



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Minding Ourselves and Each Other During the Postgraduate Experience

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Guidelines

- **You decide whether you would like your video on or not**
- **You will be muted on entry to the session, and unmuted when you have a question during dedication question times**
- **We won't be having a break but the session is only be 50-60 mins**
- **The chat box is a place you can type in questions or comments throughout the presentation but these will only be responded to during the specific question times**
- **If you would prefer to ask a question during this designated time you can 'raise a hand' virtually**
- **If nobody asks questions, I'll assume everything is making sense 🙏**

NO PRESSURE...



JOHNSON, I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE TIME IN THE
WORLD TO GET THIS DONE BY TOMORROW.

What you signed up for...

and what you can hope to develop:

- **Motivated Performance**
 - **Social Evaluative threat**
 - **Low Controllability**
 - **High unpredictability**
- **Balance: “Know thyself”**
 - **Community/ Growth**
 - **Ownership/ Flexibility**
 - **Preparedness/ Communication**

with thanks to Callum Neill, Edinburgh Napier University

The proactive approach to looking after ourselves



Managing your mental health



What is Mental Health?

It encompasses our capacity to work, to love and to play:

- Work: A sense of agency and the capacity to be generative/feel that what you do has meaning
- Love: The capacity to have an authentic, intimate relationship with at least one other person,
- Play: The capacity to enjoy life, sing, dance, play. To be involved rather than just observe.

Our capacity to tolerate distress not just work towards contentment.

“Psychological wellness is not just the absence of mental health issues”
- Nancy McWilliams

Difficulties Arise when...

Our emotional needs (safety, acceptance, purpose) are not being met.

The demands in our environment outweigh our available resources.

We feel powerless, under threat and overwhelmed by this to the point where we can no longer make sense of it.

We feel alone.

The Postgraduate Context

Postgraduate students are often:

- **More isolated from support networks**
- **Experience intercultural differences & language barriers**
- **Can become dependent on their supervisory relationship**
- **Experience unrealistic expectations for themselves.**
- **Feel like imposters much of the time!**

All of which can lead to feelings of terror, shame and loneliness on a pretty regular basis...

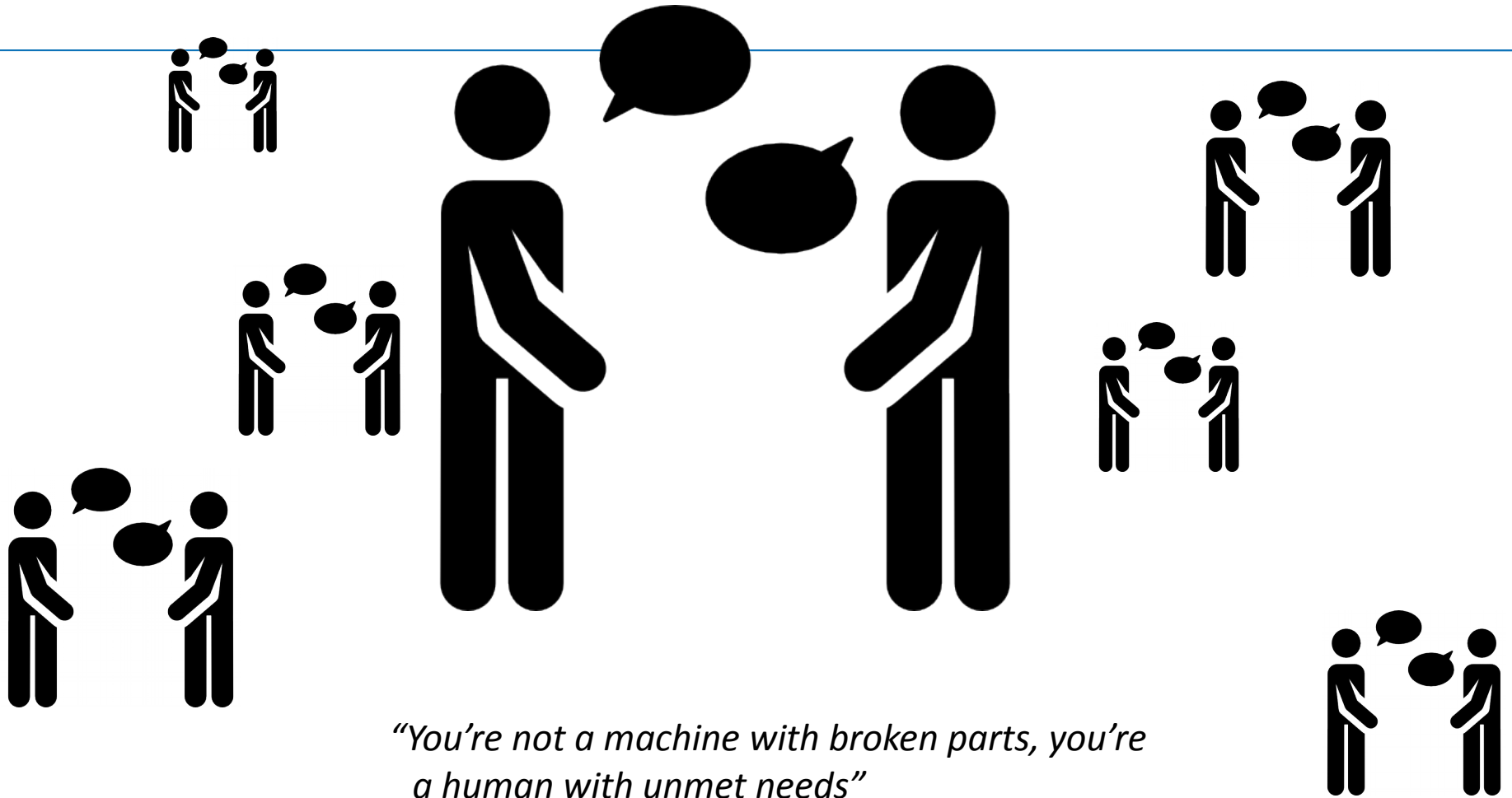
<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/the-postgraduate-survival-guide-1.1715460>

And often there's more challenges in terms of...

- **This time/stage of life**
 - **Financial expense and/or accommodation difficulties**
 - **Taught vs. research vs. PhD have different expectations of students**
- (These are rarely explicit and need to be independently navigated!)**

International transitions bring their own challenges!

- **Now navigating different cultural & academic expectations**
- **May be language barriers to overcome**
- **Will likely face additional challenges around social integration**



*"You're not a machine with broken parts, you're
a human with unmet needs"*

- Johann Hari

EMPATHY VS. SYMPATHY



Question Time... comments welcome also!



5 Top Tips... and a recommendation.

- 1) Understanding that stress is a typical and adaptive response.**
- 2) Manage your own boundaries & set limits.**
- 3) Cultivating self-compassion by catching your self-critic.**
- 4) Avoid Avoidance!**
- 5) Build, access and stay open to connection and community.**

Make time for fun!!

Managing Stress

- ❑ Stress occurs when the demands on us are greater than our available resources.

- ❑ It is *not unusual* to feel stressed and anxious... and both can be adaptive:
 - Focus
 - Performance
 - Alert to danger
 - Prepare

- ❑ Amount of stress we experience in these situations is determined by **our perceived ability to cope and the supports we have in place.**

Setting Effective Boundaries (with others and for ourselves)

Effective boundaries are necessary to promote both efficiency/productivity and our general health.

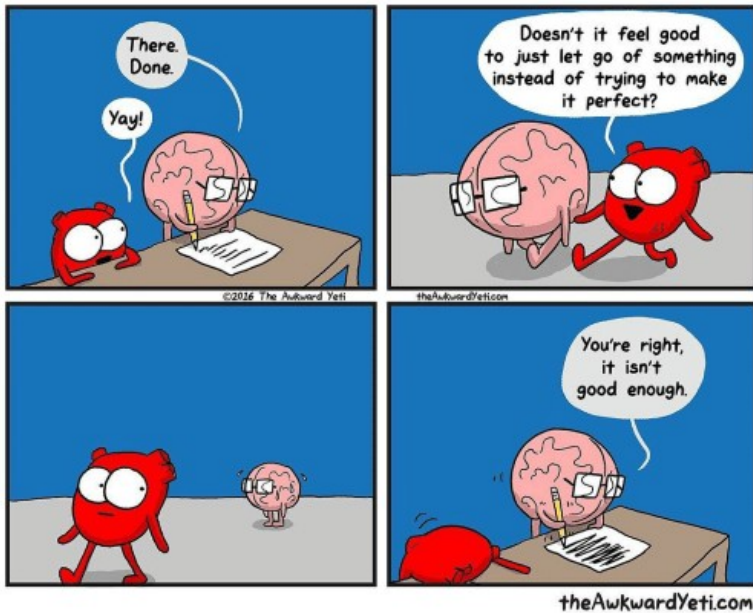
They can also be hugely caring and facilitative of interaction with and engagement from others:

- 1. Time limit**
- 2. Goal**
- 3. Support**
- 4. Debrief**

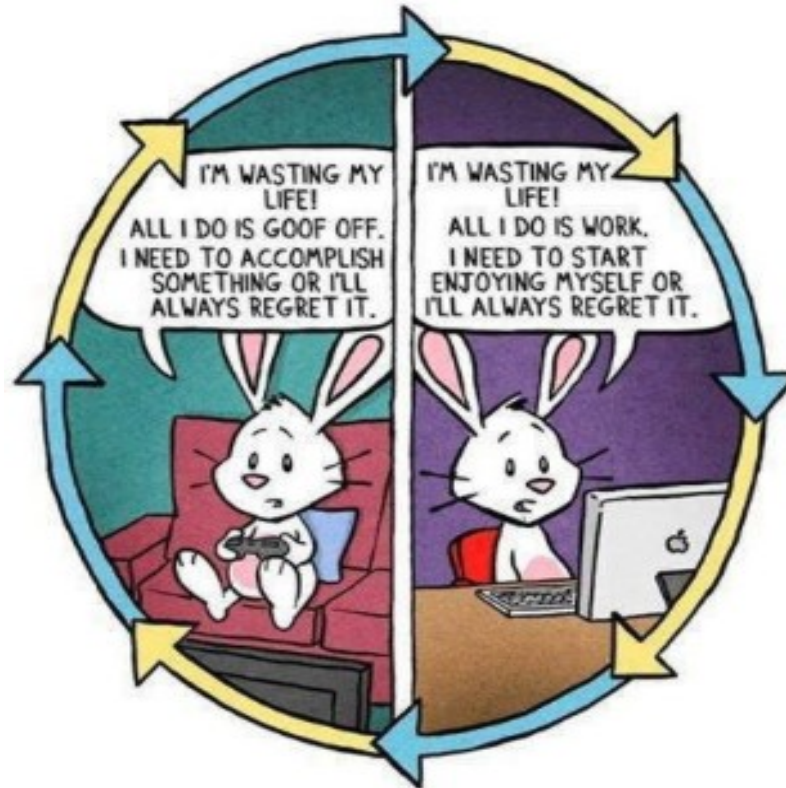
Effective boundaries are important to manage our internal experiences also! Making time for intentional attention is a way to facilitate this:

The Free Mindfulness Project - Free Resources

Catch the self-critic and cultivate compassion...



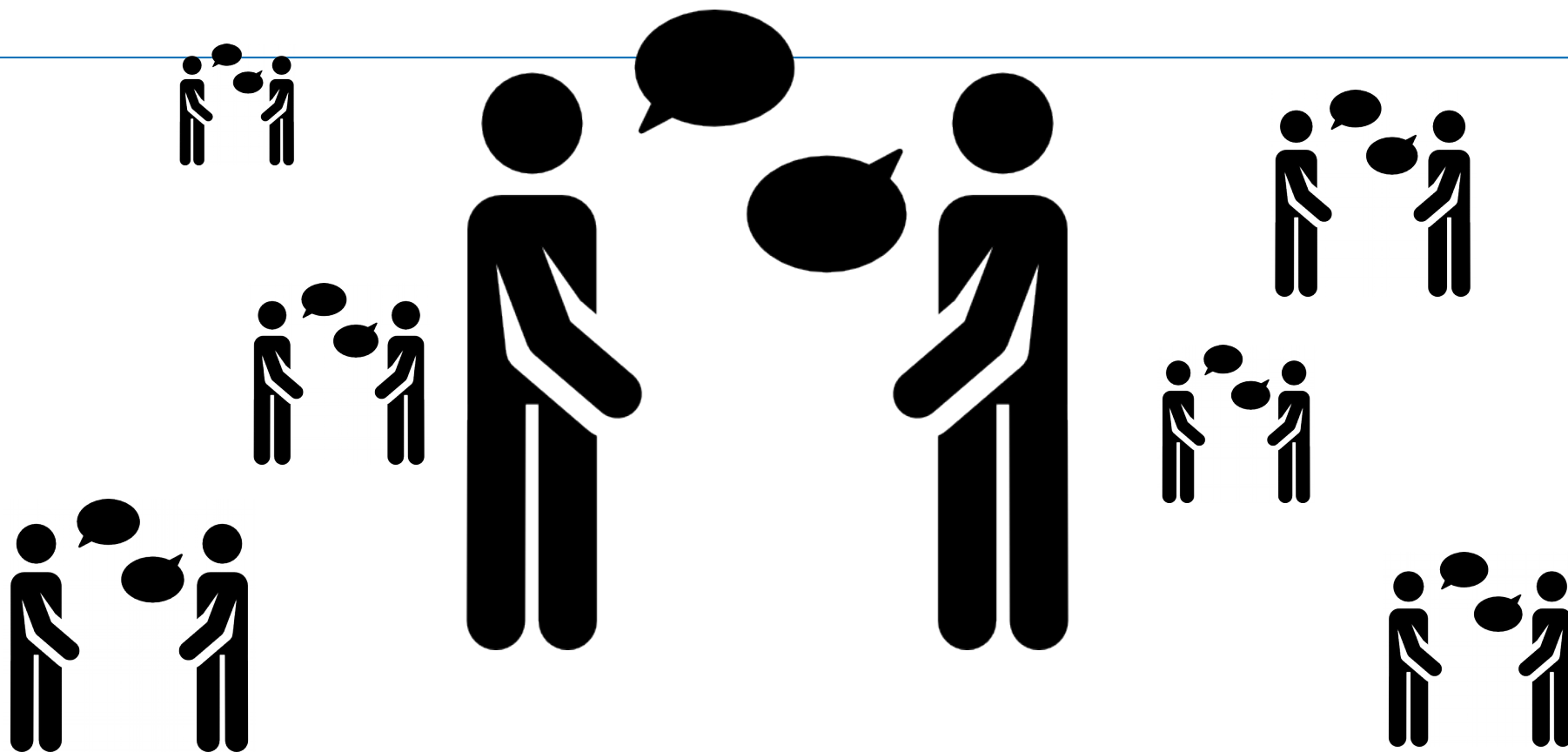
Avoid Avoidance



Foster a support network, and build communities.



Talk, Seek Support, Connect



SLD 
Student Learning Development

S2S 
Student to Student

SCS 
Student Counselling Services

Group Therapy In SCS

Surviving your Postgraduate Experience & **Compassion Focused Therapy** are both closed groups you can register for by attending a SNAP appointment.



| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| ETHNIC MINORITIES SUPPORT GROUP | ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT GROUP | DROP IN THERAPY GROUP | COMBAT YOUR CRITIC GROUP | MINDFULNESS DROP IN & RAINBOW GROUP |
| Mondays | Tuesdays | Wednesdays | Thursdays | Fridays |

Groups

at a glance

Summer 2025

SCS
Student Counselling Services

Trinity
College
Dublin
The University of Dublin

Drop In Therapy Group

WEDNESDAYS 1-2PM, SCS

Mindful Menstruation

THURSDAYS 2-3PM, SCS

Rainbow Group

FRIDAYS 11-12.30PM, SCS



groups are **drop-in** and run **fortnightly** over the Summer

scan the code for more info and dates



Question Time



- Sports Centre
- Disability Service
- Chaplaincy: 01 896 1260/1901
- College Health: 01 8961556/ 8961591
- Graduate Students' Union: www.tcdgsu.ie
- S2S Peer Support: 01 896 2438 , student2student@tcd.ie
- Student Learning Development: <http://student-learning.tcd.ie>
- Postgraduate Advisory Service: pgsupp@tcd.ie
- Student Counselling Service: stucounc@tcd.ie

Out of Hours Support

- Niteline: 9 pm- 2:30 am every night of term - Ph: 1 800 793 793 / IM service on their website
- Samaritans 24 hr helpline : 1 850 60 90 90, call in to Marlborough Street during the day for in-person support
- Crises Text Service 50808
- Solace Café in person Thurs-Sun 5-10pm in Aware 9 Leeson St. Upper, Ranelagh
<https://solacecafe.ie/>

Reflect on one way to mind yourself & support others

- Some themes to bear in mind:
 - Finding balance is important to sustain motivation
 - Getting to “Know thyself” is an opportunity for learning
 - Cultivating a ‘growth’ mindset can overcome unhelpful deficit focused attitudes
 - Fostering community (research or social supports) is key to feeling less alone
 - Taking ownership of what’s in your control (let go of what’s not)
 - Aim for flexibility and a self-compassionate tolerance of uncertainty
 - Support yourself to feel prepared where possible
 - Communicate your needs, values and desires to yourself/others

<https://eu.surveymonkey.com/r/SLDPGSchool>



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Thank You & Good Luck!