

# Aging Well Lab Manual

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*2020-05-04*



# Contents



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Welcome to the Aging Well Lab manual! This manual was created by the Lab Director, Kendra Seaman, to convey my vision for our lab and to communicate community expectations. This manual will be updated regularly as our lab grows and develops. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the content of this manual, please share these with me. This is a living document and will change as needed.

Since we are a brand-new lab, this manual was inspired by (and in some places directly copied from) other lab manuals, including MemoLab Manual, Peele Lab Manual, and Smith Lab Manual. Thanks to everyone who has shared their resources!

This lab manual was created in R Studio using the bookdown package.



## 1.1 About the Lab

Our research is dedicated to using basic and translational scientific research to promote health and wellbeing across adulthood. We use a variety of behavioral, modeling and neuroimaging techniques to better understand how the mind and the brain change as people get older.

**Address:**

Aging Well Laboratory  
Center for Vital Longevity  
1600 Viceroy Drive, Suite 800  
Dallas, TX 75235



## 1.2 Lab Info

The lab has several public-facing accounts that anyone can access:

- Website: <https://agingwelllab.github.io/>
- GitHub: <https://github.com/agingwelllab>
- OSF: <https://osf.io/26jqs/>

The lab also has sites that are only accessible to lab members:

- CVL Lab Wiki: <https://cvlwiki.utdallas.edu/doku.php?id=seamanlab:home>
- Asana: <https://app.asana.com>
- Slack: <https://agingwelllab.slack.com>

## Chapter 2

# Approach

We use cognitive modeling and neuroimaging to understand how people learn and make decisions. We are interested how these processes *do, or do not*, change as people get older. The ultimate goal of this research is to promote health and wellbeing across adulthood.

**STAND BACK**



**I'M GOING TO TRY  
SCIENCE**

Recognize that this work is inherently interdisciplinary, meaning we will use tools and knowledge from traditional fields like psychology, neuroscience, and economics. Because it requires competency in so many different domains, the learning curve can be steep and can feel overwhelming - but this is also what makes it interesting and rewarding work. Hang in there. It will get easier.

## 2.1 Mentorship and IDPs

To help you with this endeavor, you will be assigned a mentor within the lab. If you are a lab manager, graduate student, or postdoc, the Lab Director will likely be your mentor. If you are an undergraduate, you will likely be reporting to the lab manager, a graduate student, or a postdoc. To facilitate these relationships, we will use individual development plans (IDPs). The structure of IDPs will vary depending on your role in the lab, but generally they will set and track short-term and long-term goals. These will be created when you join the lab and be revisited each semester (i.e. Fall, Spring, and Summer).

## 2.2 Feedback

You should expect to regularly receive feedback from your mentor and your peers. Feedback, especially negative feedback, can be discouraging and overwhelming. Please recognize that the purpose of feedback is to improve your work and help you meet your goals. Also know that giving critical and constructive feedback is an time-consuming effort and **try** to accept feedback in the spirit in which it is offered. As a group, we will discuss how to give and receive feedback.







## Chapter 3

# Code of Conduct

All lab members are expected to agree with the following code of conduct. We will enforce this code as needed. We expect cooperation with all members to help ensure a safe environment for everyone. Please also see the UT Dallas Nondiscrimination policy.

### 3.0.1 The Quick Version

The Aging Well Lab is committed to providing a harassment-free environment, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion (or lack thereof). We do not tolerate harassment of lab members in any form. Sexual language and imagery is generally not appropriate for any lab venue, including lab meetings, presentations, or discussions.

### 3.0.2 The Less Quick Version

Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

Members asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact Kendra Seaman immediately. If Kendra is the cause of your concern, then please reach out to one of the center directors or another trusted departmental member who can assist.

We expect members to follow these guidelines at any lab-related event.

This section was adapted from the MemoLab.

## Chapter 4

# Expectations and Responsibilities

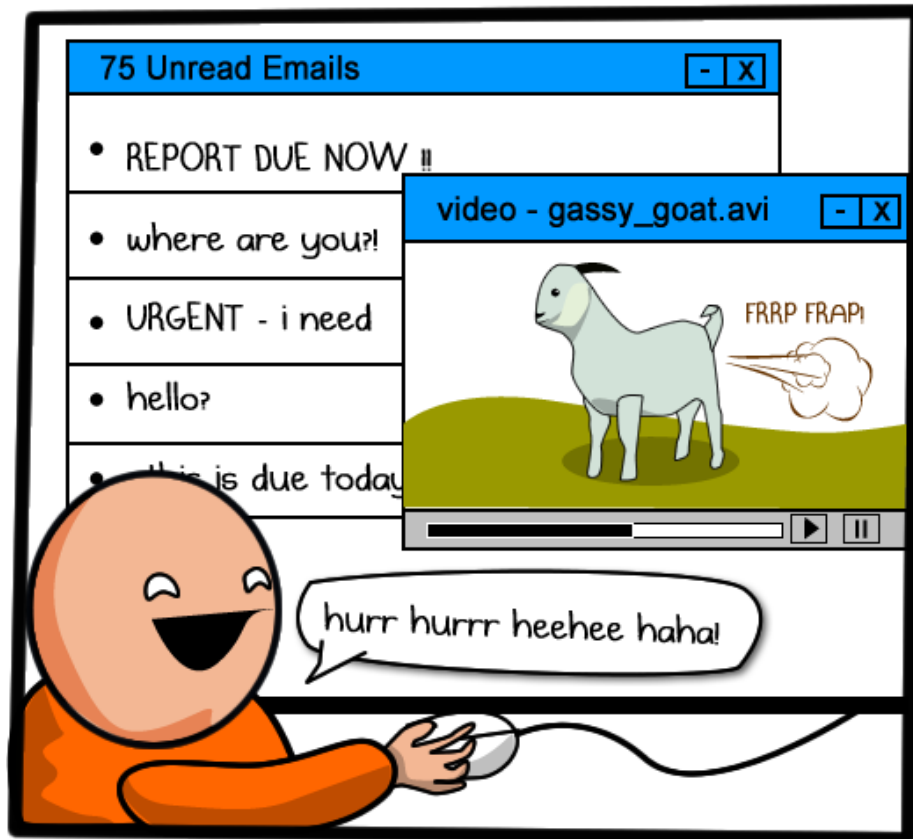
### 4.1 Everyone

#### 4.1.1 Big Picture

We expect everyone to:

- **Be supportive** - We're all in this together!
- **Share your knowledge.** Mentorship takes many forms, but frequently involves looking out for those who are more junior to us. If you've done something before, share your experience. We are a team and we should work together.
- **Be engaged in the community.**
  - Attend and actively engage in lab and one-on-one meetings. Ask questions, make suggestions, etc. If you are easily distracted by technology, disconnect during meetings.
  - Attend talks in the CVL, BBS, and greater UTD community.
  - Be an positive representative and advocate for our lab and our lab's work in our larger research communities.

# Distractions



- Be independent when possible, ask for help when necessary. Specifically, ask three, then me!
  - There are lots of web resources you should consult - StackOverflow, NeuroStars, etc
  - Use others in the lab (and in the CVL, BBS) and external collaborators.
- **Communicate honestly**, even when it's difficult.
- Do work we are proud of individually and as a group.
  - Double check your work.
  - Our lab has a commitment to open science. Be ready to share your work both within the lab and with outsiders at the conclusion of a

project.

- Work towards proficiency in Unix, BASH, R, and Python.
- Respect each other's strengths, weaknesses, differences, and beliefs.
  - Be patient with everyone (including the Lab Director). Most of us are learning new skills and are busier than we would like.
- Adhere to the ethical principles as described by the Association for Psychological Science, Society for Neuroscience, and UT Dallas Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Maintain a professional and accurate online presence. Make sure you keep your online profiles up to date. Remember, we all represent the lab and the lab represents us.

#### 4.1.2 Small Picture

We're sharing a relatively small space, so please be thoughtful of others. Specifically:

- **Do not come into the lab if you are sick!** It's better to keep everyone healthy. If you are sick, email your mentor and the lab manager.



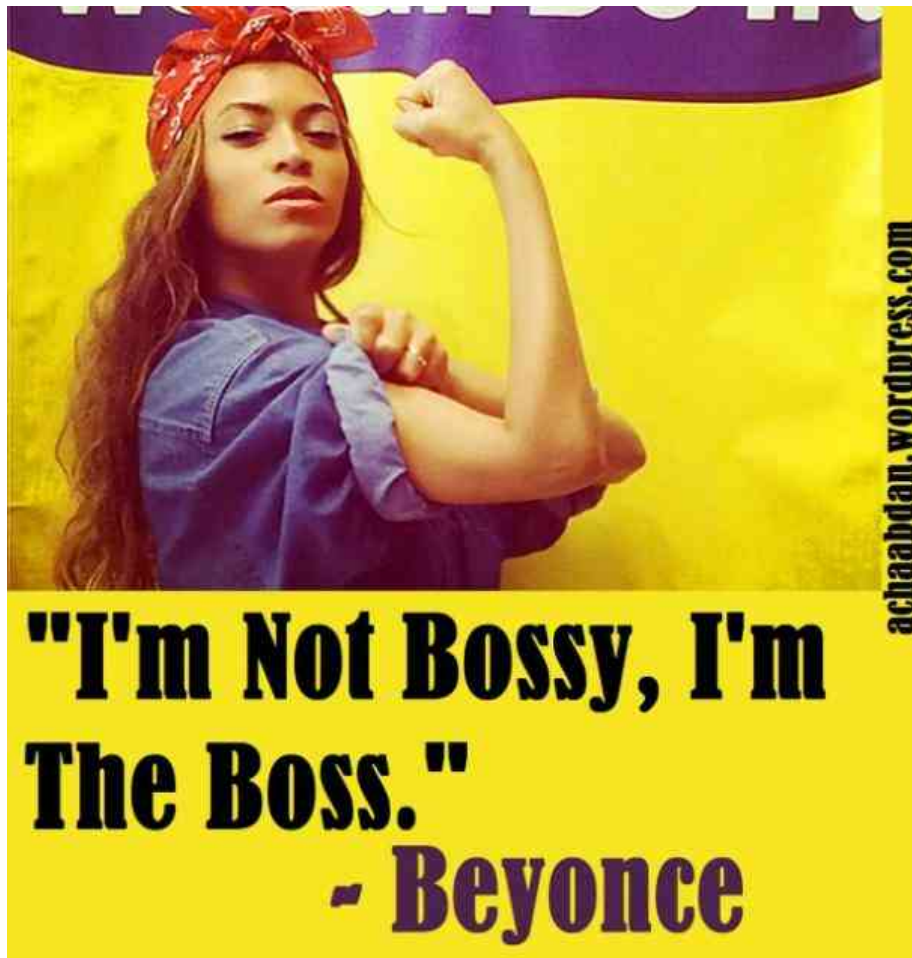
- Keep the lab neat.
  - Do not leave food, drinks, or crumbs in the lab.
  - Items left unattended may be cleaned, reclaimed or recycled.

## 4.2 Lab Director

As the lab director, you can expect me to:

- Have a vision for where the lab is going, both in the short-term (next few weeks) and in the long-term (next few years).
- Obtain funding to support our laboratory.
- Care about your happiness.
- Support your career development, including:
  - writing recommendation letters,
  - introducing you to other scientists (potential future mentors and colleagues),
  - promoting your work as often as possible (at conferences),
  - facilitating conference travel (see position-dependent specifics below), and
  - working with mentees (Postdocs, Mentees) to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Support your personal development, including:
  - flexible working hours and environment (when feasible), and
  - encouraging activities outside of school/work.
- Make the time to meet with you regularly, read and provide feedback on code, posters, manuscripts, and other data products.
- Obsess over choosing the correct analyses, clear phrasing, and awesome data visualizations.





## 4.3 Employees

Employee salaries follow the UTD paygrade.

### 4.3.1 Lab Manager

The lab manager is the heart and soul of the lab. While other lab members (including the Lab Director) may have flexible or irregular schedules, the lab manager will be a constant presence for the lab in the Center for Vital Longevity (CVL).

In order to provide constency for the lab, I expect the lab manager to:

- maintain regularly scheduled hours on weekdays (except for UTD holidays),

- serve as a liason between the the CVL administrative staff and our lab,
- check the lab email and personal work email accounts daily and respond to all emails within two business days, and
- check the voicemail daily and arrange for return calls to be made within one business day.



The Lab Manager's primary responsibilities include: