

# BEING AN ACADEMIC MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

This poster explores some of the common stressors that academics, including professors, experience in their strive for academic success.



## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

Given the competitive environment of research, keeping concurrent is vital to sustain your career. Pressure can impact mental health.



## RACE TO THE BOTTOM

Saying no to opportunities can be very difficult even if it means overstretching. There always seems to be someone else willing to go further to be successful, like working extremely long hours.



## EMOTIONAL FATIGUE

Often part of the job is to support and mentor PhD and undergrad students, having to listen and help sort their problems, but very little support exists for professors themselves.



## MANAGING REJECTION

Unfortunately most activities lead to repeated rejection. It is hard to get used to rejection, particularly when your success hangs in the balance.



## IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

Being surrounded by people brilliant at what they do can make you question if you deserve to be where you are and lose confidence.



## TOP-DOWN PRESSURE

Often as an academic it can feel impossible to say no to requests from senior management, increasing workloads and strain.



## PLATE JUGGLING

Balancing research, teaching, student mentoring, marking, outreach and admin work can lead to feelings of guilt and anxiety due to being stretched too thin.



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

With regular academic performance reviews to evaluate what impact you bring to the university, there is little space to breathe. Metrics feel unrelenting.



## WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Trying to be the best in your field and balancing caring responsibilities, or simply wanting a life outside of work can lead to guilt and burnout. With workloads so high it results in no time to do anything fun.



## COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Often feeling pitted against others, be it members of your own department, other departments, or universities, it can be hard to find allies and peers to talk to. Competition over collaboration is fostered.



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Academia is not a meritocracy even though it often pretends to be. People are often discriminated against due to sexuality, gender, race, disability and/or faith.



## CREATE A FAÇADE OR FAIL

Admitting that you are not coping due to pressures can be perceived as weakness. This also makes it hard to disclose pre-existing mental health conditions or disabilities.



SELF-HARMING?  
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS? CALL SAMARITANS NOW ON 116-123

Part of the #mentalhealth series by Dr Zoe Ayres (@zjayres). Free to distribute. With thanks to several academics for useful conversations, including Prof Bhavik Patel (@BhavikAnilPatel) and Prof Adrian Dobbs (@APDobbs).