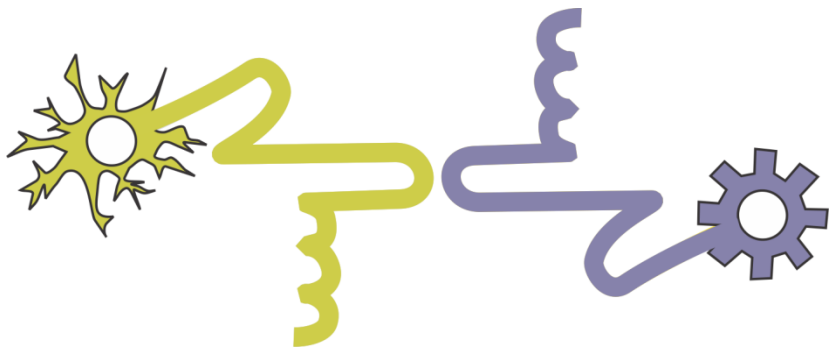# Lessons Learned

Cara Stepp
Boston University

Acknowledgements
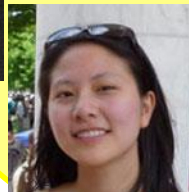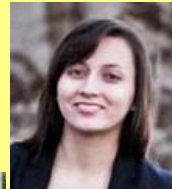
Stepp Lab, Boston University:

Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

Biomedical Engineering

Computational Neuroscience

The Medical Foundation
A division of *Health Resources in Action*

BU CTSI CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
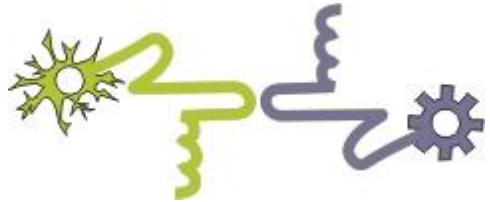*Advancing Translational Research*

American Speech-Language-Hearing FOUNDATION

NIDCD
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

My Path

My Path

PhD

- Harvard-MIT Program in Speech & Hearing Biosciences & Technology (2004 – 2009)
- MGH Voice Center
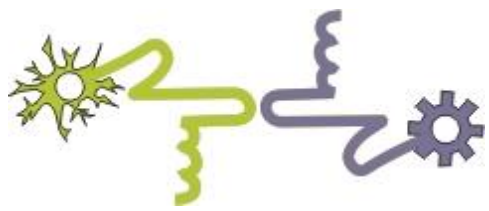- Funded on T32: no grant writing!

My Path

PhD

Postdoc

- University of Washington: Computer Science & Engineering, Rehabilitation Medicine
- Neurobotics Laboratory
- Practice mentoring!
- Again, T32, but one small internal grant submission
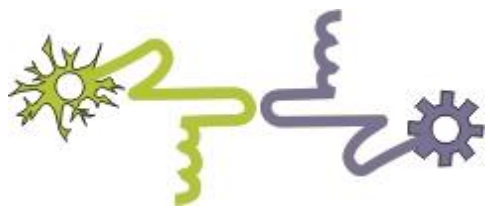- Submissions to ASHF

My Path

PhD | **Postdoc** | **TT Y1**

Fall:
- Taught first course
- Training new ugrads
- ASHF New Investigators!
- Submitted R03
- Small grant submissions

Spring:
- Lessons for Success!
- R03: not funded, resubmit
- Identified additional mentors
- PhD student 1
- Lots of small grant submissions! (50:50 success)
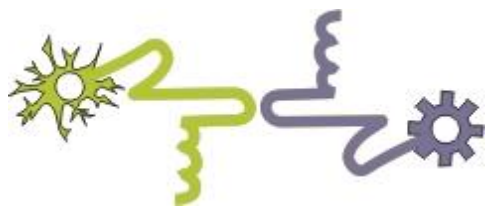- Lab manager!

Interlude

- Year 1: 13 grant submissions

- For every fail: "10% closer to success"
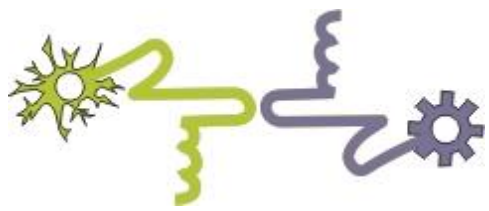
My Path

PhD | Postdoc | TT Y1 | TT Y2

Fall:
- AFAR grant (fail)
- R21/K to NIA (double fail)

Spring:
- NSF HCC (fail... for now)
- R21 (fail)
- **R03 funded!**
- Noonan Foundation (funded)
- ASHF Clinical Research (fail)
- NSF CAREER (fail... for now)
- Postdoc 1

My Path

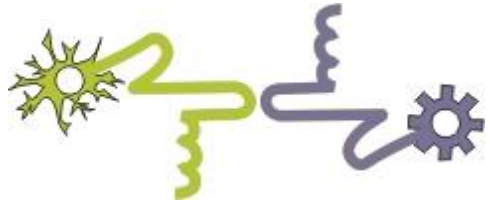| PhD	Postdoc	TT Y1	TT Y2	TT Y3

Fall:
- Advice: stop writing grants!
- Focus: prepping R01!
- PhD students 2 and 3

Spring:
- Resubmit to NSF (pending!)
- Postdoc 2
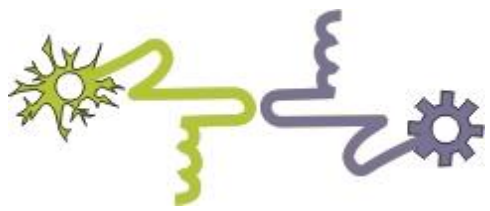- Prepping CAREER resubmit
- Focus: prepping R01!

PhD

Postdoc

TT Y1

TT Y2

TT Y3
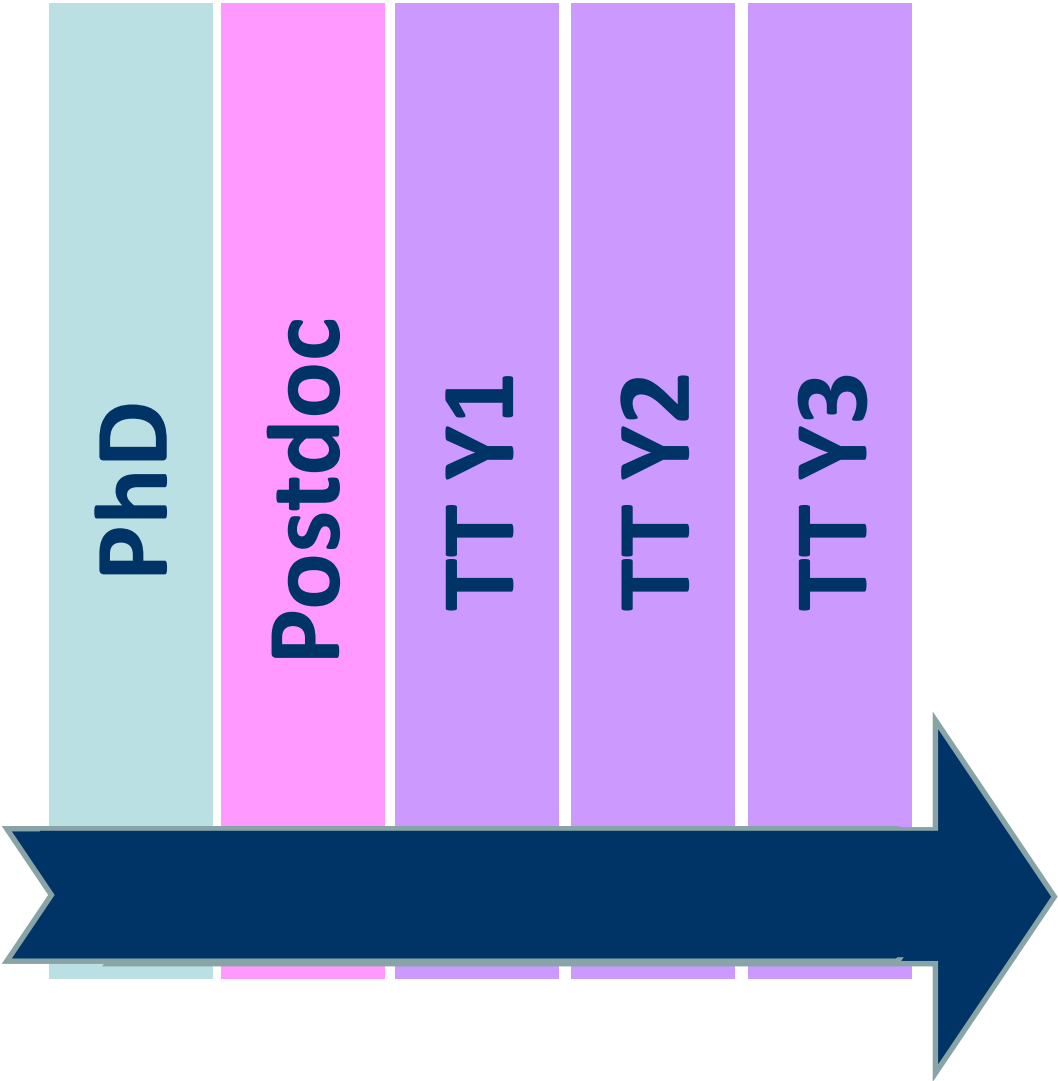
R01?   Tenure?

Research Strategy

- Listen to yourself (but listen to others)

- Go deep … but stay broad
  - Multiple lines of research allow for more high risk/rewards
  - Attacking multiple agencies with different priorities

- Tell everyone!

Grant Writing

- Write early and write often
- Share (and volunteer for others)
- Sit on a panel AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
- Don't take it personally when people don't talk to you
- Make your work accessible

Time Management

- Urgent vs. Important
- Outsource

Getting what you need

- Ask

- Be informed

- Be strategic

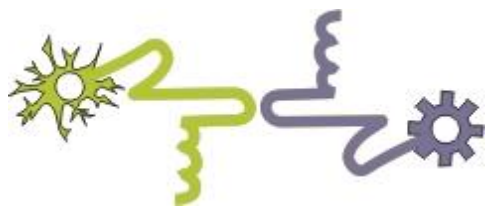- Explain why

- Have a solution in mind

Getting the most from LfS

- Catch up on sleep later

- Network

- Write as much as possible
  - Before
  - During
  - After

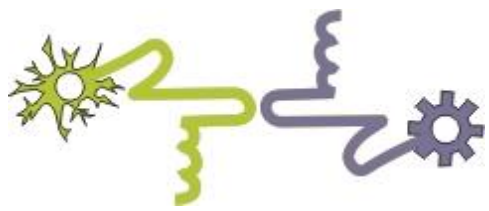- Go back to those directions / examples later!

For PhD students

<u>Why I did a postdoc (and think you should too):</u>

- Obtain more mentors / sponsors

- Obtain a new network

- Practice "starting from scratch" with less pressure than TT

- Practice research mentoring

- Get pilot data and grant writing experience

- Build your CV → "better" TT job

- Distinguish yourself from your PhD supervisor

Questions?

- Email: cstepp@bu.edu
- Visit: http://people.bu.edu/cstepp/