

MENTAL HEALTH DURING YOUR PhD

47%

A study by the University of California, Berkeley,¹ found nearly half of postgraduate students met criteria to classify them as depressed.


SOME WAYS TO HELP MANAGE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE




Speak to a medical professional about how you are feeling. This may lead to intervention such as medication or counselling to help you manage your mental health.

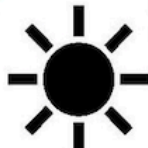
TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR

It is not always possible, but if you can approach your supervisor, discuss your mental health concerns with them. Other options  include discussions to reduce workload temporarily and taking time out.


TALK TO YOUR PEERS/POSTDOCS

It is highly likely that people around you have also experienced the stressful nature of a PhD. Reach out, if you feel able. Remember,  postdocs have survived their PhD so may have some useful tips/ coping strategies.


TAKE SOME TIME OUT

 Taking a break can actually improve efficiency when you return to work. If you cannot justify taking a couple of weeks off, take a series of long weekends to get some time away.


FOCUS ON YOU

 It is a proven fact that lack of sleep can add to feelings of stress. Exercise can also work to alleviate stress. It may feel like you don't have time, but going for a walk at lunchtime (for example) may help.


CREATE MANAGEABLE CHUNKS

If everything is overwhelming, try to breakdown your research into manageable tasks. It may help to do this in consultation with your supervisor. When writing, consider starting with figures first. 

REQUEST COUNSELLING

Universities have counselling services that are available for you to use. This can be useful to help talk through your problems and also make sure appropriate coping strategies are in place. 

READ LITERATURE

There are a large amount of online resources available to help manage mental health and wellbeing. For example, the charity Mind, have a range available, from how to manage stress, to how to support others. 

REFERENCE: 1. Graduate Student Happiness & Well-Being Report, 2014, University of California, Berkeley.

SELF-HARMING? SUICIDAL THOUGHTS? CALL SAMARITANS NOW:
ON 116-123 OR EMAIL JO@SAMARITANS.ORG

A poster by Dr Zoe Ayres (@zjayres).
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