
sometime in between 2013-2017	Promoted to medication aide (med tech) at Benchmark	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	better pay

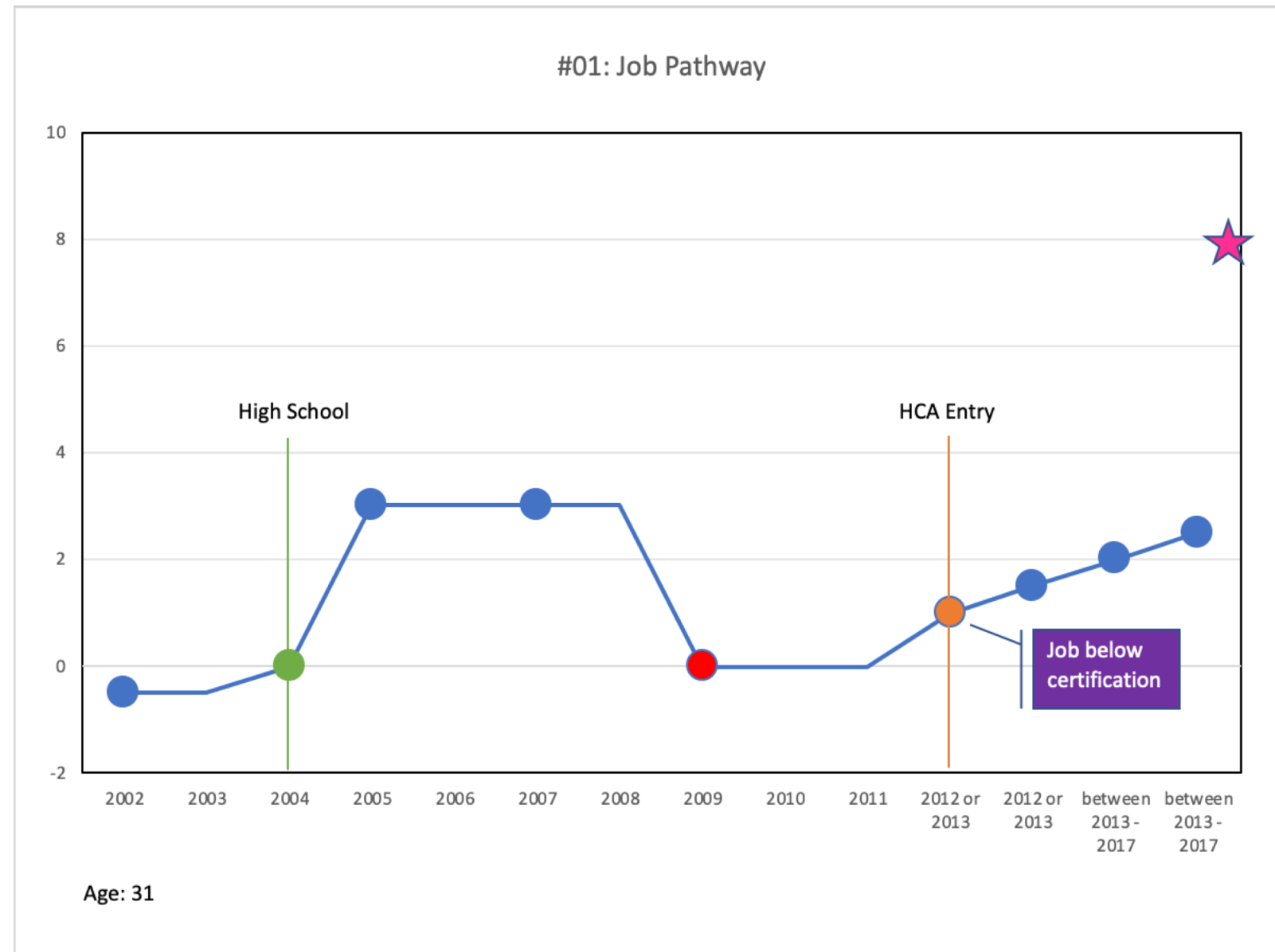
# Step 3: Assign Values to Moves

Year	Work Experience/ Education/Other Event (MOVEMENTS)	MOVEMENT CODES	CODING NOTES: COULD NOTE THINGS LIKE STRATEGIC DOWNWARD MOVE	Magnitude
began age 16 (2002-2005)	Waitressing/hosting	workforce entry		baseline
2004	HS graduation	upward moment	education	0.25
2004-2005	1.5 semesters at Central Connecticut State University	upward moment	education	0.25
	Left CCSU	DOWNWARD moment	termination from education	-0.25
age 19 - 21 (2005-2007)	Receptionist/office manager at chiropractic office; also ran weight loss program for the office	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry	1
age 21-23 (2007-2009)	Receptionist for eye doctor office; also ran pre-tests with patients	LATERAL CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry	~
age 23 - ? (2009+)	Experienced a tough time (participant describes going down a "bad path"), became pregnant with her daughter and was out of work	DOWNWARD CAREER MOVE	became unemployed	-1
2012 or 2013	Enrolled in HCA; CNA training at Griffin	upward moment	education	.25 !
2012 or 2013	Hired as a housekeeper at Benchmark Senior Living (assisted living facility)	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed within health care industry	0.5
	Completed CNA training and certification	upward moment		0.5
2012 or 2013	; hired to do "Signature Services" (step below CNA) at Benchmark; part-time to full-time	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	employed as HC; full-time; BUT BELOW CREDENTIAL	0.5
six months after CNA completion (sometime in 2013)	Phlebotomy training at Griffin (also paid for by HCA)	upward moment	education	0.75
sometime in between 2013-2017	Promoted to CNA at Benchmark	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	Entry HC to CNA; better pay	1
sometime in between 2013-2017	Promoted to medication aide (med tech) at Benchmark	UPWARD CAREER MOVE	better pay	1

# Step 4: Assign Absolute Values to Benchmarks



# Step 5: Visualize Career Pathway



# **FINDINGS: TYPES OF PATHWAYS**

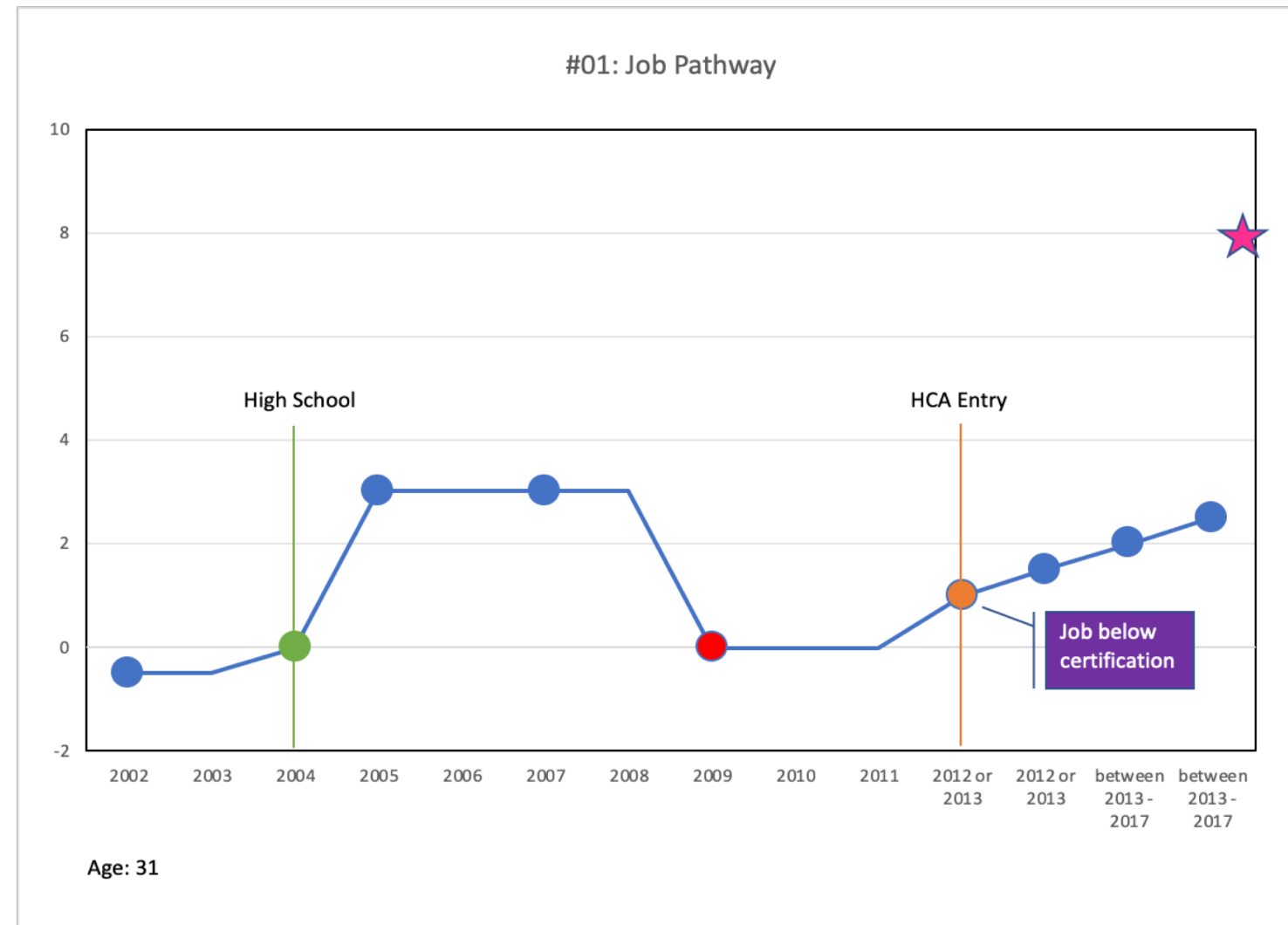
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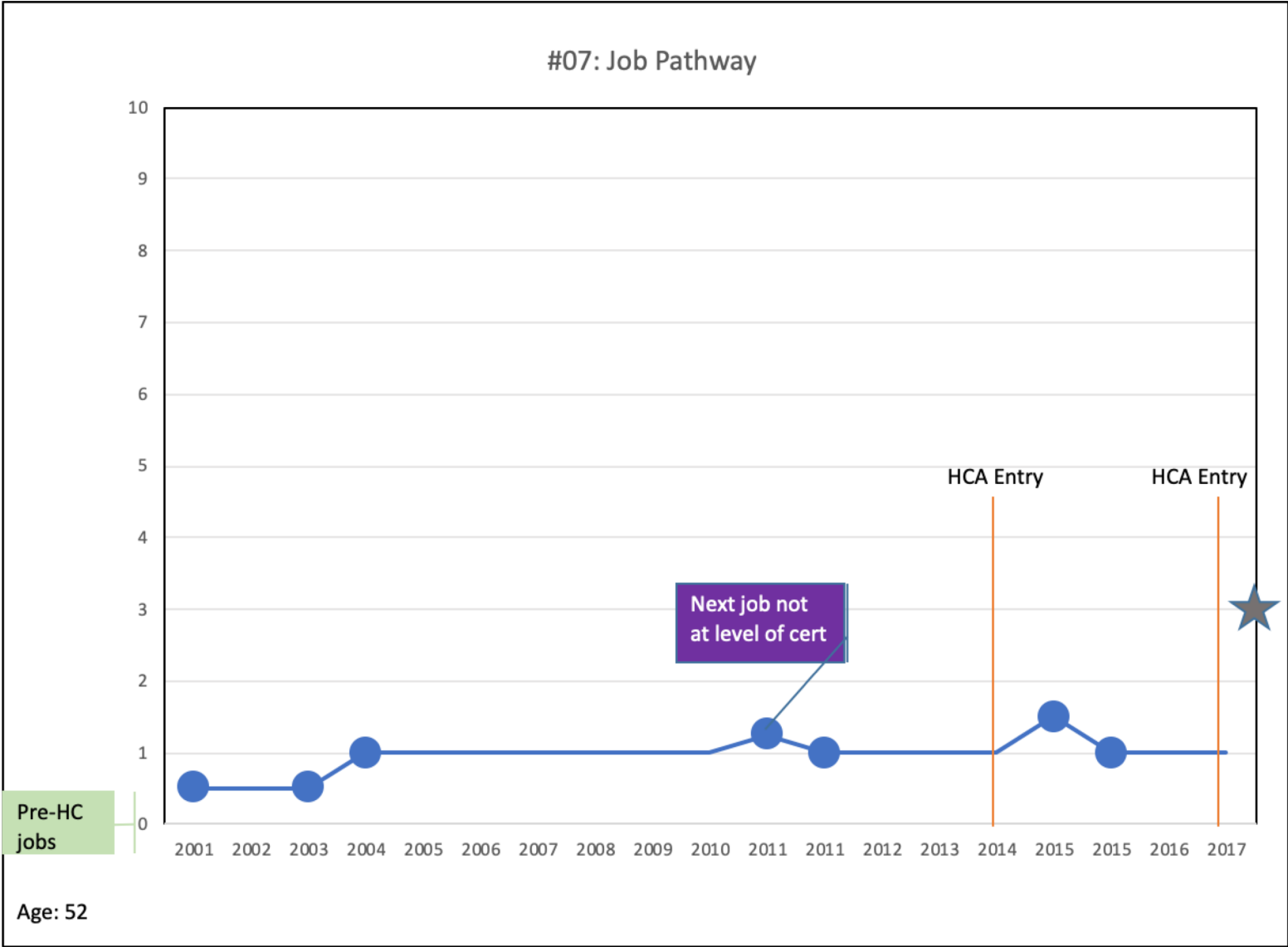
# FINDINGS

Questions	Findings
What is the overall <b>shape of each individual's career path</b> and are there patterns among the sample?	Zig-zag Stagnant

# Zig-Zag Career Paths



# Stagnant Career Paths

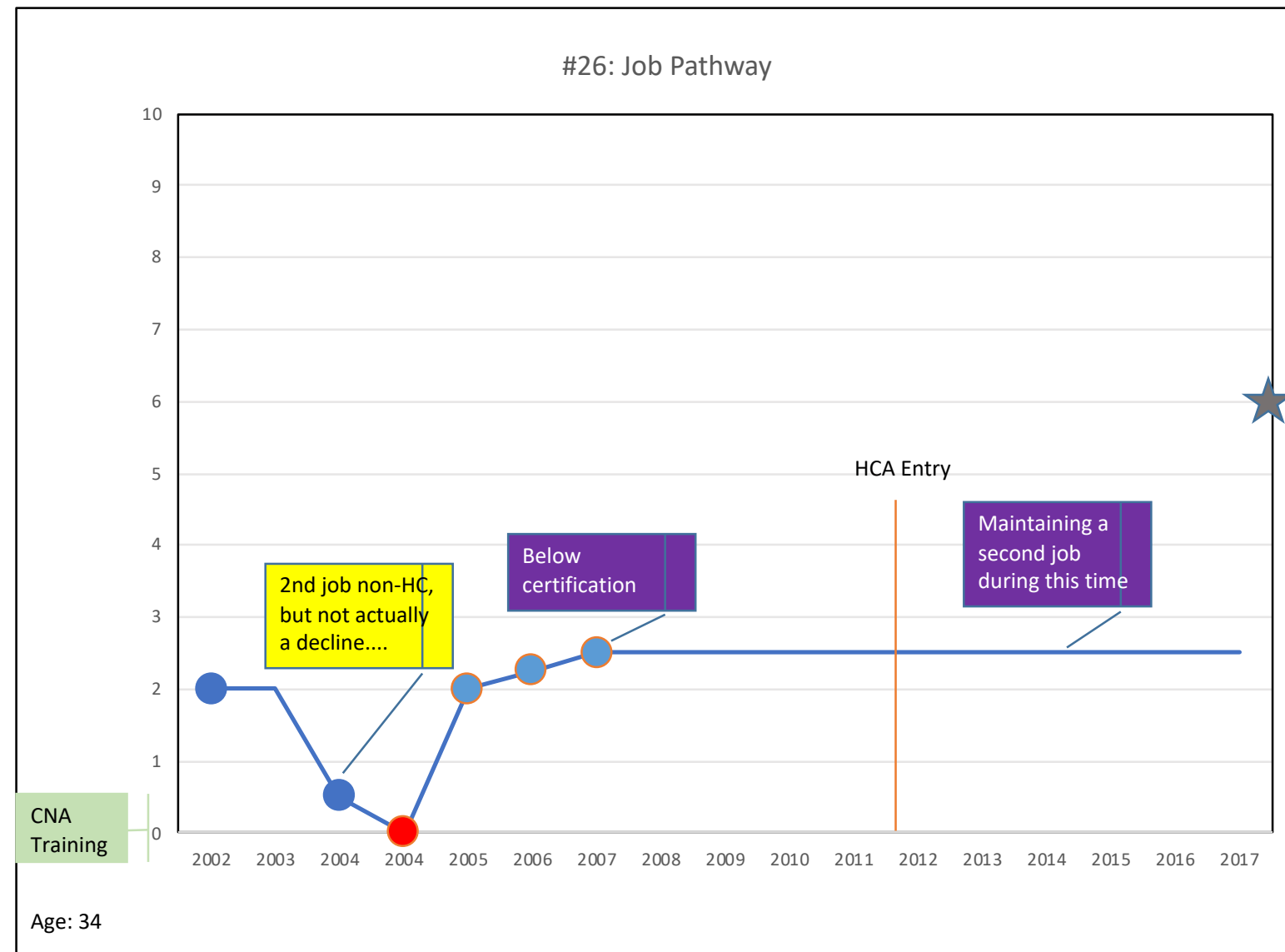


# FINDINGS

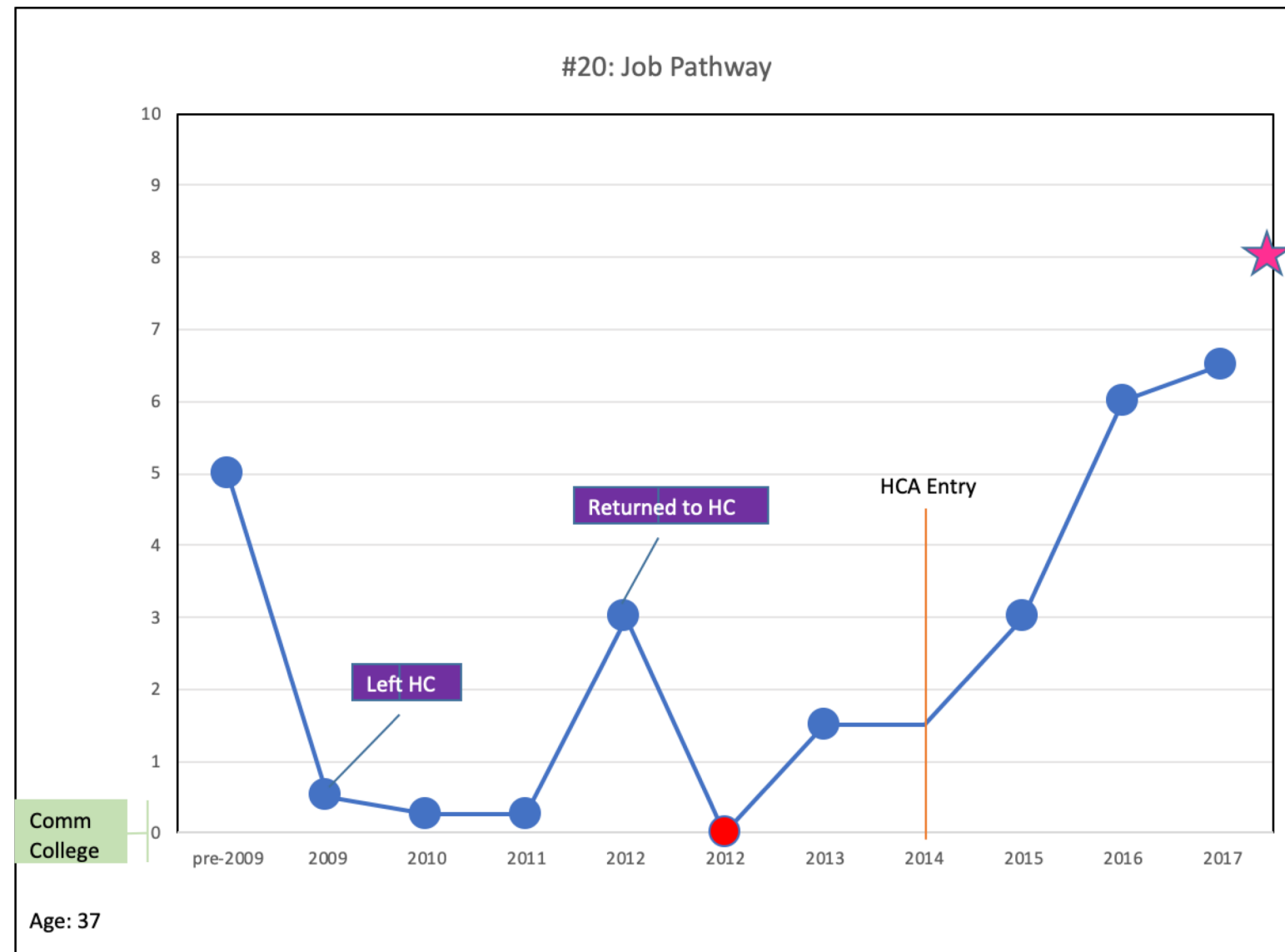
Questions	Findings
What is the overall <b>shape of each individual's career path</b> and are there patterns among the sample?	Zig-zag Stagnant
To what extent <b>do the actual outcomes of HPOG participants vary from their stated aspirations</b> for advancement?	What can often be perceived as a “success story” in terms of aspirations/actual outcomes differs from qualitative coding  Structural v. personal motivation = both/and

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# Stagnant, Disconnected Aspirations



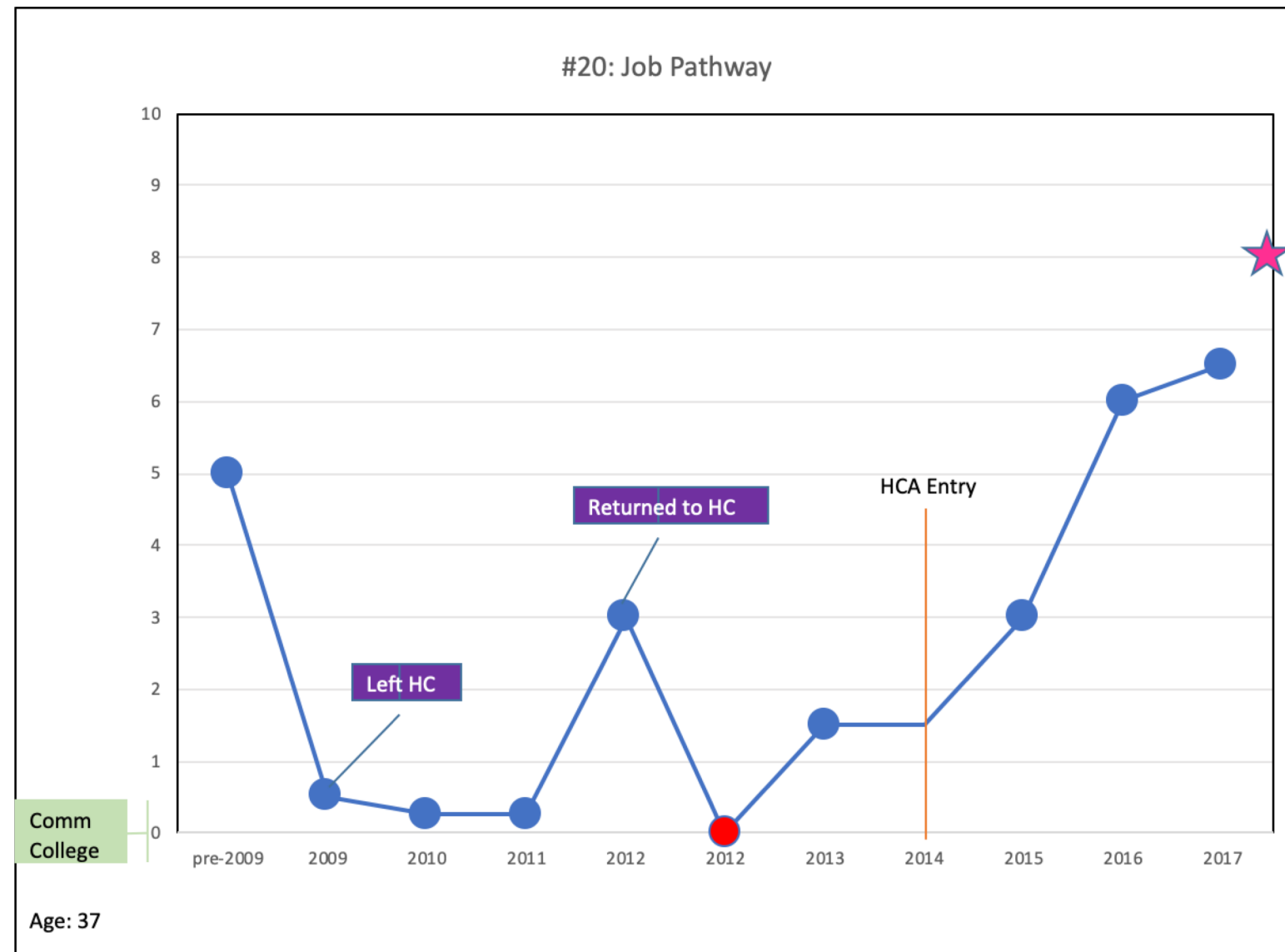
# Zig Zag, Aspirations Aligned



# FINDINGS

Questions	Findings
What is the overall <b>shape of each individual's career path</b> and are there patterns among the sample?	Zig-zag Stagnant
To what extent <b>do the actual outcomes of HPOG participants vary from their stated aspirations</b> for advancement?	What can often be perceived as a “success story” in terms of aspirations/actual outcomes differs from qualitative coding  Structural v. personal motivation = both/and
What are the <b>key transition points that act as catalysts or traps</b> for career advancement?	structural v. personal v. combination (HCA, life/family, training, job quality characteristics)

# Zig Zag, Aspirations Aligned





# IMPLICATIONS

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# Implications

## Conclusions

This type of method and analysis helps us move from personal → structural more accurately

## Implications

**Methods implications:** More work is needed in this area to focus on an objective, consistent way of measuring pathways  
E.g., we are developing a quantitative methodology that can be used with longitudinal administrative data to assess people's employment outcomes more accurately

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**Administrative implications:** Some end working at their credential/ have a higher pay scale (evaluations say this is a success), but overall their path is stagnant. What does this mean for program design, evaluation, and people's lives?

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Aspirations v expectations do not always align

Career pathways go beyond the meritocracy narrative

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**Administrative implications:** Some end working at their credential/ have a higher pay scale (evaluations say this is a success), but overall their path is stagnant. What does this mean for program design, evaluation, and people's lives?

**Policy implications:** Restructuring the labor market instead of focusing as much on personal motivations

# References

1. Schwartz, D., Strawn, J., & Sarna, M. (2018). *Career pathways research and evaluation synthesis* (Career pathways design study). Washington, DC: Abt Associates and US Department of Labor.
  2. Peck, L. R., Zeidenberg, M., Cho, S.-W., Litwok, D., Strawn, J., Sarna, M., ... Schwartz, D. (2018). *Evaluation design options report* (Career Pathways Design Study). Washington, DC: Abt Associates and US Department of Labor.
  3. Loprest, Pamela, and Nathan Sick (2018). *Career prospects for certified nursing assistants: Insights for Training Programs and Policymakers from the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program*. OPRE Report 2018-92, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
  4. Loprest, P., Werner, A., & Sick, N. (2017). *Measuring Career Progress in the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) 1.0 Program* (No. OPRE Report #2017-111). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Childrne and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services.
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# Thank you!

Misti Jeffers  
[jeffers@brandeis.edu](mailto:jeffers@brandeis.edu)

Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP)  
[iasp.brandeis.edu](http://iasp.brandeis.edu)

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