

Small Particles, Big Issues: PRIORITYze DEI

Issue 32: Mental Health and PhD Supervision

Dear all,

We hope this email finds you well.

Doctoral researchers (PhD students) are the cornerstone of academic innovation, yet their mental health often faces significant challenges. A recent study, "*Understanding how doctoral researchers perceive research supervision to impact their mental health and well-being*" ([read here](#)), sheds light on the critical role of supervision in shaping the mental health experiences of PhD students.

Key Findings:

- **Supervision as a Conduit:** Supervisors can directly influence doctoral researchers' mental health, either protecting them from or exacerbating stress and other mental health challenges.
- **Supervision as a Mirror:** Supervisors shape how students view themselves, influencing their confidence, sense of worth, and professional identity.

Implications for Practice and Policy:

1. **Mandatory Supervisor Training:** Institutions should implement training for supervisors to foster positive supervisory practices and equip them to respond compassionately to mental health challenges.
2. **Improved Reporting Mechanisms:** Universities must establish robust and confidential channels for reporting and addressing negative supervisory practices.
3. **Balancing Guidance and Autonomy:** Effective supervision should scaffold autonomy, balancing mentorship with respect for the student's independence.

The study highlights that positive supervision not only supports the academic success of doctoral researchers but also buffers the inherent stress of PhD studies, fostering mental well-being and self-agency.

To learn more, you can access the full study: [Understanding how doctoral researchers perceive research supervision to impact their mental health and well-being](#).

Best regards,
Mariasole and Camilla
COST Action CA20101 PRIORITY