

## Planning how to replan: A Leadership Reflection and Personal Development.

Do you ever wish there were more hours in a day? Instead of 24 hours, wouldn't it be great if there were 26, or 28 even? This has been my main struggle over the summer: finding the **time** to do all the things I want to do.

This summer, I have been working on a research project on how to predict whether internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or antidepressants will affect a person's tiredness levels. When I initially wrote my research proposal back in January when applying for the Laidlaw scholarship, I genuinely thought I had it all planned out. I believed I had accounted for any possible delays, and because I anticipated that there would need to be changes to my research plan, I had plans B, C and D ready. But did any of my plans turn out the way I thought they would? No.

In addition to my research, I have also been organising a live online event (which you can [join here!](#)) for the Neuroscience Ireland conference on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. The event focuses on compulsivity, its diverse manifestations, and how it affects our moods and behaviour. Of course, I also created a timeline for planning the event, because I knew my time was already limited. Did I stick to that plan? Again, no.

The reason why none of my plans have worked out the way I thought they would be because (you guessed it) of time. All the tasks I had to complete—and I mean all of them—took longer than I thought they would. My solution? To *make* time by working over the weekend as well. As it turns out, there is a reason why people say free time should be restricted to “me time”.

I quickly started noticing that my productivity dropped when I stopped taking weekends off, and I changed strategy as a result. Instead of only reflecting on what I ideally wanted to do, I started thinking about what was feasible. For example, I wanted to practice my public speaking and therefore to present during the event I was organising, but I also wanted to gain experience in promoting and organising research-related events. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to do both. So, instead of pushing myself to the brink, I sat down and thought about what experience I would find more useful. As I already have experience in public speaking and frankly, do not find it uncomfortable, I chose to take on the experience that intimidated me, and to take the lead in organising the event. I turned to a colleague of mine who I knew would be more than happy to present. I then hit the ground running with organisation – with no stress!

Being the lead organiser of this event has not only increased my confidence in settings I am not used to but has also improved my organisational skills. For example, within the first few days, I quickly realized that there were **several** people I had to get in contact with. I started emailing them one by one, before noticing that things were getting a bit scattered. Had I already contacted that person? Did that individual re-direct me to someone else, or had they just not responded yet? All these things seem like tiny details that wouldn't be a big issue, but trust me, without a smart spreadsheet, things get messy. So (surprise!) I created a

spread sheet and kept going. This not only reduced the amount of information I was keeping in my brain, but also saved **time**. However, what I am most thankful for in this experience, is that I have been surrounded by great colleagues who did not only make collaboration easy, but also incredibly enjoyable!

So... the outcome? Well, if you're interested in let's say, why you repeatedly check your phone, and would like to visually see how it affects (and is affected by) your levels of happiness and boredom, for example, join the event and tell me what you think! The event is taking place on **9<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 online**. Tickets are free of charge and can be reserved [here!](#)

