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PhD Student Wellbeing

LAHP Induction 13 October 2020

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Introduction

• What is my background and how did my interest in student wellbeing develop?

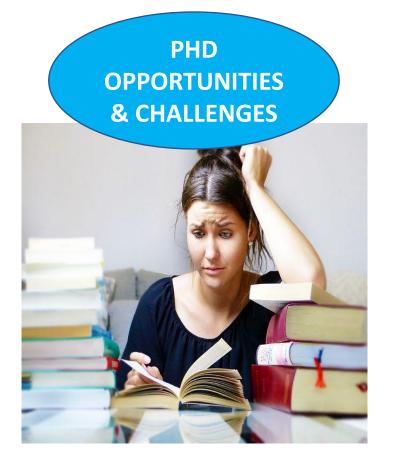
Wellbeing Tips for the Current Academic Year

• What steps can each student take to prioritise their wellbeing during the 2020/21 Academic Year?

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OPPORTUNITIES

- Freedom to research whatever interests you
- Become an expert on your topic
- Make an original contribution in your field
- Expand career options



CHALLENGES

- Length of time until completion (sustaining motivation)
- Juggling research with other commitments
- Difficulty switching off from work
- Feelings of isolation and self doubt

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The Challenges of Starting a PhD in 2020

- Isolation
- Working from home
- Virtual meetings with supervisors
- Restrictions
- Health concerns
- Uncertainty



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SELFCARE



- Set small, achievable goals for yourself and make it enjoyable
- Get out of the house at least once a day even if it's just a quick walk
- Set a bed-time alarm | adopt a daily wind down routine
- Maintain the same wake-up time every morning (even on weekends!)
- Make healthy eating a priority by planning your meals in advance and upgrading foods*

*For inspiration see Liana Werner-Gray's, *The Earth Diet: Your Complete Guide to Living Using the Earth's Natural Ingredients* (Hay House, 2014) and *10-Minute Recipes: Fast Food, Clean Ingredients, Natural Health* (Hay House, 2016).

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Pillar 2: Daily Routine

- Establish some boundaries between your working space and living space
- Use the <u>Pomodoro technique</u> to enhance concentration and focus
- Break tasks down into manageable pieces (for help with prioritizing tasks use the <u>Eisenhower matrix</u>)
- Manage distractions by checking email and social media during designated windows of time throughout the day
- Spend some time making your work space feel organized and welcoming
- Communicate your needs and set boundaries with family members, partners, and flat mates





PILLAR 3: Detaching from Work

- Set an end to your work day in advance (don't wait until you reach exhaustion or burnout)
- Plan an activity for your time-off
- Carve out time for a new hobby
- Actively give yourself permission to take time off (<u>PhD Process Journal</u>)
- Ease yourself into downtime with a transition activity





PILLAR 4: Support Network

- Enlist the support of an <u>accountability partner</u>
- Arrange regular meetings with your supervisor throughout the first term
- Set up a virtual working session with a colleague
- Schedule ongoing catch-ups with family and friends | Have something to look forward to
- Spend some cultivating your inner support system

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PILLAR 5: Mindset (the foundation of all the Pillars)

- Take things one day at a time or week by week
- Acknowledge when you are in a state of worry and gently bring yourself back to the present moment
- Minimize your news consumption | Be mindful about when and how long you watch, read and listen to news
- Adopt a gratitude practice to put things in perspective
- Use music for an instant boost (make a playlist of calm or upbeat music)
- Reach out to others who may need additional support
- Search for <u>volunteer opportunities</u> in your area or create your own (see next photo)

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Wellbeing Links

- Mental Health and Wellbeing, The London Arts and Humanities Partnership <u>www.lahp.ac.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/</u>
- Student Minds <u>www.studentminds.org.uk</u>

Further Reading & Additional Resources

- Persisting with the PhD: Sustaining Motivation During the Coronavirus
- How to Make Working from Home Work for You
- PhD Plan B: Managing Detours on the Doctoral Path
- Building Your Mindfulness Muscle
- Managing Your Relationship with Your PhD Supervisor

Any questions? Feel free to get in touch at info@academease.org