

WELLBEING PLAN

For Researchers

The SPRINT Project

Sport psychology research
in new territories



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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 research.

This well-being plan is designed based on best practices for protecting the mental health of researchers in emotionally demanding research (Quinton et al., 2025). It is a resource for you, as a researcher, to reflect on your well-being and create an action plan for safeguarding your mental health. It is also encouraged for supervisors/line managers to complete this plan too.

This iterative tool should be shared with supervisors or line managers, to articulate and understand your needs and boundaries. There is no right or wrong way to use this plan, it can be made adaptable to your specific needs and context.

For more information and resources, visit www.sprintproject.org

Please reference this tool using the following format:

Quinton, M. L., Bird, G. A., Cumming, J., Skeate, A., ... & Tresadern, C. (2025).

Guidelines for protecting the mental health of researchers in emotionally demanding research: wellbeing plan. University of Birmingham, Birmingham UK.



ASSESSING YOURSELF

BEGINNING OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

Our well-being as researchers is important to reflect on regularly. There may be times when everything is going well, but there may also be times when it is difficult to know we are struggling. This page provides a tool for you to proactively check-in with yourself and should be done every 6 months over your research career. To assist you with this, copies are provided throughout (p.7) and at the end of this document (p.12).

Y = yes; N = no; ? = sometimes

Physical well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Get enough sleep	☐	☐	☐
Eat healthy	☐	☐	☐
Get Regular exercise	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			

Psychological well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Take time to relax	☐	☐	☐
Enjoy my research	☐	☐	☐
Have a good support system	☐	☐	☐
Practice self-reflection and mindfulness	☐	☐	☐
Switch off from my research	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			

Social well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Feel connected to colleagues	☐	☐	☐
Make time for social activity	☐	☐	☐
Set Boundaries	☐	☐	☐
Say no when necessary	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			



MY BOUNDARIES - PART 1

RISKS AND TRIGGERS

Thinking ahead about possible challenges can help you protect your well-being. The boxes below invite you to reflect on how your research might affect you emotionally or mentally. Anything you write down as a potential challenge may not actually happen, but it's helpful to name it just in case. Likewise, things you don't mention now might still catch you off guard later. The tool in this section is here to help you prepare for both. It is recommended that you complete this together with your supervisor or line manager.

TOPICS I MIGHT RESEARCH

TOPICS I MIGHT FIND
EMOTIONALLY DEMANDING

TYPES OF DATA I WILL USE
e.g., audio, visual, text

TYPES OF DATA I MIGHT FIND
EMOTIONALLY DEMANDING

MY BOUNDARIES - PART 2

Collecting and analysing data can be emotionally demanding. This page will help you to plan your time for handling data. Including regular check-ins and debriefs is also important. This page helps you and your supervisor/line manager to manage expectations, such as limiting the number of data collections per day and analysis per week.

WHAT TIME BOUNDARIES DO I WANT TO SET WHEN SCHEDULING,
COLLECTING, AND/OR EXTRACTING DATA?

e.g., no more than 1-2
interviews per day

(this depends on your
research, e.g., field work
might be more
nuanced)

WHAT TIME BOUNDARIES DO I WANT TO SET WHEN ANALYSING MY DATA?

e.g., taking an hour's
break between
reading/transcriptions

HOW OFTEN WILL I CHECK-IN AND DEBRIEF WITH MY
SUPERVISOR/LINE MANAGER?

JOURNALLING & PLANNING

Proactively prioritising your well-being helps you be better prepared for anticipated and unanticipated challenges. Here is a space for you to plan and consider self-care strategies.

THINGS I CAN DO EACH DAY
THAT WILL MAKE ME FEEL
PREPARED FOR RESEARCH

WHO I CAN REACH OUT TO FOR
SUPPORT

e.g., line manager, research team,
peer support networks

WHAT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
SHOULD I AVOID WHEN I AM
HAVING A DIFFICULT DAY

HOW I CAN PLAN THE IDEAL
PHYSICAL WORKSPACE

e.g., at home or in the
office, are there people I
want/can have around me?

SELF-CARE

In line with the UK National Health Service, there are things we can do at work and at home to protect our well-being. <https://dghscp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NES-Wellbeing-Planning-Tool-final.pdf>

For this section, consider what you might do to psychologically, physically, and socially recharge.

MY SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

AT WORK:

AT HOME: (E.G., SLEEP HYGIENE)



ASSESSING YOURSELF

DURING MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

Certain times in your research career might be more challenging than others, such as during periods of data collection and analysis. Data collection is a prime example of a time where this check list should be re-addressed. Are your physical, psychological, and social well-being needs being met?

Y = yes; N = no; ? = sometimes

Physical well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Get enough sleep	☐	☐	☐
Eat healthy	☐	☐	☐
Get Regular exercise	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			

Psychological well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Take time to relax	☐	☐	☐
Enjoy my research	☐	☐	☐
Have a good support system	☐	☐	☐
Practice self-reflection and mindfulness	☐	☐	☐
Switch off from my research	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			

Social well-being

Do I...	Y	N	?
Feel connected to colleagues	☐	☐	☐
Make time for social activity	☐	☐	☐
Set Boundaries	☐	☐	☐
Say no when necessary	☐	☐	☐
NOTE:			



My strategies are working:

NO

[illegible]

A blank sheet of lined paper with 15 horizontal blue lines, framed by a brown border. The bottom corners feature decorative brown and yellow floral patterns with green leaves.

OTHER REFLECTIONS

Anything else you wish to reflect on?

[illegible]

SEEKING SUPPORT

If you are struggling with your own mental health or would like some help and support, there are several resources available in the UK. Use the final resource to check for international services:

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/](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.



ASSESSING YOURSELF

Spare copy for you to print and use as and when required

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NOTE:			



This tool is based on a recent academic manuscript, 'Best practices for supporting researchers' mental health in emotionally demanding research across academic and non-academic contexts' (Quinton et al., 2025), and subsequent guidelines for supporting the mental health of researchers. Access to both of these resources is free.

Find the article here: Quinton, M. L., Shepherd, K. L., Cumming, J., Tidmarsh, G., Dauvermann, M. R., Griffiths, S. L., ... Tresadern, C. (2025). Best practices for supporting researchers' mental health in emotionally demanding research across academic and non-academic contexts. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2025.2464380>

And the guidelines here: <https://www.sprintproject.org/guidelines>

You can also access a range of free grounding resources at <https://www.sprintproject.org/resources>



<https://www.sprintproject.org/>

