

# Understanding the Mental health of Doctoral Researchers

## Researcher-Led Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives - Application Form

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Researcher-Led Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives funding scheme.

The deadline for applications is Friday 8th November 2019.

Please ensure that you have read the application guidance before completing your application.

### 1. Name

First

Last

### 2. Sussex e-mail address

@sussex.ac.uk

### 4. School and department of lead applicant

School of English, Linguistics

## About the proposed initiative

### Title of initiative

Researching Difficult Data: How do we protect our mental health while engaging with difficult data and themes?

### When is the proposed initiative running?

On a single date  On multiple dates

End date

31/01/2020

Start date

01/11/2019

### Which theme(s) does your proposed initiative best align with?

- Theme 1: Creating and maintaining community belonging
- Theme 2: Cultivating time to breathe
- Theme 3: Celebrating self and successes
- Theme 4: Constructing "other groups, other routes, other ways to be free"
- Theme 5: Curating experiences of research process

**Please describe your proposed initiative (including how it aligns with the theme(s) you have**

**selected above):**

To create a peer-support group of researchers from across the Doctoral School who are researching difficult data. This group will meet on a monthly basis, and two to three times a year will invite in speakers from across the University and potentially other Universities as well to discuss best practise in maintaining one's own mental health in difficult circumstances.

Creating a group of researchers across the Doctoral School will create a sense of community and lessen the isolation of researchers. It will increase interaction with other researchers from across the Doctoral School, not just those in one's own school, and cultivate time to breathe by being in a group of people who keenly understand the difficulties faced by researchers engaged with difficult topics. Having an opportunity to talk to others who understand is incredibly useful for one's mental health, hence the proliferation of group therapy. Having more senior colleagues join the group periodically, sharing their own struggles and successes in managing the experience, will be of great benefit to the group.

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

**Please provide a project timeline, outlining the steps you would take to organise the initiative, including promotion and evaluation of the activity**

I already have a group of around 18 researchers who have expressed interest in joining the group. I have today contacted them to find a mutually agreeable date for our first meeting in November. Once we have a date, I will ask this to be promoted throughout the Doctoral School by email, I will also produce a poster to go up in hallways of the Schools. The meeting in October will be a combination of a peer support meeting and a planning meeting to get some ideas of who we would like to invite to attend in January. Considerations thus far include [REDACTED] who is currently researching migration narratives in the media, [REDACTED] who is a member of the Colombian Caravana UK Lawyers Group, a group of international lawyers that monitors the human rights abuses faced by legal professionals in Colombia, and [REDACTED] who is completing a Project on the motivations and constraints of supervision, which I feel would be particularly appropriate in helping researchers understand the nature of and constraints upon their supervisory relationships. Once a group decision has been made about whom to invite, these invitations will be sent, an appropriate venue found and publicity sought again via the Doctoral School emails and physical posters.

Another meeting will then happen in December which will be focussed on peer support.

After the event in January I, and other researchers who helped organise it, will provide written feedback in the format required by this initiative including reflections on the first two peer support meetings, the collaborative element of organising the event in January, and the event itself including the speakers, the attendance and the publicity. Attendees will also be asked to fill in a short evaluation form, the results from which will be fed into the overall evaluation.

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

**Please describe the target audience. For example, would your initiative be suitable for all doctoral researchers or only those at a particular stage and/or in a specific discipline?**

The target audience is all researchers at any stage who are researching difficult topics.

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

**If your target audience is within your department or School, please set out how the initiative could**

**be scaled up (in future projects) to reach a broader range of doctoral researchers across Schools**

N/A

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

**Please outline how your proposed initiative will promote awareness of, support, or improve doctoral researcher mental health and/or wellbeing at Sussex**

This initiative will promote awareness of researcher mental health as it will be a public announcement that there are researchers finding their topics difficult and potentially detrimental to their mental health, of which many people, including staff, may not be aware.

It will support wellbeing and improve researcher mental health by providing a place for those experiencing these issues to come together and support one another as well as receiving help from more experienced colleagues.

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

**Describe how the success and impact of the initiative will be evaluated:**

After the event in January I, and other researchers who helped organise it, will provide written feedback in the format required by this initiative including reflections on the first two peer support meetings, the collaborative element of organising the event in January, and the event itself including the speakers, the attendance and the publicity. Attendees will also be asked to fill in a short evaluation form, the results from which will be fed into the overall evaluation.

*Please limit your response to a maximum of 400 words*

## Budget

Please provide a detailed budget indicating what you would spend the funding on if you are successful in your application.

Your budget should include a breakdown of costs and justification for each item (e.g. lunch for 30 people at £6 per head from Sussex Food; accommodation for external speaker at £80 per night at a University approved hotel or guest house). See the guidance notes for further advice on your proposed budget.

## Budget details

**Item details**

**£**

Lunch for 20 people at £6 per head from Sussex Food for 2x peer support meetings

£240.00

Lunch for approx 35 people at £6 per head from Sussex Food for January event (assuming a higher up take of this event and including speakers)

£210.00

Potential travel costs and accommodation for external speakers

£150.00

Estimated cost of publicity (printing of posters for meetings and January event)

£50.00

Contingency to cover unforeseen circumstances e.g. a larger number of attendees requiring higher food costs.

£100.00

**Total: £750.00**

**Total requested**

£750.00

**Do you have additional funding for the proposed initiative (e.g. from your School or Department?)**

Yes  No

**Please attach any additional documents here relevant to your application (e.g. to assist the panel in understanding the activity) (optional)**