



Dickerson
et al.

A healthier approach to research.

Workshops,
Webinars & more.



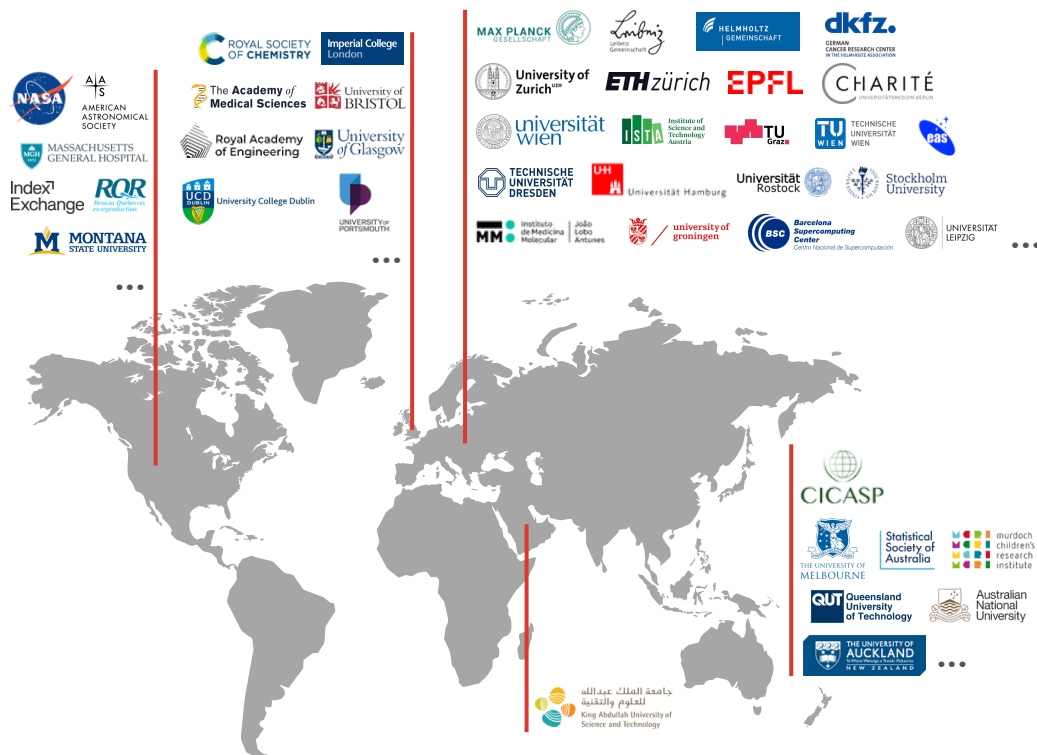
Helping academics worldwide.

The choice to pursue a career in academia is one fueled by passion and a love for research. Passion alone, however, is not always enough to help academics navigate the immense pressure and stress that comes with working in research in the current context.

At **Dickerson et al.** we provide the academic community with **strategies and insights** to take better care of their **well-being**, improve **decision-making**, and develop **career and leadership skills**. We support institutions and funding bodies in creating a **healthier research environment** for our researchers.

In this document, you will find our service offering, organised in thematic tracks.

Contact us and see how we can **help your community**.



Our Offering.

Tracks

- **Well-being for academics.** p. 7
A selection of services to help academics tackle the constant pressure, stress and uncertainty they face.
- **Decision-making in academia.** p. 12
Webinars and workshops to improve decision-making and reduce related stress and worry.
- **The academic mindset.** p. 18
Sessions that focus on challenging common beliefs and stereotypes that undermine how we approach our work.
- **Working better.** p. 21
More is not always better. These sessions help researchers rethink productivity with both their goals and well-being in mind.
- **Tools of the trade.** p. 24
Science is a collective enterprise and communication (writing, speaking) is an essential skill. These sessions focus on sharpening these tools.
- **Career development & change.** p. 29
Strategies and insights to ease hard and uncertain career transitions.
- **Supervisors track.** p. 33
Skills and strategies for (current and future) group leaders, including communication skills, conflict management and supporting student mental health

Formats

- **Live Workshops.**
In-person and online workshops designed to take an in-depth look at the thought and behaviour patterns that undermine our work and decisions.
- **Live Webinars.**
Self-contained talks including interactive Q&A and summary PDF handouts for the participants.
- **Keynote addresses**
Talks at scientific events, work retreats, conferences, etc.
- **Self-paced Workshops.**
On-demand content for your community, including video material and workbooks for self-paced work when people need it.
- **1:1 Coaching.**
We offer coaching for individuals wanting to improve their well-being, tackle work-related issues or facing a career transition.
- **Consulting.**
Our team consults with academic institutions seeking to improve their research environment and take better care of their community.

Our Offering.

Live Workshops

We offer *in-person* workshops where participants learn and practice new tools and strategies to improve the well-being, decisions and work-related skills.

Our live *online* workshops use a (tried and tested) hybrid format, with a mixture of live discussion sessions, video content and self-paced exercises and written material. This format allows for optimal learning of the content.



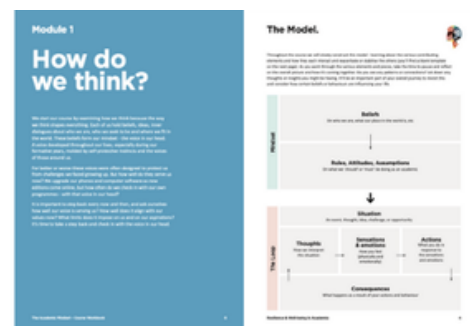
Live Webinars & In-person talks

Our live webinars, talks and keynote addresses are complemented with guided discussion, exercises and a written summary handout for participants.



Self-paced workshops & on-demand content

Our *self-paced* workshops are based on video content, guided exercises and workbooks for the participants to work through in their own time. These workshops and content allow institutions to reach a larger audience, whilst ensuring a meaningful learning experience.



The team.



Desiree Dickerson, PhD

As a former postdoctoral researcher in the neurosciences and a **clinical psychologist**, Desiree has worked at both ends of the spectrum - from (lab) bench to bedside. After working in research in New Zealand, Australia, and Austria, she now lives in Spain and helps academic institutions worldwide and academics themselves pursuit **a healthier approach to research.**



Vicent Botella-Soler, PhD

Vicent has been a PhD student (physics), a postdoc (neuroscience), a machine learning consultant for startups, a R&D manager for tech companies. With extensive international experience in both academia and industry, he now works as consultant and author, helping academics and industry professionals snap out of cognitive traps hindering their development. He specializes in **critical thinking** and **decision-making** for individuals and teams.

Contact us at
www.dickersonetal.com

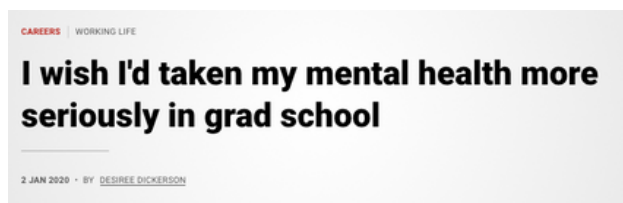
In the media.



Science Magazine "Mental Health awareness month"
Facebook live, 27/5/2020



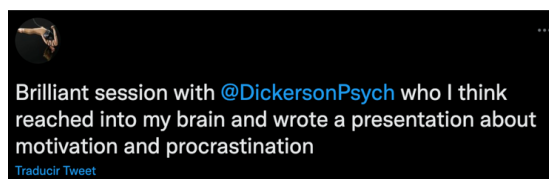
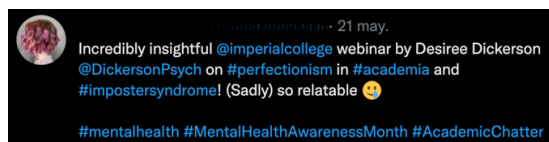
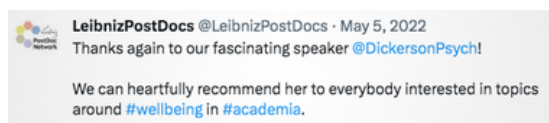
Nature.com Career Column during COVID-19 pandemic, 26/3/2020



Science.com Working Life Column 2/1/2020



Nature.com Career Column on Imposter Syndrome, 8/10/19



Nature.com Career Column on Perfectionism, 16/2/20



EPFL Magazine Interview, Feb 2020

Well-being for academics.

Well-being for academics.

A selection of workshops and webinars to **tackle the toll constant pressure, stress, and uncertainty take** on academics' well-being. Check out the abstracts and further details in the following pages.

Live Workshops

- Resilience and well-being in Academia.

Live Webinars

- Improving well-being in research.
- Navigating uncertainty.
- Isolation & belonging.
- Managing conflict.
- The power of saying no.
- Filling your bucket.
- Parenting & Academia.

Self-paced Workshops

- Navigating social interaction.
- Well-being for **supervisors**: taking care of yourself and your students.

Live workshop

Resilience and well-being in Academia.

Academia is an ultramarathon that we try to run as a sprint. We quickly run out of time and energy and can experience waning motivation, burnout, and a sense of failure. Although the environment certainly plays a role, we as individuals can address the way we approach academia to buffer us against stress and burnout, worry and fear. **A healthier approach to research is possible!**

In this workshop:

- We address the thought processes that underlie **perfectionism, imposter syndrome or worry** and learn to reframe them.
- We identify maladaptive coping strategies (e.g. **avoidance** and **procrastination**) and explore more effective (and healthier) alternatives.
- We discuss the need to *fill our bucket* and why balance in our lives is essential to **creativity, insight, motivation**, and our ability to deal constructively with feedback and rejection.



“ It changed the way I see things now, and I really believe the techniques we’ve learned will be super useful in my career in the near future. **Best workshop ever.**”

PhD Student
University of Vienna

Webinars

Improving well-being in Research.

We explore the many ways in which academics are trying to navigate their roles and their well-being in the research world. We highlight the need to **stop normalising the stress** we experience, recognise the impacts of chronic stress and **develop healthy coping strategies** for stress in the moment.

Navigating uncertainty.

We are forever facing new **challenges and constant change**. Arguably, that is part of what we love most about academia. But over time, the **uncertainty and instability** of the situation can take a toll. In this webinar we describe tools and strategies to navigate all of this uncertainty.

Isolation & belonging.

Academic life can be an isolating experience for many people. For some, the role requires them to live far from home. For others, the workload can impact significantly on their ability to socialise and maintain relationships. In this webinar we explore concrete tools to **increase our sense of belonging** within the academic and local community through creating a **sense of safety, connection, and common threads**.

Managing conflict.

Conflict is a part of any relationship. And is more frequent when stress is high. In this webinar we explore how to **recognise key triggers for conflict** in academic and supervisory relationships, we develop practical tools to approach important discussions and **navigate potential clashes**.

The power of saying no.

When everything feels like an opportunity, a priority, or an obligation, how do we say no? In this webinar, we explore why we tend to say yes to everything, its consequences (time poverty, exhaustion, loss of self and loss of joy) and **how to start saying no effectively**.

Filling your bucket

We are **constantly spending our energy** in our work and projects. But our bucket empties. In this webinar, we explore the many ways that we drain our bucket day-to-day and key tools that help us **refill it**.

Parenting & academia.

How do we achieve **work-life balance** when the family to-do list is three times as long as the work to-do list and it seems you are always the one that has to remember everything? In this webinar, we learn what **mental load** is and how to decontaminate our time so that we can be more effective in our work and more present at home. We explore **self-compassion tools** to prevent guilt and worry.

“ Thank you, this session has made me feel nurtured and this is very much an experience we don't have once we get to a certain stage in our careers, we become the nurturers”

Professor
Royal Academy of Engineering UK

Self-paced workshops

Navigating social interaction.

Being a social and collective endeavour, academia demands frequent interaction and collaboration with others. It is key that we learn **how to listen** to others, **how to express** our demands assertively and **how to manage conflict** when it arises. Also, we can work on the feelings of inadequacy or awkwardness social interaction can generate. This online course provides concrete tools and strategies to improve the way we navigate social interaction.



“ I would consider it as one of my most useful experiences since my doctoral studies started.”

PhD Student
Università della Svizzera italiana

Well-being for supervisors: taking care of yourself and your students.

If we are to change the well-being landscape in academia, it is important that supervisors understand how the different **pressures and increased uncertainty are affecting the academic population**. This course lets supervisors explore the main issues regarding mental health and well-being in academia and provides them with tools to better take care of themselves and their students.

Decision-making in Academia.

Decision-making in Academia.

Webinars and workshops to **improve decision-making** and **reduce stress** and worry.
Check out abstracts and further details in the following pages.

Live Workshops

- **Mental clarity & decision-making in academia.**
- **Decision-making for (future) team leaders.**

Live Webinars

- **Rethinking our decisions.**
- **Breaking decision paralysis.**
- **Making good decisions.**
- **Fighting worry & regret.**
- **The power of saying no.**
(see p. 10)

Self-paced Workshops

- **Decision-making for academics.**

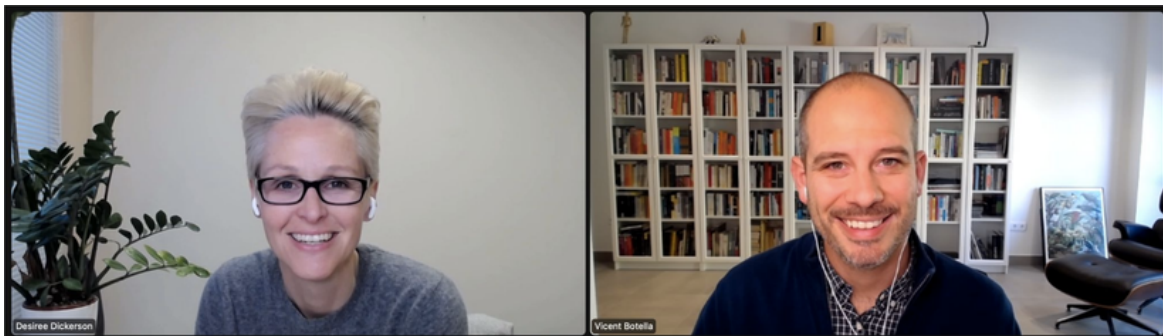
Live workshop

Mental clarity & decision-making in Academia.

How do we create the **mental clarity** to make big decisions when academia leaves us with so little time or energy? Often, we are left trying to make big life changing decisions from a place of self-doubt, emotional reactivity, and exhaustion. Fortunately, we can learn some tools and strategies to lessen the pressure of decision-making and **gain confidence** with our decisions, big and small.

In this workshop:

- we discuss the role our **biases, thinking patterns,** and **behavioural choices** play in how we evaluate situations and available options.
- we explore the forces that keep us from making decisions: the **worry,** the **overwhelm,** the **self-critical inner voices.**
- we put in practice **concrete strategies to improve** our decision-making and compensate for some of the most common cognitive biases and thinking traps.



“ I wish I'd taken your course 20 years ago!”

Professor
Royal Academy of Engineering UK

Live workshop

Decision-making for (future) team leaders.

Making decisions comes with many challenges. Even simple decisions can feel hard and have us worry over them. It only gets more challenging when we have to decide with others or for others, in a leadership role.

In this workshop:

- we discuss the **main hurdles in our decision-making**, as individuals, as teams and as leaders.
- we emphasize the **importance of clarity** and communication when leading a team.
- we discuss the **main dangers and sources of conflict** when making decisions with others.
- we detail and practice some **concrete tools** to help us improve our decision-making and **leadership skills**.



“What a great feedback, especially that 100% of the participants think they can use what they learned. That is rare!”

Career Development Officer
University of Hamburg

Webinars

Rethinking our decisions.

Which experiment/analysis should I do next? Which job offer should I accept? What would be the best next move? Where should I focus my efforts? The path of any academic is **full of decisions** and they all seem crucial. However, many of the hurdles we face in our decision-making stem from the way we think about the decisions themselves and a number of documented **cognitive biases**. In this webinar we review the most common biases affecting our decision-making process as academics and provide some useful tools and strategies to **reduce their impact**.

Breaking decision paralysis.

Positions, projects, opportunities, candidates, equipment, readings, collaborations... **so many choices**. We live now in a world of (apparently) infinite **possibilities**, and decision paralysis has only gotten worse. In this webinar we will discuss how to identify decision paralysis (often disguised under **procrastinating behaviours**), understand its causes and provide some insight on how to break from its stronghold.

Making good decisions.

Given that we always have limited information and are largely **unable to predict the future** (the long-term consequences of our actions, our future desires and emotions), how do we define a good decision? Let's discuss **how to make sensible decisions** in the face of uncertainty, with concrete examples relating to the academic experience.

Fighting worry & regret.

We can worry a lot, and we fear we might come to regret our choices. Academia is a high-stress high-stakes environment with a scarcity of resources, which makes every decision seem crucial, and fuels worry dynamics. But **what is worry?** Does it have a purpose? And **what is regret?** What do we actually fear when we fear regret? It is well known that fear of regret is one of the main drivers in our decision-making. Let's discuss what worry and regret do for us, and how we can better understand them to **reduce their impact in our daily work** and experience.

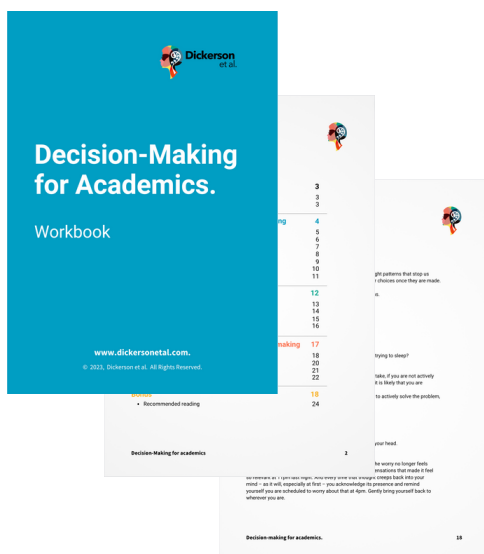
“**Very good speaker, inspiring talk!**”

PhD Student
University of Hamburg

Self-paced workshop

Decision-making for academics.

In this online course, academics are able to explore in their own time the **main factors affecting our decision-making**, with examples and tools adapted to the academic experience. We discuss worry, procrastination and avoidance, fear of regret, decision paralysis and a selection of cognitive biases affecting our decisions. The course includes short video lectures and written material as well as exercises to **develop better decision-making strategies**. The material is organised in self-contained learning modules.



“ I am very inspired by this workshop and have made a lot of progress in my decision. I will definitely recommend it to my colleagues and would be happy to attend other workshops by these speakers.”

Postdoc
University of Hamburg

The academic mindset.

The academic mindset.

Sometimes our **mindset and beliefs** get in the way of our best work. We can be our most merciless and unfair critic, and this has a big impact on our well-being. The following workshops and webinars tackle the typical negative mindsets and beliefs many academics share.

Live Workshops

- **Resilience & well-being in Academia.** (see p.9)

Live Webinars

- **Taming the inner critic.**
- **Perfectionism & Imposter syndrome.**
- **Focusing on your strengths & values.**

Self-paced Workshops

(COMING SOON!)

Webinars

Taming the inner critic.

We all have an inner voice in our heads. It is an essential part of what makes us human and it is designed to help us navigate the world and to keep us safe. The problem is, in order to keep us safe it tends to **focus on the negatives**, the perceived threats, and all the possible ways that we might mess up, fall down, or embarrass ourselves. In this webinar we explore how our inner voice shapes our thoughts, our mood, our choices, and our productivity; we **address the critical inner voices** that drive perfectionism, imposter syndrome, and self-doubt; and we learn how to **rewrite that inner critic** to a voice that allows for more mental space and energy to think, create, be present, and thrive.

Perfectionism & Imposter syndrome.

We often argue that our perfectionism drives us to great heights, to excel, and to maintain our edge. We rarely stop to see the costs it carries. Imposter syndrome distorts the way we see ourselves, our performance, and our capabilities. Both **reflect our doubts and fears** – fear of being judged, fear of failing, fear of not being good enough, fear of not belonging. In this webinar we discuss the true costs of these doubts and fears, and the extent to which they impact on our productivity, mental clarity, and our joy for what we do. We describe simple ways to notice when our perfectionism or imposter syndrome is tripping us up and strategies to **reshape our inner critic to be** more objective and **more compassionate**.

Focusing on your strengths & values.

We spend a lot of time focusing on our weaknesses in the hope of improving our skills. But what about our strengths? Research tells us that we can enjoy our work and achieve more when we **pay attention to our strengths**. Also, how our work aligns with our values has a direct impact on our joy and motivation for our work. In this webinar, we explore how to identify and play to our strengths, and **use our values as a compass**.

“She spoke with such passion and conviction, with answers, and counterarguments against, almost every situation of doubt and fear that arises during PhD studies.”

PhD student, University of
Glasgow

Working better.

Working better.

Academia is currently a high-stress environment, with consequences for our work approach and habits. In these workshops and webinars we discuss **motivation and productivity** issues and practice some strategies to work better in this pressure-cooker context.

Live Workshops

(COMING SOON!)

Live Webinars

- Rethinking productivity.
- Tackling procrastination.
- Navigating supervision.
- The power of saying no.
(see p.10)

Self-paced Workshops

(COMING SOON!)

Webinars

Rethinking productivity.

Learn to see productivity through a well-being lens. Learn how to structure your day in a way that aids your **concentration and focus**, rather than constantly detracting from it. In this webinar we discuss how to **create a routine** during times of constant change, learning to **ride the productivity wave**, creating a rhythm that works for you, navigating the balancing act of families and research, and how to plan to be (realistically) productive.

Tackling procrastination.

Procrastination is a way of easing our own discomfort. Discomfort because the task is too hard, too boring, too big, too scary. The difficulty with procrastinating is that it makes you feel better for a moment but it does nothing to fix the reason the task feels uncomfortable to begin with. It is still too big, too hard, too scary, or too boring the next time you sit down to do it. And so the **vicious cycle repeats**. In this webinar we learn how to **identify these procrastination loops** when they start to unfold, identify some of the thoughts underlying the discomfort and reframe them, and employ **alternative strategies** that can alleviate the discomfort and make the task less difficult, scary, hard or boring.

Navigating supervision.

Learning to navigate the **supervisor-supervisee relationship** is critical to positive outcomes in our PhD or Postdoc experience but this dance is not always easy. In this webinar, we will discuss ways to **create and foster a healthy relationship**, manage expectations, set boundaries, and communicate clearly. We learn to recognise when our assumptions, thoughts and behaviour patterns aren't helping us, to interpret feedback (and not take it personally) as well as to navigate different types of supervisors.



We can heartfully recommend her to everybody interested in topics around wellbeing in academia"

Leibniz Postdoc Network

Tools of the trade.

Tools of the trade.

Academia is a collective endeavour and **communication is key**. In these workshops and webinars we help academics sharpen the tools of their trade: **public speaking, writing and social interaction**.

Live Workshops

- Public speaking for academics.
- Unblock your writing.

Live Webinars

- Tackling writer's block.
- Social anxiety: when interacting with others is hard.

Self-paced Workshops

- Navigating social interaction. (see p. 11)

Live workshop

Public speaking for academics.

Speaking in public is one of the most important tasks of the academic. Whether giving a presentation, teaching a course, or in a media appearance, our ability to **communicate clearly and effectively** is key. In this workshop we explore:

- The act of communication.
- Humans as storytellers.
- Discourse structure and clarity.
- Using your voice well (language, volume, intonation, enunciation).
- Non-verbal language.
- Fears and worries. Stage freight.
- Visual aids: best practices for your slides.

This workshop runs in 3 sessions over 2 weeks and includes **practical public speaking exercises** for the participants to apply the concepts and strategies learned during the sessions.



Live workshop

Unblock your writing.

What lies beneath a writing block? In this workshop we work on the **psychological underpinnings** of a writer's block: the perfectionism, the anxiety, the fear of failure. We also describe and defuse typical **counterproductive beliefs** about what the writing process should look and feel like.

Vicent Botella-Soler has written and published academics papers, popular science books, poetry, and non-fiction, so he knows well **the dread of the blank page** and has faced and broken writer's block more than once. In this workshop he draws from personal experience and the works of other writers to help academics get their words flowing.



Webinars

Tackling writer's block.

Writer's block is a type of **performance anxiety**: it is stage fright with no stage. Our doubts and perfectionism keep us from moving forward or even starting. Also, we believe that "if we knew" how to do it, words would just flow out of us in perfect sentences. But **the process of writing is a lot more messy** than that and we should embrace its true nature to fight the beliefs that keep us from putting pen to paper. In this webinar we will dispel some myths and provide concrete tools to help the words find their way onto the page.

Social anxiety: when interacting with others is hard.

Academia is a social endeavour and it demands frequent **communication, interaction and collaboration** with others. At the same time, many of us find interacting with others an awkward, **difficult** or incredibly energy-consuming activity. In this webinar we discuss the basics of social anxiety and different strategies to reduce its effects on our work and daily interactions.



Career development & change.

Career development & change.

Academia is a vocation, a calling. Leaving academia for other career paths can be quite difficult, and not just in a practical sense. In these workshops and webinars we tackle the main challenges of this **transition** and provide **strategies** to tackle them.

Live Workshops

- **Moving on: tips and tools for your career change.**

Live Webinars

- **Changing course: transitioning away from academia.**

Self-paced Workshops

(COMING SOON!)

Live workshop

Moving on: tips and tools for your career change.

Leaving academia and facing a career change can be daunting. In this workshop we tackle the most common **fears, worries and emotions** academics face when considering moving on to a different professional path.

We also discuss **practical tools** and tips regarding job search, CV writing for industry jobs, job interviews, networking and online presence.



Webinar

Changing course: transitioning away from academia.

Eventually, many academics face this possibility: leaving, quitting academia. Often, it is a decision fraught with much **emotion**, perceived as a threat to our identity, to our sense of self and pride. The **uncertainty** of our prospects in the outside world also fuels fears and doubt. In this talk we introduce some **helpful strategies** in transitioning away from academia and dispel some common misconceptions and biases.

Among other things, we will discuss:

- The importance of movement and expanding your context.
- Understanding your leverage and the role of luck.
- The primacy of soft over hard skills: communication and empathy.
- Initiative: finding the right balance.
- Incentives and constraints: academia vs industry.
- Identity threat: who will you be moving forward?



Supervisors track.

Supervisors track.

Leading a team is usually a completely **new challenge** for many academics. Going from a student role to a teacher or manager role can be a very stark transition that requires extra skills and training. These courses aim to fill that gap.

Live Workshops

- **Decision-making for (future) team leaders.** (see p. 15)

Live Webinars

- **Supporting student well-begin.**
- **The multiple roles of a supervisor.**
- **Leading a team.**
- **Effective communication.**
- **Managing conflict in a team.**
- **Motivation & Productivity.**

Self-paced Workshops

- **Well-being for supervisors: taking care of yourself and your students.** (see p. 11)

Webinars

Supporting student well-being.

"I'm an academic, not a therapist. How do I support my students' mental health and well-being?" Some group leaders operate on a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy with their group members and students when it comes to one's life and its challenges. Some may have the sense that their people are struggling and simply not know how to approach the subject. In this interactive session we will develop a **toolbox for navigating students' mental health** and well-being.

The multiple roles of a supervisor.

Supervision is a role many of us look forward to embracing. In this current academic system, however, where time is short and competition is everywhere, there are a number of **pressures and challenges** to navigate. Academic supervision is a relationship, and any relationship is built on trust, mutual respect and expectations. As a supervisor you are **expected to fulfil many roles** (e.g. mentor, coach, colleague). In this webinar we explore what these roles are, why they should (or shouldn't) be fulfilled and the importance of clear expectations for an effective supervisory experience.

Effective communication.

As leaders, we need to **communicate effectively** and use feedback as the powerful and motivating tool it can be. Also, good communication is a skill our students need to develop whilst in our research group. In this webinar we describe different tools and strategies to improve our communication skills and our ability to provide **efficient feedback**.

Leading a team.

Becoming a supervisor is a challenging move from the research-focused routine to a people-focused **leadership** role. You are a leader now. And the success of your team depends partly on **how you choose to lead**, on the tone you set, on how you model **collaboration and collegiality** with others, on how you narrate failure and how you lift others up when they stumble, as well as on how you navigate conflict and seek to understand the position and path of those you are working with.

Managing conflict in a team.

Conflict is natural part of working with other people. Managing conflict well is a fundamental part of good leadership practice and essential for the mental health and well-being of all research group members. In this webinar we will explore **how to better manage conflict in our day-to-day work** by looking into the most common types of conflict, the early warning signs, our beliefs about conflict as well as some tools for navigating conflict and creating a safe environment that can help us avoid the its most harmful sides.

Motivation and productivity.

There are many factors that can slow our progress and that of our students. In this webinar we discuss how to **rethink productivity** and efficiency and how to improve our time management. We explore the triggers and reasons for procrastination and how to avoid it, and describe the **true drains on our mental and emotional energy**, including decision fatigue and the inner critic.



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