



# Le bien-être pendant les études doctorales : un examen factuel des défis et des solutions associées

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Responsable du groupe de recherche « Systèmes d'information pour la société ».



# Pourquoi est-ce que je vous parle aujourd'hui ?

2015–2016 Emploi de chercheur, IE  
2011–2015 Emplois dans l'industrie, RU  
2011–2017 Doctorat, France, FR



2022 Chef de groupe de recherche, FR  
2019 Poste permanent, FR  
2018–2019 Marie Curie, NL  
2017 Postdoc, NL



2017–2019 Réseau de santé mentale entre pairs  
Conseil de la faculté 2018-2019  
2018 – Démarrage de l'OMR

- Niveaux de mobilité intenses
- Un doctorat non financé
- Expérience dans un groupe avec un taux d'abandon extrêmement élevé
- Activer le changement du haut vers le bas par le biais de l'organisation régionale de gestion (ReMO)

Manifeste des chercheurs sur la santé mentale et le bien-être : soutenez-le sur change.org

October 8, 2021

Other

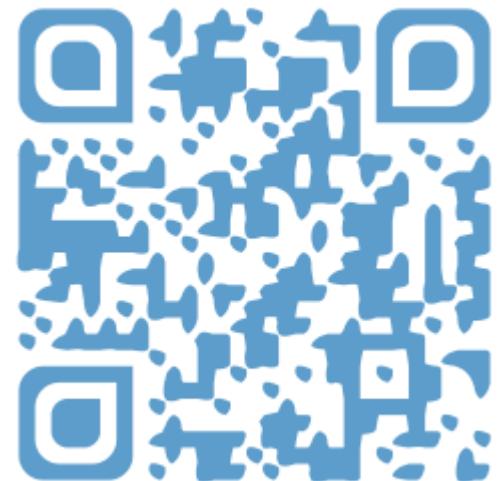
Open Access

# Researcher Mental Health and Well-being Manifesto

 Gábor Kismihók;  Brian Cahill;  Stéphanie Gauttier; Janet Metcalfe;  Stefan T. Mol;  Darragh McCashin;  Jana Lasser;  Murat Güneş; Mathias Schroijen;  Martin Grund;  Katia Levecque;  Susan Guthrie;  Katarzyna Wac;  Jesper Dahlgaard;  Mohamad Nadim Adi; Christina Kling

The ReMO COST Action is a network of stakeholders from all levels of the research community that has drafted a Researcher Mental Health and Well-being Manifesto that calls for the assessment of how the mental health and well-being of researchers can best be nourished and sustained through actions and initiatives at the policy, institutional, community and individual levels.

This manifesto calls for all stakeholders in the research ecosystem to engage in developing policies that monitor, improve, and maintain well-being and mental health in the research environment, delineating more encompassing metrics of success and quality, supporting work-life balance, inclusiveness, and family-friendly sustainable research careers.



This work was performed within the framework of COST Action CA19117 - "Researcher Mental Health".

## A MANIFESTO

# Europe supports early research careers and stimulating research workplaces

### Europe needs more scientists!

There is a wide consensus throughout Europe about the need to further attract and retain the best talent for research. Indeed, research is the basis upon which present and future generations will be able to conduct the major transitions our societies are embarked on. This requires increasing the recognition of the research activity and fostering diversified research careers at a European level, across the public and the private sectors, including NGOs and the third sector. By "career" environment we mean the way researchers are recruited, their work assessed, rewarded and eventually disseminated, which employment conditions they are offered and how they, as well as society, can profit from mobility across sectors and countries.

The lasting COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation army and its economic consequences, is bringing unprecedented challenges for the research communities in all EU Member States. It deeply affects researchers, particularly those early in their career. Its negative impact has been widespread and is lasting, denting productivity and career prospects for researchers. While we discuss long-term goals, **research organisations must put an immediate priority on the mitigation of the effects of the pandemic and other emerging uncertainties affecting early research careers.**

The stress arising from the present crises does not occur in an otherwise serene environment. As the recent **REMO Cost Action** on "Research Mental Health Observatory" has shown, researchers, especially early career ones, often work in unfavorable psychological conditions. REMO has promoted the discussion about **workplace well-being** in order to develop tailored, effective and efficient prevention and action programmes.

A big part of the hardship is a consequence of insufficient levels of public and private investment in R&D throughout all European regions. An increase of that investment is necessary, part of which needs to be dedicated to improving young researchers' careers in Europe. This has been explicitly

strengthened. The originality of its organisation should also be used as a model for other programmes.

To achieve these goals, an in-depth policy debate about research careers across Europe should be activated. It must articulate related issues mixing public and private systems, while taking into consideration that careers are often a national competence and the autonomy of institutions a feature to be preserved.

The following priority themes need to be carefully addressed throughout Europe:

#### I. Monitoring:

- A **special priority** must be given to implementing open monitoring and reporting systems across Europe. Although conclusions on matters as career paths have already been approved at the level of Research Ministers in the Competitiveness Council, the implementation of such systems remains to be done. The monitoring should guarantee **open observation, monitoring and reporting systems** across Europe about annual progress in framework conditions, healthy working and employment environments and issues such as remuneration, social security, pensions and **mental health**;
- Monitor the annual mobility "flows" of researchers, as well as of **research career paths and progress in training and career development systems at institutional level**;
- Include as an **immediate goal** an in-depth study of the pandemic's effects on early career researchers and younger students' intention to engage in PhD programmes.

#### II. Improve stimulating research careers in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs), Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Focus on **early career researchers** and improve their employment and working conditions, including mental health and protection from abusive attitudes;
- Implement rapid concrete actions to **alleviate the impact of the Covid crisis on early career researchers whose work has been severely hindered**;
- Improve recruitment, reward and assessment systems giving more appreciation and value to **research performance beyond scientometry** in order to encourage openness, collaboration and sharing as a means to increase research quality and impact. A better balance between educational, research, managerial and entrepreneurial achievements is the goal leading to the **establishment of true European practices for recruitment and career development**;
- Consider recommendations for a stepwise approach to **joint recruitment schemes**, piloted

- Partager avec vous le travail effectué au sein de ReMO et d'autres moments de mon expérience
- Vous permettre de réfléchir à votre situation en tant que chercheur et futur superviseur
- Vous faire réfléchir à des solutions institutionnalisées potentielles



# Qu'est-ce que la santé mentale ?

Un état de bien-être dans lequel l'individu se rend compte de ses propres capacités, peut faire face au stress normal de la vie, peut travailler de manière productive et fructueuse, et est capable d'apporter une contribution à sa communauté – Organisation mondiale de la santé

Également lié à la satisfaction





Avez-vous déjà craint d'être pris en défaut parce que vous n'êtes pas aussi bon que vous le devriez ?

# Le problème est réel – et il est désormais prouvé !



Research Policy

Volume 46, Issue 4, May 2017, Pages 868-879



## Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students

Katia Levecque<sup>a b</sup>   , Frederik Anseel<sup>a b c</sup>   , Alain De Beuckelaer<sup>d e a</sup>   ,  
Johan Van der Heyden<sup>f g</sup>   , Lydia Gisle<sup>f</sup>  

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resp.2017.02.008>

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### Abstract

Research policy observers are increasingly concerned about the potential impact of current academic working conditions on mental health, particularly in PhD students. The aim of the current study is threefold. First, we assess the prevalence of mental health problems in a representative sample of PhD students in Flanders, Belgium ( $N=3659$ ). Second, we compare PhD students to three other samples: (1)

- Prévalence des troubles mentaux courants :
  - 37 % des chercheurs contre 19 % de la population
  - 50 % des doctorants en danger de détresse psychologique
  - 33 % des doctorants sont exposés à un risque de troubles psychiatriques courants
- Exigences professionnelles et contrôle de l'emploi (agence, autonomie) au travail en tant que variables d'intérêt
- L'étape du projet de doctorat n'a pas eu autant d'impact
- Le style de leadership du superviseur peut être utile lorsque le superviseur est une source d'inspiration.
- Les personnes ayant une famille en bénéficient

# Les raisons pour lesquelles la santé mentale est un tel problème ne sont pas aussi clairement abordées

- Interne : motivation, compétences, identité académique, estime de soi
- Externe : superviseur, structures départementales, devoir s'occuper d'un membre de la famille, devoir s'intégrer dans une nouvelle culture, COVID



Si l'on prend un peu de recul, le débat a commencé lorsque nos emplois ont commencé à changer

 Restricted access | Research article | First published Autumn 1972

## Professorial Stress as a Variable in Structuring Faculty Roles

[Fremont A. Shull, Jr.](#) [View all authors and affiliations](#)

[Volume 8, Issue 3](#) | <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013131X7200800305>

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### Abstract

*Using data from empirical studies which are available on the various dimensions of faculty stress, this article suggests implications for organizational design in academe. Based upon his experiences in university administration, including consultant to the Vice-President for Administration, University of Wisconsin, the author interprets academic behavior in terms of two criteria, organizational effectiveness and academic freedom.*

[Published: September 1986](#)

# Dimensions of stress among university faculty: Factor-analytic results from a national study

[Walter H. Gmelch](#), [Phyllis Kay Wilke](#) & [Nicholas P. Lovrich Jr.](#)

[Research in Higher Education](#) **24**, 266–286 (1986) | [Cite this article](#)

1085 Accesses | 99 Citations | 4 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

## Abstract

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Previous studies on the role of the professor reflect the existence of a multifaceted complex of strains on faculty. This research study investigated identifiable patterns of faculty stress. From a sample of 80 doctorate-granting institutions, 1,920 professors were selected and stratified by academic rank and Biglan's academic discipline model. The response rate was 75.28%. The multidimensionality of the 45-item Faculty Stress Index, investigated through factor analysis, resulted in five distinct dimensions of perceived stress: reward and recognition (55% common variance); time constraints (12% common variance); departmental influence (7% common variance); professional identity (6% common variance); and student interaction (6% common variance). Each factor was also analyzed according to professional and personal characteristics, and the analysis resulted in significant differences in the areas of tenure, rank, age, gender, and marital status. No differential pattern was discovered among disciplinary categories.

## **Occupational Stress in University Staff**

**Anthony H. Winefield<sup>1,3</sup> and Richard Jarrett<sup>2</sup>**

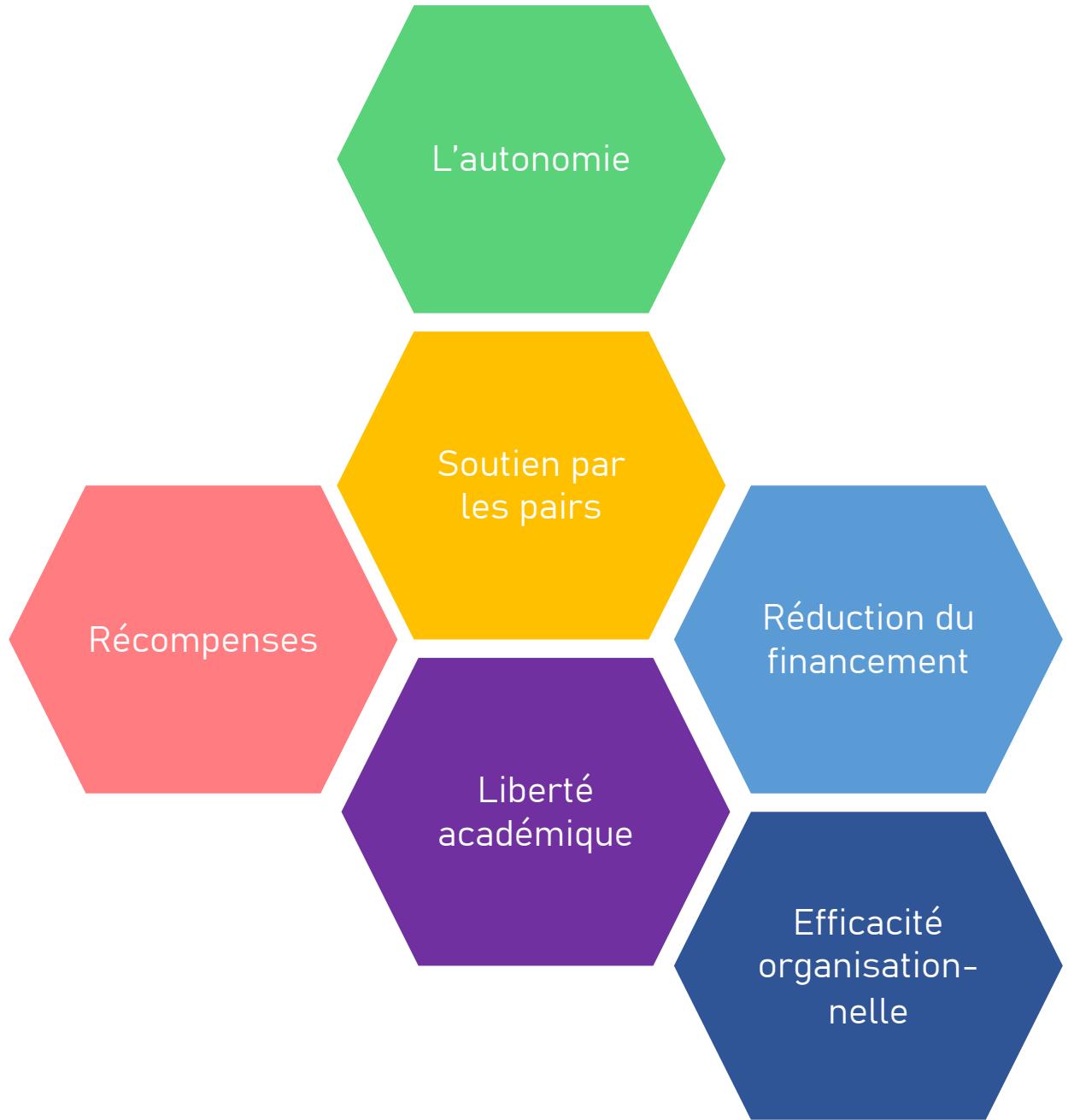
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*A survey was conducted of all staff members of an established Australian metropolitan university. The overall response rate for noncasual staff was 72% (77% for general staff and 65% for academic staff) resulting in a sample of N = 2,040. High levels of psychological stress were observed, despite the fact that trait anxiety and job satisfaction were normal. Psychological distress was highest and job satisfaction lowest among academic staff engaged in both teaching and research. In general, university staff reported high levels of autonomy and social support from colleagues. However those engaged in both teaching and research reported increased pressure arising from funding cuts to universities, resulting in heavier teaching loads and greater difficulty in securing research funds, as well as a decline in facilities and support for both teaching and research. The results are discussed in relation to the Demand-Control and Person-Environment Fit models of job stress.*

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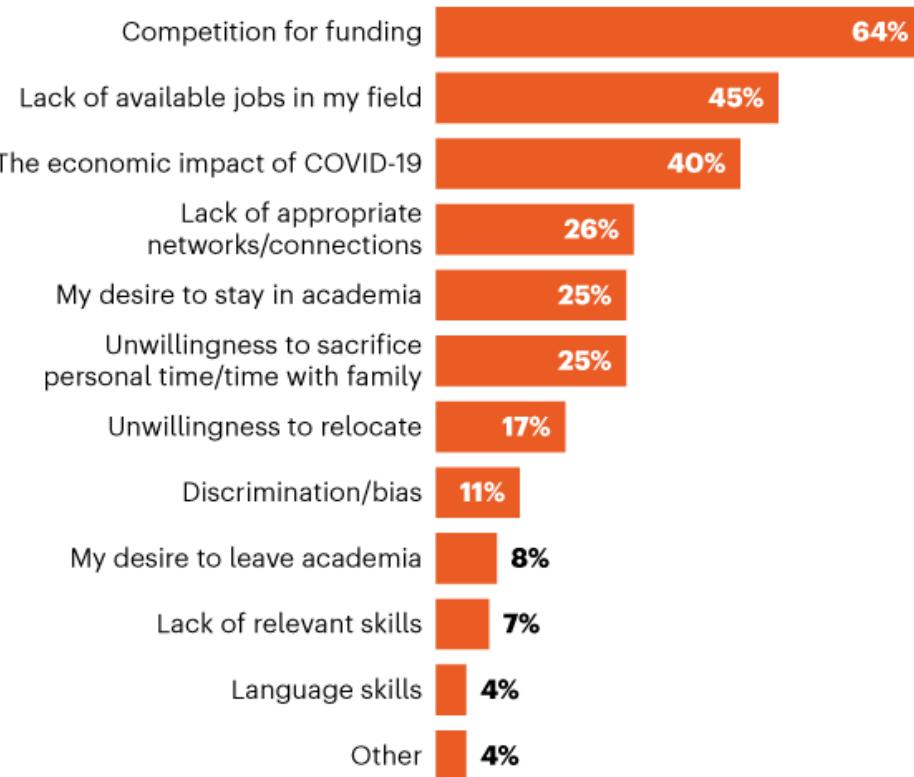
**KEY WORDS:** occupational stress; university staff.

Tous ces facteurs de stress  
semblent rester valables  
aujourd'hui



# La conversation s'est déplacée vers les doctorants/candidats lorsque nous avons commencé à en avoir « trop »

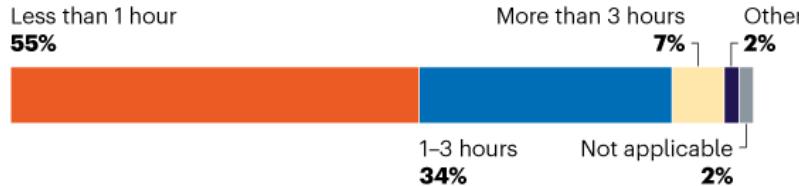
**What do you think is the biggest challenge for your personal career progression?**



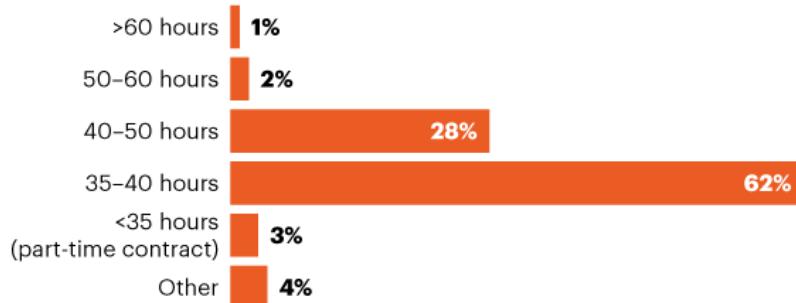
- + 70 % en 10 ans (Levecque et al., 2017)
- Moins de financement pour la recherche
- Plus d'exigences envers les individus
- Plus de tâches à apprendre sur le lieu de travail
- Les postes basés sur des projets sont liés à un sentiment d'autonomie plus élevé et à des états de bien-être plus faibles

# Cela nous conduit à des cultures de travail et à une organisation du travail non durables

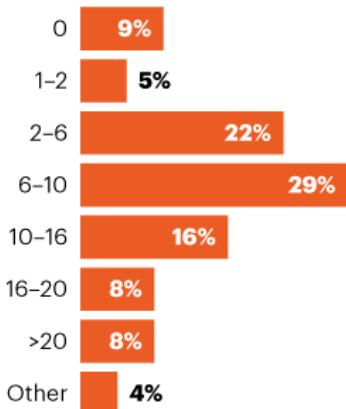
**On average, how much one-on-one contact time do you have with your supervisor/PI each week?**



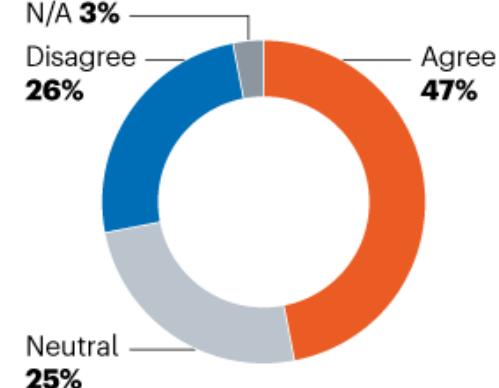
**How many hours a week are you contracted to work?**



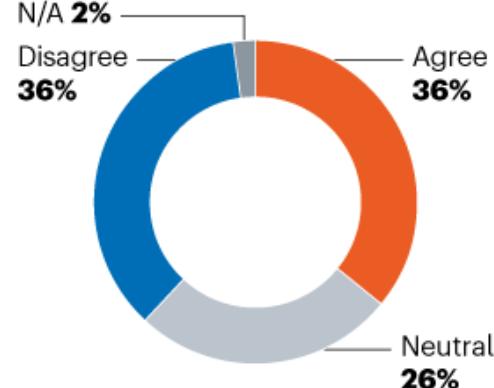
**How many hours per week, if any, do you typically work beyond those contracted?\***



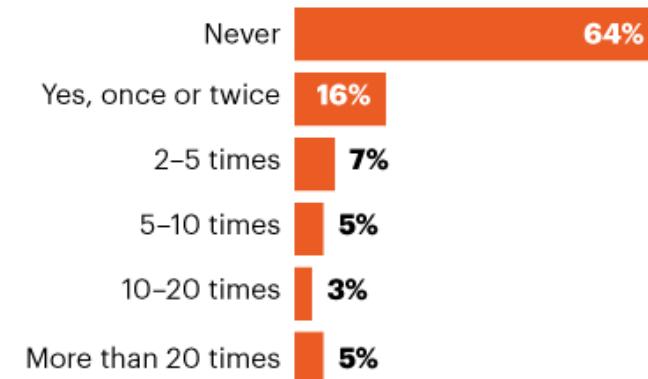
**There is a long-hours culture at my university\***



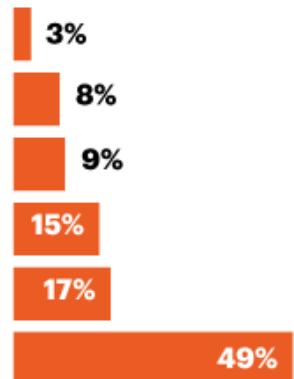
**My university supports good work-life balance**



**In the past year, have you ever worked:  
...overnight in the lab?**



**...on weekends or on days off?\***



©nature

\*Percentages do not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Et le décrochage important, parce qu'il a un impact sur la compétitivité nationale, devient un sujet de préoccupation pour les politiques et les institutions

CAREER FEATURE | 03 March 2023

## Fed up and burnt out: 'quiet quitting' hits academia

Many researchers dislike the term, but the practice of dialling back unrewarded duties is gaining traction.

Nikki Forrester



Find a new job

When Isabel Müller became an assistant professor in 2021, she started working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although nobody expected her to work this much, she says, she couldn't find a way to fit all her research, teaching and mentoring efforts into fewer hours. But as the first term progressed, Müller realized her pace was unsustainable. She needed to set boundaries if she wanted to continue working in academia: "It took another term, but now I try to stick to some rules."

**Would you recommend a career in scientific research to your younger self?**

Yes

**47%**

No

**24%**

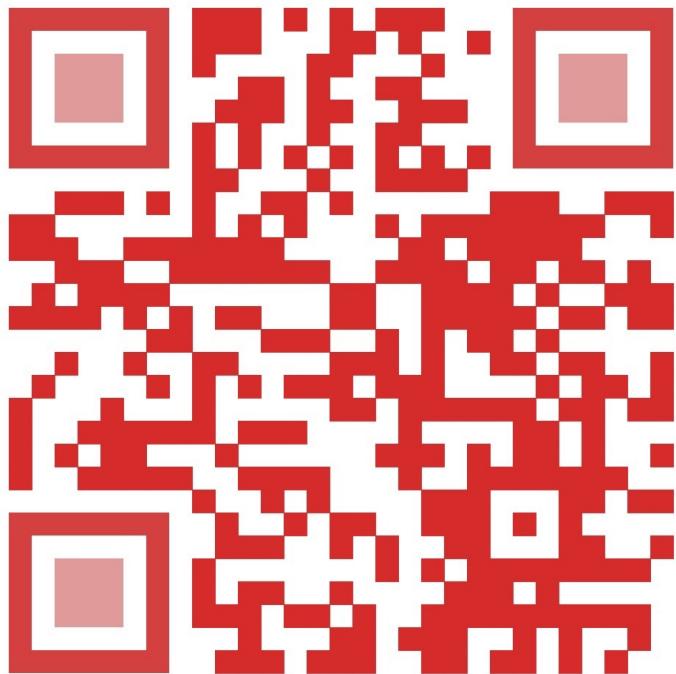


©nature

Il existe peu de recherches fondées sur des données probantes pour s'attaquer à ce problème

- Pas assez d'informations sur le lien de causalité
- Pas assez de mesures d'atténuation
- Mais nous observons certaines corrélations

# Nous devons produire plus de preuves : l'enquête STAIRCASE



STAIRCASE: Sustainable Working Conditions in Academia Survey



Funded by  
the European Union

**Click here to complete the  
STAIRCASE Survey on  
Sustainable Working Conditions in Academia**



The STAIRCASE survey aims to understand the impact of working conditions on mental health and well-being in academia, enabling evidence-based recommendations for impactful change. It is part of the EU-funded Researcher Mental Health Observatory (ReMO), a COST Action that is building a network that advocates healthy and sustainable working conditions in academia.

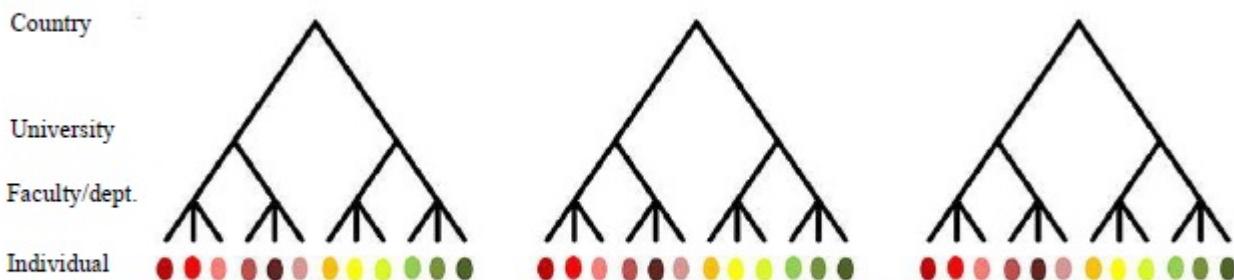
The STAIRCASE Survey is a unique and transformative initiative in both its pan-European outreach and bottom-up driven approach. Your participation is needed to ensure a proper representation of your country and institutions. The STAIRCASE survey, conducted by researchers for researchers, aims to bring about transformative change within the academic system, through the identification of factors that foster healthy and sustainable working conditions. By sharing your experiences regarding mental health and working conditions, you are directly contributing to the generation of valuable insights that will yield evidence-based recommendations for policy changes.

Please fill out the Staircase Survey here: <https://service.tib.eu/remosurvey/index.php/817261?lang=en>

Your participation is instrumental to ensuring proper representation of your institution and country. By actively participating, you enhance the likelihood of gathering sufficient data to develop tailored recommendations that are specific to your unique context and circumstances.

L'ambition est de s'appuyer sur ces recherches existantes et d'aller au-delà des responsabilités individuelles

## Multilevel design



## Attributing variance in individual level mental health to faculty, university and country level variables

# Dans la littérature, « tout » est une question de comportement individuel



- Kusurkar, 2020 : Arrêter de faire ce qui est mal, commencer à faire ce qui marche
  - Ce qui fonctionne, c'est l'affiliation avec les collègues et le travail sur les motivations intrinsèques
- Données sur les expériences individuelles
- De nombreuses études utilisant des cadres d'autodétermination
- Recherche sur le comportement individuel (habitudes, sommeil)
- Seul l'individu aurait un pouvoir d'action

# Les conseils prodigués à tour de bras exercent une pression considérable sur les personnes qui souffrent réellement



NATUREJOBS | NATUREJOBS BLOG

Being proactive about mental health during your PhD: a very short guide

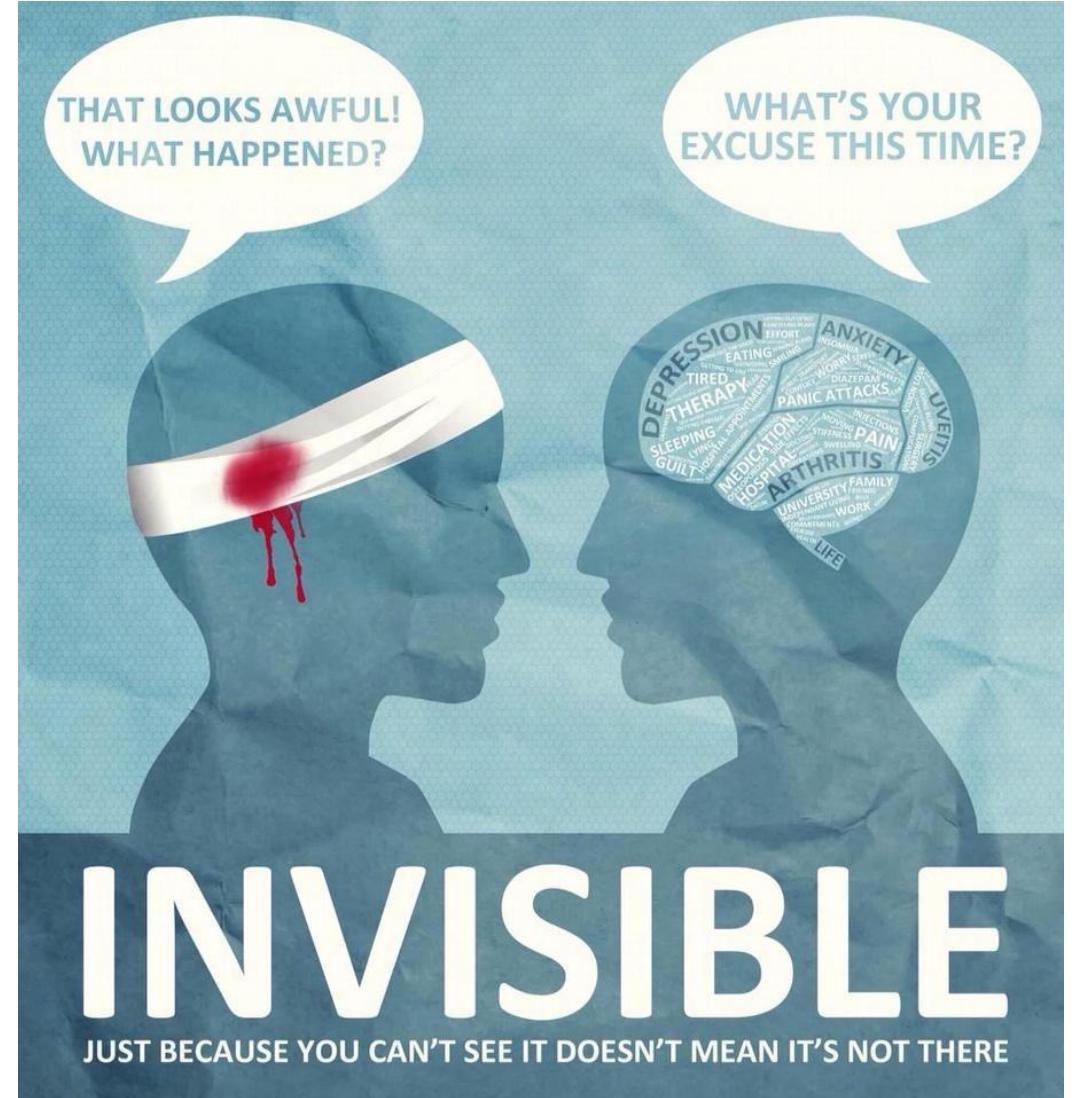
- Reconnaissez votre sentiment
- Investir dans un réseau de soutien
- Développer une perspective
- Rester impliqué
- Demander de l'aide rapidement

ReMO considère qu'il est nécessaire d'étudier l'expérience individuelle et d'apporter un soutien

Nous considérons également qu'un changement systémique est nécessaire pour prévenir les problèmes de santé mentale

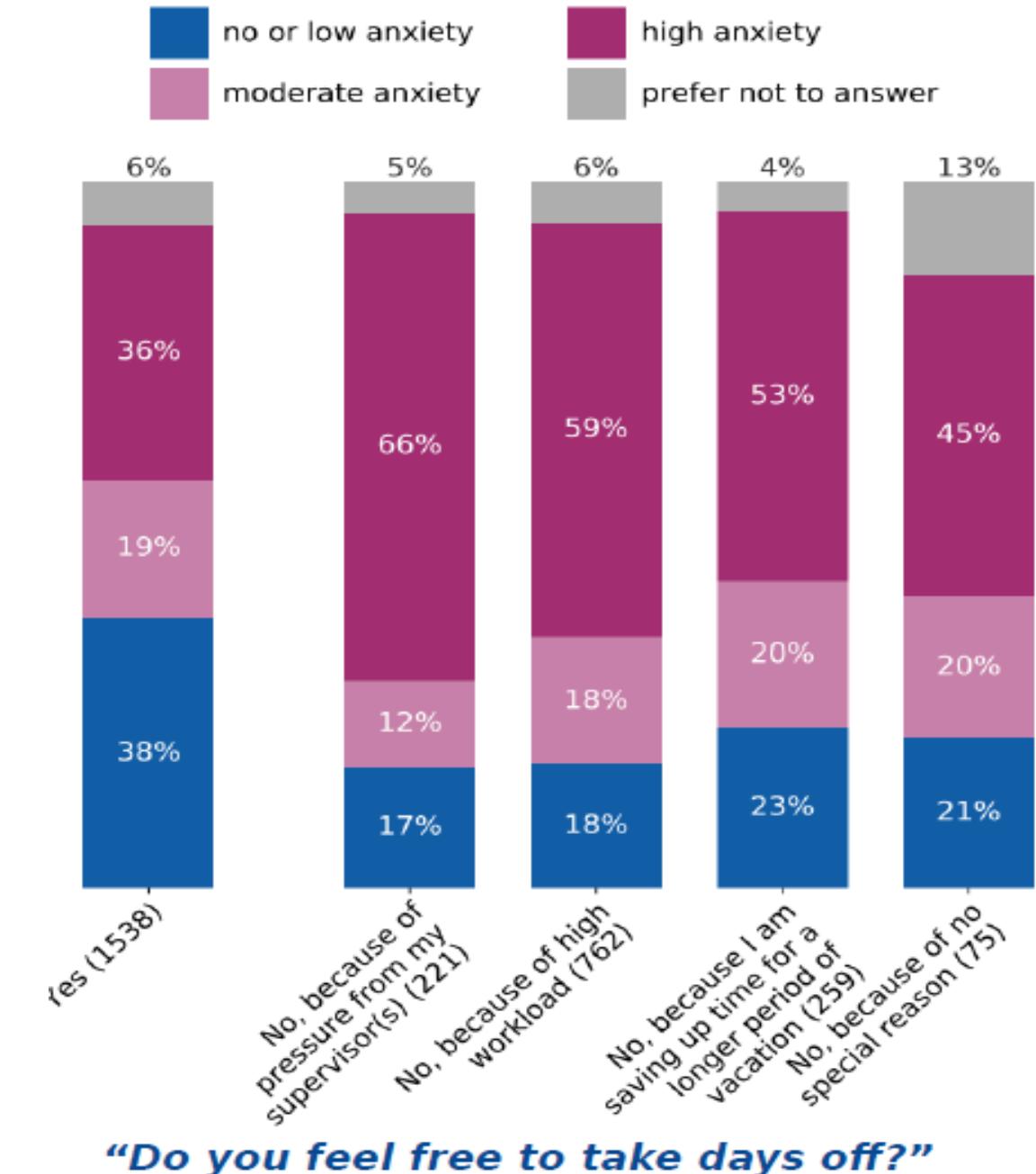
# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : SUIVI

1. L'écoute active
2. Nombre de jours de congé de maladie, absentéisme en tant qu'indicateurs de performance clés obligatoires dans l'organisation, avec un plan



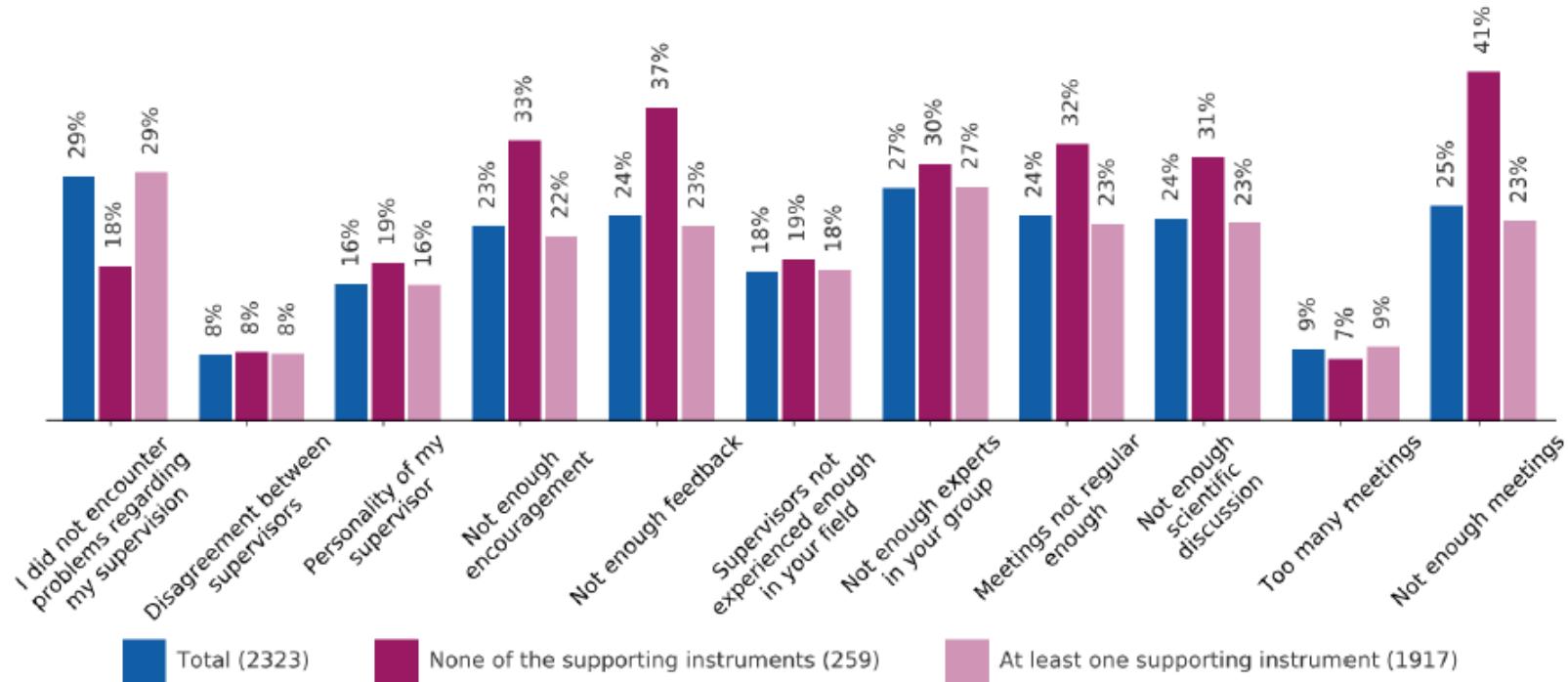
# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : VACANCES

1. Disposer d'une politique en matière de vacances : dans la charte/le règlement du programme de doctorat
2. Appliquer la politique : vérifier que les personnes prennent bien leur temps libre  
(Idem pour les heures supplémentaires, le travail le week-end, etc.)



# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : LA SUPERVISION – LA PROFESSIONNALISER

1. Élaborer des lignes directrices : quelle sera la fréquence des réunions de supervision ; quand peut-on changer de superviseur ?
2. Permettre des discussions pour gérer les attentes
3. Suivre les problèmes de communication
4. Former les gens !



***“Did you ever encounter problems regarding your supervision?”*** Answers are filtered for having at least one and not having one of the above scientific support instruments.

# Utiliser des supports formalisés pour expliciter les « espaces d'autonomie »

Expectations of Research Supervision					
	Supervisor	Rating	Student		
1.	It is the supervisor's responsibility to select the research topic.	1 2 3 4 5	The student is responsible for selecting her/his own topic.		
2.	The supervisor should decide which theoretical framework and/or methodology is most appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	The student should decide which theoretical framework and/or methodology they wish to use.		
3.	The supervisor should develop an appropriate program and timetable of research and study for the student.	1 2 3 4 5	The student should develop their own program and timetable of research.		
4.	The supervisor should ensure that the student has access to the resources and facilities that they need.	1 2 3 4 5	It is the student's responsibility to locate and access all necessary resources and facilities.		
5.	It is the supervisors' responsibility to advise the student of all relevant policies, procedures and requirements.	1 2 3 4 5	The student is responsible for being familiar with the relevant policies, procedures and requirements.		
6.	It's up to the supervisor to build an appropriate professional relationship with the student.	1 2 3 4 5	It is the student's responsibility to manage the relationship with their supervisor.		
7.	The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the student.	1 2 3 4 5	The student should decide when she/he wants to meet.		
8.	The supervisor should check regularly that the student is working consistently and on track.	1 2 3 4 5	The student should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent.		
9.	It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the thesis is finished by the required submission date.	1 2 3 4 5	It is up to the student to finish within the allocated timeframe.		
10.	The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the student is on the right track.	1 2 3 4 5	It's up to the student to decide when to show drafts of their work.		
11.	The supervisor should assist in the writing, editing and presentation of the thesis.	1 2 3 4 5	The writing of the thesis should only be the student's own work and they must take full responsibility for presentation of the thesis.		
12.	The supervisor is responsible for deciding when the thesis can be submitted for examination.	1 2 3 4 5	The student should decide when they are ready to submit the thesis for examination.		

## Applicants need to assess whether the offered PhD is appropriate for them

What does a PhD applicant need to know before they accept the opportunity to be supervised by you? It is important that both of you make an informed decision, and you certainly want to avoid the student resigning from the position because it wasn't what

they expected. Some supervisors arrange for a PhD applicant to meet with other PhD students in the research group. This is an opportunity for the applicant to find out more about the place, the people and the supervisor. Before an applicant makes a final decision, you should ensure that they know about issues that include, but are not limited, to the following:

Supervision and working arrangements
<input type="checkbox"/> Expected working hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Expected frequency of meetings
<input type="checkbox"/> Amount of assistance that they can expect to receive in relation to e.g. conceptualisation, refining questions, methods, discussion, feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> How will the research questions be developed, refined and decided? (This is really about degree of independence and autonomy: some students have an exaggerated view of how much freedom they'll have; some supervisors have exaggerated views about how much and how little freedom a student can have! Nevertheless, the applicant needs to know in advance, and make an informed decision.)
<input type="checkbox"/> If there are co-supervisors, what will their roles be?
<input type="checkbox"/> Will there be close interaction with other research partners e.g. other universities, private industry

<https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/for-research-supervisors>

# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : PERMETTRE UN RETOUR D'INFORMATION DIVERSIFIÉ



1. Faire en sorte qu'un comité de thèse suive l'ensemble de la thèse et donne son avis
2. D'autres membres du corps enseignant évaluent l'étudiant de manière formelle

# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : RENDRE L'AIDE DISPONIBLE

1. Externe, indépendant, facile d'accès, gratuit
2. Réseaux peer to peer

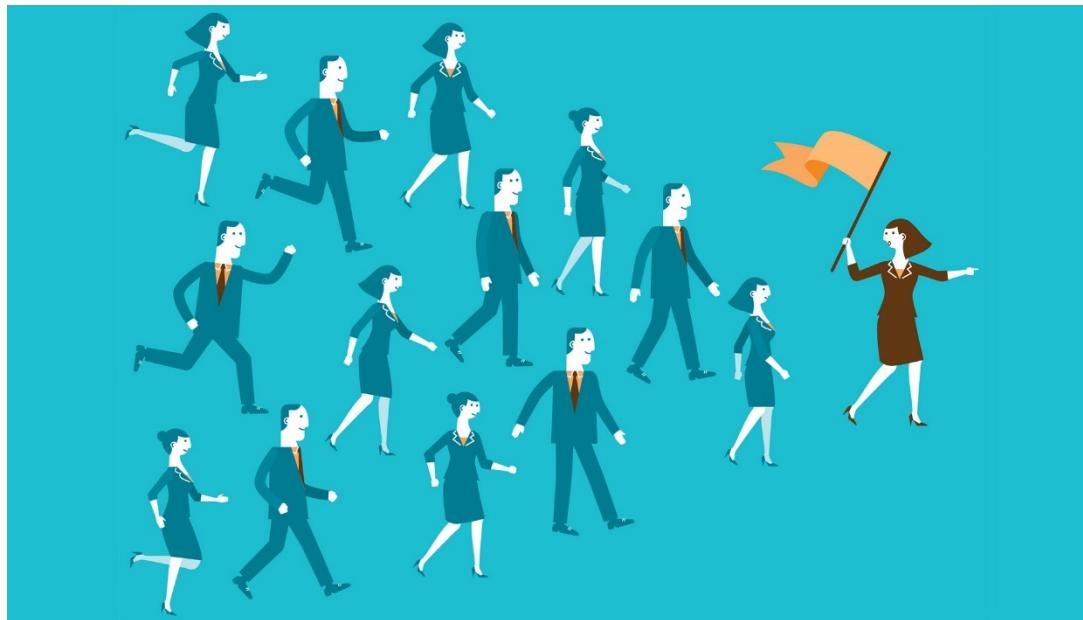


# Quelques idées sur les meilleures pratiques : FOURNIR UNE FORMATION

1. Dans le domaine de la santé mentale
2. Comment accomplir toutes les tâches !
3. Comment être un bon superviseur

Your supervisory practice: Self-assessment	
What are you doing well, and what could be improved?	
Meeting the challenges of supervision	
Two strong points of your current practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Two actions to improve your practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Recruitment	
Two strong points of your current practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Two actions to improve your practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Getting started in the first few weeks	
Two strong points of your current practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Two actions to improve your practice	
1.	_____
2.	_____
Planning	
Two strong points of your current practice	

# MONTRER L'EXEMPLE



# Recenter la conversation sur les conditions de performance des chercheurs

1. Profils de recherche

2. Les objectifs

Repenser le vocabulaire utilisé

3. L'évaluation

Utiliser les déclencheurs de l'UE pour cela = accord sur l'évaluation de la recherche !

4. La promotion

5. Récompense financière

# Qu'est-ce que cela signifie en termes de responsabilités politiques ?

- Mise en place de systèmes de financement compatibles avec la santé mentale (durée, conditions, droits)
- Favoriser le développement du marché de l'emploi (universitaire et industriel)
- Réduire la précarité et contrôler l'utilisation des fonds pour les carrières durables
- Réviser les définitions de l'excellence et de l'évaluation, pour les chercheurs ET les institutions
- Soutenir le développement de pôles d'information, avec une vision pluraliste de la question



## ReMO Ambassador Programme: Becoming an ambassador for wellbeing in academia



ECRs, Professeurs permanents,  
Personnel de gestion de la  
recherche

Individuel, institutionnel,  
politique

Avec la participation d'un  
député européen et d'un  
bureau COST

Une brochure sur Zenodo

