

A7 - Healthy and supportive environments for PhD candidates: paving the way for good practices

Day	Day 1
Code	A7
Start time	15.30
Room	Dorset
Audience	Work with Doctoral Researchers
Presenters	<p>Dr Maria-Antonietta Buccheri, Career Development Working Group Vice-Chair, Marie Curie Alumni Association</p> <p>Dr Brian Cahill, Member of Governing Board of EuroScience/Junior Research Group Leader, Marie Curie Alumni Association</p> <p>Dr Mathias Schroijsen, Secretary, European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers</p> <p>Dr Mattias Bjornmalm, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow, Imperial College London</p>

Workshop overview:

In the closing session of the Vitae Conference 2017, Prof. Katia Levecque highlighted that PhD candidates in Flanders experience psychological distress and that the prevalence of developing a common psychiatric disorder was 2.43 times higher in PhD candidates compared to the similar cohort of highly educated people in the general population. Similarly, other studies in the field conclude that workers at universities are at higher risk of burnout if compared to the general population.

Stress may stem from the high workload early-career researchers are confronted with, the highly competitive atmosphere and consequent fear of failure, difficult work-life balance and job insecurity. However, intense work should not equal suffering.

Research is an activity that aims to confront the boundaries of human knowledge: it demands excellence from all researchers and significant intellectual creativity. There is a need for appropriate management strategies aimed at creating nurturing research environments with supportive networks for PhDs.

Workshop topics covered:

- Sharing existing literature data on mental health issues
- Introducing concrete examples of strategies to face mental health issues in research environments
- Stimulating discussion with the audience about stressors and risk factors related to ment

Themes covered:

- Research environment and culture; shaping an inclusive research environment; wellbeing and mental health, gender equality and diversity research integrity and open research
- Engaging research leaders, principal investigators and supervisors in professional development and nurturing the careers of researchers

Workshop outcomes:

- Raising awareness of the prevalence of mental health issues
- Encouraging wider and systematic data collection on mental health issues
- Collecting input from the participants as a basis for a repository of potential strategies and good practices th

Format:

The session will be held according to a mixed format. In the first part, speakers will illustrate data and experiences on the proposed theme. Once the stage is set, the session will proceed according to the interactive "Brain Walk" format.