







# PGT During The Pandemic

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When it comes to providing support and guidance for PGT students during this pandemic, there is no one size fits all.

The challenges you may be navigating will vary depending on your subject, how far along you are, your lived experiences and a variety of other factors.

This document has been created to signpost you to some fantastic support resources that exist. Read through and pick out what you need, leave what you don't.

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# Working from Home: Pandemic Productivity and Self-Compassion



If your productivity during the pandemic looks very different to your productivity pre-pandemic - that is okay!

As a result of the pandemic, many of us are working from home which can be a challenge in and of itself without the added personal, social, psychological and financial stressors that one may be experiencing due to Covid-19.

There have been a number of articles written about the pressure to be productive during this time that are worth a read if you are feeling guilty about 'not being productive enough', not 'making the most of lockdown' or feeling like a 'failure' compared to your peers when it comes to working successfully during this time.



*'I still feel twinges of guilt for falling behind on deadlines and promises to pick up a hobby. "Why aren't I working more quickly, doing more?" [...] There is a tendency [...] to be self-critical, as opposed to being self-compassionate' - from Monica Torres, Huffington Post.*

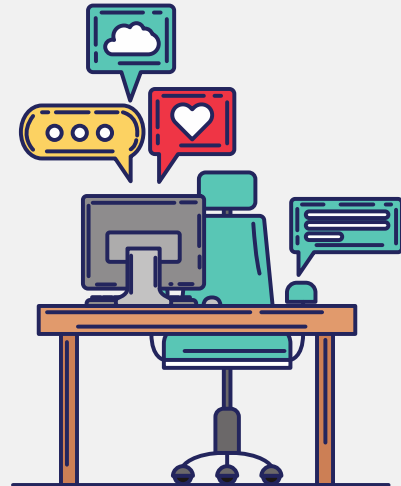
*'Ignore the people who are posting that they are writing papers and the people who are complaining that they cannot write papers. They are on their own journey. Cut out the noise.'* - Aisha S. Ahmed, The Chronicle of Higher Education.

*'Some people may feel like failures because they are not sufficiently "seizing the moment" within this pandemic. Because they are struggling to cope. [...] There's nothing wrong with being productive or creative. It can be a helpful, constructive way to cope. But we must also allow ourselves space to not be "amazing."' - from Dr. Susan Biali Haas, Psychology Today.*



# Working from Home & Wellbeing

However, if you are looking for resources to support yourself in working from home during this time, then the following resources could be of use.



**Keele**  
UNIVERSITY



Keele University  
Tips For Remote Learning During Self-Isolation

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust  
Working From Home: Your Wellbeing Action Plan



MHFA England

MHFA England:  
Supporting Your Mental Health While Working From Home

Student Minds:  
Adjusting to Working from Home During Isolation

**student  
minds**

Remember, treat yourself with compassion during this process and use these resources to help you adapt to working from home as opposed to using them with the sole goal of trying to match your pre-pandemic levels of productivity. It is okay to put the wellbeing of yourself and your family first.

# Working from Home: Tips and Tricks



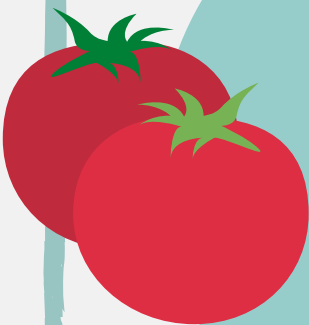
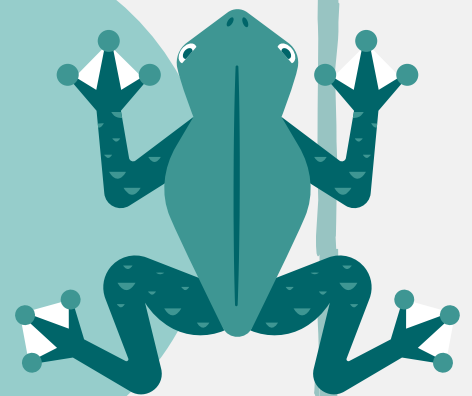
## Accept help!

If you find yourself struggling and don't know where to begin, reach out and ask for advice from your tutor or your peers. Talking things over can be a great way of organising your thoughts. For those of you engaged in independent study and research (such as a dissertation) just because this is an independent project does not mean you have to be alone on the journey!

## Trouble procrastinating? Eat the Frog!

*"If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first." - Mark Twain*

Eating the Frog can be a great way for some people to get started with work. However, it is important to recognise the time we're living in and the fact that this won't work for everyone.

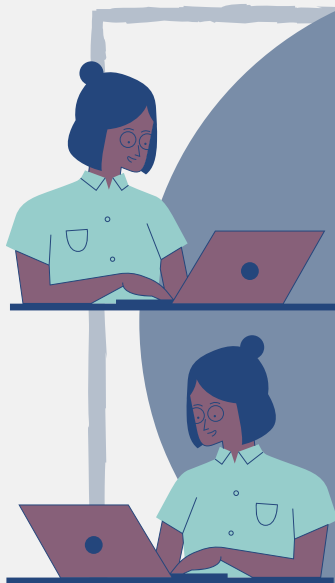


## Take one step at a time

If eating the frog doesn't work for you, My tomatoes might be a better option. This technique allows you to set a bite-size target of doing 25 mins of work at a time - this may be enough to get you started and may help work come a little easier. If it doesn't, be kind to yourself and take a break to go do something enjoyable and come back to it.

An added bonus of this is that it provides you with a means of recording your achievements and allows you to look back on all you have done.

# Working from Home: Further Tips and Tricks



## Set up virtual study sessions with other PGT students

Sometimes it is easier to work when others are also working. You could set up study sessions with fellow PGT students.

Keep the session relatively short, an hour is good. Begin the session by discussing what it is you will be working on and what you want to achieve, then mute your mic and get started.

Once the allotted time is up, chat about what went well and problem solve what didn't. Finish up by deciding when you want to study together again.

## Feel like you're not doing enough? Be kind to yourself - take note of and celebrate your achievements, no matter how 'small'.

If you have an inner critic berating you for not being productive, or comparing you to your peers, it is good practice to take note of what you have done well. My Tomatoes, mentioned on the previous page, can be a great way of doing this. Additionally, [these self-compassion exercises](#) are a good place to start to help you develop a kinder way of talking to yourself. It is hard to feel motivated or encouraged to do anything when all you hear from yourself is how terrible you are at everything!

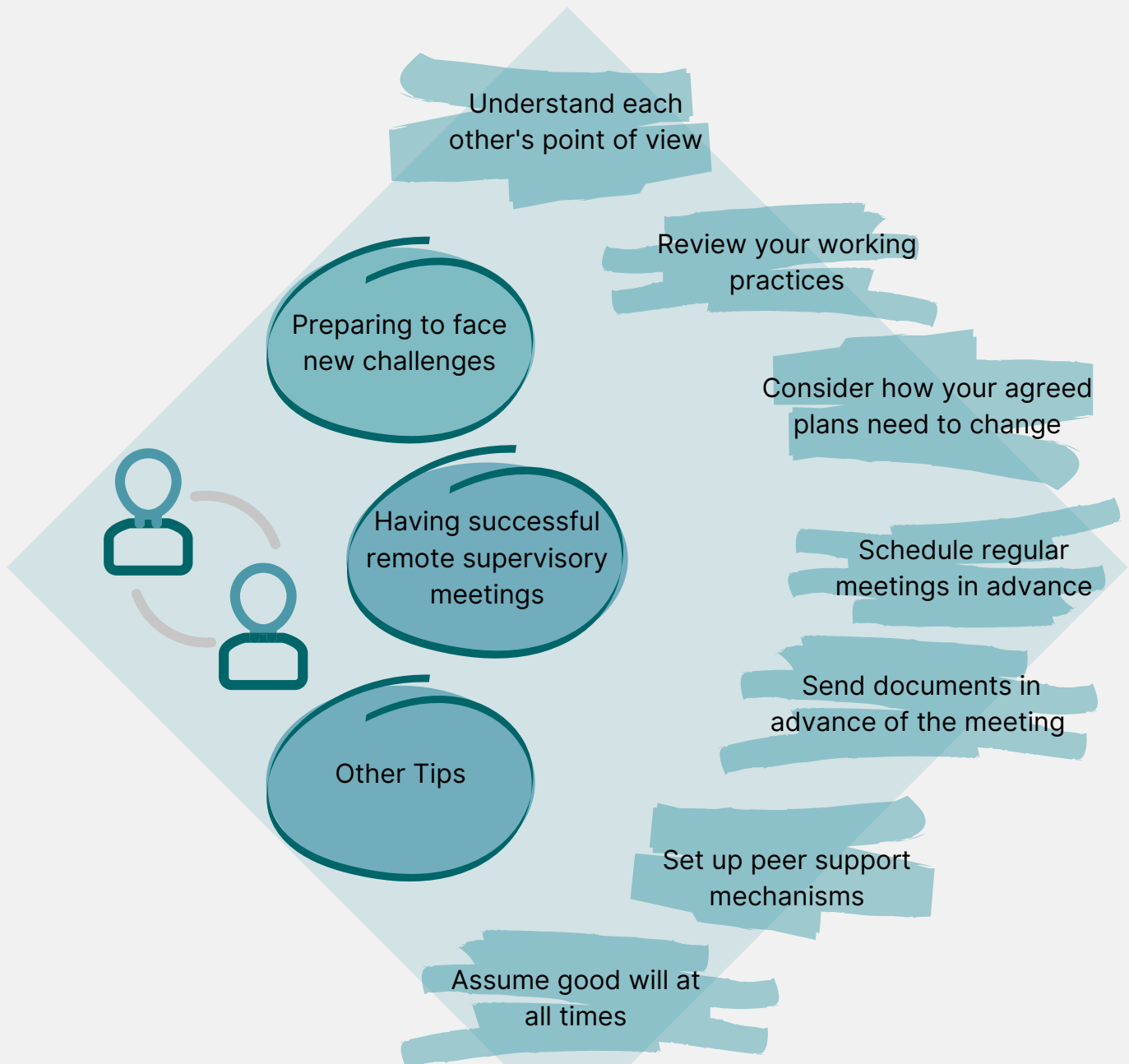


## Feeling you're not writing enough or are dealing with anxiety or negative beliefs?

The [first](#) of these two podcasts provide a general discussion of coping with anxiety during the pandemic the [second](#) podcast focuses specifically on PhD students.

# Dissertation Supervision

When it comes to your dissertation, navigating the relationship with your dissertation supervisor virtually may present its own challenges and the following resources will provide some guidance on how to adapt to working with your supervisor in what could be a very different context. The following image summarises some tips taken from the University of Southampton's [Tips for Continuing a Supervisory Relationship at a Distance](#). Bear in mind that this resource was created with PGRs in mind - nevertheless, you might still find some useful tips to help you.



# Parenting During the Pandemic and Financial and Career Concerns

## Parenting during the Pandemic

If lockdown has left you juggling parenting, teaching, working, and studying in a home that is now serving as, among other things, an office and a classroom, the following resources from the [APA](#) and the [NSPCC](#) may be of use. The NSPCC site also provides links resources for home learning and websites and organisations to support families and children living with autism, anxiety, or deafness.

In addition to this, [BBC Bitesize Daily Lessons](#) has daily lessons for kids aged 5 - 15 and [Twinkl](#) contains an array of teaching and learning resources for kids up to age 11.

If you are experiencing financial concerns, you can book appointments with money advisors who can offer you confidential advice and support and help you will a range of queries including:

- Keele University Hardship Fund, Emergency loans
- Information and advice on bursaries and scholarships
- Advice about alternative funding sources
- Advice about government funding sources Money education
- Help with budgeting
- International student funding (including federal loans for US students and Canadian loans)

## Financial Concerns?

## Career Concerns?

If you have career concerns during this time, [Keele's Career and Employability Service](#) remains open to provide you with support.

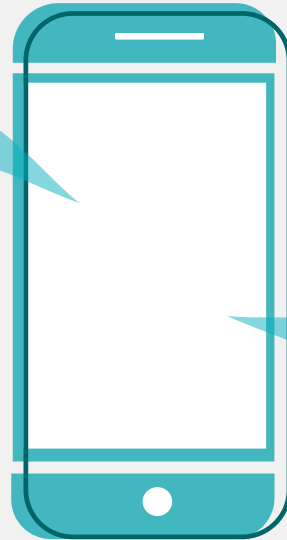


# Mental Health and Wellbeing: Self Help

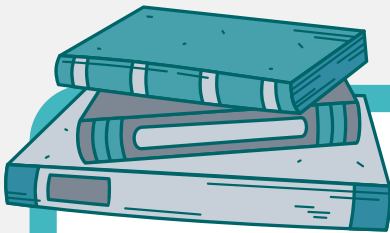
## Self-Help Apps

Both [Keele](#) and the [NHS](#) websites have links to apps to help you manage your mental health and wellbeing.

Examples include apps that focus on mindfulness, meditation and to help with relaxing and sleeping.



There are also apps based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy or dialectical behaviour therapy designed to help people manage feelings of such as anxiety, depression, panic attacks or to help people to manage the urge to self-harm.



## Self-Help Resources and Guides

### The NHS

The [NHS Website](#) also contains a series of detailed self-help leaflets covering a wealth of different topics including alcohol, bereavement, domestic abuse, eating disorders, obsessions and compulsions as well as a guide for [those supporting a partner with depression and low mood](#).

### Togetherall

[Togetherall](#) is a freely accessible anonymous service available 24/7 that can provide online peer and professional support, with trained counsellors. It provides a space to learn how to improve and self-manage your mental health and wellbeing.

### CBT

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** resources and provide some helpful evidenced-based therapeutic tips on how to navigate challenges which might affect your wellbeing while working from home, including '[How to Cope with Uncertainty](#)' and '[Coping in the time of Coronavirus](#)'. Further worksheets, resources and techniques can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

# Mental Health and Wellbeing: Where to go for Support

## Support from Keele

Keele University's Counselling and Mental Health Support Team are continuing to provide support during this time, and you can get in touch with them by email and by phone.

If you need to talk to someone when the Counselling and Mental Health Support Service is closed, you can find the contact details on Keele University's out of hours support page.



## Other external support services

### **Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline**

- Call on: 0808 800 2234 (Free)
- Text: 07860 022821 (FREE)
- Email: [Staffordshire.helpline@brighter-futures.org.uk](mailto:Staffordshire.helpline@brighter-futures.org.uk)
- Instant Messaging service (online chat) can be found here, you just need to click on the Instant Messaging Service button

**HopelineUK**: run by Papyrus this service provides support for those 35 and under who are at risk of suicide. Get in touch by phone, text or email and find out more here.

- Call: 0800 068 41 41
- Text: 07860 039967
- Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

**Changes**: provides 1-2-1 telephone/video support, on-line peer-support groups and wellbeing training, click here for more information.

- Call: 07983 437747
- Email: [wellbeing.here4u@changes.org.uk](mailto:wellbeing.here4u@changes.org.uk)

**SANEline**: is a service to provide emotional support. You can get in touch by phone or email and the service also provides textcare as well as peer-support through their online forums. Find more information here.

**Shout**: This is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. Click here for more information.

- To get support, text SHOUT to 85258

# Mental Health and Wellbeing: The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

**The 5 Ways to Wellbeing:** this was researched and developed by the [New Economics Foundation](#) who have provided a [guide](#) on how to adapt the 5 principles during the lockdown.



You can also find further ideas:

- If you want to **connect**, the [KPA](#) are continuing to host their weekly coffee mornings as well as watch parties and afternoon tea events and more.
- In the [20 Activities for the 'New Normal'](#) document available on the Keele Website.
- Keele's [health and wellbeing pages](#) also provide ideas on how to get active, take a mindful walk and take notice.
- The University of Manchester have created a resource looking at the [ways to wellbeing when working from home](#).

Though it isn't mentioned in the 5 ways, **sleep** is an incredibly important part of wellbeing. If you are struggling with sleep during this time, the sleep foundation has created a [resource](#) that may be of use.



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