

GETTING STRUCTURE BACK INTO YOUR LIFE WITH THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY COVID-19

Case Study

Ali is studying for a PhD in synaptic plasticity within the Institute of Clinical and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Exeter. This put immense demands on him and to get through he found having structure to his week really helped.

Ali found it helped to follow a similar routine, making it into the Uni for 9am and working until at least 6pm before going home. At times also having to go into the Uni over the weekend to manage the lab equipment. It was not all work and no fun however, he was an active member of the Guild MedSoc and Film Societies. Although busy, Ali really enjoyed work and being with friends around Exeter.

However, all this changed when restrictions arising from COVID-19 were put in place. Ali had returned home, but was unable to come back to the Uni and found the structure he had in his life was suddenly taken away. He was no longer socialising with friends and unable to go into the lab for his PhD research was causing some concern. He even found his daily routine had stopped, no longer getting out of bed as normal by 8am, often not showering and sometimes even missed

breakfast. All this began to take its toll on Ali, who was getting increasingly frustrated, at times feeling a little fed up doing less and less and sleeping in the day. It was possible to continue with some tasks associated with the PhD, but even that was beginning to get more difficult. Whilst continuing to receive weekly supervision, not having other PhD students to bounce ideas off or chat about research at MedSoc, really began to challenge Ali's motivation.

One day when receiving supervision, the supervisor noticed Ali was struggling to keep moving forwards with his PhD. Ali explained, that now there was no longer any routine his motivation to do anything had gone. Whilst he wanted to keep a structure to his life and complete his PhD, he couldn't think of any way he would manage this.

If you find you're worrying a lot about many different things and this is beginning to influence your wellbeing, or you're worrying about your studies and struggling to concentrate, then this is the approach for you.

Give it a go, what have you got to lose!

