MENTAL HEALTH DURING YOUR PhD

THE TOXIC MIX

A study by the University of California, Berkeley, found nearly half of postgraduate students met criteria to classify them as depressed. This poster explores the common stressors that PhD students may be exposed to during their PhD.

- **Imposter Syndrome**: Most prevalent in women and minority groups, feelings of not ‘deserving’ to be on your PhD despite having earned it are rife.
- **First Time Failing**: Students undertaking a PhD have often never experienced failure, having done well in previous studies.
- **Presenteeism**: Maintaining a work-life balance can be difficult with the academic culture of overwork.
- **TOUGH RELATIONSHIPS**: Supervisor/student relationships be it an absent supervisor, or over-bearing, can be particularly tough to manage.
- **FInANCIAL CONCERNS**: Money worries can lead to increased stress. Waiting long time periods to receive for example, conference reimbursement can exacerbate the issue.
- **COMPETITiVE LANDSCAPE**: Competition not collaboration is often fostered. Given no two PhDs are the same, comparing your PhD to someone else’s can be defeating.
- **PAPERS, PLEASE**: Focus on research output can lead to feelings of not being ‘good enough’ if you do not have n publications.
- **ISOLATION/GUILT**: Writing a thesis can be isolating. This can also be coupled with feelings of guilt when taking breaks.
- **NO MORE TICK BOXES**: Transitioning from taught courses to research can be difficult, particularly given the open-ended nature of research.
- **CULTURE OF ACCEPTANCE**: In academia, there is a culture of acceptance that mental health issues are part of the journey. This needs to change.

Self-help? Social thoughts? Call Samaritans now on 116 123

Part of the 4mentalhealth series by Dr Zoe Ayres (@zjaynes). Free to distribute.