Cleaned interview transcript

INTERVIEWER: How have you been?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, fine thank you, good.

INTERVIEWER: Good. So I've got a few questions, not very many, I need to do a little bit more analyses over the next sort of a couple of weeks, three, four weeks, probably a month really, and I may have to ask you again for an interview then in the sort of January/February time, if that's okay?

0:00:22.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah that's fine.

INTERVIEWER: But for now I mean we were talking briefly about what academic identity is and you had quite a clear picture of there being somebody, like a male academic who's who's obviously quite well-read and all that, and I was just wondering how do you perform your academic identity in your environment?

0:00:44.

PARTICIPANT: How do I perform it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, so because you were talking about, you know, there being a specific way of how academics kind of behave and that, and and then you were saying actually you're aspiring towards, to that, but but it's not an academic identity, so there was this thing, this this kind of this tension between what you you thought it should be and what you would say that it is.

0:01:14.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah I reflected quite a lot about that actually since we spoke cuz that was quite interesting to me as well, I came up with that. And to me it felt like the original academic identity that came into my head was much more a kind of stereotype than something I actually believe in or aspire to, and actually what I've reflected on is, if I think about (oh sorry, just lost your picture) if I think about an academic or academics in my department who I really admire, they're not, you know, the male scholarly etc. So that seemed a quite useful exercise for me to think about actually the people I really admire in my department, most of them happen to be women who are very engaged with people and are very supportive and they really encourage development, are valid career researchers, they're very engaged with the public, they're very ethical, and they have their integrity. So that's been quite an interesting thought to process for me.

0:02:36.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so if you then revise this, how would you then say, would you identify academic identity, how would you then describe it?

0:02:45.

PARTICIPANT: So, oh golly, I guess someone who is able to apply theory and knowledge to what, in my case because it's in health research, in kind of real-world situations and is able to communicate their findings to a broad audience, who is also obviously also able to tick those boxes in terms of publications and getting grants in, so yeah I've kind of definitely gotten beyond that stereotype that for some reason popped into my head.

0:03:25.

INTERVIEWER: That's fine, that's fine, so when you, when you're now considering this this role of grants and of conferences, how do you, I mean you're obviously doing exactly the same thing, you go to conferences you go to talks, you apply for grants, how do you reconcile your illness with that because obviously the productivity will slow down because of the kind of constraints through the illness?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah definitely. I don't know how I sort of consciously reconcile it, I think I'm very fortunate that I work in a department who are incredibly understanding, I always feel that there's a backup plan, so for example a few weeks ago I was really poorly and it was very difficult for me to pull this training together, it was meant to be a two hour training session, and my line manager was amazing and just stepped in and said "Do you know what, I've got most of the material, don't worry, I'll do it, you do the next one", so I've never really, I don't have to worry about that stuff. Whereas, actually when I was a student, a PhD student, I was very, very, poorly and it meant that I couldn't deliver a conference presentation, and they came down really hard for me and it was a very horrible, horrible interaction, and it got very, well I was very emotional about that, and I ended up talking to the director of our department because I felt I'd been treated really badly, because there was no, I didn't feel there was any support or understanding and I'm the kind of person who, I will push and push and will, you know, if I say I can't do it it's because I really am poorly, I don't, you know, I come in I would say probably sixty, seventy, seventy-five percent of the time and I don't feel great at work, I really don't, I'm in pain and I feel really tired, but I come in and I do my job and I very rarely take days off, so when I had this horrible situation as a student it was in such a contrast to how I am treated as a member of staff, it was really quite shocking.

0:05:55.

INTERVIEWER: So what happened then with, I mean they, you've just said that you can't deliver it because you're not well enough?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, and then they had a go at me for it because someone had come up to them and said, you know, I cancelled at the last minute, by email apparently, and it wasn't last minute actually it was about 48 hours, so never mind, and they, yeah they were really quite cross at me about it all. And I thought, wow, you know after I'd thrown myself in all these times, they were

unnecessarily harsh, I thought, and I had to get disability support involved as well.

0:06:44.

INTERVIEWER: That, that's to me is quite interesting because often you know when people drop out of conferences or whatever it just, you know, I get the feeling that people are quite understanding of that?

PARTICIPANT: No. Not even a bit. I mean, as I say that's not my department I'm in now, it's another department, but no it was hideous and it really damaged the relationship with my supervisors and had I not been so confined by the PhD I would have changed supervisors.

0:07:16.

INTERVIEWER: That's sad. So when you go to a conference now and you know how do you how do you deal with the day because obviously it's it's quite an intense day and you said that usually you need a day or two to recover again after after something that's intense, so how do you cope with the actual day what do you do how do you, how do you go through the day?

0:07:40.

PARTICIPANT: It's all about what I put in place around the day I think, so I always try and make sure I'm not working or at least don't have backed up meetings the day before or the day after, so I try and manage my diary around the day. I then, I'm very sensible in terms of then trying not to carry a load on a train so I try and get the plane whether possible so I don't have to drive. Then I try and find out ahead of time if there is anywhere that I can get icepacks from or if I can bring my own icepacks and stick them in the freezer. So again it's like I said before, I'm uber organized without even realizing that's what I'm doing anymore, but it's that real planning ahead and then making sure that that evening obviously I haven't got any social commitments, there's nothing else in the diary and at the next day I either because I work for three days it means that I can juggle you see, so that's what I try and do all the time so I don't have really intense periods of time, of working time together.

0:08:47.

INTERVIEWER: And when you go to a conference I mean obviously the day itself there is quite, quite intense because you know in the typical conference you're sitting there for an hour or two hours and then you network with people, but it's quite intense, you obviously listen very carefully to what's being said and at the same time you're constrained in that particular sort of lecture chair so so how do you how do you interact with other people in that context, do you get up, do you network with people or do you withdraw, you don't network with people?

0:09:22.

PARTICIPANT: Oh no, on the whole I do network because I actually really enjoy that bit, and I really enjoy talking to other people and meeting people, so yeah, so I just kind of get on with it I think, I try not to engage very much with the pain, but I do have to move around, I can get quite fidgety in a chair, so I might try and sit at the end of a row or towards the back so if I need to move it's easier to get out, that kind of thing.