

GUIDELINES

FOR RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Protecting mental health in emotionally demanding research

1 - Normalize the conversation that emotionally demanding research can affect your mental health



- Start having regular conversations with your colleagues about how you are feeling, particularly during and after the research.
- Reach out to people, to help kick-start discussions on your mental health at work.

2 - Adopt a psychologically informed approach

- Ensure this approach is consistently embedded across the whole organisation (whole systems approach).
- Set ground rules and etiquette at meetings, e.g., only sharing appropriate information.

Scan the QR code to read this paper for more information on psychologically informed research cultures!



3 - Provide access to tailored mental health resources

- Provide access to bespoke, not generic, mental health support, which can be tailored to emotionally demanding research experiences.

For example:
Reflective practice
Clinical supervision
Bespoke counselling

4 - Provide access to peer support networks for those working in emotionally demanding research

- Organise meet-ups, events and other opportunities for peers to connect with each other.
- Join peer support networks within or outside of the organization.

Check out these links for examples of peer support networks!

<https://www.srnmidlands.com/>
<https://www.researcherresilience.com/>



5 - Provide access to mentoring schemes bespoke for those working within emotionally demanding research

- Ensure there is the option for trained mentors to provide advice, to support the welfare of employees working in emotionally demanding research.



7 - Provide training for those involved in emotionally demanding research

Provide researcher and staff training on best practice in working within emotionally demanding research, for example:

- Limiting unnecessary exposure of material to others
- Psychologically informed or trauma-informed training
- Creating well-being plans
- Using guided and ongoing reflection

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.

For example, limiting time spent on emotionally demanding analysis (i.e., no more than 2 days per week).



Scan this QR code to read the full guidelines



8 - Ethics committees to consider impact of research on researchers' mental health (academic institutions)



- 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).