Welcome!

Thank you for being interested in our survey!

Many people struggle with their mental health during their time in academia; if you know someone who has been experiencing difficulties, we are interested in learning about your experience.

By gathering this information we hope to inform better care for people in academia who go through difficult times, as well as for those who support them.

This survey will take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You will not receive any compensation, and your responses will be anonymous. You can decide to withdraw your participation at any point during the process by simply closing the survey.

Your consent

Please look through the study information below. By clicking on the "Next" button at the bottom of the page, you give your consent to take part in the survey, and you also confirm that you have read the information on this page and understood that:

- **Your participation is anonymous, voluntary, and that you are free to withdraw at any time by closing your browser.**
- **Your data will be kept securely and confidentially for as long as is necessary for this research, in accordance with GDPR regulations.**
- **Results obtained by analyzing your data may be used in features articles, scientific papers, reports and presentations. You can choose or refuse to let us use the answers you give to optional open questions as quotes in these materials. Your anonymous, non-analyzed data may be made available to the community for further analysis.**

This survey is led by Dr Lucy Cheke (Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge) and the eLife features team. eLife is an open journal in the life sciences, which is funded by the Wellcome Trust, HHMI, the Max Planck Society and the Knut and Alice Wallenberg foundation.

Eligibility
I certify that I am 18 years of age or older. I understand that this survey is unpaid.

Confidentiality and anonymity
This survey does not require or use any information that would allow the data you provide to be linked to you. There are a number of open questions (which are optional) where you are free to write about your experiences and to share your thoughts. Should your answers contain details that would allow yourself or other individuals to be identified, this information will be redacted and deleted from the dataset.

Withdrawal
You can withdraw from the study at any point by simply closing your tab or browser.
If you want to discuss the survey or your participation with us, you can contact us at features@elifesciences.org. Please note that because the data you share is anonymous, it may be impossible for us to provide you with a copy of your data, to stop processing your data, or to delete your data.

Data storage
Data are collected through a GDPR-compliant service, SurveyMonkey. At the end of the project, the research team will download and delete the data from SurveyMonkey. Only the immediate research team will have access to the data at that stage. The anonymous data will be kept for a minimum of 10 years, in accordance with good research practice.

Data usage
Results from groups of individuals (and potentially, if you give us explicit consent, quotes from your answers to open questions) may be used to write reports, data-led features articles (e.g. in eLife), presented at conferences, written up in journals, and used by professionals who work towards improving research culture. Anonymous, non-analyzed data may be shared with the community as part of collaborations, joint projects or open access.
Please see https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data for further information about the University of Cambridge's use of personal data.

Content warning
Certain questions will broadly and briefly mention mental health difficulties (e.g. suicidal ideation, self-harm) that could be caused by difficult events (e.g. bullying, sexual harassment). If you feel distressed or unsettled as a result, please do not hesitate to contact the resources we have listed below.
If you need support, the Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 (UK number, 24/7) or by email at jo@samaritans.org; in the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255 and in Australia the crisis service Lifeline is 13 11 14. Please visit www.befrienders.org to find other international helplines.

Ethics Committee Approval
This project has received ethical approval from the Cambridge University Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (reference number for this application is 2018-19/35).

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with us (features@elifesciences.org), and we will aim to answer within a few days.

By clicking on the "Next" button you confirm you want to take part in this survey

Your overall experience

We are interested in learning about the interactions you may have had with people conducting research in academia. In particular, we would like to hear about the support you may or may not have provided to individuals who experience mental health issues. By support, we mean any action (such as actively listening, giving advice, providing practical help etc.) done with a desire to help them.

1. I have provided support to someone who was doing research and who was struggling with their mental health:

- ( ) No
- ( ) Yes, to one individual
- ( ) Yes, to between one and five individuals
- ( ) Yes, to more than five individuals
- ( ) I am not sure
- ( ) Prefer not to answer

2. I have been in a situation when I thought someone in academia needed help, but I couldn't or didn't provide support:

- ( ) No
- ( ) Yes, once
- ( ) Yes, a few times
- ( ) Yes, often
- ( ) I am not sure
- ( ) Prefer not to answer

3. If yes: I didn't provide support because (tick all that applies)

☐ I didn't think it was my responsibility

☐ I wasn't sure the person actually needed help

☐ The person was difficult to approach, or I didn't think they wanted to be approached

☐ I didn't know what to do

☐ I didn't have time to help

☐ I was already supporting someone else (in or out of the lab)

☐ I felt someone else was in a better position to intervene

☐ The timing was wrong (e.g. you were about to leave the lab)

☐ I was struggling with my own mental wellbeing, or did not have the emotional resources required

☐ Intervening would have put me in a complicated position (e.g. helping the person may have been construed as taking a side in a conflict).

☐ I am not sure

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Your experience supporting others

When answering the following questions, please consider the interactions you have had with the person you have most recently supported who was doing research and struggling with their mental health. This includes someone who you may still be supporting. If this could apply to several individuals, please choose the experience related to the person with whom you had the most recent interaction.

1. During my supporting role, I was:

○ An undergraduate student

○ A Masters student (research or taught Masters)

○ A PhD student

○ A postdoctoral researcher (postdoc)

○ A technician, research assistant, lab manager, field coordinator or other lab staff

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (less than 5 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (5 to 10 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (10 or more years' experience)

○ A non-academic staff member in contact with people doing research (e.g. university admin staff)

○ Not in academia

○ Prefer not to answer

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

2. It was part of my official job description to be in charge of the person I helped:

○ No

○ Yes

○ I am not sure

○ Prefer not to answer

3. As I was providing support, I was struggling with my own mental health:

○ No

○ Yes

○ I am not sure

○ Prefer not to answer

4. I was helping more than one person at the same time (in my professional and personal life):

◯ No

◯ Yes

◯ I am not sure

◯ Prefer not to answer

5. When I provided support, I was working in the following country:

[   ]

Who did you support?

1. The person I supported was:

○ An undergraduate student

○ A Masters student (research or taught Masters)

○ A PhD student

○ A postdoctoral researcher (postdoc)

○ A technician, research assistant, lab manager, field coordinator or other lab staff

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (less than 5 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (5 to 10 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (10 or more years' experience)

○ Prefer not to answer

○ Other (please specify)

2. To be the best of my knowledge, the person I was supporting was struggling with (select all that applies):

☐ Perfectionism

☐ Burn out

☐ Low mood or depression (diagnosed by a professional)

☐ Low self-esteem

☐ Anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder (diagnosed by a professional)

☐ Sleep problems

☐ Panic attacks

☐ Suicidal thoughts

☐ Self harm

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Bereavement

☐ Substance abuse (alcohol/drugs)

☐ Eating disorders

☐ ADHD or ADD (diagnosed by a professional)

☐ Bipolar disorder (diagnosed by a professional)

☐ Post-traumatic stress disorder (diagnosed by a professional)

☐ A personality disorder (e.g. OCD; diagnosed by a professional)

☐ I am not sure

☐ Prefer not answer

3. I believe the following factor(s) played a role in the person's struggles (select all that applies):

- [ ] Issues with work progress (e.g. failed experiments, problem with fieldwork etc.)
- [ ] Issues with workload
- [ ] Conflict or difficult relationship with supervisors
- [ ] Bullying or harassment in the research place
- [ ] Isolation or loneliness
- [ ] Culture shock or homesickness
- [ ] Problems with funding or stipend
- [ ] Administrative or logistical problems (e.g. visa, accommodation)

- [ ] Sexual assault or sexual harassment in the research place
- [ ] Discrimination or racism in the research place
- [ ] Poor physical health that interfered with their work
- [ ] Lack of accommodation from the institution for health conditions or disabilities not related to mental health
- [ ] Lack of accommodation from the institution for mental health conditions or disabilities
- [ ] I don't believe the person's problems were related to or influenced by their research role
- [ ] I am not sure
- [ ] Prefer not to answer

- [ ] Other (please specify)

[   ]

4. The person received at least some professional help as I was supporting them:

- ( ) No
- ( ) Yes, before I started to support them
- ( ) Yes, after I started to support them
- ( ) Yes, but I am not sure when they started to receive it
- ( ) I am not sure
- ( ) Prefer not to answer

5. What type of support do you think was most lacking or insufficient for the person you supported?

- [ ] Support from friends and family outside of academia
- [ ] Support from peers and colleagues
- [ ] Support from supervisors and managers
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Institutional measures (e.g. extensions, intermission)
- [ ] Support from mental health professionals within the institution
- [ ] Support from health professionals outside of the institution

[   ]

The support you provided

1. My support lasted:

○ Less than six months

○ Between six months and a year

○ Over a year

○ I am still supporting them, and started less than six months ago

○ I am still supporting them, and started more than six months ago

○ I am not sure

○ Prefer not to answer

2. When supporting the person (select all that applies):

These options are extensive and are by no means an indication of what should have been done

☐ I suspected they were struggling and actively helped them open up

☐ I signposted them to resources they could access to get help

☐ I actively helped them get access to resources (e.g. assisted them with making appointments)

☐ I provided emotional support, online and/or in person (e.g. listened to them, try to reassure them etc.)

☐ I gave them practical advice on how to manage their mental health (e.g. discussed medication, helped them establish healthy routines etc.)

☐ I provided additional practical help with work (e.g. helped them conduct experiments or write, took on some of their work)

☐ I provided practical help in their personal life (e.g. helped them sort out administrative issues)

☐ I was present with them during an intense moment of crisis (e.g. panic attack, self harm)

☐ I made alternative work arrangements for them (e.g. allowed them to go on leave, extended deadlines)

☐ I advocated for the person within my institution

☐ I am not sure

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other (please specify)

3. Optional: Please share if there were anything you wish you could have done but did not get to do
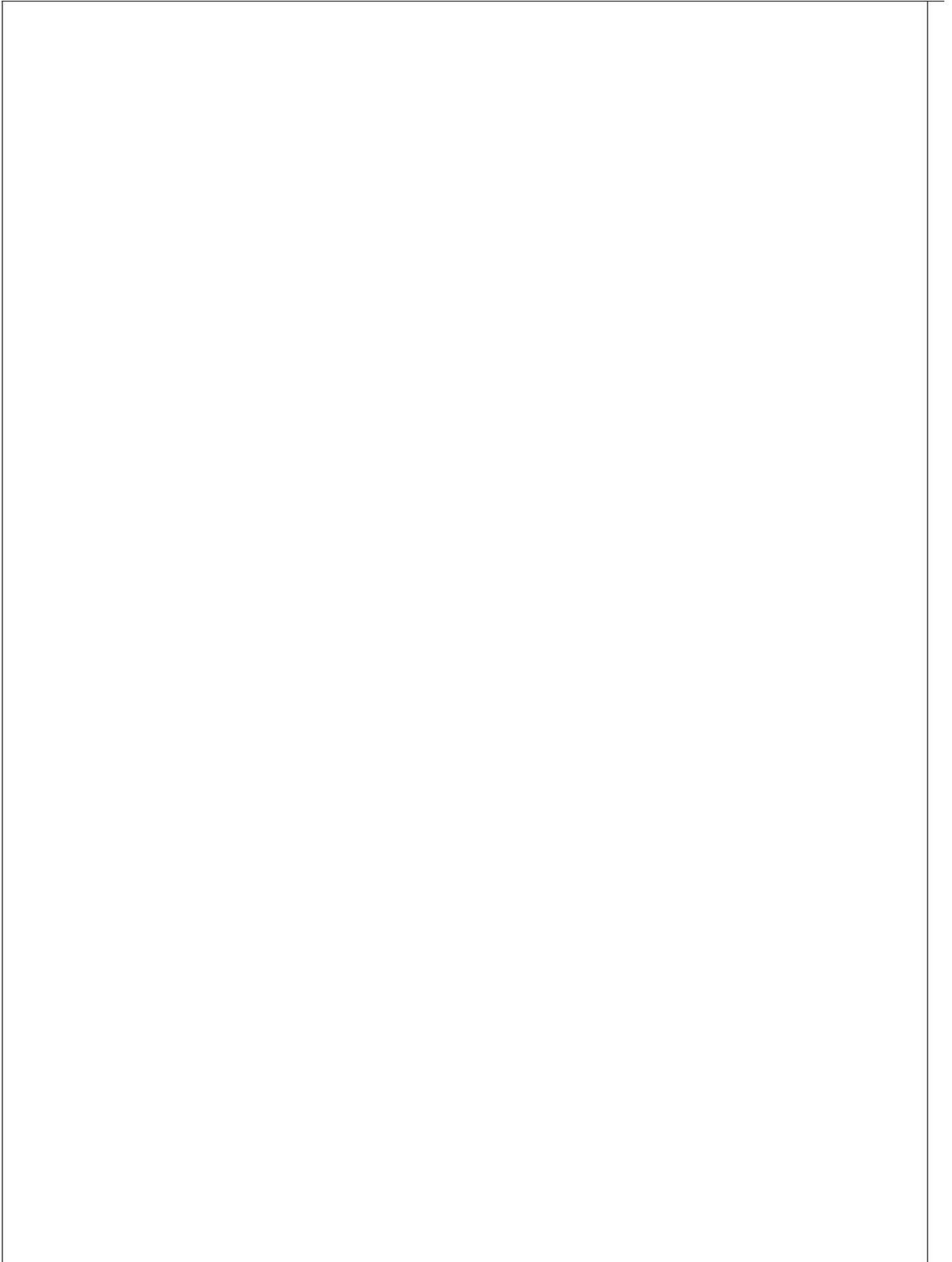
How did you feel about your supporting role?

1. When providing support, I felt that:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/Prefer not to answer
I was comfortable discussing mental health problems	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was confident in my ability to do or say the right thing	○	○	○	○	○	○
The experience was emotionally draining or stressful	○	○	○	○	○	○
The experience took a lot of my time	○	○	○	○	○	○
The experience negatively impacted my academic work	○	○	○	○	○	○
The experience had an impact on my personal life (e.g. you were thinking about it outside of work)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being in a supporting role was personally rewarding	○	○	○	○	○	○
I made a positive difference in someone's life	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other people came to me for help because they knew I was providing support	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. Please list up to five words to describe your experience

What support did you feel was available to you in your supporting role?

1. While I was providing support to someone struggling with their mental health:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Non Applicable/Prefer not to answer
I felt supported or valued by my institution (e.g. managers, department) for the help I was providing	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt supported or valued by my colleagues (e.g. other members of the lab) for the help I was providing	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt supported or valued by my friends, partners and family outside of academia for the help I was providing	○	○	○	○	○	○
I felt valued by the person I was helping	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. I needed emotional support (i.e. to be able to talk to someone about my feelings) related to my supporting role (select all that applies):

☐ No

☐ Yes, but I didn't find it

☐ Yes, and it was offered by institutional resources

☐ Yes, and I found it with my peers and colleagues

☐ Yes, and I found it with my friends, partners and family outside of academia

☐ I am not sure

☐ Prefer not answer

☐ Other (please specify)

3. I needed practical information (e.g. advice, guidelines, training...) to help me in my supporting role:

○ No, I did not need information

○ No, I had already received information before

○ Yes, I needed information

○ I am not sure

○ Prefer not to answer

○ Other (please specify)

Accessing the resources you needed

1. My experience with the following resources to inform my supporting role:

	Accessed easily	Accessed with difficulty	Needed, but not accessed	Not needed	I am not sure	Prefer not to answer
Advice from colleagues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Advice from friends, partners and family outside of academia	○	○	○	○	○	○
Advice from online scientific communities (Twitter, Facebook groups)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Written resources (leaflets, guidelines)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Specific mental health training (workshops, courses...)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Specific advice from professionals	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[ ]

2. If applicable: What were the main barriers to you accessing the resources you needed to inform your role (select all that applies)?

☐ They were not available

☐ They were difficult to find

☐ I did not have the time to find or access them

☐ I did not have the financial resources to find or access them

☐ The resources I accessed were not useful

☐ Other (please specify)

[ ]

3. Optional: What did you most need support or information with during your experience?

[ ]

4. Optional: Which resource(s) did you find the most useful?

Getting to know you

1. Your age

2. With which gender do you most identify?

○ Man

○ Non-Binary

○ Woman

○ Prefer not to answer

○ Prefer to specify:

3. Do you identify as a member of an under-represented community or minority (select all that applies)?

☐ No

☐ Yes, because of my ethnicity

☐ Yes, because of my gender identity or gender expression

☐ Yes, because of my sexual orientation

☐ Yes, because of my disability status

☐ Yes, because of my socio-economic background

☐ I am not sure

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Prefer to specify:

4. Your current role

○ An undergraduate student

○ A Masters student (research or taught Masters)

○ A PhD student

○ A postdoctoral researcher (postdoc)

○ A technician, research assistant, lab manager, field coordinator or other lab staff

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (less than 5 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (5 to 10 years' experience)

○ An independent researcher or a group leader (10 or more years' experience)

○ A non-academic staff member in contact with people doing research (e.g. university admin staff)

○ Not in academia

○ Prefer not to answer

○ Other (please specify)

5. If applicable: your research field

6. Overall, I feel that:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/Prefer not to answer
My research environment is very competitive	○	○	○	○	○	○
There is a toxic research culture in my research environment	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have gone through times in my life when my mental health was poor	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a good understanding of mental health issues	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. Would you consent to your answers to open questions being quoted anonymously in articles or reports that summarize the results of this survey?
Please note that that any information you may have provided in these answers that could help to identify yourself or others will be deleted by the research team.

◯ No

◯ Yes

8. Optional: Please share with us any thoughts or remarks you have regarding supporting people in academia who struggle with their mental health.

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Please click on "Done" to exit the survey.

Thank you for taking part in this survey, your experience is very valuable to us. Please consider sharing this questionnaire with friends and colleagues on Facebook and Twitter.

If you would like to learn more about how to support people with mental health problems, please see here: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/