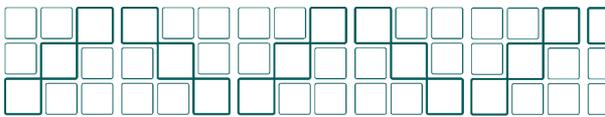

Supporting Trainees Through the Covid Winter

Sharon Milgram, Director NIH OITE

www.training.nih.gov // Sharon.milgram@nih.gov

On Twitter [@NIH_OITE](https://twitter.com/NIH_OITE) // [@SHARONMILGRAM](https://twitter.com/SHARONMILGRAM)





#News

Mental Health Crisis for Grad Students

Study finds "strikingly high" rates of depression and anxiety, with many reporting little help or support from supervisors.

By **Colleen Flaherty** // March 6, 2018

72 COMMENTS

CBE—Life Sciences Education, Vol. 18, No. 2 | Article

Free Access

Burnout and Mental Health Problems in Biomedical Doctoral Students

Gabriela A. Nagy, Caitlin M. Fang, Alexander J. Hish, Lisalynn Kelly, Christopher V. Nicchitta, Kafui Dzirasa, and M. Zachary Rosenthal

Diane K. O'Dowd, Monitoring Editor

Published Online: 31 May 2019 | <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.18-09-0198>

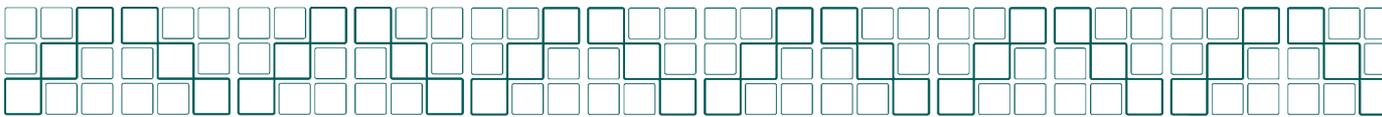
Researchers facing 'shocking' levels of stress, survey reveals

Nearly two thirds of those who took part had witnessed bullying or harassment

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/06/new-study-says-graduate-students-mental-health-crisis>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/12/06/new-research-graduate-student-mental-well-being-says-departments-have-important>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jan/15>



Data from CDC

During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use*

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS



STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS



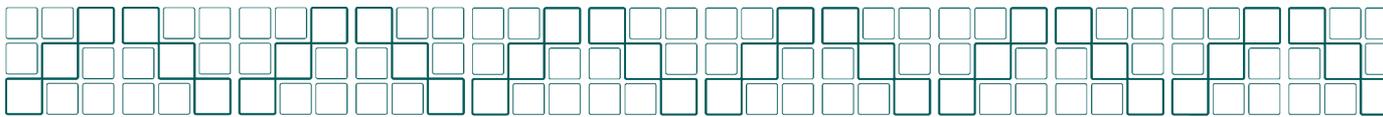
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE†



*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24–30, 2020

†In the 30 days prior to survey

For stress and coping strategies: bit.ly/dailylifecoping



Meta-analysis of 19 studies (N=93,569)

In upcoming special issue on Corona Virus (12/2020)

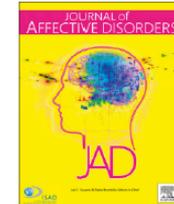


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Affective Disorders

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jad



Review article

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population: A systematic review



Jiaqi Xiong^a, Orly Lipsitz^c, Flora Nasri^c, Leanna M.W. Lui^c, Hartej Gill^c, Lee Phan^c,
David Chen-Li^c, Michelle Iacobucci^c, Roger Ho^{e,f}, Amna Majeed^c, Roger S. McIntyre^{a,b,c,d,*}

^a Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

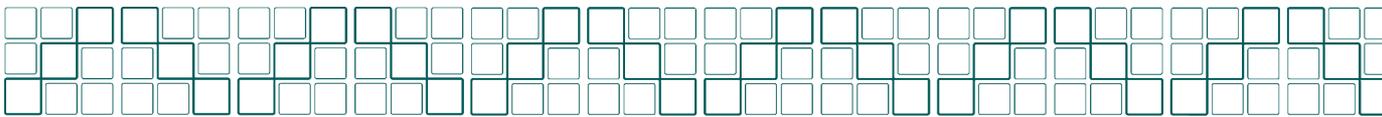
^b Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

^c Mood Disorders Psychopharmacology Unit, University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario

^d Brain and Cognition Discovery Foundation, Toronto, ON

^e Department of Psychological Medicine, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, Singapore

^f Institute for Health Innovation and Technology (iHealthtech), National University of Singapore, Singapore



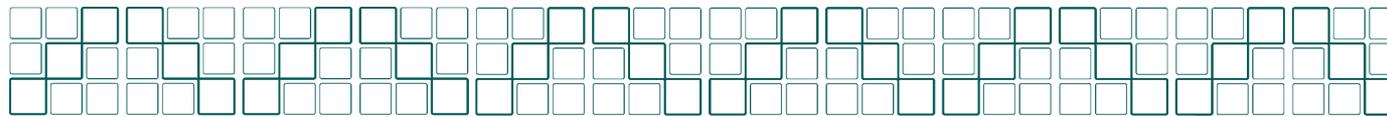
Key Findings

- Females
- ≤40 years
- Students

Increased

- Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Adverse psychiatric symptoms
- PTSD

NOTE: Most vulnerable groups in US are 18 – 24 years, then 25 – 44 years old. Individuals from marginalized communities and those lacking financial resources.

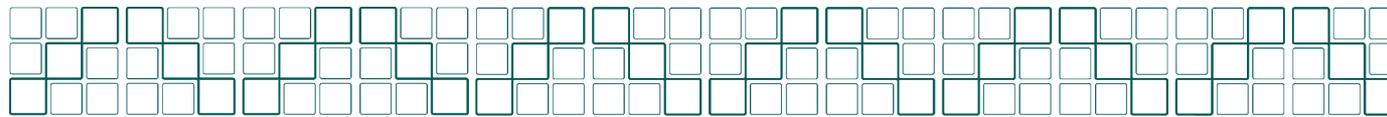


Loneliness Is a Key Factor

- The most prominent factor for depression and anxiety
- Highly lonely individuals are 82% more likely to be susceptible to depression and anxiety



Image by Flaticon



Impact On (Early Career) Scientists

- Impact of discipline¹
 - Bench science disciplines reported the largest declines in research

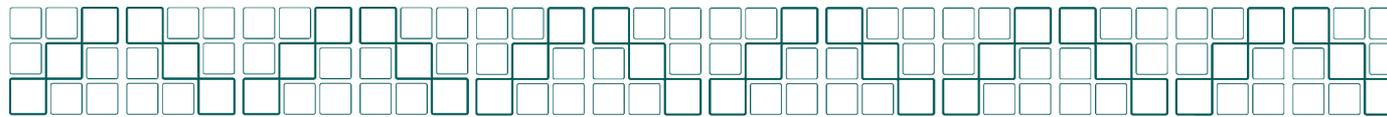
- Female scientists and scientists with young children reported greatest reduction in research time¹
 - COVID-19 medical papers have fewer women first authors than expected²

- Hiring freezes/rescinding of job offers³

1 Myers et al., (2020). Unequal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on scientists. *Nature human behaviour*, 4(9), 880-883.

2 Andersen et al. (2020). Meta-Research: COVID-19 medical papers have fewer women first authors than expected. *Elife*, 9.

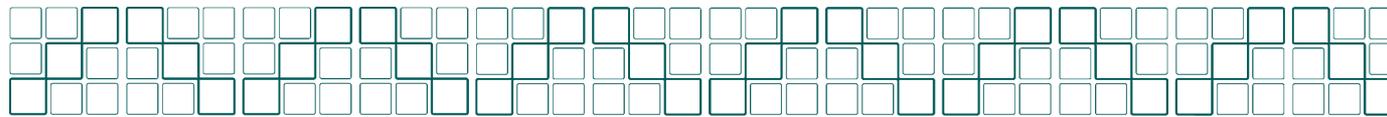
3 Woolston, C. (2020). Junior researchers hit by coronavirus-triggered hiring freezes. *Nature*, 582(7812), 449-450.



Impact on International Students

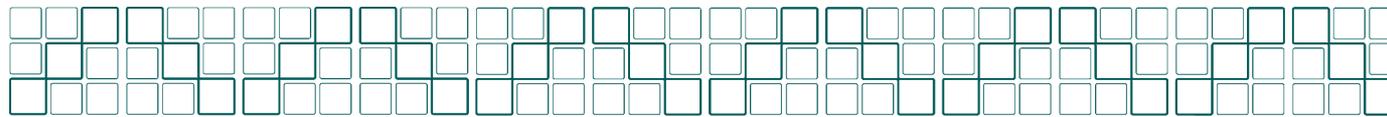
- Even during non-pandemic times, international students are:
 - More prone to mental health issues (e.g., depression)
 - Struggling with the local medical system
 - Less motivated to seek psychological services

- During the pandemic:
 - More isolated with stress of physically being away from family
 - Less access to public resources due to monetary, informational, language, or cultural barriers.
 - Face increased discrimination (especially Asian trainees)
 - Increased uncertainty about future (e.g., visa status)



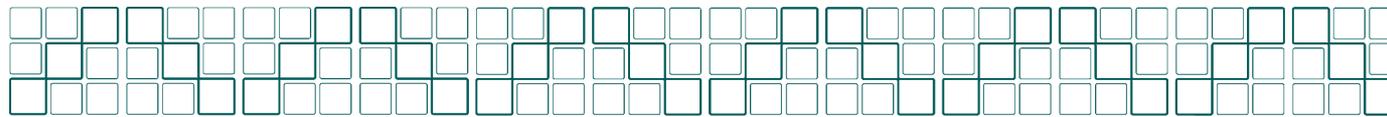
NIH COVID-19 Survey

- Half of all trainees (51%) experienced negative impact of being physically separated from coworkers.
- Negative impact on productivity
 - 69.4% of trainees reported having experienced lower productivity (vs. 19% for non-trainees)
- Career
 - 66.3% felt that the pandemic will have negative impact on their careers (vs. 22.7% for non-trainees)
- Job Satisfaction
 - 36.5% reported lower job satisfaction (vs 15.2% % for non-trainees)
- Use of NIH services for mental health and wellness support
 - 67% using OITE services
 - Anecdotally, we know some trainees do not feel they can participate in our activities because they are during work hours



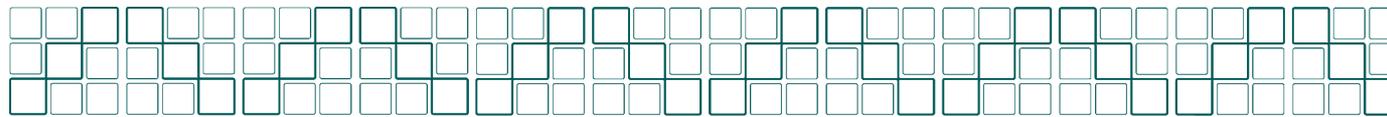
Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

- Type of depression related to changes in season, usually winter
- ~12 million people per year
- Symptoms:
 - Feeling depressed most of the day
 - Loss of interest in activities
 - Low energy
 - Problems sleeping
 - Changes in appetite or weight
 - Feeling sluggish or agitated
 - Having difficulty concentrating
 - Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
 - Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide



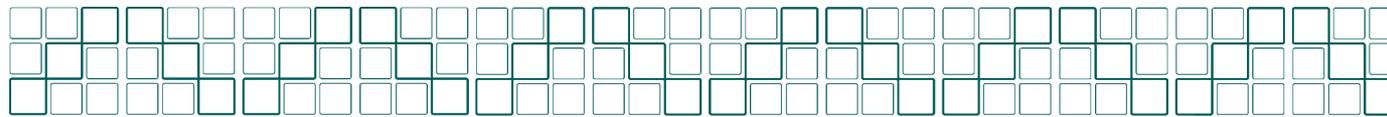
Protective Factors (I)

- The development and use of positive coping styles
 - OITE's Resilience and Mental Health and Wellness series
 - Wellness Wednesday Lunches
 - Drop-in discussion groups
 - 8-week wellness support groups
 - Wellness skills groups
 - Individual wellness advising and referrals for more support



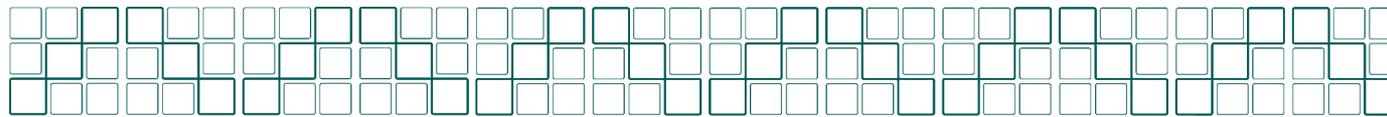
Protective Factors (II)

- The development and use of positive coping styles
- Enhanced social support
 - At the Lab/Branch/IC level (without discussing science)
 - OITE Buddy system for regular check-ins
 - Affinity group activities and supports for various communities
 - Important to engage in small group activities for conversation (not just one-way listening)



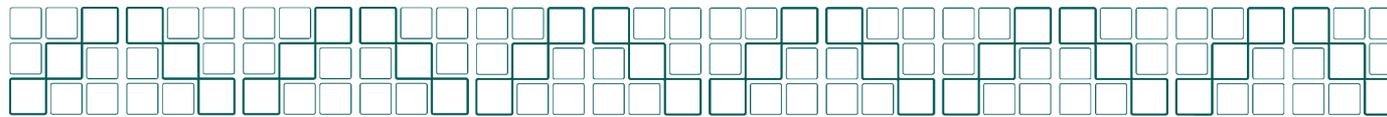
Protective Factors (III)

- The development and use of positive coping styles
- Additional social support
- Time to rest and recharge
 - Encourage time off, especially during daylight hours
 - Remember vacations even if travel is restricted
 - Be proactive about planning over the holidays
 - Support to develop and engage in hobbies
 - Careful attention to doom-scrolling



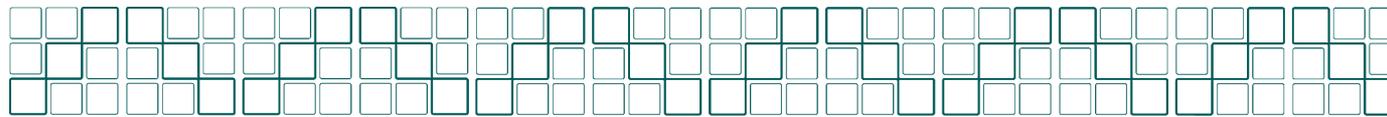
Protective Factors (IV)

- The development and use of positive coping styles
- Additional social support
- Time to rest and recharge
- Sense of (financial) stability
 - Understand that contextual factors do impact productivity
 - Address productivity issues up-front and with support
 - Discuss re-appointments and extensions early
 - Reach out about appointment flexibilities
 - Support parents by providing additional flexibilities
 - Give extra time and support to trainees interviewing remotely (less travel but more stress)



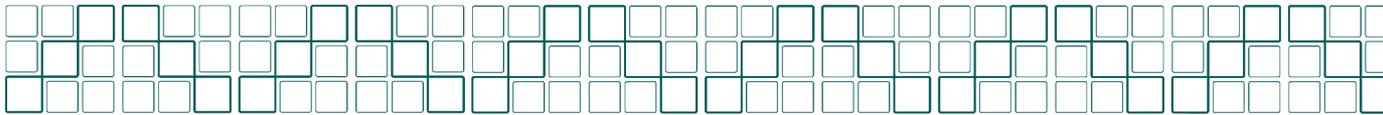
Protective Factors

- The development and use of positive coping styles
- Additional social support
- Time to rest and recharge
- Ability to get financial help when needed



Important OITE Resources

- Information at <https://www.training.nih.gov/wellness>
- Email OITE-WELLNESS@NIH.GOV for resources or an appointment with a wellness advisor
- **REMINDER: According to NIH COVID-19 survey, 67.2% of the trainees used OITE's Wellness resources during the pandemic.**
 - Let's make sure everyone who needs community and support has it!



Important NIH Resources across NIH

NIH wide resources

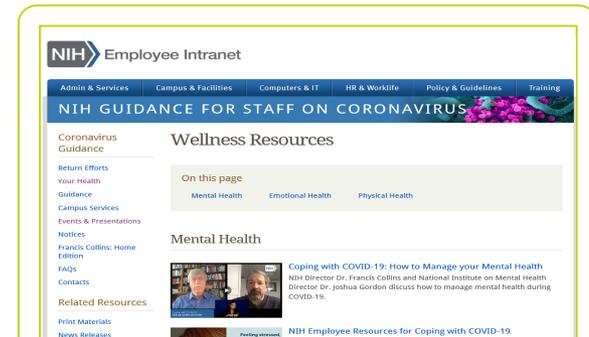
- [NIH Coronavirus Intranet](#)
- [Mental, Physical, and Emotional Health Resources](#)
- [How to Cope](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself and Your Family](#)
- [NIH Child and Family Services during COVID-19](#)
- [Strategies & Tools for Dealing with Stress During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [Telework and Leave Guidances](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)

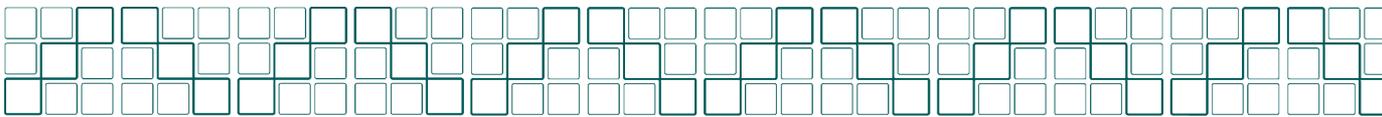
NIMH Resources

- [Coping with COVID-19 Shareable Resources](#)
- [Coping with Traumatic Events Health Topics](#)
- [I'm So Stressed Out! Fact Sheet](#)
- [My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?](#)
- [NIMH Resources on Child and Adolescent Mental Health](#)
- [Help for Mental Illness](#)

Outside Resources

- [CDC: What you need to know for daily activities](#)
- [WHO: Advice for the Public](#)
- [Maryland: Behavioral Health Administration Crisis Services Locator](#)

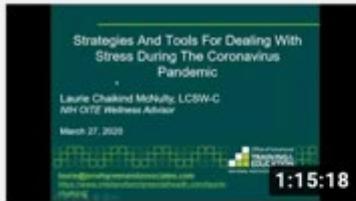




Helpful You Tube Videos

www.youtube.com/channel/UCQQHo_QnuBxdfcsRy4INGGw

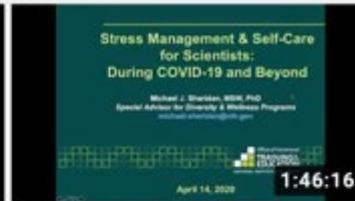
Wellness & Resilience ▶ PLAY ALL



Strategies and Tools for Dealing with Stress During...

NIH OITE
 772 views • 4 months ago

CC



Stress Management and Wellness for Scientists

NIH OITE
 294 views • 3 months ago

CC



Supporting the Mental Health and Wellness of Biomedical...

NIH OITE
 844 views • 3 months ago

CC



Becoming a Resilient Scientist...pandemic edition

NIH OITE
 327 views • 3 months ago

CC

Leadership, Mentorship, Management ▶ PLAY ALL

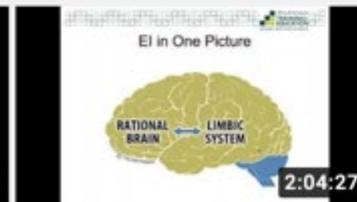


Managing Up to Maximize Mentoring Relationships



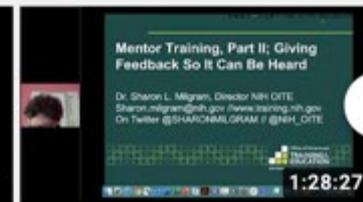
Self advocacy for scientists

NIH OITE

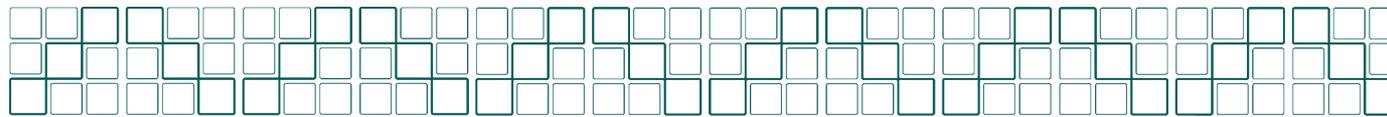


Leadership

NIH OITE



Sharpening Your Mentoring Skills Part 2



OITE Resilience Series

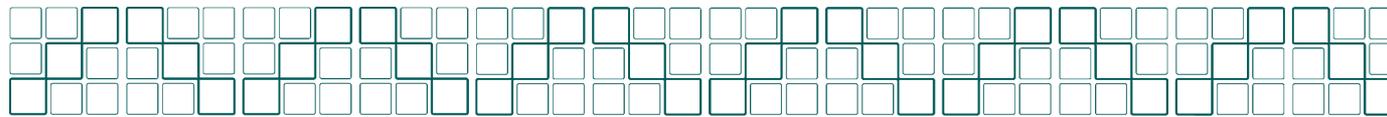
- Six-part series

- An introduction to wellness and resilience (Sept)
- Understanding cognitive distortions and imposter fears (Oct)
- Emotional intelligence and emotion in the workplace (Nov)
- Self-advocacy and assertiveness for scientists (Dec)
- Developing feedback resilience (Jan)
- Maximizing mentoring relationships (Feb)

- Monthly webinars with follow-up small group discussions; open to trainees **everywhere**

- Info at https://www.training.nih.gov/nih_becoming_a_resilient_scientist_series

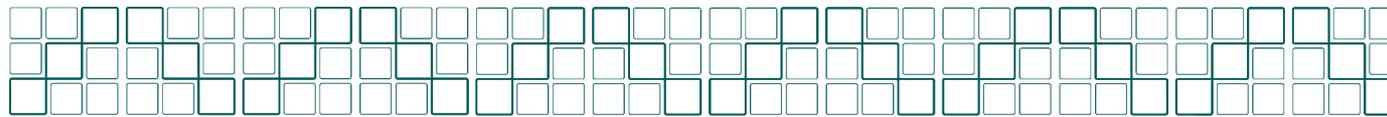
- Prior videos on the NIH OITE You Tube channel



OITE Mental Health Series

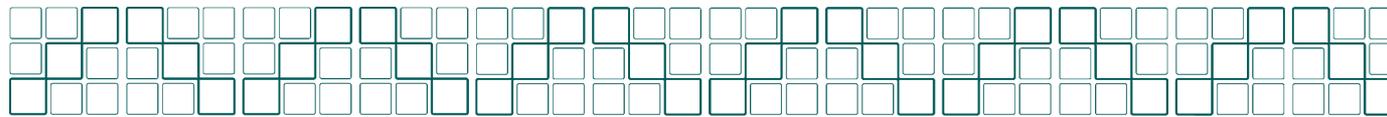
Topic	Date	Time (ET)
Suicide Prevention and Awareness	October 5, 2020	1:00 – 3:15 pm
Mental health and wellness through a cultural lens	November 2, 2020	1:00-3:15 pm
Addictive behaviors	December 1, 2020	12:00-2:15 pm
Wellness strategies for individuals and groups	January 11, 2021	1:00-3:15 pm
Anxiety and anxiety disorders	February 1, 2021	1:00-3:15 pm
Depression and other mood disorders	March 1, 2021	1:00-3:15 pm
Executive function	April 6, 2021	12:00-2:15 pm
Psychology of career decision-making	May 3, 2021	1:00-3:15 pm
Trauma (individual and group)	June 7, 2021	1:00-3:45 pm
Welcoming colleagues on the Autism Spectrum	July 12, 2021	1:00-3:15 pm

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0ktsXKJRZQ&list=PLxnpU66KqCch9kL_e1m0D93yclRQhIQLW
https://www.training.nih.gov/new_seminar_series_mental_health_and_well-being



Weekly Resources

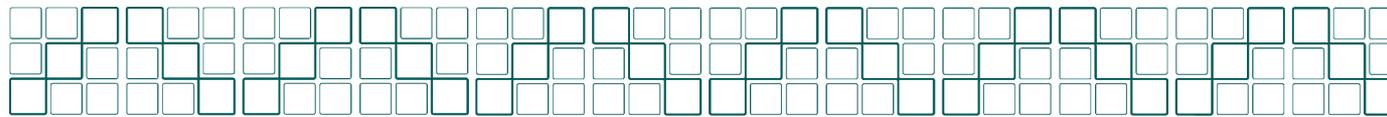
- Through OITE:
 - Guided meditations
 - Drop-in resilience support/discussion groups
 - Wellness Wednesday
 - Affinity group meetings and lunches
- Social activities through our trainee groups:
 - Postbac Committee
 - GSC
 - FelCom
 - VF Committee



Affinity Groups For Social/Emotional Support

- NAAF
- LGBT-FF
- The NIH-SACNAS Chapter
- Mom-Dad-Docs
- Fellows of All Abilities (FAAb)
- Veteran and Active-duty Members of the U.S. Military (and a Spouse/Partner Group)
- Parenting List

- Info at https://www.training.nih.gov/you_are_not_alone
- <https://www.training.nih.gov/listservs>



More Community Resources

■ Postbacs: [The Postbac Committee](#)

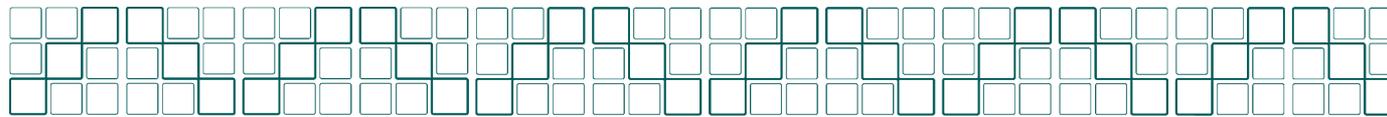
- Postbacc_L for for Postbac Seminar Series, Social, Service, Outreach, etc.
- ClubPCR Google Group for housing, carpooling, furniture, study materials, etc.
- Club PCR Facebook Page for social activities
- Instagram, Google Calendar, Slack

■ Grad Students: [The Grad Student Council \(GCS\)](#)

- Google Group: gs-underground (Email Kat Daly (kat.daly@nih.gov) or Katelynn McCann (katelyn.mccann@nih.gov) to join), Facebook: Graduate Student Underground, [GSC Slack Channel](#) (use your non-NIH email to join)

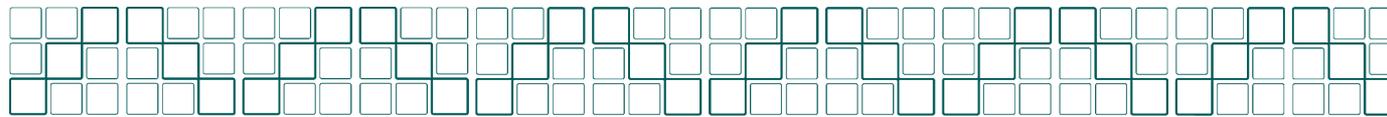
■ Postdocs: [FELCOM](#)

- Join FELLOW-L@list.nih.gov (<https://www.training.nih.gov/listservs>)
- Visit Facebook page: [Bethesda Postdocs](#)
- Join their Slack page with channels for game/trivia nights, yoga and workout classes, Bethesda Postdoc Running Club, networking, and more:
https://join.slack.com/t/bethesdapostdocs/shared_invite/zt-h67vb550-GM_t9zGrTAQWMSdSBfa0bA
- Visiting Fellow Committee is also having events--join this list to get more info:
<https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A0=visitingfellows>
 - Social events monthly, movie club, more!



Current Wellness Support Groups

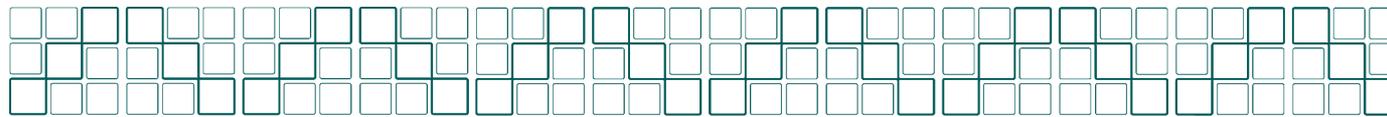
- Dealing with transitions
 - Imposter fears
 - Grad student support
 - International trainees
 - Being alone/feeling lonely
-
- To join, email OITE-WELLNESS@NIH.GOV



Skill Development Groups

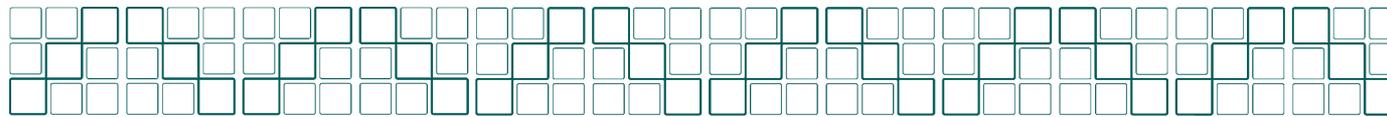
- Starting soon
 - Mindfulness
 - Stress management and wellness
- Coming in January
 - Emotional regulation
 - Assertiveness

Register at https://www.training.nih.gov/wellness_skill-building_groups



Drop-In Group Topics

- Addictive habits
- Anxiety & Depression
- Application Stress Management
- Difficult Relationships & Difficult Conversations
- Graduate Student
- Habits and habit formation
- International trainees
- Imposter Fears & Cognitive Distortions
- Self Compassion
- Trainees of Color
- Uncertainty (Covid and beyond)



What Can We Do To Help?

- Contacts:

- Sharon.milgram@nih.gov

- oite@nih.gov

- oite-wellness@nih.gov