
2025

GUIDELINES

*For protecting the mental health of
researchers in
emotionally demanding research*

Mary L. Quinton, Georgia A. Bird, Jennifer Cumming, Karen L. Shepherd,
Grace Tidmarsh, Maria R. Dauvermann, Sian L. Griffiths, Amanda Skeate,
Anita Fernandes, Tasneem Choucair, James Downs, Karen Harrison Denning,
Meghan H. McDonough, Lizzie Mitchell, Daniel J. A. Rhind, & Charlie Tresadern

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report outlines guidelines have been co-designed with an advisory group and based on previous research investigating best practices in emotionally demanding research across academic and non-academic contexts. The open access link to this paper can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2025.2464380>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work was supported by the QR research and knowledge funding: enhancing research culture fund

To reference the report, use the following format: Quinton, M. L., Bird, G. A., Cumming, J., Shepherd, K. L., Tidmarsh, G., Dauvermann, M. R., Griffiths, S. L., ... & Tresadern, C. (2025). Guidelines for protecting the mental health of researchers in emotionally demanding research. University of Birmingham, Birmingham UK.
<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.29892173>

CONTACT INFORMATION

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston B15 2TT
Email: m.quinton@bham.ac.uk

Please visit The SPRINT Project website for more information: <https://www.sprintproject.org/guidelines>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01.	Introduction
02.	Glossary of key terms
03.	Who are these guidelines for?
05.	How to use these guidelines
06.	Organizations and Academic institutions
09.	Funders/research councils
10.	Conferences
12.	Line manager/principal investigator/supervisor
14.	Individual researchers
15.	Signposting and support
16.	Notes and goal setting
17.	References and resources

01

INTRODUCTION

Research can be emotionally demanding, particularly when addressing certain topics or working within challenging environments. The mental health and well-being of researchers are often overlooked, despite their crucial role in producing high-quality, impactful, and meaningful research.

These guidelines have been co-designed with an advisory group across sectors, disciplines, and roles. The co-designed guidelines were based on extensive research into best practices for supporting researchers engaged in emotionally demanding research across academic and non-academic contexts. They aim to foster a culture of care, inclusivity, and psychological awareness that prioritizes researchers' well-being at every level of the research ecosystem.

These guidelines are designed for academic and non-academic research contexts and includes: organizations and academic institutions; funders and research councils; conferences; line managers, principle investigators and supervisors; and also the individual researcher.

By addressing each of these groups, the guidelines offer actionable steps to create safer, more supportive environments for researchers, ensuring that their mental health is protected without compromising their professional contributions.

The open access link to this paper can be found here:
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2025.2464380>.

02

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS



Emotionally demanding research

Emotionally demanding research requires “a tremendous amount of mental, emotional, or physical energy and potentially affects or depletes the researcher’s health or well-being.” [1]



Mental health

Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. It encompasses indicators of both mental illness and mental well-being. (3) The World Health Organization define mental health as “a state of well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.” [4]



Psychologically informed

Psychologically informed approaches, as part of the psychologically informed environment (PIE) model, are concerned with understanding the emotional and psychological needs of people and tailoring interactions and support accordingly. [2]



Content notes

Content notes are short overviews of the presentation (including posters) or meeting topics. They state the potentially emotionally demanding topics or methods that will be discussed. This provides attendees with insight into the nature of the talk and a choice whether to engage with the content.

03

WHO ARE THESE GUIDELINES FOR?

The responsibility for fostering a supportive research environment extends beyond individual researchers. The collective effort of peers, mentors, institutions, and their own community plays a pivotal role in creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere.

ORGANIZATIONS

Academic (Universities or higher education institutions and their affiliated research centers) and non-academic institutions, companies or agencies (e.g., local, national or international organisations or non-profit/charity groups) that engage researchers in research activities.

Deliberate and proactive investment and resource is required from organizations for best practice in emotionally demanding research.

FUNDERS/ RESEARCH COUNCILS

Research funders may include government bodies, academic institutions, industry partners, or charitable organisations

Funders/research councils' have a key role in providing financial support to facilitate research.

04

CONFERENCES


Large-scale gatherings arranged by organisations or professional governing bodies, or smaller, more focused meetings, depending on the context and purpose.

LINE MANAGERS/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS/SUPERVISORS

Individuals responsible to oversee and manage the delivery of a research project and therefore the team they support. They may also have additional roles such as academic/teaching responsibilities including supervising PhD students.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHER

Someone engaged in research in a variety of fields and disciplines, including academia, industry, and public, private, and third sector organisations.



A researcher may also have multiple identities, for example an academic researcher who also has lived/living experience.

05

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES



Not everything will work or be relevant for everyone. Rather, this is more a “toolbox” that you can draw upon and tailor to your own context.

- Treat topics deemed 'sensitive' with care, as such judgments are subjective and shaped by individual experiences.
- Be mindful that individuals can occupy multiple roles (e.g., researcher, academic, person with lived experience), and these roles often intersect to enhance research, policy, and practice.
- Regularly revisit the guidelines to reflect evolving sensitivities and adapt to individual needs and preferences.
- Recognize what is already working – and continue to do that! We recognize that organizations and their researchers often have established research policies and procedures. These guidelines have been designed to be used in conjunction with and to complement these existing practices and strategies, thereby expanding their research 'toolbox'.
- We recognize that the level of resource available to implement these guidelines will vary across different organizations, and that additional investment and buy-in is likely needed to increase the effectiveness of the guidelines' implementation

06 ORGANIZATIONS & ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

1

Normalize the conversation that emotionally demanding research can affect mental health [5,6]

This will help challenge mental health stigma and increase awareness that researchers, not just participants, are impacted by emotionally demanding research.

2

Adopting a psychologically/trauma informed approach

- A consistent psychologically-/trauma-informed approach across the organisation/institution (i.e., whole systems approach) [7-11]
- Set meeting ground rules and etiquette (e.g., only sharing agreed level of detail or information relevant to the research) [12-13]



3

Provide access to tailored mental health resource, not only generic mental health support offered by the organisation (e.g., Employee Assistance Programmes) [14-16, 6, 17]

Provide access to mental health support which can be tailored to emotionally demanding research experiences (e.g., reflective practice, clinical supervision, or bespoke counselling)



07 ORGANIZATIONS & ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

4



Provide access to peer support networks for those working in emotionally demanding research [17-19]

Create opportunities for those working on emotionally demanding topics to join peer support networks within the organization and/or academic institution

5

Provide access to mentoring schemes bespoke for those working within emotionally demanding research [20-22]

Provide trained mentors who can provide advice to support the welfare of employees working in emotionally demanding research



6



Allow flexibility with time when working within emotionally demanding research

Allow extra time to prepare, deliver, analyse, and reflect on the research when required (e.g., limiting time spent on emotionally demanding analysis)

08 ORGANIZATIONS & ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

7

Provide additional training for those involved in emotionally demanding research (e.g., line managers, supervisors, PIs, employees)

- Incorporate best practice in researcher mental health in emotionally demanding topics in staff inductions (e.g., limiting unnecessary exposure of material to others) [23-28]
- Psychologically informed or trauma-informed training [27,29]
- Training on how to effectively use guided reflection as a tool in emotionally demanding research [24,30]

8

Ethics committees to consider impact of research on researchers' mental health [31-34]

- Applications to include how the researchers' mental health will be looked after throughout the research
- Ethics committee members to signpost to resources for researcher mental health (e.g., peer support networks, mental health support)



What is one small step you can take as an organization/academic institution to promote mental health? Use our dedicated notes page (p.16) to help plan some goals



09 FUNDERS/RESEARCH COUNCILS

1

Include bespoke mental health support (e.g., counselling or reflective practice) as part of eligible costs for applications [24,35]

Funders should recommend to applicants to consider including bespoke mental health support as an eligible cost for emotionally demanding research projects.

2

Ensure appropriate and realistic timelines for grants including emotionally demanding research

- E.g. Qualitative projects should be long enough to allow breaks throughout data collection
- E.g. Projects including exposure to graphic material should be long enough so researchers do not have to work full time on this type of data

3

Include a compulsory section on researcher mental health within applications on emotionally demanding research

Require applicants to state how researcher mental health is going to be looked after throughout the proposed research



What is one small step you can take as a funder/research council to promote mental health? Use our dedicated notes page (p.16) to help plan some goals

10 CONFERENCES

1

Request and provide content notes on emotionally demanding research

- Include content notes as part of abstract submission
- Include content notes and signposting information as part of conference programme booklet
- Include content notes on session information outside of the room (i.e., before you go in) [36,37]
- Provide content notes on potentially emotionally demanding research and provide a reminder at the start of presentation

2

Provide designated quiet rooms for attendees if they wish to take a quiet break and/or decompress

Quiet rooms should be private and away from the noise of the conference. These rooms should be supportive of a calm environment.

[CLICK HERE, OR SCAN THE QR CODE, TO VIEW OR DOWNLOAD OUR FREE DOCUMENT FOR GUIDANCE ON EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING TOPICS FOR CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS AND DELEGATES](#)



1 1 CONFERENCES

4

Avoid reading potentially sensitive quotes out loud, so attendees have the choice whether to read it

This allows attendees the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they wish to engage with specific quotes or not, reducing the risk of secondary trauma.

5

Minimise risk of secondary trauma by only sharing detail within the remit of the presentation*

- Only share information within the remit and relevancy of the presentation, in alignment with the content note* [38,39]
- Set guidelines/ground rules for how Q+A/panel discussions will work (e.g., what is within remit for taking questions on)

**Note. If content notes are provided at the different stages as recommended above, then the risk of secondary trauma is reduced (as attendees have the choice whether to engage with the talk or not). These points are more in relation to ensuring the presentation covers content within the remit of what was stated in the abstract and content notes.*



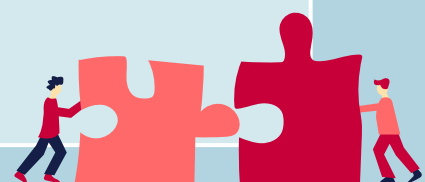
What is one small step you can take as a conference organiser to promote mental health? Use our dedicated notes page (p.16) to help plan some goals

12 LINE MANAGERS/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (PI)/SUPERVISORS

1

Set clear expectations with the researcher

- At recruitment stage, be clear on the nature of the work that may be emotionally demanding (e.g., types of data, methods) [28]
- Create a researcher mental health/self-care plan collaboratively between researcher and supervisor/line manager to proactively identify any support required [40,41]
- Allocate protected time for meetings on impact of research on mental health (e.g., review self-care plan)
- Limit time on emotionally demanding research (e.g., a couple of days per week) [28]
- Clarify boundaries of working relationship and signpost to organisational level policies, procedures and resource when appropriate (e.g., safeguarding protocols but also mental health support) [42]
- Signpost to peer support networks (e.g., communities of practice, buddy systems) for additional informal support when working in emotionally demanding areas [43]
- Discuss best practice on dissemination (e.g., working together with participants to ensure they are comfortable with how stories are shared)
- Manage endings explicitly and healthily (e.g., exit interview or an equivalent to reflect on what went well and what could have been done differently)



13 LINE MANAGERS/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (PI)/SUPERVISORS

2

Know your team

- Understand different learning and communication styles and personal experiences where relevant to the research
- Organize opportunities to get to know people outside of the work environment



4

Role model behaviour

- Establishing and maintaining boundaries between oneself and the research
- Embodying healthy behaviours like work-life balance and self-care [23,46]



What is one small step you can take as a line manager/PI/supervisor to promote mental health? Use our dedicated notes page (p.16) to help plan some goals

3

Offer opportunities for check-ins and debriefs

- Offer opportunities for regular general check-ins and debriefs for the team and individual researchers [17]
- Organize regular check-ins and debriefs especially during periods of data collection and analysis for the team and individual researchers [14,45]

14 INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHER

1

Deliberate engagement in activities away from the research [56-65]

- Go for a walk [47,54]
- Listen to some music or a podcast [47,54]
- Engage in creative activities (e.g., painting, colouring, drawing) [55,56]



2

Proactive behaviours to look after own mental health

- Engage in reflective tools and techniques (e.g., journaling) [17, 23, 57-61]
- Reflect on and integrate healthy lifestyle behaviours (e.g., physical activity, balanced diet, good sleep hygiene) [57,62]
- Be aware of and set boundaries for one's own limits (e.g., topics, types of data) [28,43]
- Limit time when scheduling, processing, and analysing emotionally demanding research (e.g., limiting number of interviews per day) [6,17 28,45]



What is one small step you can take as an individual research promote your mental health? Use our dedicated notes page (p.16) to help plan some goals

© 2025 University of Birmingham.

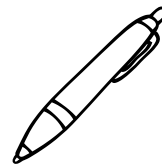


1 5 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

If you are struggling with your own mental health or would like some help and support, there are several resources available:

- UK NHS mental health services: Call 999 (for emergencies), 111, or attend your local NHS walk-in service
<https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Walk-in-centre/LocationSearch/663>
- Samaritans: Call 116 123 or visit
<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>
- Call Papyrus Mental Health Hope-line: 0800 068 4141
- Call SANEline a national out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, on 0300 304 7000 (open 4:30 to 10:30pm every day)
- Mind: Visit <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>
- For international emergency and non-emergency services and resources, filter by the relevant country on websites such as <https://findahelpline.com/> or <https://checkpointorg.com/global/>.

Please also refer to the mental health support resources within your own organisation, institution, and local services.



17 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

1. Kumar S, Cavallaro L. Researcher self-care in emotionally demanding research: a proposed conceptual framework. *Qual Health Res.* 2018 Mar;28(4):648–58. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317746377>
2. Johnson R, Haigh R. Social psychiatry and social policy for the 21st century: new concepts for new needs: the 'psychologically-informed environment'. *Ment Health Soc Incl.* 2010;14(4):30–5. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5042/mhsi.2010.0620>
3. Keyes CL. The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of health and social behavior.* 2002 Jun 1:207-22. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090197>
4. World Health Organization. Mental health [Internet]. World Health Organization. World Health Organization; 2022 [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
5. QUAHRC Methods Podcast: Co-producing research with young people with lived experience | QUAHRC [Internet]. QUAHRC. 2021 [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.quahrc.co.uk/resources/quahrc-methods-podcast-co-producing-research-with-young-people-with-lived-experience>
6. Loyle CE, Simoni A. Researching under fire: political science and researcher trauma. *PS Polit Sci Polit.* 2017;50(1):141–5. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516002328>
7. Eades DN. Managing stressors in a detention facility: the need for supporting and safeguarding staff. *J Adult Prot.* 2020;22(3):153–63. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAP-12-2019-0040>
8. Berger R. Studying trauma: indirect effects on researchers and self-and strategies for addressing them. *Eur J Trauma Dissociation.* 2021;5(1):100149. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejtd.2020.100149>
9. Sprang G, Lei F, Bush H. Can organizational efforts lead to less secondary traumatic stress? A longitudinal investigation of change. *Am J Orthopsychiatry.* 2021;91(4):443.
10. Loomis AM, Felt F. Knowledge, skills, and self-reflection: linking trauma training content to trauma-informed attitudes and stress in preschool teachers and staff. *Sch Ment Health.* 2021;13(1):101–13. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-020-09394-7>
11. Edelman NL. Trauma and resilience informed research principles and practice: a framework to improve the inclusion and experience of disadvantaged populations in health and social care research. *J Health Serv Res Policy.* 2023 Jan;28(1):66–75. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13558196221124740>
12. Ground rules for digital meetings – NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre [Internet]. [Nihr.ac.uk](https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/patient-and-public-involvement/ground-rules-for-digital-meetings/). 2025 [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/patient-and-public-involvement/ground-rules-for-digital-meetings/>

13. <https://blog.lucidmeetings.com/blog/a-mindfulness-based-technique-for-facilitating-a-group-through-a-sensitive-discussion/>
14. McMahon SA, Winch PJ. Systematic debriefing after qualitative encounters: an essential analysis step in applied qualitative research. *BMJ Glob Health*. 2018;3(5):e000837. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000837>
15. Kiyimba N, O'Reilly M. The risk of secondary traumatic stress in the qualitative transcription process: a research note. *Qual Res*. 2016;16(4):468–76. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115577013>
16. Velardo S, Elliott S. Prioritising doctoral students' wellbeing in qualitative research. *Qual Rep*. 2018;23(2):311–8. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3074>
17. Silverio SA, Sheen KS, Bramante A, Knighting K, Koops TU, Montgomery E, et al. Sensitive, challenging, and difficult topics: Experiences and practical considerations for qualitative researchers. *Int J Qual Methods*. 2022;21:16094069221124739. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221124739>
18. Woodhams J, Duran F. A model for secondary traumatic stress following workplace exposure to traumatic material in analytical staff. *Commun Psychol*. 2024;2(1):13. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-024-00060-1>
19. Ferreira MC. Let's discuss academic isolation and how to mitigate it [Internet]. University of Birmingham. 2023 [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/health-services-management-centre/research/projects/2023/mastery-managing-sensitive-topics-in-teaching>
20. Taylor S. The long shadows cast by the field: Violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher. *Fennia*. 2019;197(2):183–99. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.84792>
21. Baker S, Bellemore P, Morgan S. Researching in fragile contexts: Exploring and responding to layered responsibility for researcher care. *Womens Stud Int Forum*. 2023;98:102700. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102700>
22. Lawson R. Talking about distressing data, sensitive topics, and researcher well-being: where are all the men? [Internet]. University of Birmingham. 2023. Available from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/health-services-management-centre/research/projects/2023/mastery-managing-sensitive-topics-in-teaching>
23. Sikic Micanovic L, Stelko S, Sakic S. Who else needs protection? Reflecting on researcher vulnerability in sensitive research. *Societies*. 2019;10(1):3. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc10010003>
24. Smillie S, Riddell J. Supporting emotionally demanding research: Developing guidance for a university research centre. In: Clift BC, Costas Batlle I, Bekker S, Chudzikowski K, editors. *Qualitative researcher vulnerability*. Taylor & Francis; 2023. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003349266-6>

25. 1. Resources [Internet]. University of Birmingham. 2025 [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/psychology/research/protecting-the-protectors/resources>
26. Forward G. The benefits of middle management peer supervision in social work settings. *Mastery*. [Internet]. [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/health-services-management-centre/research/projects/2023/mastery-managing-sensitive-topics-in-teaching>
27. Goodwin J, Tiderington E. Building trauma-informed research competencies in social work education. *Soc Work Educ*. 2022;41(2):143–56. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2020.1820977>
28. Burrell A, Costello B, Hobson W, Morton R, Muñoz CG, Thomas K, et al. Being prepared for emotionally demanding research. *Commun Psychol*. 2023;1(1):9. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-023-00008-x>
29. Bluvstein I, Ifrah K, Lifshitz R, Markovitz N, Shmotkin D. Vulnerability and resilience in sensitive research: The case of the quantitative researcher. *J Empir Res Hum Res Ethics*. 2021;16(4):396–402. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/15562646211027418>
30. Fitzpatrick P, Olson RE. A rough road map to reflexivity in qualitative research into emotions. *Emotion Review*. 2015;7(1):49–54. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914544710>
31. Mallon S, Elliott I. The emotional risks of turning stories into data: An exploration of the experiences of qualitative researchers working on sensitive topics. *Societies*. 2019;9:62. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9030062>
32. Pearce R. A methodology for the marginalised: Surviving oppression and traumatic fieldwork in the neoliberal academy. *Sociology*. 2020;54(4):806–24. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520904910>
33. Kumar S, Cavallaro L. Researcher self-care in emotionally demanding research: A proposed conceptual framework. *Qual Health Res*. 2018;28(4):648–58. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317746377>
34. Committee on Publication Ethics. About our organisation. [Internet]. [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://publicationethics.org/about/our-organisation>
35. Dickson-Swift V. Undertaking qualitative research on trauma: impacts on researchers and guidelines for risk management. *Qual Res Organ Manag*. 2022;17(4):469–86. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-05-2021-2150>
36. Edelman N. Addressing researcher vulnerability with the trauma and resilience informed research principles and practices framework. In *Qualitative Researcher Vulnerability 2023* (pp. 94-120). Routledge.
37. Edelman N. Doing trauma-informed work in a trauma-informed way: understanding difficulties and finding solutions. *Health services insights*. 2023 Nov;16:11786329231215037. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/11786329231215037>

38. Trauma-informed services. [Internet]. [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.ticservicesltd.com/>
39. Isobel S. Trauma-informed qualitative research: some methodological and practical considerations. *Int J Ment Health Nurs*. 2021;30:1456–69. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12929>
40. Orr E, Durepos P, Jones V, Jack SM. Risk of secondary distress for graduate students conducting qualitative research on sensitive subjects: a scoping review of Canadian dissertations and theses. *Glob Qual Nurs Res*. 2021;8:2333393621993803. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393621993803>
41. Hammer LB, Dimoff JK, Mohr CD, Moffitt RL, Brady JM, Crain TL, et al. A framework for protecting and promoting employee mental health through supervisor supportive behaviors. *Occup Health Sci*. 2024;8:243–68. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41542-023-00171-x>
42. Rinkus MA, Kelly JR, Wright W, Medina L, Dobson T. Gendered considerations for safety in conservation fieldwork. *Soc Nat Resour*. 2018;31(12):1419–26. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2018.1484979>
43. Brougham PL, Uttley CM, Haley TM. Researcher safety: studying social deviance or criminal behavior. *J Crim Justice Educ*. 2023;34(1):53–70. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2050519>
44. McMahon SA, Winch PJ. Systematic debriefing after qualitative encounters: an essential analysis step in applied qualitative research. *BMJ Glob Health*. 2018;3(5):e000837. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000837>
45. Sterie AC, Potthoff S, Erdmann A, Burner-Fritsch IS, Oyine Aluh D, Schneiders ML. Dimensions of researcher vulnerability in qualitative health research and recommendations for future practice. *Int J Qual Methods*. 2023;22:16094069231183600. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183600>
46. Garrels V, Skåland B, Schmid E. Blurring boundaries: balancing between distance and proximity in qualitative research studies with vulnerable participants. *Int J Qual Methods*. Available from: 2022;21:16094069221095655.
47. Mental Health Foundation. Mental health information and resources [Internet]. London: Mental Health Foundation; [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>
48. Mental Health Foundation. Our best ever mental health tips - backed by research [Internet]. London: Mental Health Foundation; 2022 Nov [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/mhf-our-best-ever-mental-health-tips-backed-by-research-online.pdf>
49. Wallace WC, County K. Vicarious trauma and coping mechanisms: the lived experiences of a cohort of qualitative researchers in academe. *J Aggress Maltreat Trauma*. 2023:1–19.

50. Berger R. Studying trauma: indirect effects on researchers and self—and strategies for addressing them. *Eur J Trauma Dissociation*. 2021;5(1):100149.
51. Ma J, Lin P, Williams J. Effectiveness of nature-based walking interventions in improving mental health in adults: a systematic review. *Curr Psychol*. 2024;43(11):9521–39.
52. Ferdman A. Walking and its contribution to objective well-being. *J Plan Educ Res*. 2023;43(2):294–304. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X19875195>
53. NHS. Five steps to mental wellbeing [Internet]. London: NHS; [cited 2025 Apr 10]. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>
54. Sterckx A, Van den Broeck K, Remmen R, Keune H. Self-care and nature in the private and professional practice of healthcare professionals in Belgium. *Res Dir One Health*. 2023;1:e10.
55. Bojner Horwitz E, Spännäri J, Langley J, Jacobs B, Osika W. Taking care of the researcher—a nature and art-related activity retreat: sharing natural space puts humanity into perspective. *Work*. 2020;67(3):535–48.
56. AbiNader MA, Messing JT, Pizarro J, Kappas Mazzio A, Turner BG, Tomlinson L. Attending to our own trauma: promoting vicarious resilience and preventing vicarious traumatization among researchers. *Soc Work Res*. 2023;47(4):237–49. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svad016>
57. Kavanaugh KL, Campbell ML. Conducting end-of-life research: strategies for success. *Nurs Sci Q*. 2014;27(1):14–9. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318413509711>
58. Gill A. Reflexivity and lived experience of out-of-home care: positionality as an early parenthood researcher. *Affilia*. 2022;37(4):664–83. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099211061210>
59. Brown N. Making the most of your research journal. Bristol: Policy Press; 2021.
60. Mishra P, Gupta A. Exploring the use of diary entries for qualitative researchers: mitigating challenges when investigating sensitive topics on Indian women. *Qual Rep*. 2024;29(5):1279–98. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2024.6330>
61. Karcher K, McCuaig J, King-Hill S. (Self-) reflection / reflexivity in sensitive, qualitative research: a scoping review. *Int J Qual Methods*. 2024. Advance online publication. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241261860>
62. De Bruin EI, Formsma AR, Frijstein G, Bögels SM. Mindful2Work: effects of combined physical exercise, yoga, and mindfulness meditations for stress relief in employees. A proof of concept study. *Mindfulness*. 2017;8:204–17. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-016-0593-x>