

**TRAPPED BY THE  
TRAPPINGS**

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## ABOUT ME

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Explain twitter handle will be top of every slide

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# DISCLAIMERS

- Discussion of depression, anxiety and panic
- I am not a therapist
- I am not you
- Discussion > Assumption

Mentions but no details, if people feel they need to leave that's fine

Depression/anxiety are not the only conditions, remember to speak to people first

6th October 2016

## There's No Line in my Timesheet for Panic Attacks

by [Chad Gowler](#)

"When every hour of a developer's time needs to be accounted for, how do we give people the space to be unwell?"

I've spoken about mental health before, I wrote a blog post about anxiety and time recording for geek mental help week. Got a good response, got me thinking. We think coding is our work, but there are loads of little things that are part of that, and sometimes they can be hard.

## IT'S VERY TIRING

- Physically
- Mentally
- We need to plan how we spend our energy, even for small things

It's very tiring, panic exhausts the body, personas, keeping up the basics. Anything else needs careful planning, even things you might think are small.

## IT'S VERY ISOLATING

- What's the difference between "Leave me alone" and "I want to interact but can't"
- It's hard to socialise if you don't drink, or like certain situations

It's very isolating; it can be hard to admit you need help or space, especially if you're in an underrepresented demographic. Office environments can mean we wear headphones to cope, but it's hard to tell what means "leave me alone". Left out of social events.

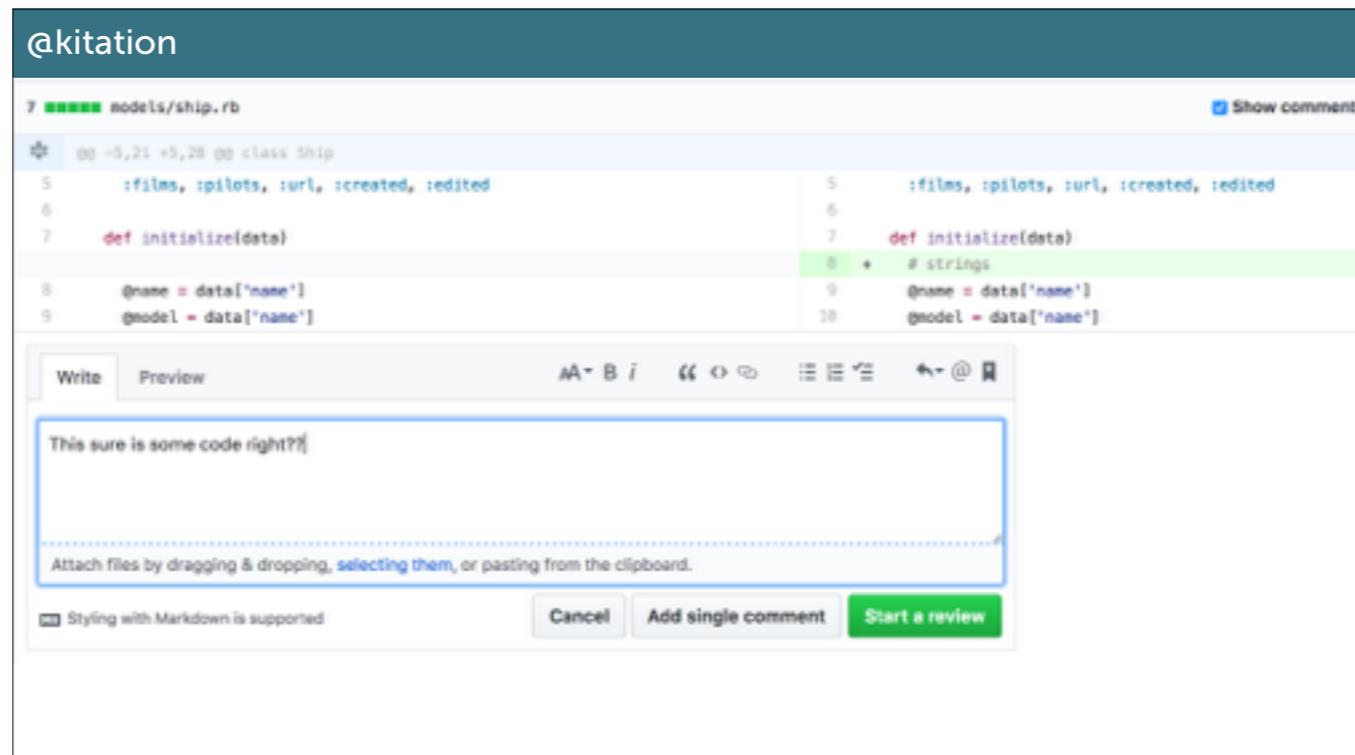
# MEETINGS

- Have an agenda
- Don't cancel them last minute
- Be considerate of people's time and energy levels
- Don't forget your remote team

Let's start with meetings. Nobody really enjoys them, but they are necessary. Anything from the standup to the retro via all hands and scribbles on a post it with the person next to you. A meeting looms large on the calendar, especially if I'm expected to speak. Give an agenda beforehand if possible. Don't cancel, it wastes energy. Things like standups provide routine. Noise is a factor, get a quiet room so that people can hear you, sensory overload.



Consider anon retros, retro wall or proxy. Takes some of the pressure off. Can we apply this to other meetings?



I understand the advantages, keeps us on same page, QA go-over, avoid big mistakes. Most code reviews happen here in Github (gitlab looks similar). It's easy to lose context and tone with this setup. What do I mean here? Code reviews are async, take up headspace.

**THE REVIEW IS OF THE  
CODE, NOT YOU.**

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## THE REVIEW IS OF THE CODE, NOT YOU.

This erases the humanity of the person  
doing the work

We are naturally protective of creative  
works

It's good to tell people personal insults are bad ("this is what I expect from women, what uni did you go to etc), but it gives people licence to forget there's a person behind the PR. Don't take it personally == It's not my fault you don't understand me. Can't assume people are stupider than you. Try code reviewing together, take some time so you can have a conversation, remember both parties are people. Have a mentor/neutral third party to ask. Mental illness changes your perception of reality, sometimes you can't help taking it personally.

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TALK

Be open and available, have a private space

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TALK  
LISTEN

Take in everything, don't feel the need to judge. It doesn't matter if it sounds small or odd to you.

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TALK  
LISTEN  
ACT

If I keep speaking but nothing changes, it doesn't really matter if you're listening, I'll stop speaking.

## AS A COMPANY

- Mental health days
- Meeting-free days
- Quiet spaces
- Varied social events
- On-site help

# RESOURCES

- Open Sourcing Mental Health (<https://osmihelp.org/>)
- Mind (<http://www.mind.org.uk/>)

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**THANK YOU**