



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Research &
Innovation
Services.

Doctoral Times.

Issue 15 | Spring 2017

Wellbeing



The Newsletter for
Doctoral Researchers

WELCOME TO THE DOCTORAL TIMES

WELLBEING EDITION

Wellbeing is a hot-topic in Higher Education generally and the impact of wellbeing and mental health on postgraduates is getting more and more attention, and rightly so. PhD Researchers are among the groups of students most likely to experience poor mental health during their studies and since they are often living and working in very different circumstances to their family and peers it can be hard to tackle this.

This edition of the Doctoral Times, then, sets out to explore the experiences of PhD students at Sheffield; to identify communities, groups and activities that may be less obvious ways of supporting wellbeing; to dip a toe into the wealth of research being done into wellbeing, both here and further afield; and to examine some of the things the University is doing to support PhD researchers.

While we can only scratch the surface of this vast topic in these pages, we hope you find the expert advice from both students and staff valuable. Whether you feel entirely on top of your wellbeing or have been struggling for years we think you will find articles of interest as well as links and videos.

Editorial Team

Content: Cara Hammond

Covers: Fozia Yasmin



We would like to hear about who is reading the Doctoral Times and what you think about this format, please take a couple of minutes to follow the link and complete the survey.

<https://tinyurl.com/kmbbu98>

CONTENTS

Communities for Wellbeing

- Parents@TUoS (page 4)
- BMS PhD Society (page 5)
- Students' Union (page 6)
- Women@TUoS (Page 6)



Student Experience

- Your Mental Wellbeing Matters (page 8)
- Visionary Wall (page 9)
- Tropical Fish (page 10)
- Heavy Metal Music (page 18)
- Leadership Development Day (page 24)
- Painting (page 31)



Library

- A Wealth of Knowledge (page 10)



Wellbeing Goes Wider

- Live Music in Care Homes (page 12)
- How Much Green Space is Enough? (page 14)
- Mental Health Mosquito Nets (page 16)
- Festival of the Mind Video (page 19)



Home and Wellbeing

- Residence Life (page 20)
- PropertywithUS (page 22)



ThinkAhead

- When the Going Gets Tough (page 26)
- Thesis Mentoring (page 28)



Body and Mind

- The Importance of Exercise (page 30)
- Horses Bikes and All (page 32)
- Chaplaincy Services (page 33)
- Reluctant Runner to Happy Runner (page 34)



Crossword (page 35)



COMMUNITIES FOR WELLBEING

It is widely recognised that loneliness has a huge impact on wellbeing for people of all ages and backgrounds and we know that completing a PhD can be an isolating process. Fortunately universities are full of people of all kinds and there is almost certainly someone who shares some interests with you. In this section we explore some of the communities available at Sheffield.

Parents@TUoS

Being a postgraduate researcher and a parent is a juggling act. Sometimes it feels as though all the balls are up in the air, often some are up and some are down, but they can also fall on the floor together in a big pile, and it sometimes takes a while to pick them all up again. Carrying out a PhD or postgraduate research is a huge transition stage; it's a time when you're never quite sure if you're doing the right thing – as though someone at some point is going to find out you're an imposter. Of course there's a magical time when you suddenly, finally know the topic you've been investigating for three years, but it's a difficult time for most. Throwing children into the mix increases the difficulty level.

I started attending the Parents@TUoS coffee mornings during the second half of my PhD, when I found out that I was expecting my daughter. Not only did I enjoy a pastry (or three) while I was there, but I also found the network to have a real community feel, and the content of the sessions to be informative, uplifting, and motivating. I decided that I wanted to join the steering group, and for the last two years I've been helping to craft the direction of the Parents@TUoS network with our current chair Louise Preston and co-deputy chair Jennifer Gladwin.


Our network is open to all academic, research, teaching and professional services staff and students across the University, with the aim of supporting all individuals who have children (included adoptive children) or are considering starting a family. Our main focus is our quarterly coffee mornings where we aim to provide a friendly and informal space for parents across the university to meet up over a coffee, share best practice and "how to" tips, and engage with a specific theme. We have previously covered topics such as parental leave, work/life balance, positive parenting, and childcare; and we often have a guest speaker who is an expert in the field, with time for questions and discussion. The network also runs an informal buddy scheme "Parent-to-Parent" as a means to share experiences with someone who isn't a friend, family member or supervisor.

Even now as a postdoctoral researcher with a three-year old, I still find the Parents@TUoS network one of the most rewarding connections I've made across the University. So if you're a postgraduate researcher who is a parent or thinking of becoming one, then the Parents@TUoS network is here to help.

You can find more information on our webpages
<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/equality/support/parents>.
See you at the next coffee morning!

Author: Dr Kendra Arkley, Member of the Active Touch Laboratory at Sheffield (ATL@S), Department of Psychology






During your PhD it is quite easy to feel isolated. Often the only one working on your topic, in quiet, dusty corners of the campus, your supervisor watching in case you should you dare to try to sneak off and steal some social interaction. PhD societies offer a welcome escape, with people tackling similar challenges, both in and outside of research. The BMS PhD society is here to connect students to each other for both academic and social benefits (borrowing/stealing resources and escapism). PhDs are full

of set backs, and sometimes it's nice to vent your frustration to people who understand. There is also the fun social side of what we do, getting people off campus and out to explore all of what Sheffield and the surrounding area has to offer. Activities like climbing or trampolining can be a little intimidating to go on your own (downright terrifying), but going with a society means you've got both support and, most likely, someone just as scared as you. We even go beyond fun and games and put on talks aimed at young career researchers, looking at everything from prospective jobs post-PhD to the mental health and social issues associated with life in academia. All this comes together to help foster a community that people are keen to be a part of, with social and career benefits, brightening up the PhD experience. Setting up a society is as easy as finding some like-minded people and applying to the Student Union to form one, so there's no excuse for suffering through your PhD in isolation. Funding can be a challenge; we are partially funded by the BMS department and the rest we generate from fund raising activities such as coffee and cake mornings. This allows us to put on events throughout the year that are totally free to attend and we can provide food and drinks. With all these benefits how can you say no? So go then, start one! What are you waiting for?!

(Note: New societies can't be formed until the beginning of the academic year, but please maintain this level of excitement until then).

Part of a "Research" Community BMS PhD Society

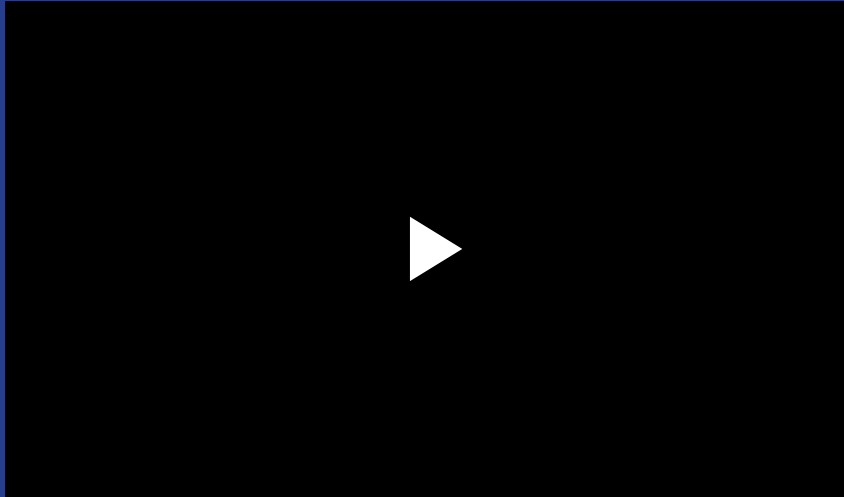
Author: Aragorn Jones, PhD Researcher, Department of Biomedical Science



Parents@TUoS coffee mornings, courtesy of the Parents Network

Picture above: BMS PhD Soc trampolining trip courtesy of BMS PhD Soc

COMMUNITIES FOR WELLBEING



It's not just the groups that we have featured here that are available to you; just like all students at Sheffield you have access to the number 1 Students' Union in the country, with all that it has to offer. From clubs and societies, to cafes, bars, fine dining, cinema, student radio as well as volunteering and community activities. Most societies will accept new members year round and have a mix of people of all ages and races.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVWklLlISU>

The One World Café is your weekly chance to meet new people from all around the world (with free tea and coffee!). The café takes place 4-6pm every Thursday, usually in Fusion (Level 2 of the Students' Union) and every few weeks we host special themed cafes that celebrate a cultural holiday or introduce a new activity.

Look out for more from OneWorld in the next Doctoral Times.



<http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/get-involved/one-world/one-world-connect>

Women@TUOS Network aims to support the professional development of female members of the University. For over five years we have provided informal networking opportunities, talks, workshops, access to female role models, and a unified voice for raising issues about the challenges faced by women in academic careers. Our events are open to all staff including early career researchers and postgraduate students. The network has its roots in the Faculties of Science and Engineering, but now reaches out to women across the University and welcomes all interested parties to get involved. Our network is run by women for women, but staff of any gender are welcome to attend most of our events.

We work closely with the Parent@TUoS Network who run quarterly coffee mornings for men and women at the University who have families, or who are thinking about having or adopting children in the future. Each coffee morning has a specific theme and includes opportunities for discussion and networking. Parents@TUoS also have an informal 'buddy' scheme

Women @TUoS Network

*Author: Professor Julie Gray
Department of Molecular
Biology & Biotechnology*



*Natalie Bennett
at opening of
International
Women's day
celebrations 2017*

to help support parents going on and returning from parental leave.

Recent Women@TUOS Network events have covered topics such as Unconscious Bias, Imposter Syndrome, Women in Decision-Making, Effects of Brexit on Equality, and the Practice of Mindfulness. Our lunchtime talks have included Everyday Sexism, Understanding University Finance, Life as a Research Fellow, and Presenting Your Confident Self. To provide a supportive environment where women can write their theses, funding proposals, reports and papers away from departmental demands, we run a regular writing club. The Women@TUOS Writing Club meets on Tuesdays in the Mappin Building and Fridays in the Arts Tower, and is open to all women in the University, including early career researchers and post-graduate students. You can sign up for as many sessions as you like, drop in for a few hours, or stay all day.

We usually celebrate International Women's Day as a joint jamboree event with Sheffield Hallam University. This year in March, a hundred and twenty women (and a few men) from across our two universities, gathered in the Octagon. Natalie Bennett, former leader of the Green Party, kindly opened the conference by discussing her career path, and the challenges facing woman in leadership positions. We socialised with our counterparts from the other side of the city over lunch, and joined five workshop groups. Here we discussed strategies for building personal resilience, CV writing, and career planning before competing in an amusing Sheffield-themed quiz. As always, we had an inspiring, and fun day. If you are interested in attending next year, look out for the invitation.

Women's day lunch time networking 2017 (above)
Women's day Keynote Talk audience 2017 (below)



Our Annual General Meeting will be held in June. This presents a great opportunity for the Steering Group to interact with members, evaluate events, and plan for the next academic year. In 2017, our invited speaker will be discussing the additional challenges associated with being a black and female academic. The AGM is a critical component in ensuring that our Network works for its members; many of our events are organised as a direct consequence of feedback from the membership so we would love to hear your ideas.

We welcome new members and hope to see you at one of our events soon. You can find more information at:

www.sheffield.ac.uk/womens-network

twitter.com/WomenTUoS



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

When it comes to wellbeing during a PhD, no one knows more than those going through it. Here is a personal story of the challenges of dealing with your own mental health during a PhD and look out for pink sections throughout this edition, where students have shared their own advice on de-stressing, getting some personal time, and keeping motivated.

When I started my PhD, I was as optimistic as they come. Determined to do justice to my project and transition smoothly into this entirely new system (and country.) As an international student (born and raised in Nigeria) who had done her BSc Honours, and MSc degrees at the University of Johannesburg over a period of six years, academic transitions were not new to me. Neither was the prospect of being away from family and having to make new friends or acclimatising to new cultures. So on paper, I was all set to go: as highly functional as ever.

Let me take a step back: I have lived with debilitating anxiety and OCD since I was fifteen. The mixture of my optimistic nature and high functionality meant that I was mostly able to self-manage. My grades were never affected. In fact, I did quite well. And in a way, my inner noise probably pushed me to work harder.

While there was no doubt in my mind that I had some form of an anxiety disorder, I remained undiagnosed for over a decade. Only during my undergraduate degree did I finally open up to a counsellor. And things got a little better. I was able to conduct my research project and get a good grade for my MSc. So I took it for granted that the same way I'd been able to cope during my MSc, albeit stumbling now and again, would, should be the way I would be able to cope during my PhD. I did not account for various situations beyond my control occurring during my PhD. Or for any kind of eventual breaking point.

A mistake I made was not to disclose any information about my anxiety to my supervisors at the start of my PhD. What followed was two years in which my mental health went on a rollercoaster, catalysed by impostor syndrome, extenuating circumstances, and continued self-management.

In September 2016 I had a panic attack just before leading a workshop, which I was able to mask well. My esteem took a nose-dive, but it was clear to me that I needed help. I opened up to my supervisors, and postgraduate mentors. The Disability and Dyslexia Support Services (DDSS) and the University Health Services (UHS) worked together to support me. Finally, 15 years after its onset, I was diagnosed with Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

Your Mental Wellbeing Matters

A Personal Account

Author: Furaha Florence Asani, PhD Researcher, Florey Institute for Host-pathogen Interaction, Department of Infection and Immunity

Whilst I have been openly speaking about my mental health for a couple of years, coming clean to my supervisors has made realise that external help is indeed available. With a few months left on my PhD I now feel more confident in my ability to still do justice to my project.

Mental illness needs to be de-stigmatised. There is no shame in admitting you need help. The Students' Union (with links to DDSS, UHS, Nightline, Counselling services and the Samaritans) and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) are all services available for help. If there is one message I've learned, it is that there is hope.



Visionary Wall

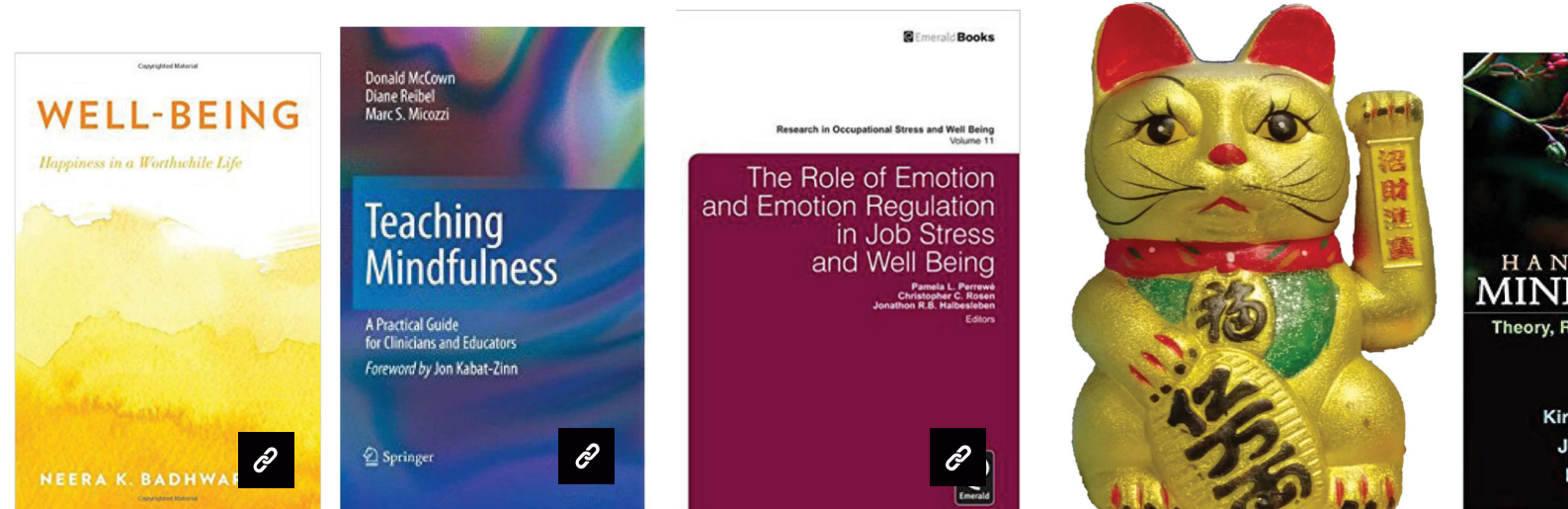
*Author: Sandy Belle Rosales Cadena, PhD Researcher,
Department of Psychology,
Chair of the Postgraduate Society*



I started doing them six years ago and the first one was a poster of Big Ben that would remind me that one day I would visit the UK. After visiting England for the first time in 2012, I thought it would be great to have a Visionary Wall so this time I added more images, pictures, drawings, little messages, motivational quotes and there is always a watch or a calendar that represents time. It reminds me that I am not in this world forever so it is good to feel down because I am a human being and have feelings but I need to move on ASAP because “time is ticking out”.

I put it on the wall in front of my bed so every time I went to sleep it would be the last thing I would see at night and the first one in the morning. Since then, when I feel blue and that I am not achieving anything in my research I look at my “wall”, close my eyes for a few seconds, take a breath and for some reason, after doing it I feel comforted and ready to keep going.

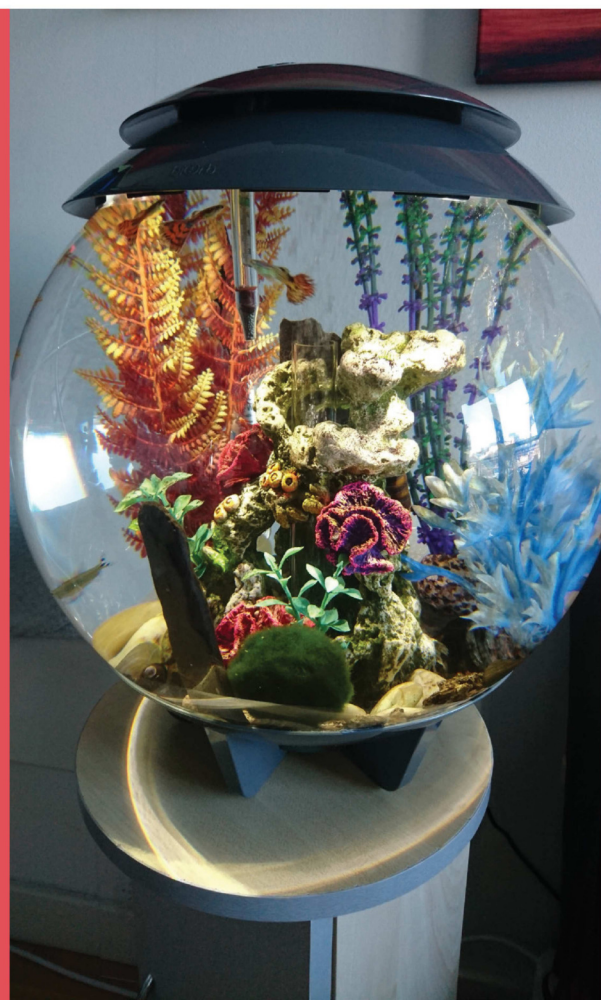
I hope it inspires others to never give up.



Did you know the Library has a wealth of ebooks and papers on the topics of wellbeing and mindfulness?

To access them, open StarPlus - library catalogue from the 'My services' menu in MUSE, choose the 'University Collections' search tab and enter your keywords (e.g. wellbeing, mindfulness). Use the Full Text Online filter on the left to refine your results to just eresources. Add the Books filter to see just ebooks. Then follow the 'view it' links to read them online.

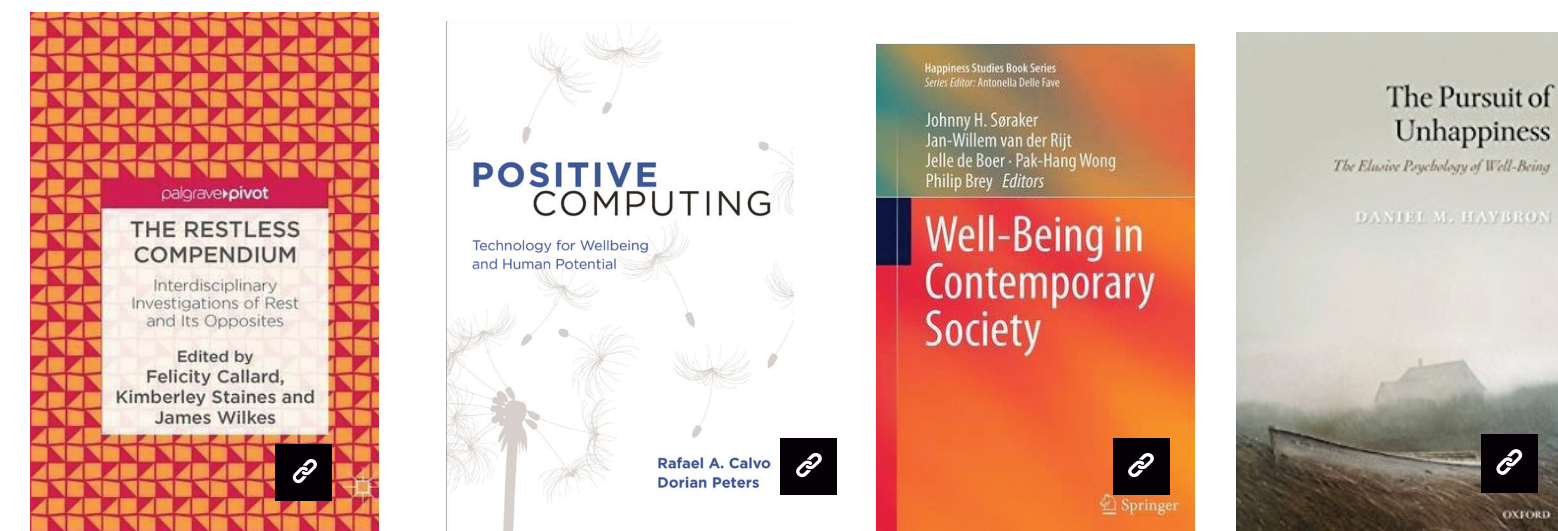
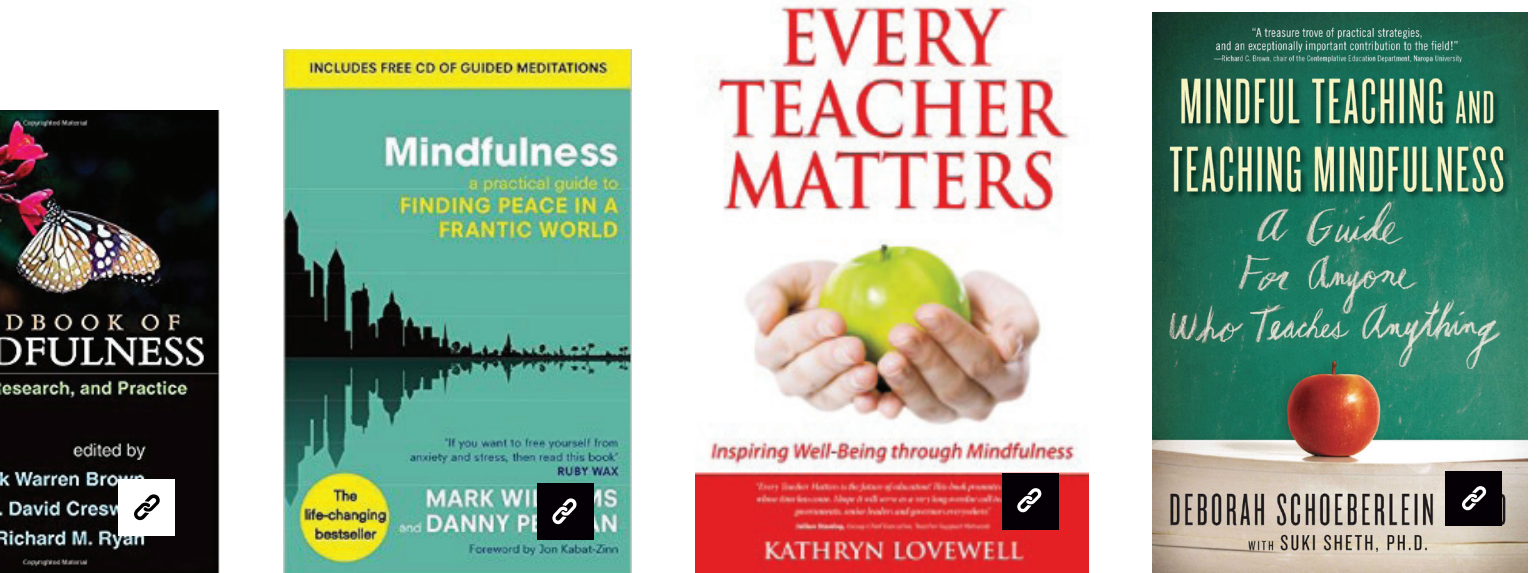
We've selected a few ebooks and print books to get you started. Click on the image to access the book in the Library Catalogue.



Tropical Fish

Research has shown one of the best de-stress activities is caring for something, be it from gardening and bonsai plants to tropical fish. The latter was acquired for myself for that very reason and I find the calming effect the sound of the water and flutter of the fish has is very effective. My small tropical tank is only 30 litres in capacity and homes 2 rabbit snails, 2 amano shrimp, 5 rummy nose tetras and 4 guppies. I would highly recommend a tropical fish tank to anyone who feels like they might need some brightness and colour in their homes, especially during dark gloomy nights.

Author: Sean T. Barlow - 3rd year PhD in Materials Science



Find more research on mindfulness, wellbeing and more by searching these specialist resources from the 'University Collections' tab in StarPlus:

psycARTICLES, published by the American Psychological Association, is a great source for academic, research and practice literature in psychology and other related disciplines. It provides access to all American Psychological Association periodicals and is a key resource for information in behavioural science.

<http://tinyurl.com/khy5hul>

psycINFO provides abstracts and citations to the scholarly literature in the psychological, social, behavioral, and health sciences from 1806 to the present. <https://tinyurl.com/k2n479e>

Psychiatry Online find the latest news and research articles relating to psychiatry and clinical psychology. Also includes online access to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

<https://tinyurl.com/l3e383r>

Mindfulness Journal <https://tinyurl.com/md8xvt8>

International Journal of Wellbeing <https://tinyurl.com/k4bnw3z>

Use the 'Articles and more' search tab to find the full text of scholarly articles online such as: Sirois, F.M., & Tosti, N. (2012). Lost in the Moment? An Investigation of Procrastination, Mindfulness, and Well-being.

<https://tinyurl.com/n455gxq>

Live Music in Care Homes

Raising Awareness and Exploring the Potential

Author: Jessica Crich BMus(Hons), MA, Dip. ABRSM, PhD Student (Year 2), Department of Music

Photos courtesy of City of London Sinfonia and Live Music Now

At present, it is estimated that there are 5,153 nursing homes and 12,525 residential homes that support the care of elderly people within the UK today¹. Many care home residents have a range of complex and often multiple health conditions that can include dementia, musculoskeletal disorders, stroke, depression and audio and visual impairments². As the UK population aged 65 years and over is projected to rise by over 40% in the next seventeen years from 11.6 million to over 16 million, and the number of elderly people with complex health needs is anticipated to exponentially increase within the coming years, it is expected that care homes will play an increasingly vital role in the provision of elderly care across the UK³. However, a timely question remains: what is being done to support the care of elderly people living in care homes today?

Music has both anecdotal and evidence based promise as an adjunctive aid to care within care homes; promoting a positive atmosphere in care home environments, improving the delivery and receipt of care, and enhancing relationships between residents and staff⁴. Notably the use of live music in care homes, particularly for people living with dementia, has shown marked effects on resident quality of life⁵. Within the UK community music organisations such as Live Music Now⁶ and City of London Sinfonia⁷ provide interactive live music concerts delivered by professional musicians to elderly populations living in care homes. These concerts aim to improve resident wellbeing through music and provide care homes with access to professional live music-based services.

Working in collaboration with Live Music Now, City of London Sinfonia and local Sheffield care homes, my PhD research explores the perspectives of professional musicians who deliver these live music-based services in care homes and the key members of care home staff teams who help facilitate them: care home managers, activity coordinators and care assistants. Through a series of semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations, my research aims to shed light on the experiences these professional groups have of providing live music in care homes, with a focus on their collaborative working and educational support and training. Indeed, whilst public and scientific perspectives continue to promote the benefits of live music use for care home residents, as detailed above, there remains little insight into the practice of live music in care homes and the key professional groups involved.

Through my research, I aim to provide a professional and relational basis for understanding the impact of live music in care homes.



This 'Wellbeing Goes Wider' section explores some of the research being done at the University of Sheffield and beyond and also the work that the wider HE community is engaged in to improve wellbeing for Postgraduates.

There are lots of people researching wellbeing and mental health at Sheffield, try using the Researcher Collaboration Tool to find them:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/researchcollab/profiles>



Yet, what inspires me most about my research, more broadly, is how it highlights the ways in which the provision of live music has the potential to advance the work of professional groups in new ways. For performing musicians, my research shows how the role of musicians today is transcending the realm of traditional concert hall settings to contribute to health and social care within society⁸. Whilst for care home staff, my research illustrates how live music can become an organic part of care home life, central to daily care practices⁹.

Broader societal challenges surrounding my research may limit the extent to which live music-based services may be delivered across UK care homes, namely; the financial strains that currently govern arts organisations¹⁰ and the social care sector¹¹, along with the largely undesirable public perceptions¹² that surround UK care homes. I hope that together academic research and community practice can continue to support the work of key professions who supplement live music provision and promote the positive potential and widespread application of live music in care homes now and in years to come.

1. https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true

2. <https://www.dementiastatistics.org/statistics/comorbidities/>

3. <https://www.alz.co.uk/research/WorldAlzheimerReport2014.pdf>

4. http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/Imn_news/title/How-do-high-quality-live-music-performances-benefit-older-people-living-in-care-homes/item/68658

5. <http://www.musicinhospitalscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NHS-Poster-Final-June-2.pdf>

6. <http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk>

7. <https://cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/meet-the-music/wellbeing-through-music/>

8. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage>.

9. <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2007/09/05/music-choices-in-care-homes-and-day-centres/>

10. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/arts-funding>

11. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/social-care>

12. <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2014/jul/29/residential-care-homes-need-rebranding>



How Much Green Space is Enough?

Good Enough vs. Best Practice



Is there a magic bullet which, if aimed at the green spaces in our towns and cities, would have the same impact on our health and wellbeing as more heading to the doctors and popping pills? Obesity, heart disease, diabetes and mental illness are rising around the world, and are increasingly a problem in both developed and developing nations, as well as being compounded by growing inequalities within countries across the economic spectrum. On Tuesday 7th March Catharine Ward Thompson, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Edinburgh and Director of the OPENspace research centre, addressed a Health in Place seminar to share her research findings on the impact of the quantity and quality of green space on human health, addressing its health-enhancing properties as well as its ability to address disparities of health care provision.



Professor Thompson cautioned the audience that there is no easy answer to the question. But, through the careful dissemination the work that she and her colleagues have undertaken, the stakeholders and academics in the audience were given a good introduction as to why salutogenic and equigenic approaches (health-enhancement and health inequality respectively) to health and wellbeing are critical to building sustainable cities. Motivating the research is the necessity for it to inform policy, and on this point the Professor was very clear: that planners and designers need to be able to present compelling and proven research if they want to

change professional practice.

The complexity of multidisciplinary and longitudinal studies was addressed, with Professor Thompson recognising the challenges of establishing causality and proof when often interventions in the environment have complex social and physical implications. For many designers, planners and academics, the value of urban natural environments is a central tenet of their practice and something which is corroborated by a growing body of evidence, but there is still a gap between theory and implementation. Establishing the authority of these convictions, and placing them at the heart of the development of healthcare and green space strategies is something which is supported by the World Health Organisation's issue of seventeen goals which include 'good health and wellbeing', 'sustainable cities and communities' and 'reduced inequalities' as integral parts of sustainable urban development. This joined-up policy making has been informed by Professor Thompson's work and, in turn, provides a blueprint for local authorities and governments to implement from a community scale all the way through to the planning process.

Although the magic bullet was not forthcoming, the diversity of methods and projects that were shared with the audience would have left no one in doubt that the importance of green spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds. The measurement of cortisol – a hormone associated with stress – in the participants' saliva of one research group was one particularly intriguing way in which anxiety and depression was shown to often be coupled with low access to green space. Where we exercise was also shown to be important, with much greater benefits to our mental health coming from exerting ourselves outside, rather than inside (a finding which makes not having gym membership sound like a good investment!).

To close, Professor Thompson outlined what types of green spaces cities need, and what they do for us;

from visible and accessible nearby places to calm and uplift, small semi-private areas for the young or elderly, networks of green to link together these places within the urban fabric, and large parks and recreational areas that are accessible to all. What is key is that these places are close, with the World Health Organisation stating that every urban resident should have access to at least one green space that is minimum of half a hectare in size (fifty square meters) and within five minutes' walk from their home. As a resident of Sheffield for the last four-and-a-bit years, this adds scientific validity to me taking a detour through the park as I cycle into University; a necessary dose of salutogenic wellness as I work on my doctorate!

Author: Camilla Allen studied Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield and has stayed within the Landscape department to continue her research with a PhD on the forester and environmentalist Richard St. Barbe Baker.

You can read about Camilla's research at her website: www.radicalsylviculture.com or follow her on Twitter: @CamillaAllen

Images (clockwise from below): Uhuru Park Nairobi, by Camilla Allen; Catherine Ward Thompson presenting, by Dr Audrey Gerber; seminar attendees, by Dr Audrey Gerber; Camilla in Kenya, by Max Charles



Mental Health Mosquito Nets: Forewarned is Fore-armed

On the 6th March the UK Council for Graduate Education hosted a conference on 'Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Postgraduate Students'. Thirty-six staff and student representative from around 20 institutions attended to share ideas of good practice related to supporting postgraduate wellbeing. Since the Doctoral Academy has made work on Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) wellbeing a priority I attended to see what I could learn and share experiences of things we do at Sheffield.

This group recognised that there is a huge challenge for institutions and individuals and that many people have a part to play. Surveys and stats suggest that around 50% of postgraduate researchers experience episodes of poor mental wellbeing during their degree (Bereley Mental Health Survey, Exeter Mental Health Questionnaire, NUS Survey, YouGov 2012 Survey). We discussed that loneliness is a real challenge for many researchers who are engaged in extended personal projects and have long periods of writing up that can be in isolation. It was noted that postgraduates on average have much more complicated lives than younger university students and many are dealing with caring for children, older relatives, siblings and spouses alongside their studies. We explored the challenges of funding a degree, of needing to apply for grants or sometimes work at the same time as studying. We also discussed the high proportion of international post graduates who may have a whole range of challenges including being isolated from normal support networks, dealing with a change of culture, experiencing language barriers and uncertainty or difficulty with visa status if there is any need for a break from study.

Although these myriad challenges are daunting, it was encouraging to see that people from all different areas of HE are trying to tackle these and that with that kind of backing we have a hope of finding solutions. Supervisors, lecturers, counsellors, administrative support staff and NUS student representatives were all there showing that there is a will and a wealth of experience in all parts of the university system to make positive changes.

Not everyone agreed on how to approach these challenges and there was some lively debate. Even sharing the information about the likelihood of experiencing poor mental health during a research degree can be seen as problematic; on one side it reassures students that they are not alone and may reduce stigma, on the other it can feed into a culture of acceptance that this is a 'normal' (or even 'necessary') part of a PhD – a sentiment that no one wanted to encourage. The idea that resonated with me personally the most however was that of forewarned is forearmed; Tom Price a lecturer from Liverpool presented the PhD as a risky activity:



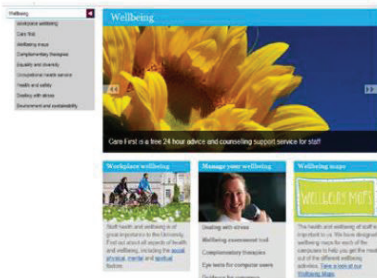
Images: Staying mosquito safe in Central America, San Andres, Peten Region, Guatemala courtesy of Cara Hammond

Author: Cara Hammond, Doctoral Development Officer, Research and Innovation Services

Image courtesy of Dr Adam Wright, Senior Policy Advisor, the Royal Society



Tackling the issues



- Being both proactive and reactive on mental health.
- Tackle the “triggers” (isolation, workloads, guilt over R&R)
- Build an inclusive research culture (change language, create realistic expectations)
- Prof. development should build confidence and resilience.
- Supervisors as signposts to support.
- Access to support for wellbeing and professional advice.
- Access to excellent careers IAG and professional development.

THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY

If you are going to take part in a risky activity, for example travelling to a location where malaria is prevalent, then you take precautions and build it into your work-plan. Just like malaria, poor mental health can cause long periods when you are unable to work, can relapse and in a few cases can be deadly. So take precautions, get your mental health mosquito net ready before you begin!

Throughout the day we learned about some of the preventative measures that universities are working on; in Warwick they are currently piloting an online module for students, which offers an opportunity to explore and develop good practices for improving your own wellbeing. This module hopes to help reduce the risks to students by giving practical ways to combat the causes of poor wellbeing. Meanwhile in Liverpool they are working on a tool-kit for supervisors to enable them to better support students, both as a preventative measure and in the case that mental health problems do arise.

Here in Sheffield there are many things going on and many people working to improve support, knowledge and provision for PGRs and we are trying to ensure that we respond in as many ways as possible. If we look at the task list (above) set out by Dr Adam Wright, Royal Society & former Research and Policy Officer (Higher Education), NUS, we can see we are making headway in almost all areas. Our proactive work includes the activities of the DA Interns on social activity and education, the Researcher Wellbeing Week, the work of mentors and the wide range of groups and societies that can help create a community and support network for PGRs. The professional development opportunities provided through the DDP, Think Ahead and Sheffield Teaching Assistant aim to help arm PGRs with a wealth of skills that can build confidence and workplace resilience. We already run some training for supervisors, but we are working on more to ensure that supervisors are able to point PGRs in the right direction should mental health and wellbeing become a concern. And just like all students at the university, PGRs have access to the central wellbeing services and have dedicated careers advisors and careers sessions. Through continued training and awareness building we hope to foster an ever more inclusive research culture. There is a long way to go, but there is a huge will to achieve the best we can for PGRs and hopefully change those figures.

Heavy Metal Music:

The gateway to personal wellbeing
(PhD Stress relief)

When I started my PhD studies, I remember a good friend of mine sharing this piece of advice with me: “Remember, loneliness and depression are always part of a PhD”. Thankfully, in my arsenal of weapons I have what is required to fight full-force this emerging threat... it is called HEAVY METAL.

Heavy Metal Music is a term usually misunderstood and when people confront a metalhead (yeah, that's what we are called), imaginations of noisy brutal vocals praising our lord and saviour Satan (not!) arise. Well, you can find satanic lyrics at some subgenres (e.g. Black Metal), you can find brutal vocals in some others (e.g. Death Metal), but once you pass the veil of negativity and embrace this underrated form of art, you will witness a huge variety of emotional storms. The wide spectrum of metal music has lyrical concepts, rhythms and vocal performances suitable for every mood and every situation.

From the monumental Traditional Heavy Metal records of Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath, Manowar, etc., which set the foundations of this music, all the way up to the raging brutal war machines of Death Metal like Obituary, Death, Massacre, Autopsy etc., the musical journey provides you unforgettable experiences. Whether you are happy or sad, whether you feel cheerful or depressed, whether you are in need of power and inspiration or full of energy or rage, a nice selection of metal tunes will satisfy your mental needs, 100% guarantee.



Photo: Album Vintage Whine on 12" Vinyl format, from Folk-metal pioneers Skyclad

*Author: Michalis Benakis, PhD Student
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield*

Apart from the mainstream aspects of this music, once you dive deep into heavy metal, a vast ocean is revealed, full of underground bands, private labels, unreleased demo material, insane vinyl-record collecting and festivals all over the world that unite metalheads, the last remaining knights that keep the flame burning.

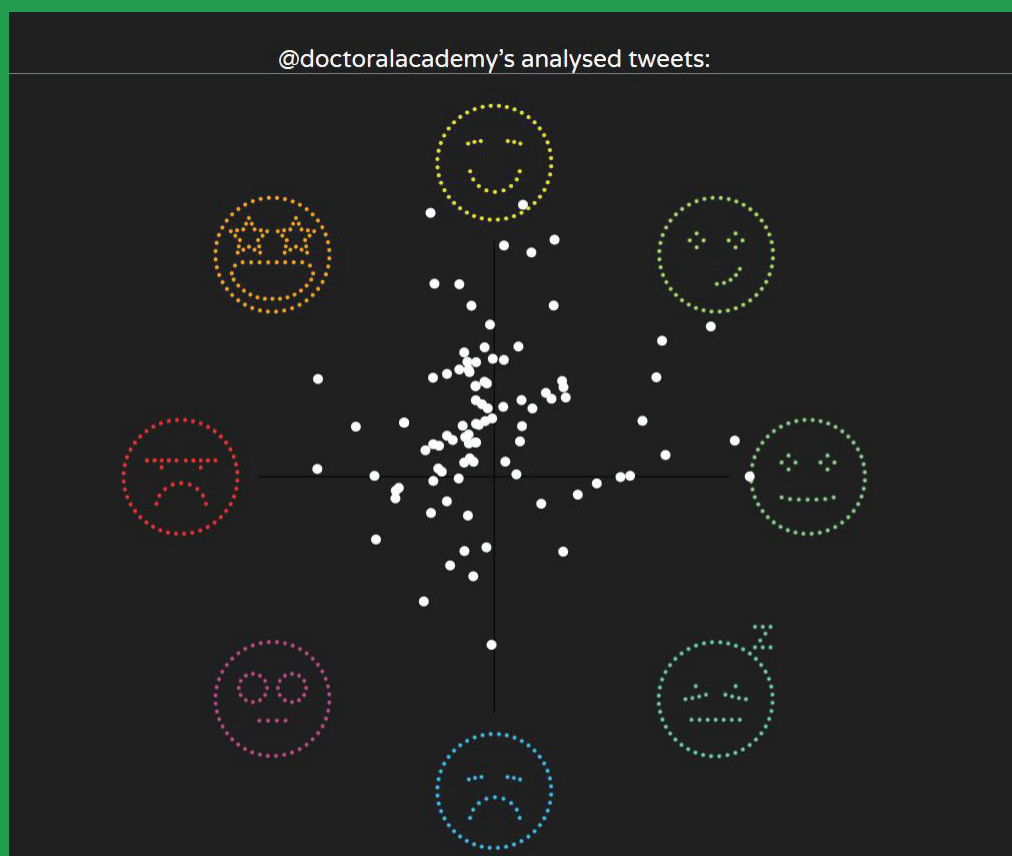
So, next time you're in need of mental power (or on the edge of mental breakdown), put Riot's 1988 album Thundersteel on your speakers and start head-banging!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r34-po1Wzo0&index=9&list=PLqRi_1gyIFdQUa1NJ8_Eril_EaT2XMPUA

We love that Sheffield scholars are collaborating on wellbeing and challenging stigmas related to mental health. This video is a good example of this kind of work and it is also quite fun.

We enjoyed it so much that we used their tool to analyse our own tweets and the outcomes were really interesting, we didn't think we would be at all angry! Have a look at the image and see what you think or analyse your own tweets at the link below.



<http://happysheffield.co.uk/>

Residence Life

Wellbeing Support and Community

The Residence Life programme is part of Accommodation & Commercial Services. The programme is designed to provide multi-faceted support to students living in University accommodation. The team works to provide welfare support and development opportunities, as well as fostering a supportive and inclusive community, addressing misconduct, and offering a varied programme of activities and events. Residence Mentors (RMs) are an integral part of the team as they are students who have lived in University accommodation and are able to offer support as a peer. Residence Life tries to ensure that postgraduate students are supported by Residence Mentors who are also postgraduate students themselves. This allows the RMs to better relate to their mentees, providing relevant support as well as planning activities and events that postgraduates are interested in. Last year, Residence Life focused on a tailored programme for Families and Couples living in University accommodation. This consisted of specific events for the community, designed to introduce families to each other as well as provide more information about what resources, events, and services are available to them. A Residence Mentor was also specifically appointed to provide support to families. Due to its success, Residence Life is exploring more options to tailor the programme for postgraduate students without families living with them in University accommodation.

Postgraduate students living in University accommodation have full access to the Residence Life Programme, from Give It A Go (GIAG) and RM Activities, to Sports. In feedback from postgraduate students, the Residence Sport programme as well as day trips through GIAG are some of the most popular activities. The Residence Life programme, in partnership with Sport Sheffield and the Students' Union, also provides a programme during exam time called Stress Busters. The number of activities is decreased and all focus on the wellbeing of students. During this time free fruit and herbal teas are provided as well as sessions on aromatherapy, mindfulness, and head and neck massages, just to name a few. In addition to these activities, our postgraduate Residence Mentors put on a variety of activities based on feedback. Sessions include walks in the Peak District, meet and greet socials, viewing of documentaries followed by discussion, coffee hours, cooking socials, Acoustic Nights, as well as trips to various points of interest in Sheffield. Activities aimed at our postgraduate students with families often include age appropriate activities for children. For example, a movie for children was put on, while an area at the back of the room was set up for parents to socialise and enjoy some refreshments. As it can be difficult for families to make events, the team often need to think of creative ways of reaching them; an example was a Reverse Trick-or-Treat, where Residence Mentors dressed up and delivered sweets to families.

For more information on the support Residence Life provides or to provide feedback on what events you would be interested in, please contact us at residencelife@sheffield.ac.uk.



Images: Residence Life Families and Couples

Author: Residence Life Team, including Residence Mentors



Having a stable and supportive home environment is crucial to personal resilience and long-term wellbeing. In this section we look at two university services that can support you in finding a secure home and also feature two videos exploring Sheffield as a home.



Sheffield: A Second Home for International Students
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IK__SVgBSQ

Couples Social Event
Residence Life Staff and



Home may not be where you are born and for many a safe home is not guaranteed. here former SU president, Abdi-aziz Sulieman discusses how he became a refugee
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPZ3xw9sdyk>



HOME AND WELLBEING

propertywithUS is one of the University of Sheffield's support services, and is here to help all somewhere to stay for your studies, whenever you might need us. We know that every person a

We advertise a range of properties including studios and one bedroom flats, a room in a shared is bound to be something suitable for you. We advertise everything on our website: www.propertywithus.co.uk done your search it will ask you to log in using Shibboleth which will take you to MUSE to put in y

propertywithUS: Top Tips

For individuals:

- There are a good number of self-contained properties, but these come with a higher price tag than a room in a shared house.
- Many landlords advertise rooms in a shared house to both Undergraduates and Postgraduates, so if you find a shared property of interest but would rather live with Postgraduates why not ask the landlord who the other tenants are.

For families or couples:

- Private sector properties are usually around £550 - £700 per month plus bills. The price varies based upon the location, with properties further from the University usually being cheaper.
- The University has some family/couple accommodation, but there is often a waiting list for these, feel free to talk to us about whether this could be an option for you.
- Partners often have to pay council tax for the property, unless they are also a full time student. Make sure you factor this into your budget.

For students undertaking field work:

- If you are looking for accommodation and know that you will be undertaking field work, it can be possible to find short term accommodation instead of signing a contract for a whole year. We advertise short term accommodation on our website.
- If you need to find a replacement tenant for your contract, you can advertise your room on our website message board.



students find accommodation, it isn't just for Undergraduates. We are happy to help you find and PhD is different, so finding the right property is important.

house and even family accommodation. These have different durations and start dates, so there propertywithus.sheffield.ac.uk. As it is limited to students at the University of Sheffield, once you have your University username and password.



Areas in Sheffield:

- The areas popular with Undergraduate students are those closer to the University such as Crookesmoor, Broomhill and Broomhall. Ecclesall Road, Sharrow and Bramall Lane area are popular with students from Sheffield Hallam.
- Areas further afield are less popular with students but more popular with young professionals, such as Walkley, Crookes and Nether Edge.

Living with Non-Students:

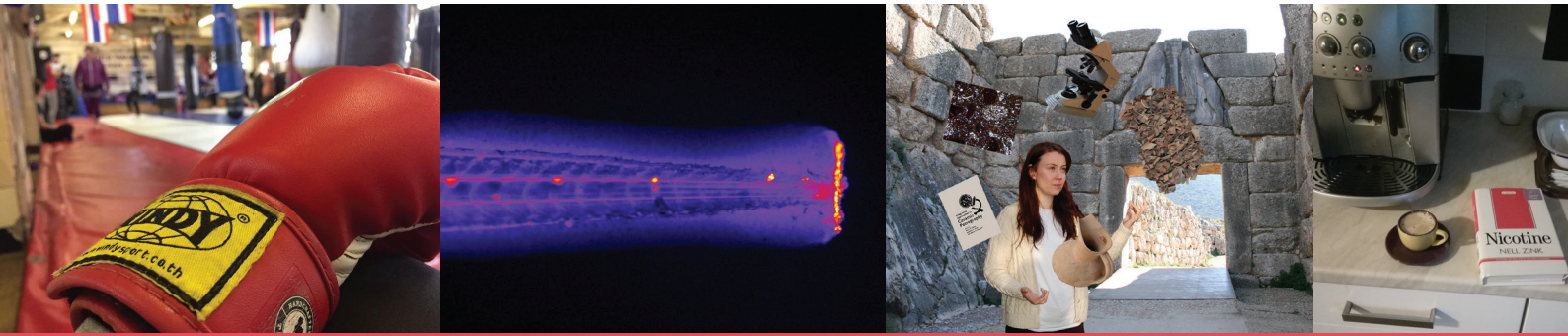
- It is possible to live in properties for professionals, but the landlord may require a guarantor or proof of income.
- You may need to discuss with the tenants whether you will pay for a proportion of the council tax (full time students are exempt) but the house will be liable for council tax if there is one or more working person living there.
- propertywithUS can provide a list of some local letting agents and websites where you might find suitable accommodation.

Feel free to pop in and ask us any of your accommodation questions, chances are we have heard it before! Or you could take a look on the website for some FAQs and advice:
www.propertywithus.sheffield.ac.uk

Visit us: Student's Union Building, Level 3 opposite Grill and Go. Open Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm
 Call us: 0114 222 6058
 Email us: propertywithus@sheffield.ac.uk

propertywithUS

STUDENT EXPERIENCE



Leadership Development Day: Arming with the skills to stand out from



Images (clockwise from top): "A Punch a Day Blows your Stress Away" by Amini Sa-idi; "Healing Swimmingly" by Gareth McCathie; "Juggling the Phd Cycle: From Pots to People and Back Again" by Clare Burke; "In the Kitchen of Philosophy" by Matthew Cull; "Behind Us" by Aldo Fernando Sosa Gallardo; "Snow Coring on Foxfonna Ice Cap in Svalbard (High Arctic)" by Archana Dayal; Leadership Development Day; "24" by Rebecca Knapp; "Ougadougou's Reel Passion" by Katy Stewart; "Plates of UoS" by Syakira Mohammed Hussein; "The 'Obviously' Doctoral Student" by Albert Attom; "Thinking Outside the Box" by Sally Jones; "The Heart of Sheffield is ready for Xmas" by Ibtissam Al-Farah; Competition Winners "My Comic Book Life and I" by Natalie Lamb and "A Researcher and Mother" by Dorathy Abonyi.





g doctoral students m the crowd

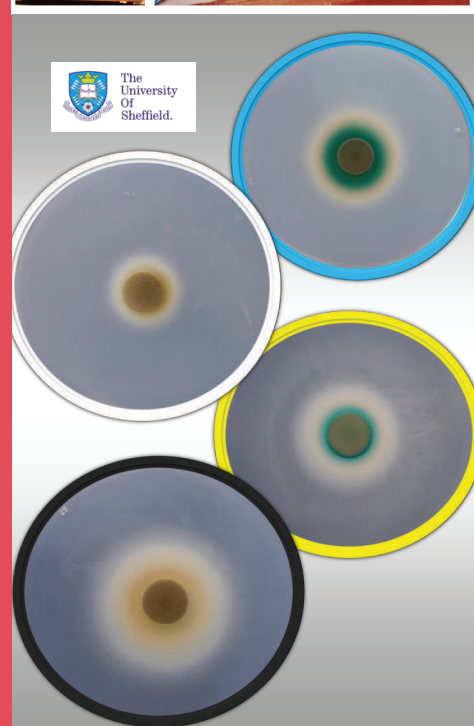
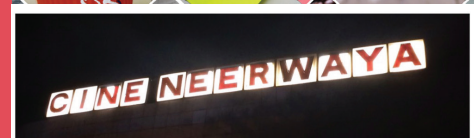
Last year in November, the first Leadership Development event was held for doctoral students from across all faculties, a full-day comprised of a series of workshops, with a focus on PGRs developing skills outside of their research subject. Due to the overwhelming interest for the first event, and the demand from students for more similar events, the Doctoral Academy (DA), and the University of Sheffield Enterprise (USE) collaborated to deliver the second Leadership Development Day, which ran on the 23rd of March this year. The programme was expanded to include five main sessions, in addition to other activities, and with 50 students registered to attend.

The day included networking, information about events for Doctoral Students, interactive workshops on being an efficient leader in the workplace, successful negotiation skills, self leadership skills, understanding the recruitment process for leaders, and new ways of problem solving. The way in which the sessions were facilitated allowed an active participation from students in the discussions and activities, leading to a dynamic and enjoyable atmosphere that lasted throughout the day. After the final session was concluded, and the speakers and researchers were thanked for their participation, the guests left equipped with a wealth of new information and resources to help them navigate their studies and future careers.

As part of the day's activities, doctoral students from across faculties of the University submitted images depicting their research and lives as postgraduate students, for the "Images of Doctoral Life Competition". The images were on display on the walls of the Alfred Denny conference room, where the event took place, for the guests to view. First and second place prizes were awarded for the best images, which went to Natalie Lamb (1st place) and Dorothy Abonyi (2nd place), for their images "My Comic Book Life and I" and "A researcher and a mother" respectively.

Tareq Omaili, PhD Student and Doctoral Academy Intern, has been instrumental in developing and running this event, which has proved very popular. Both he and Ffion Al-Shamsi, PhD student and Doctoral Academy intern, were very busy on the day, ensuring things ran smoothly and spending time talking to PhDs and staff.

The Leadership Development Day has been nominated, and shortlisted for "Best Student Led Academic Event or Activity Award" as part of the Students' Union's Academic Awards 2017.



THINK AHEAD

I am a member of the Think Ahead team, at the University of Sheffield. We work with postdoctoral and postgraduate researchers, supporting them to develop careers inside or outside of academia. We're very privileged to be able to work with researchers as they progress through their PhD, start a new research contract or take the next step in their career. We see their successes and their achievements – and it's brilliant!

Inevitably, though, we also see the other side: researchers who are struggling or stressed-out. Because – spoiler alert – academia is hard! It's enough of a challenge when everything's plain-sailing in the rest of your life but, when a perfect storm of work and other life stresses come at once, it can feel overwhelming.

What constitutes a “personal crisis” is as individual as the person experiencing it. Common areas of stress include your own health, the illness or death of a loved one, relationship breakdown, financial worries – anything extraordinary and traumatic that has an impact on other areas of your life. Suddenly, your definition of “work-life balance” isn't about having the time to train for a triathlon, learning to play the piano

or even about being able to cheer your kids on in their after school activities. It's about trying desperately to juggle the bare essentials of everything you have to cram into your day without collapsing.

The University takes your wellbeing seriously, and there is a wide range of support that you can access, if you're struggling. As well as talking to your supervisor, you can use the Health and Wellbeing services run by Student Support (SSiD), and attend at workshops offered by the Doctoral Academy or Think Ahead, to help you manage your stress, supervisor(!) and time, to enable you to feel more in control.

In addition to this, The University has a specific Researcher Wellbeing programme called ResearchWell (@reswellsheff), which offers wellbeing sessions, online resources and info throughout the year, as well as the annual Researcher Wellbeing Week, which will run again in June - keep your eyes peeled for further info!

However, while it's really important that these services exist for you, sometimes you need to consider your needs more broadly, particularly when things are tough. These three areas can be a good place to start:

When the Going Gets Tough, the To How to Get the Suppo

Find flexibility where you can

Academic research is, naturally, intellectually demanding. You need to juggle complex problems, tasks and deadlines. However, research can also often offer a certain amount of flexibility in your working patterns or even in your work location. If you have some tasks that can only be done between set times or in a specific place, you may be able to juggle other aspects of your work to enable you to be with a sick relative, to attend hospital appointments or to cover childcare. It is worth formally discussing flexible working with your supervisor if you feel this would help you, but you might not need to if you can take advantage of inbuilt flexibility within your role.

Keep your supervisor informed

If you're experiencing personal difficulties that are significant enough to have an impact on your work, it's important that you discuss these with your PI or supervisor. This can feel really awkward, particularly if you don't already have a great relationship, but the University has a duty of care to you, including

specific policies to support you during difficult times. However, if you don't tell people, they can't help you. This doesn't mean that you have to go into the minute details of your problems; you just need to outline the issues, explain what impact they might have (and how you intend to minimise these) and suggest ways that your supervisor could support you. You should try to find some specific things that you can both agree on – “I need more time to work on the results, and I'm going to have to work at home sometimes” is not as helpful as “I need an extra two weeks to analyse the results and will need to work at home 2 days a week.” Obviously, depending on the situation, you may not know exactly what you will need, but having a plan, even if it needs to be reviewed at a later date, demonstrates your professionalism and commitment to your work.

Approaching the situation proactively, not only makes it easier for your supervisor to support you while minimising disruption to the project, it can also help to give you back a feeling of being in control, which is



Author: Sarah Bell, Researcher Development Manager - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

#ResWellSheff

ough Get Smart: ort You Need, When You Need it Most

crucial. When something unexpected and awful hits, you can feel completely at the mercy of circumstance; this can help you start to wrest control back.

If this type of conversation is your worst nightmare, or you worry about not being able to get out everything you need to in a meeting, send an email first, summarising the situation and requesting a discussion. Then you'll be sure that you haven't missed anything you need to say and you'll have a handy aide-mémoire (or piece of paper to clutch!) when you have the conversation.

Get help

Asking for and accessing help is crucial, and is about much more than just your academic life. When you talk to friends and family about your situation, I bet that most of them say something along the lines of "let me know if there's anything I can do to help." I also bet that you won't. That might be because you don't want to burden them, don't think they mean it or feel like you should be able to cope on your own.

If you're involved in postgraduate or post-doctoral research, you're probably used to being capable; to being The Clever One; to figuring it out. So, it can be really hard to admit that there are some things that you can't handle entirely on your own. Needing help doesn't make you weak; recognising when you need help is smart.

Once you recognise this, you can take people up on their offers of help. Some friends might be well-meaning, but ultimately unreliable; you know the type. But most people really mean it when they offer support. So, if you need to, follow up these offers. But, remember, it's your responsibility to ask (which can be hard). You can also make things easier by, again, asking for a specific piece of help "could you pick up my library book/dry cleaning?" rather than something vague. Matching people's skills or interests to what you need, can also make a big difference. The biggest difference you can make, though, is simply finding the courage to ask.

Have you heard of Thesis Mentoring?

It's a 1:1 mentoring programme for doctoral researchers struggling with writing, feeling stressed and under pressure with conflicting or impending deadlines, or finding it hard to motivate themselves.

www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/mentoring/thesismentoring

Our experienced thesis mentors share their wisdom with you...

(1) Dr Maya Boudiffa, Research Associate in Oncology & Metabolism

Thesis writing is a time of reflection, a time to sit down and contemplate all that has been achieved during the PhD and a time to transcribe this into a coherent, comprehensive and self-contained piece of written word. Yet, finding the time to do so is no easy task, or so it seems. The writing process can be an emotional task, guilt and procrastination then follow and feelings of frustration, disappointment and anger can develop and, if unprocessed, evolve into a bitterness that transforms what should have been a rewarding experience into a very heavy cross to bear. Writing is a creative process, yet to be creative, our minds work best if void of all distractions and feelings of guilt, stress and anguish. Managing our time efficiently can help achieve such mind-set, while still enjoying life. But where to begin?

A good start is to find your own rhythm. We all have our own habits, some prefer to write in complete silence, some in busy coffee shops. Some concentrate best late night, some prefer early mornings. Some of us can stay focused for hours, and some for only 10 minutes at a time. Finding our own rhythm, that sweet spot of optimal concentration in a defined time frame, will help plan our day/week/month in a way to optimize our productive time. Indeed, with a 10 min focus capacity, 5 sessions of 10 minutes will always be more productive than one session of 50 minutes. And the cherry on top is that procrastination is kept to a minimum and the writing process becomes more enjoyable over time.

Staying Sane in the Writing Game: *lessons learned from Thesis Mentoring*

Images courtesy of ThinkAhead

(2) Dr Stuart Archer, Research Associate in Chemistry

Facing a whole doctoral thesis can seem very daunting, it's undeniably a large document. For many, this can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed by a task and unable to see the end of it, leading to unhealthy working practices such as working excessively long hours, working all weekend, working at the expense of other things like exercise, eating properly or just simply relaxing.

This is where having a realistic thesis plan is very important. A good thesis plan should break the whole thing down into manageable sections, then, for example, into individual short tasks achievable in 1-2 hours (or however you decide based on tip (1) above). There are many tools and guides to help you do this. However, it is just as important to include proper breaks. Plan around a proper lunch break every day. Take regular short breaks throughout the day, such as going for a short walk. Plan around having time off at weekends, and doing something fun or relaxing.

By taking breaks from writing and allowing yourself to stop thinking about your thesis for a time, you will refresh your mind, and you may find that although you work fewer hours, you work more effectively and even increase your productivity.



(3) Dr Naveed Malik, Research Associate in Electronic & Electrical Engineering

I've found that it's common not to know how and where to start with thesis writing even if you have some experience of writing conference and journal papers, but do not have much experience of writing thesis. It is hard for people to think of how to sit down and explain their work, resulting in discouragement through loss of confidence. Through talking it out with a mentor these thought processes start to become clearer. Mentees find they are able to break down their problems, identify and prioritise the important tasks, and tackle things one at a time.

The following techniques worked for them, and might for you:

- When writing, start from anywhere in the chapter. Write whatever comes into your mind, and organise the chapter afterwards. This puts you on the writing track and gets your ideas out of our head and on to paper.
- Start writing for the chapter that you feel most motivated toward.
- If you're reading literature, make notes simultaneously, capture what you're learning.
- Allocate every day for writing. Write a bit every day. Better to write every day for shorter periods than to write for long durations on some days, (i.e. slow and steady wins the race).
- Write when you are fresh and feel more productive (for you), and turn off distractions, e.g. mobile phones and emails.
- Do easy tasks when you're tired, e.g. organise references, sizing of figures and tables, font setting, etc.
- Try the 'Pomodoro Technique' – 25-minutes writing and a 5-minute break.
- Use a Gantt diagram for managing progress of thesis writing across months.
- Send your supervisor(s) one chapter at a time, and simultaneously work on the next chapter, while your supervisor is reviewing the previous chapter. This way feedback given by the supervisor is also implemented in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.



(4) Dr Michael Trikic, Teaching Technician, Interdisciplinary Engineering Education.

Academia. The intellectual elite, noble academic enquiry, stimulating theory, high level discussion, conferences and travel, freedom to pursue novel ideas. Also, unattributed use of data, workload, career uncertainty, failed grant applications, unrealistic supervisory expectation, long hours, failed experiments, unrepeatability data. Add to this all that challenges us in 'life', and it would be fair to say that for most people, finding thesis writing time is challenging.

Some plan a defined write up period that stretches through the doctorate and others suddenly realise time is short and writing time must start now. Allegedly some people write from day one, although no one's met them. These methods all work because everyone is different and has unique circumstances. Take heart, if you got this far your method will work, but if you can, improve it.

A lack of solid deadlines can be unhelpful, but time planning is essential, so if you can't stick to your own deadlines use other people to help you. It is essential to have others proof-read your work, so put a first draft submission deadline in your diary that allows time for the reader of your choice to fit in reading your work and giving feedback, whilst doing their work. You'll need time to act on the feedback too before sending it to your supervisors.

As Stuart said above, there's more to life than work and it is important to take time out from writing, especially when it feels like there is no time. Time out can help productivity as it re-energises and fresh eyes are useful. It also allows time for reflection which helps maintain a healthy perspective. Time out will keep you well and you need to be well to write.

The most important message to take from this article is that you can do it!



BODY AND MIND

We know we need to look after both our bodies and our minds in order to stay well and happy and doing so can come in many forms. In this section we hear from both SportSheffield users and the Chaplaincy service about what is available for your body and for your mind.

The Importance of Exercise in Relation to Overall Wellbeing

*Author: Connor Higginson,
BSC Hons Sports Coaching
Sheffield Hallam University*

It is a widely regarded concept in both academia and general society that physical activity can positively impact overall wellbeing, with a number of scientific sources concluding as such. It is generally agreed that physical activity triggers chemical changes in the brain that influence our mood, through the release of the familiar feel-good neurochemicals serotonin and endorphins. This renders exercise as valuable in reducing the symptoms of depression. Placing consideration on the long-term effects, exercise positively correlates not only with the more obvious physical factors such as strength, cardio-metabolic health and bone health, it has also been proven to reduce stress levels, boost self-esteem and improve academic achievement, as well as contributing to improved concentration levels. Numerous studies present a positive association with exercise and quality of life, solidifying the importance of the physical factor in overall wellbeing.

With an academic perspective aside, sport can simply be an outstanding opportunity for social interaction and can serve as the building blocks in creating sustainable, long-lasting relationships. Placing oneself in a communal environment teeming with high levels of serotonin crafts the ideal foundations for the construction of friendships. Thus, with the physical and psychological benefits of exercise intertwining so harmoniously, it is no wonder that we witness the undying dedication of the marathon runner rising before the sun has a chance to compete with them six days a week, or that 95% of schools consider physical activity to positively contribute toward life skills, or that sport volunteers are the largest individual sector in volunteering with an incredible 3.2 million individuals playing their part.

Fear not however, we do not need to be an aspiring Mo Farah equivalent to feel the benefits of introducing and maintaining the presence of exercise in our lifestyles. Local sports centres such as SportSheffield provide a host of opportunities for individuals to initiate exercise through involvement in sports that they may have never had a chance to experience previously. As well as this, individuals can partake in socially orientated intra-mural leagues that provide a textbook platform for making friends and interacting with peers through co-operative involvement. The underpinning theory of these initiatives lies in creating a framework for physical activity to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQHbN61HwoM>



Often, there is so much churning around in my mind that it feels like living in a tumble drier: worries about my PhD, committee meetings and admin to keep track of, emails to chase up, etc. I find it really hard to switch off and this very quickly starts to impact my mental health. But I have finally found one solution which really does calm me down: painting. I become so absorbed in the scene I am creating that worries simply can't surface in my mind. I'm not skilled at portraits, so I tend to stick to landscapes, particularly places that have a place in my heart – past holidays, favourite walks in the Peak District, etc. By trying to recreate these scenes through painting, it feels almost as refreshing as if I had actually been spending time in those places again. Sitting quietly in my flat with the radio on for company, working away at my latest 'project', I can feel my blood pressure decrease and the tension ease in my shoulders. It's understandable why 'Art Therapy' is becoming more commonplace in hospitals and mental health clinics. Besides the immediate pleasure, there is also the immense satisfaction of creating something from nothing and having a finished product. Even better, it can be a very cheap pastime; most of my paints and brushes come from The Works, Wilkinson's or even Poundland. Despite not being very proficient, I have given away some of my paintings to friends or family, who appreciated having something unique that can't be found on the high street. So for a perfect de-stresser, I thoroughly recommend painting!

Horses, Bikes and All

I am currently doing a PhD in the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering and in my spare time I ride and race mountain bikes, as well as being a member of the University of Sheffield's BUCS Equestrian Squad (C Team). I have ridden horses competitively to a high standard from a young age and took up mountain biking shortly before starting at university. Cycling is a lot like riding horses in some respects, so I took to it pretty quickly as it gives the same adrenaline buzz!

Before trying out for the equestrian team this year I hadn't even touched a horse for over 2 years so I was quite surprised and felt very privileged to make the squad. I love riding and enjoy the challenge posed by riding different horses for each competition. Each horse has its own quirks and you have to understand these to try and get the best out of that horse in a short space of time. SUEC ensure that there are regular opportunities for training which means that I can plan well in advance when I am riding which means that it is easy to plan around my PhD schedule.

Without a horse of my own for the past few years, mountain biking has allowed me to get outside and unwind. Sheffield is great in that I can leave my house on my bike and be in the Peak or at mountain bike trails in about 20 minutes. This makes cycling very easy to fit into my weekly routine and helps me to stay fit. The riding community in Sheffield are fantastic, I don't think any other city has what we have here in Sheffield and it is a great way to meet new people. I recently raced in Sheffield's first Steel City Dual Slalom, which was great fun and I really love pitting myself against some of the best the UK has to offer and see how far off I am.

I also have weekly gym sessions as part of the Elite Sports Development pathway, which has helped a lot with strengthening my knees (after stopping horse riding competitively a few years back, my drop in fitness caused havoc on my knees) and working on my upper body which has held me back in the past trying to keep the bike stable when the trails get steeper and rougher. It is satisfying to see the progress made in the gym being translated into gains on the trails.

I find the routine I have with my sports relaxing and this helps me focus more on my studies. I have had spates in the past where I have not been able to do sport due to injury and I find that without it I eventually become very demotivated, near apathetic if it stretches into months – and I consider myself to be a pretty self-motivated individual! Having always been incredibly active, not doing something isn't really an option. It is nice to watch tv sometimes, but I very quickly get bored sat inside, I like to be doing something – which is possibly even why I have ended up doing a very hands on and varied PhD!



© Shane Millen Photography



Author: Abigail Legge, STREAM IDC PhD Researcher, Dept of Civil and Structural Engineering

Images courtesy of Shane Millen photography

Croissants, coffee, and community
 Dialogue, discussion, and debate,
 Meditation, meaningful conversation, and mocktails
 Support, space, and stillness
 Weekends away, worship, and welcome

What do all these things have in common? You can find them all at the University Multifaith Chaplaincy Service!

The Chaplaincy is freely available to all staff and students of the University. Each Chaplain represents a particular religion or belief (e.g. Buddhist, Christian, Humanist, or Muslim) but everyone is very welcome to use the Chaplaincy Service and take part in any of our events, whatever their background, religious beliefs, or faith. As well as organised activities we have a Common Room in the Octagon Centre with free tea and coffee for anyone who drops in (open 9.30-17.30 Monday – Friday).

For more information:

See our website,

www.sheffield.ac.uk/chaplaincy

Like or follow us on social media,

@ShefMultifaith

Or call in to the Multifaith Chaplaincy Reception, Octagon M floor.

We work in three main areas:

1) Encouraging you

Finding postgraduate life difficult? Trying to work out what comes next?

We offer individual sessions for non-judgemental listening and support. Any member of the University can speak confidentially to a Chaplain, and we can provide either occasional or on-going support. A Chaplain is on duty between 12h and 14h Monday-Friday during the semester – just drop in to the Multifaith Chaplaincy (Octagon M floor) to speak to them. Appointments are available at other times – email chaplaincy@sheffield.ac.uk to arrange a meeting. We also facilitate regular grief groups, for small groups of students who have been bereaved and want to talk about their loss with people who have had a similar experience.

2) Encouraging friendship and personal development

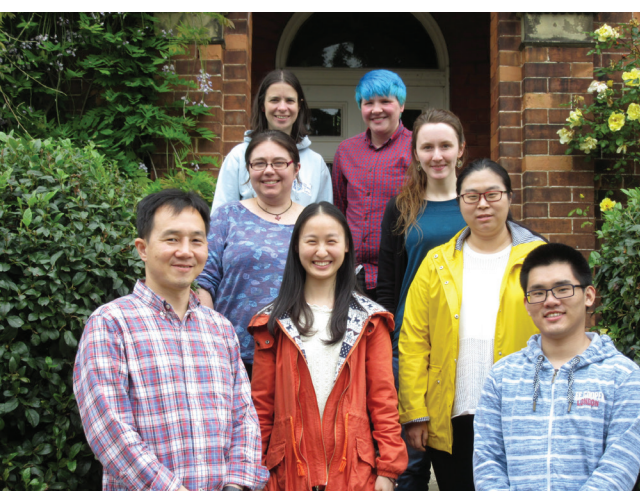
Feeling lonely on your own with your research? Interested in hearing other people's perspectives?

We run regular social events and also create opportunities for people to explore their own or others' spirituality, religion, and belief. These include Chaplaincy in the Pub (Monday 16.30h), community brunch (Wednesday 10.30-11h), Religion and Belief Tandem Learning (once per semester), personal/spiritual development workshops, and Women/LGBT+ and Faith dialogue events with the Students' Union.

3) Encouraging religion, faith and belief

Wondering where the nearest gurdwara is? Confused by the number of churches in Sheffield? Want to know what your faith or belief says about a particular situation?

We have more than 20 chaplains and faith advisors who offer faith-specific activities and advice. We have regular Buddhist chanting and meditation, Christian worship and reading groups, and Muslim Quranic recitation, plus other occasional events. You can find the list of chaplains and advisors here: <http://sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/chaplaincy/faiths>



BODY AND MIND

I began my PhD research in 2015, after studying at the same institution for my Undergraduate and Masters degree. Through this time, my relationship with sport and fitness was stuck in that same phase as at school: it was something I knew I had to do to be 'healthy', but I never enjoyed it, looked forward to it, or gained any sort of pleasure from it. Perhaps it was because I never gave myself a routine, and trying to fit in a game of netball with my friends never had the same appeal as heading to the pub. Perhaps it was because I convinced myself that money spent for a gym membership could be spent on books instead. Perhaps it was because studying felt more important than a park run. Whatever the reason, sport and fitness were never really a part of my life. That is until I began my PhD.

Beginning my doctoral research coincided with my employment as a residential mentor, with one of the requirements of the job being the promotion of sport and fitness as a way to help mental well-being. Through actively promoting the activities the university provided, and seeing the students benefit first-hand, I began a re-think. Working on my PhD had made me tired and drained, and my friends and family had taken note. I thought I should maybe give sport another go, for no other reason than to make myself happy. That was something I had never considered.

Now, I run most mornings. I don't run far, and I don't run with anyone else- those who can maintain a conversation while on a run have my upmost respect. I run to sort out the jumble of ideas in my head (whether academic or otherwise), and to get outside when PhD research generally ties you to a desk. I run to listen to some new music on my ipod, to check out another part of the city, or to get to wear some cool new running clothes. Amongst so many things, I run to help myself be happy.

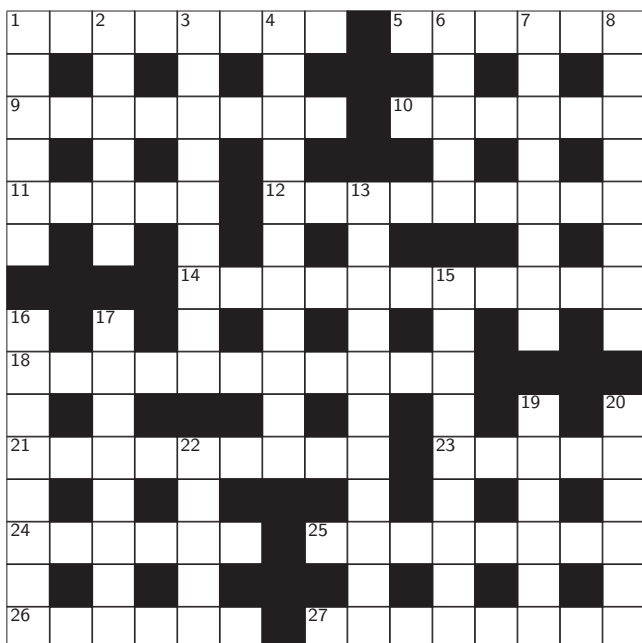
Jessica Hannington, PhD Researcher, School of English, Residential Mentor



**Reluctant
Runner**

to

**Happy
Runner**



Set by, Daniel Graves Ariel Weiss, Ciaran Schembri and Sam Morgan

Across

- 1 King lost triple As in taxi, ruining state of serenity (8)
- 5 Beaten by a hyperbolic function? (6)
- 9 Unconscious of comb and a part of the foot we hear (8)
- 10 City retreat was in its natural state (6)
- 11 Old vile pulverized fruit (5)
- 12 Deduce gold is perverting amongst the lower ranks (9)
- 14 Something one may hear in anger or tranquillity (5,2,4)
- 18 A bounder on drug badly mimics an adherence to formal rules (11)
- 21 A sliding scale's limit varies sliding along the scales (9)
- 23 Candy-striper runs over a key (5)
- 24 Ran back, entering crease finally, after extra was called. It's close! (6)
- 25 Naughty nineties produced famous scientist (8)
- 26 Shuns regular intercourse in home county (6)
- 27 May goes for trips plucking the odd forget-me-not (8)

Down

- 1 Acting as a rock is a bit of a man chore (6)
- 2 Sweater goes from tip up under the wing (6)
- 3 Perhaps myrmidons run away in pant mix-up? (3,6)
- 4 One tears up in country after revelation (11)
- 6 Live where birds fly? (2,3)
- 7 Remarkable choir with its ensemble (8)
- 8 Unhappy journalist is falling for con (8)
- 13 Disgraceful libel fix? Filthy regular claims yoga may help this (11)
- 15 Equal rights activists in sinister upheaval, lacking equal rights after decapitation of leading woman (9)
- 16 Toppled insect sent mad by digressions (8)
- 17 *Felix Holt's* sort unable to solve all quintic polynomial equations (8)
- 19 River splits Greek character beyond established churchman (6)
- 20 Acclaimed track and field athlete needs time before competitive net sport (6)
- 22 Black sailor held after confusing the French (5)

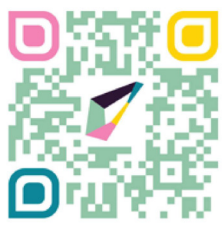
Submit completed crosswords to:

doctoraltimes@sheffield.ac.uk

B	U	C	K	S	A	W		F	U	N	D	I	N	G		
A		A		T		E		O		E		D		L		
C	A	N	V	A	S	S	E	R		U	T	E	R	I		
K		T		T		T		C		R		A		S		
	N	A	T	U	R	E		E	T	O	I	L	E	S		
P		B		E		R				N				A		
U	N	I	T			I	N	F	L	U	E	N	C	E	D	
G		L		T		E		E		S		R		I		
N	O	E	T	H	A	R	I	A	N		S	I	G	N		
A				R						T		E		M	G	
C	O	M	P	O	S	T				H	I	N	D	E	X	
I		A		T		I		E		T		L		E		
O	C	T	E	T			D	O	R	M	I	T	O	R	Y	
U		H		L		E		E		T		R		A		
S	I	S	T	E	R	S				D	R	Y	A	D	E	S



SCAN
US:



[@doctoralacademy](https://twitter.com/doctoralacademy)
www.facebook.com/doctoralacademy
www.instagram.com/sheffda/
www.sheffield.ac.uk/doctoralacademy