

Instructions

Mental Health in Academia

An interactive workshop for students

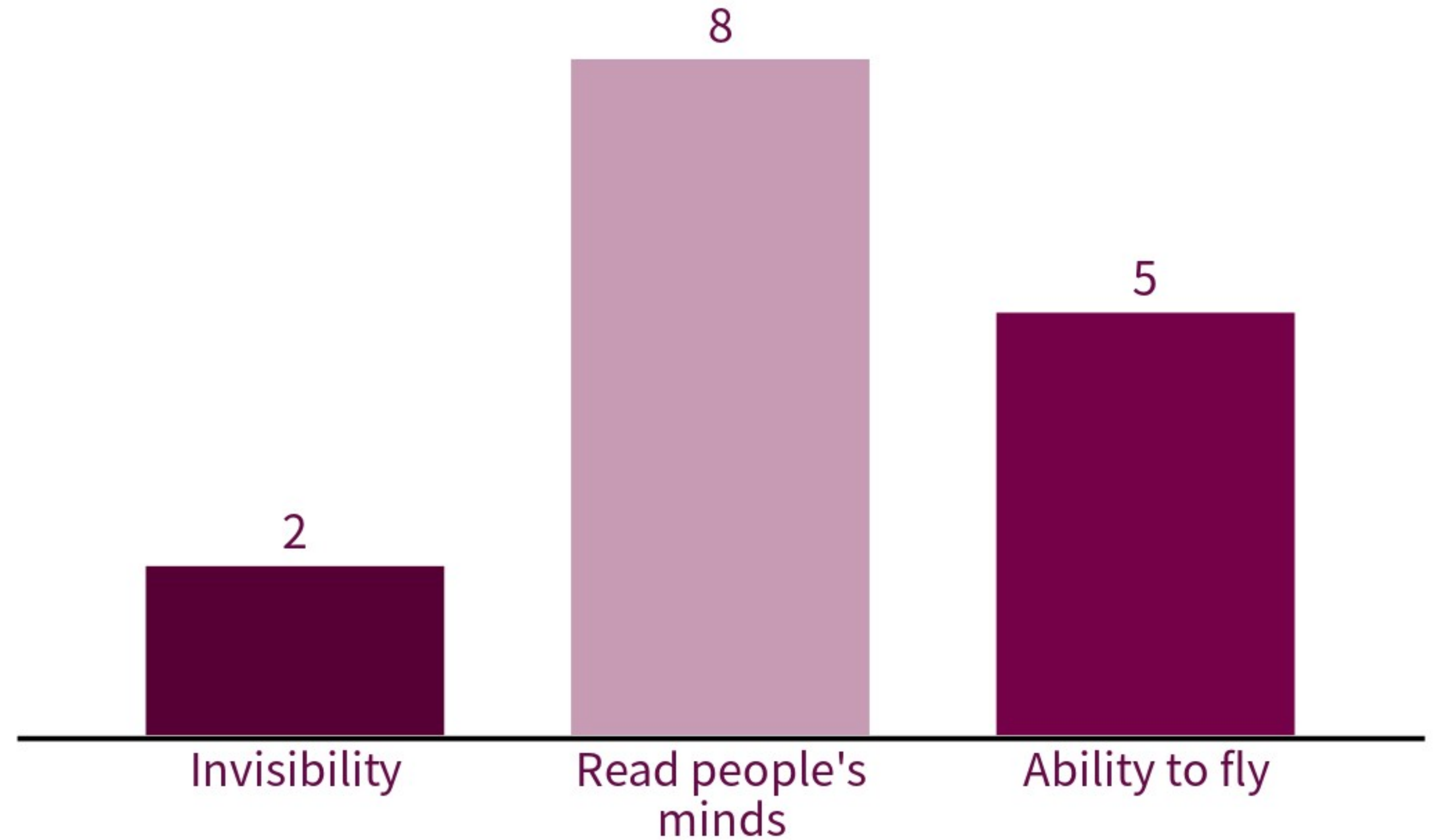
//
a third of respondents had sought
help for anxiety or depression
related to their studies

– *Nature's 2019 PhD Survey*

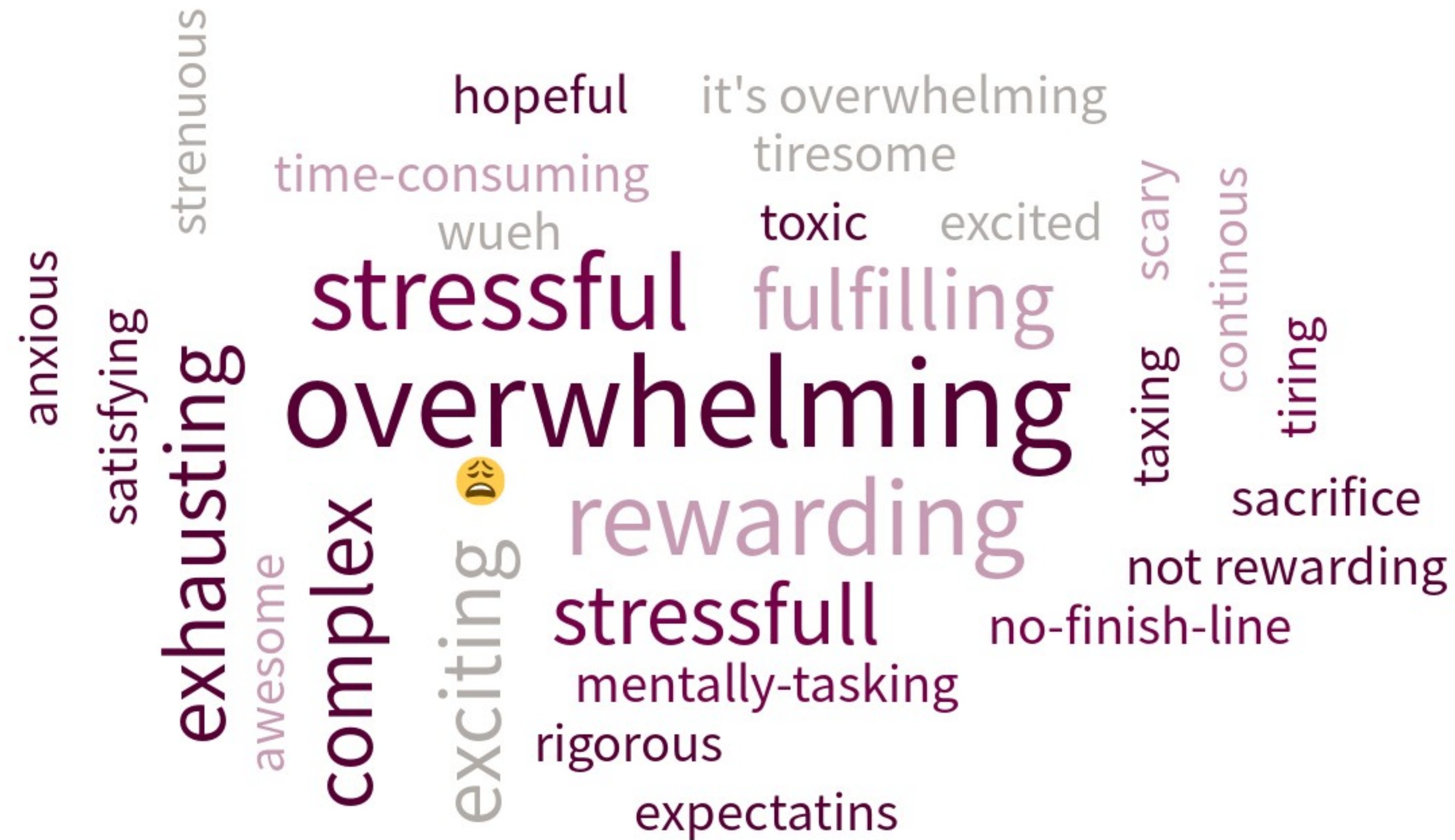
Let's talk
about mental
health freely,
without
judgement



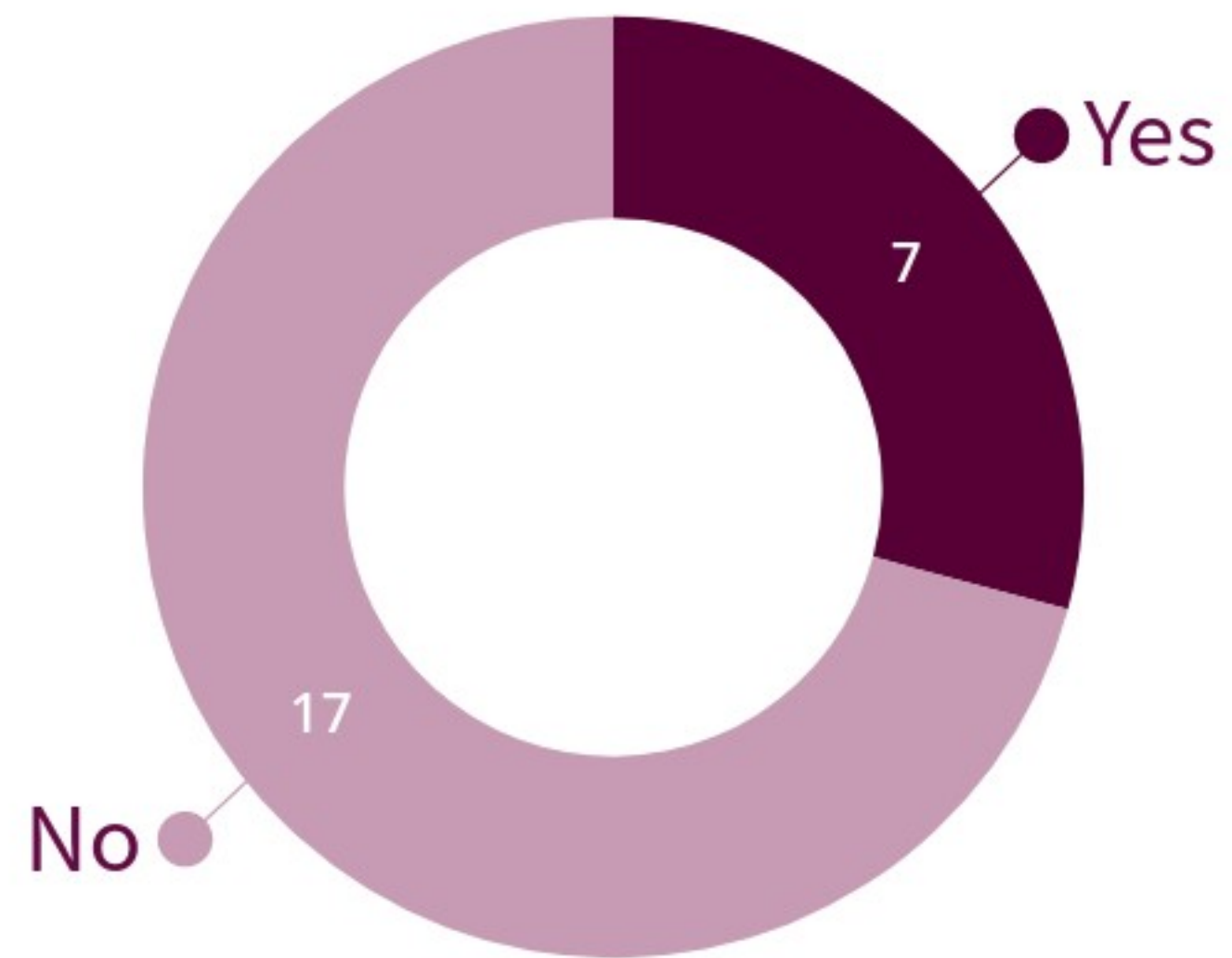
Which superpower would you like to have?



What word would you use to describe how you feel about working in academia?



Do you feel comfortable talking about mental health at work?



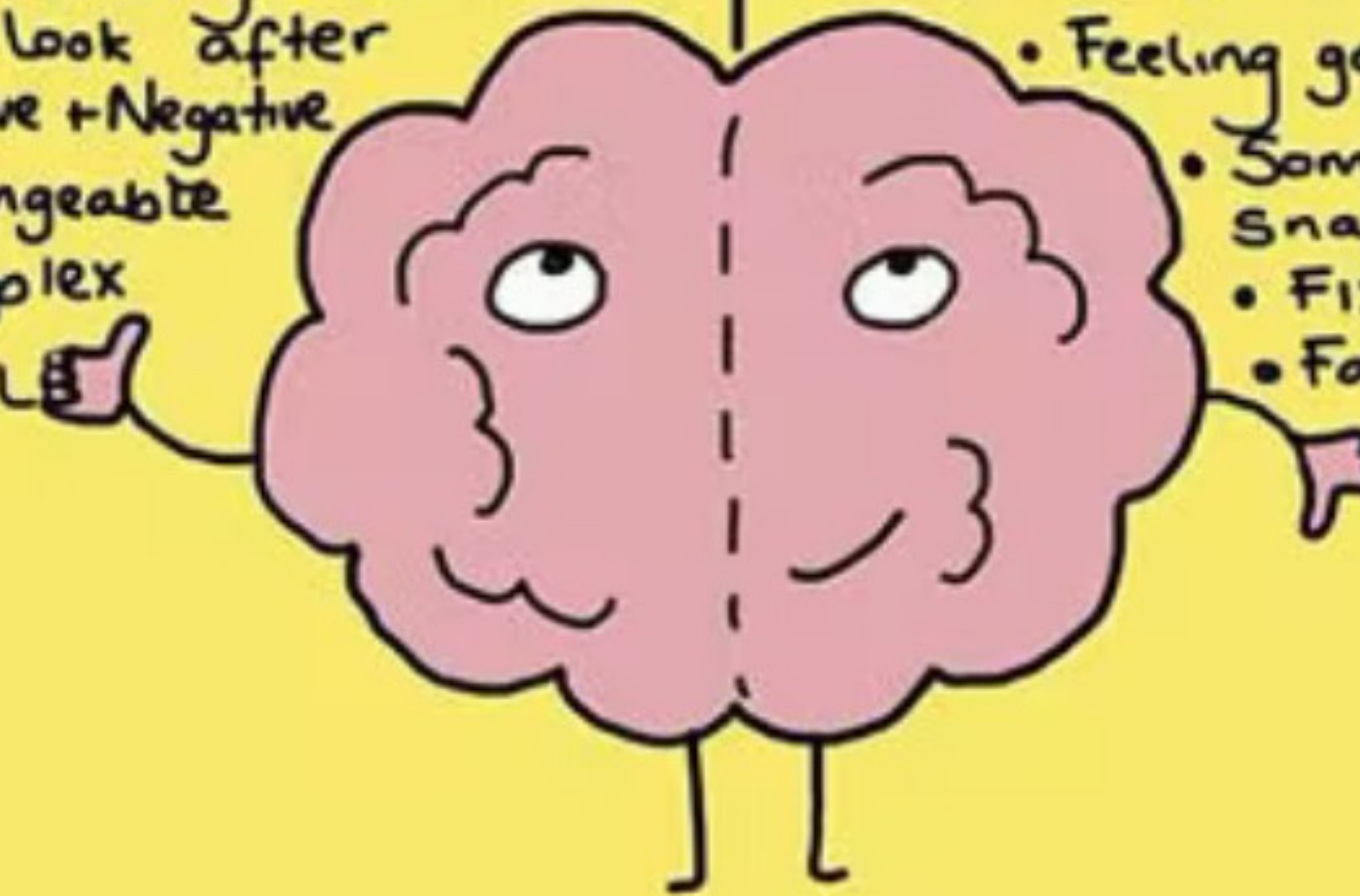
MENTAL HEALTH

IS...

- Important
- Something everyone has
- Intrinsically linked to (+ probably inseparable from) physical health
- On a continuum
- Worth making time for
- Part of being human
- Something we need to look after
- Positive + Negative
- Changeable
- Complex
- Real

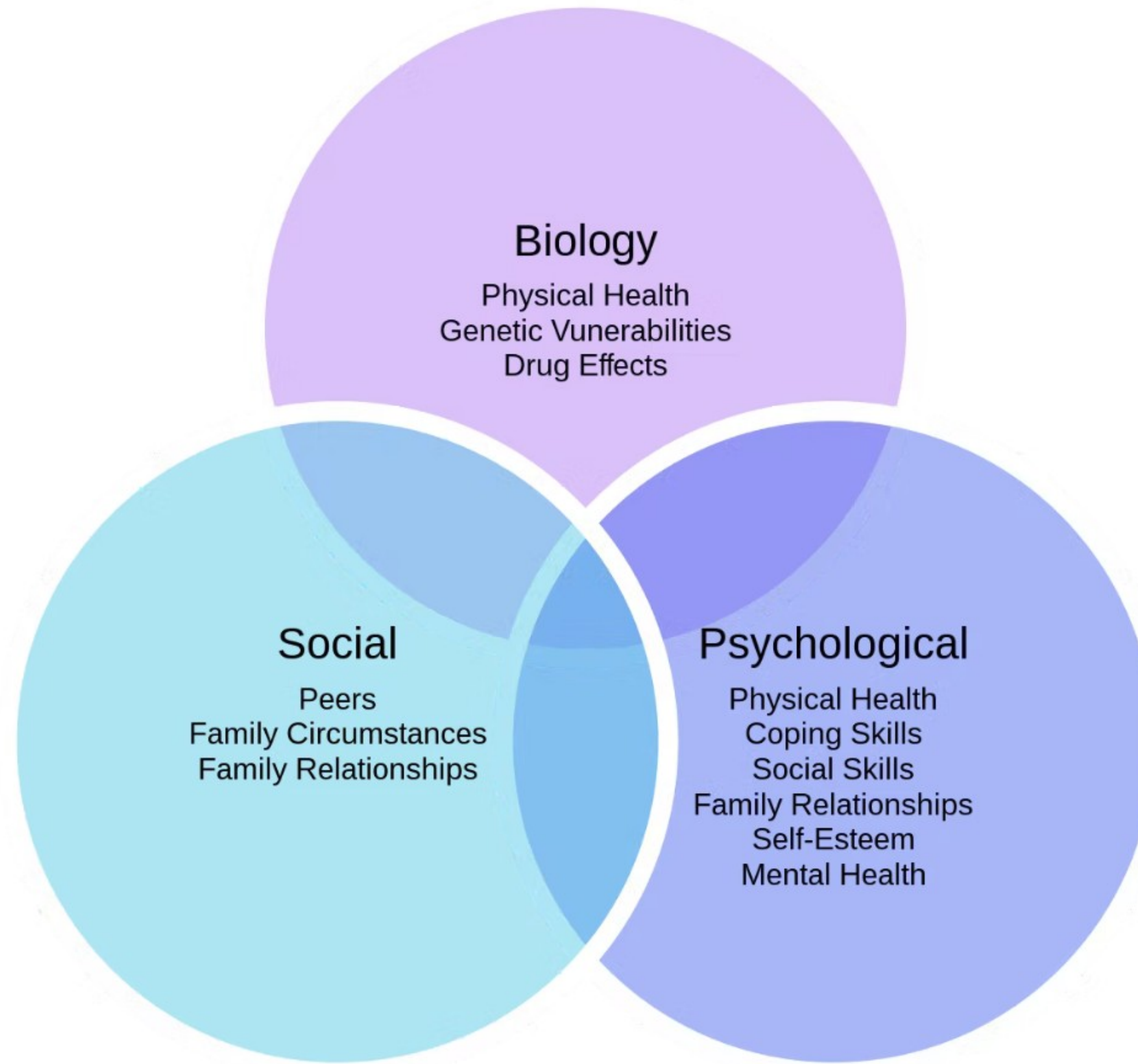
ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- Shameful
- All in your mind
- Always something negative
- Something you decide to have
- Something to think about only when it feels broken
- An interchangeable term with mental illness
- Feeling good all the time
- Something you can snap out of
- Fixed
- Fake news





Mental health continuum model





Looking after yourself

- Put support systems in place
- Don't neglect sleep
- Set realistic expectations
- Practise self-compassion

**When is self
care not
enough?**



Anxiety

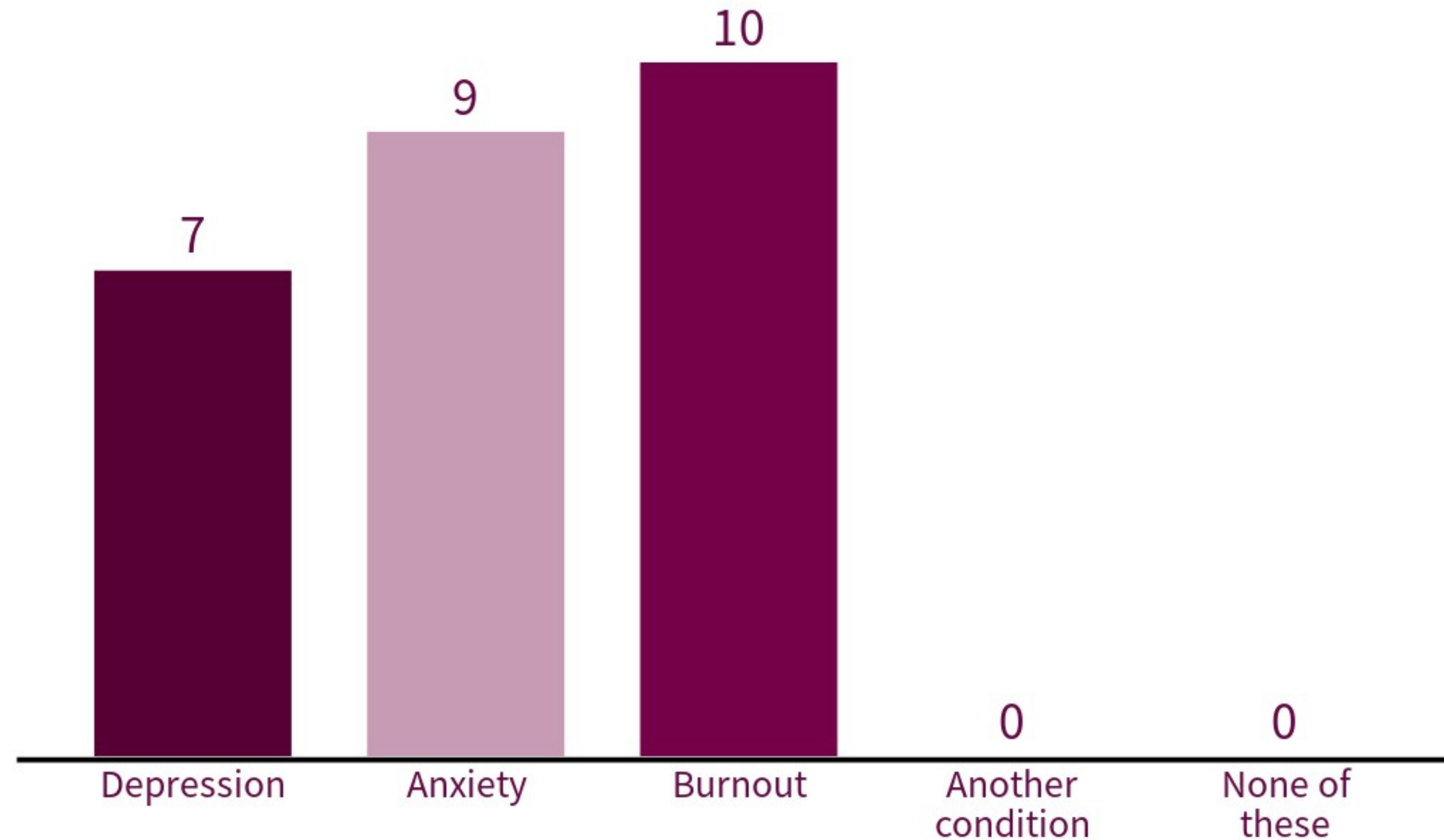
Depression



Burnout



Who has experienced one of these mental health conditions?



The Student-Supervisor Relationship

A vital element of all research degrees



Ingredients for a successful relationship

- Get to know your supervisor before you start
- Agree purpose and frequency of meetings
- Remember that you're not the only one
- Communicate regularly
- Raise problems early





How to talk about your mental health with your supervisor?

- Arrange a meeting
- Preparing for your meeting
- During your meeting
- Confidentiality and consent
- Afterwards



Reacting to the research culture

- Dealing with disappointment and rejection
- Feeling isolated and lonely
- Bullying and harassment

A practical guide for PhD researchers in STEM

What other factors, if any, contribute to poor mental health or burnout in academia?

Taking more work than you can handle.

unsupportive supervisors, no enough funding

Pressure to acquire results, overworking and less time for rest, financial constraints

There is too much pressure to deliver results which is mostly hard due to experimental failures

- Poor time plan- lack of support from supervisors

Miscommunication and lack of boundaries

Pressure to deliver

conflict between supervisors

Pressure to produce results and meet deadlines

What other factors, if any, contribute to poor mental health or burnout in academia?

short deadlines

Unavailable/ unresponsive supervisors

Taking more work than you can handle

Unclear channels of miscommunication. Multiple supervisors

lack of a safe space to talk about it. judgement, ridicule even

unaccommodating supervisors

lack of proper planning


Lack of communication from supervisors

Null hypothesis

What other factors, if any, contribute to poor mental health or burnout in academia?

work scooping by competing labs

up and down curve while working,
one point you know what you do,
another time you have have clue



Look after
yourself and each
other along the
way