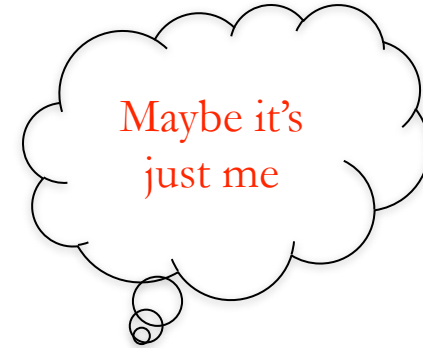


Dr. Amber Davis – HappyPhD
PhD Coach

PhD student Mental Health and Well-being

The Flourishing University
September 8th, 2017, QMUL

Well-being in Academia



It's not just you.

- Is this 'temporary lowering of well-being' that's 'part of the deal' of academic work?
- Or: does academia have a systemic and more serious wellbeing and mental health problem?

Studies

- Graduate Student Happiness & Well-being Report University of Berkeley 2014 (n=790): 47% of PhD students considered depressed.
- Amsterdam 2015 (n=433): 37% of PhD students considered depressed.
- Flanders 2016 - 2017 (n=3659): 51% experience psychological distress, 32% at risk of psychiatric disorder.
 - PhD students are 2-3 times more likely to have mental health problems compared to general highly educated population.
- Leiden 2016 (n=250): 47% experience psychological distress, 38% at risk of psychiatric disorder.

Predictors

- Low confidence/ frustration with research progress
 - Career prospects
 - Supervision
 - Financial pressure
- ✓ It's the academic rat race. Incentives matter.

'Solutions'

- Counselling services for PhDs, courses on how to better supervise, career coaching for non-academic as well as academic careers. (Leiden study)
- 'Without critical reflection of the competitive and individualistic academic culture these proposals are unlikely to bring about any change.'
- ✓ Without change of incentives nothing much is going to change.
- ✓ Breaking the 'culture of silence' around mental health/ well-being.
- ✓ Change the narrative of productivity/ competition: self-care and productivity go hand-in-hand.

Thank You!

For more information about me and my work
(I run a really great online productivity and well-being
course for PhDs) see:

www.amberdavis.nl