

Doing PhD can be lonely, but it doesn't have to be - On My Mind peer support

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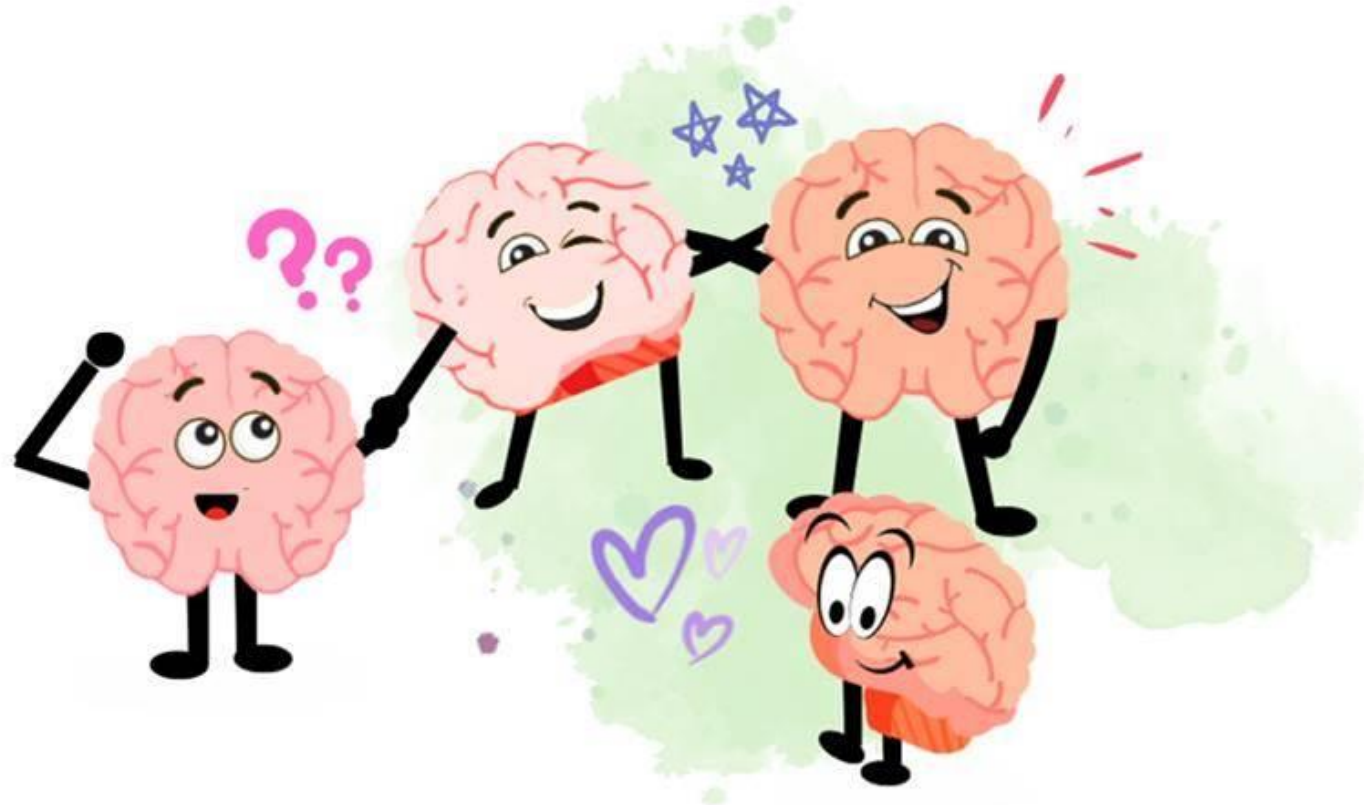
12th October, 2023

On My Mind project - Where it all began?

- On My Mind project, funded by Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to promote well-being through **community** and **peer support activities**.
- The idea to improve student's mental health was born as a student initiative in the Turku School of Economics.
- Exhaustion among students was common even though it was not talked about.
- It was realized professional help was not the solution.
- From the beginning the project focused on grass roots level support, where volunteer students' role was central: When issues are discussed early on, the need for professional help might decrease.



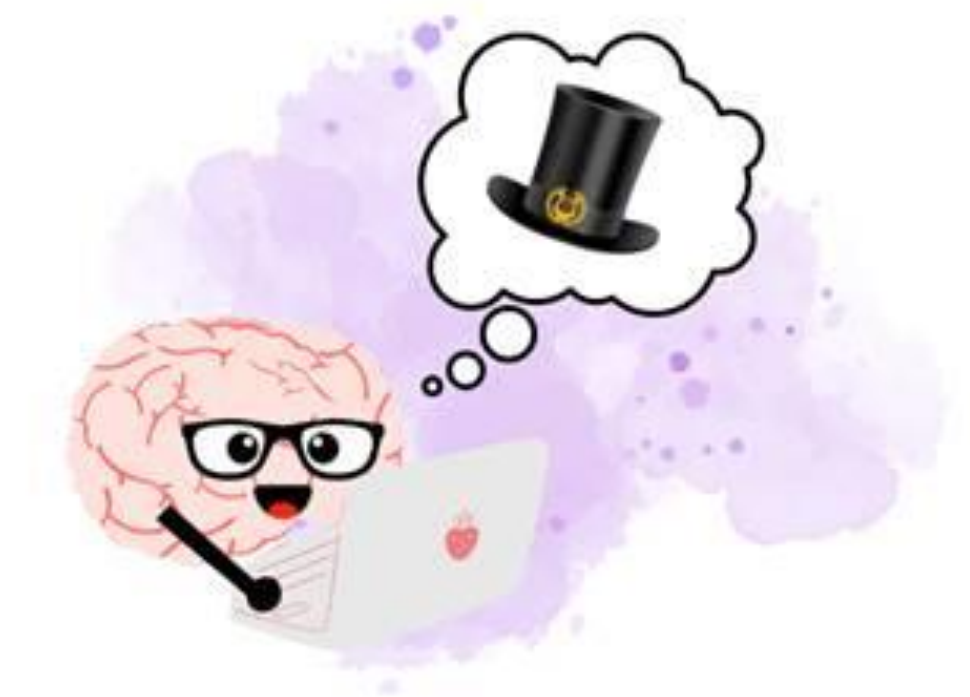
On My Mind for Doctoral Researchers started in the autumn 2022. Our main objective is to make sure that no one is left alone with their worries.



Link to On My Mind www pages: <https://sites.utu.fi/mielenpaalla/en/peer-support-for-early-career-researchers/>

On My Mind project for doctoral researchers

Peer to peer support
&
Well-being events



On My Mind peer supporters and forms of action

- Peer supporters are University of Turku doctoral researchers, who have volunteered to use their time and to listen to their fellow researchers.
- The peer supporters are not healthcare professionals themselves, but if necessary, they know where to find suitable professional help by utilizing their orientation training and the materials they have received from the project.
- Forms of action:
 - One-on-one peer support
 - Peer support groups



Selection and training of peer supporters

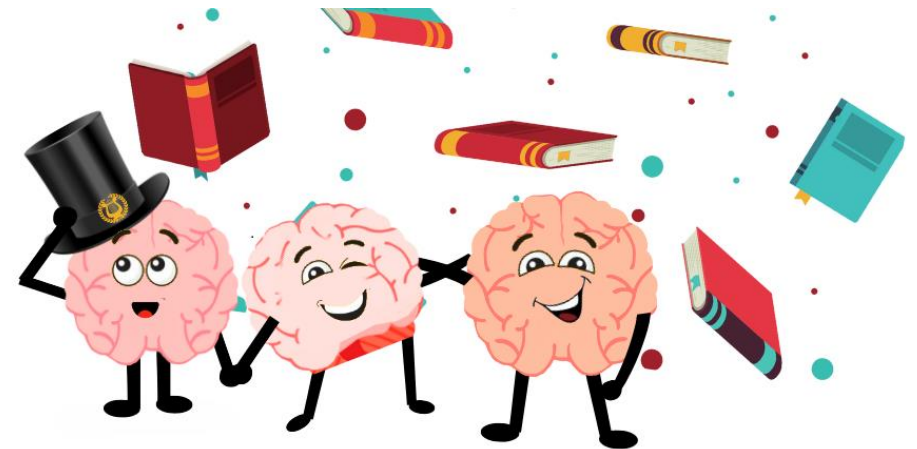
- All applicants are interviewed.
- On My Mind Orientation training (two days):
 - **Mielenterveyden ensiapu® 2** training (Mieli ry; Mental Health First Aid training) & Workshop (University of Turku) (FI)
 - **On My Mind Training for Support Peers** (EN)
- Kick-off



On My Mind Training for Peer supporters

Part I

- Introduction to On My Mind Project and Peer Support
- Active listening
- Bringing up matters for discussion
- Facilitating a peer group
- How to resolve a conflict in supervision?
- Well-being services
- Mental health and well-being
- Q&A: On My Mind support peer



Part II

- Case-based reflections in small groups

Kick-off



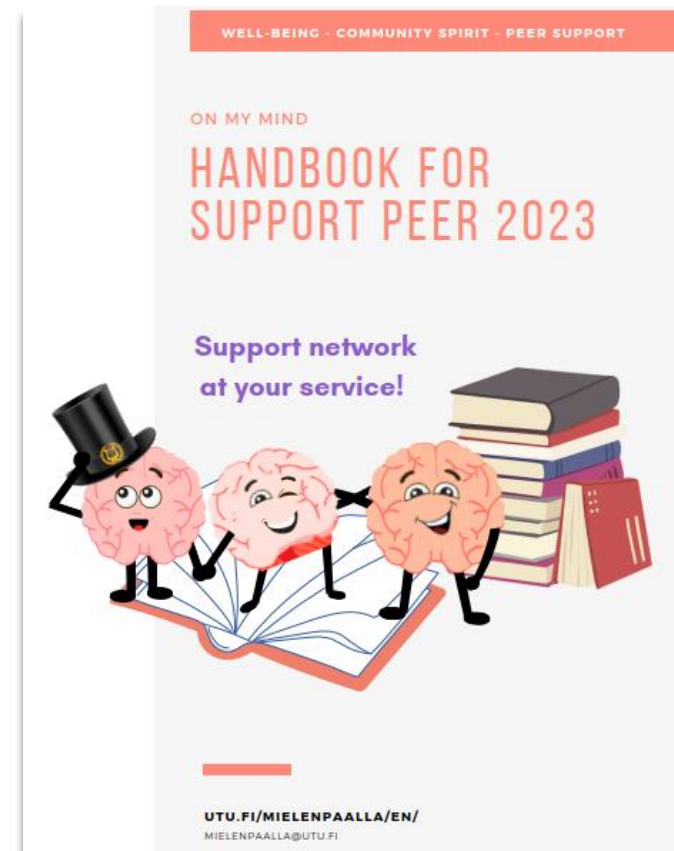
- Let's introduce ourselves to each other
- Principles for peer support
- Roles for support peers
- One-on-one peer support in action
- Peer support groups in action
- Other issues
- Support for support peers
- Let's eat cookies together!

Listening, as such, is a gift!

Finding solutions, in turn, is not always necessary.

Support for peer supporters'

- Guide and materials for peer supporters'
- Inclusion into Academic Life – a Guide for Peer Support Groups in Higher Education (pdf)
- Support for peer supporters' events
 - Twice per academic term.





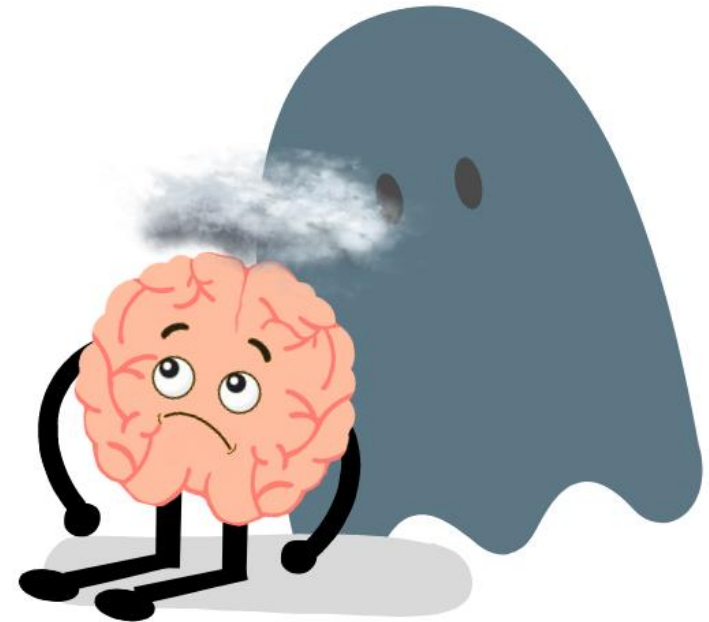
On My Mind - Participants

	Spring 2023	Autumn 2023	SUM
Peer support groups	19	20	39
One-on-one peer support	12	4 (so far)	16

In addition, four doctoral researchers have been directed to contact Occupational Health Care or the University of Turku Study Psychologists.

One-on-one peer support

- Do you have issues with doctoral studies, work-life balance, mental health, motivation, time management or something else? Would you like to talk about your thoughts with your peer?
- Support peers are available for 1-5 meetings per doctoral researcher. All conversations held with our support peers are confidential.
- By filling out **Shall we talk?** contact form, one of On My Mind support peer will contact you within 10 days!



Shall we talk?

- The coordinator contacts a peer supporter, describes the need (what would you like to talk about?) and asks whether the supporter is interested in supporting the peer.
- If yes, coordinator will send peer supporter the person's contact information, On My Mind handbook and opening discussion form.

By filling out this contact form, you will be matched by On My Mind's coordinators with one of our support students who will contact you within 10 days.

Name *

Email (UTU email) *

Choose your degree level

In which of the following faculties does your main subject belong to? If you are completing multiple degrees at the same time, please select the faculty in which you are mainly studying. *

Which of the following is your main campus? If you are completing multiple degrees, please select the campus in which you are mainly studying. *

- Turku
 Pori
 Rauma

I would prefer to meet my peer

Preferred language for peer support

What would you like to talk about with a support student (time management, study motivation, coping with daily life, hobbies)? Please, describe with few sentences.

0 of 200 max characters.

Submit



Opening discussion form



Background:

- What issues would you need peer support for?
- What expectations and feelings do you have towards peer support?
- Common rules: Confidentiality, rights and obligations of contactor and peer supporter

Practical matters:

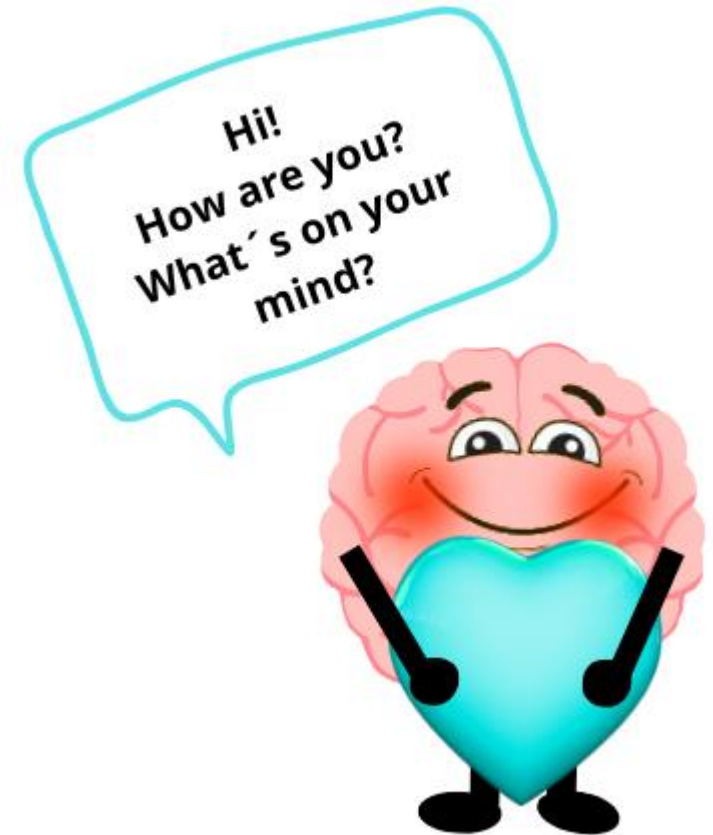
- Content of meetings: What are the issues discussed in the meetings? Can we talk or can we do something together?
- Place of meeting: Where could these meetings take place in the future?
- Contact channel: Which way we will be contact each other after the first meeting? What are the rules for communication?
- Preliminary timetable and length of the meetings: How often (1-5 times) and at what time could meetings take place in the future? (e.g. once a week, once a month)
- Discontinuation of the peer relationship: When will the need cease? How do you inform each other that you are ready?

Feedback channels:

- During peer support relationship, you can talk about things openly. Both parties in the peer support relationship can be directly in touch with the coordinator of the Mind on Mind project (Contact information)
- At the end of the peer support relationship, you can leave feedback here: [Link to the feedback form](#)

Peer support groups

- Peer support groups are composed of 4-6 doctoral researchers with similar objectives and are chaired by a trained support peer.
- The group will meet 5 (+2) times.
- [Inclusion into Academic Life – a Guide for Peer Support Groups in Higher Education \(pdf\)](#)



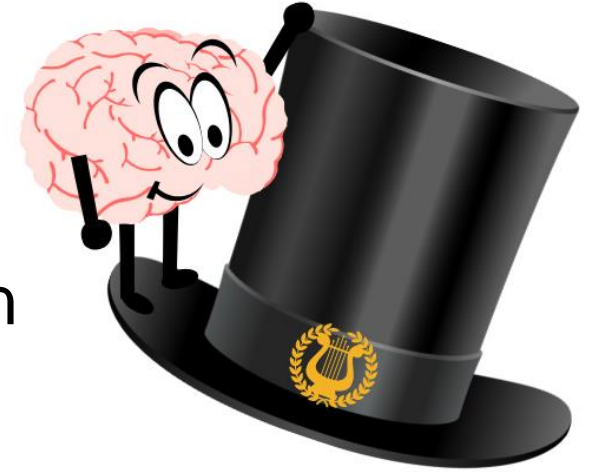
Peer Support Group Registration Form

- Basic information
- My stage on the doctoral researchers' career path
- What makes you interested in the peer group?
- I would prefer to use following language(s) during the peer group meetings
- I would prefer to meet the group members (face-to-face in Turku/ via remote connection/ both options work for me)
- I would like to work with following themes...
- I would like to register to a LOST IN FINLAND peer group targetted for international newcomers
- Any further comments, concerns or development ideas



Forming peer support groups


- Coordinator forms the groups based on the information in Peer Support Group Registration Form.
- Coordinator contacts a peer supporter interested in leading a group and asks whether the peer supporter is comfortable of with the planned group composition.
- If yes, the same question is asked from each of the group members individually.
- Some modifications to the group compositions are likely needed before the groups can start their actions.





On my mind events

- Not only PhD On My Mind events
 - Topics: Peer support, writing groups, perfectionism, time management, career after PhD, well-being services, work-life balance, conflict regarding supervision...
 - Well-being speed dating
- Lectures and workshops
 - On My Mind lecture: Mental Well-being and Power of Self-compassion
 - On My Mind Workshop - The Imposter Syndrome
- Lunchmates

On my mind **Lunchmates** brings **UTU doctoral researchers** together for lunch during the Well-being Week 2022



Mon 10.10.	Tue 11.10.	Wed 12.10.	Thu 13.10.	Fri 14.10.
11-12 Monttu	12-13 Galilei (cabinet)	12-13 Galilei (cabinet)	11-12 Deli Pharma	12-13 Galilei (cabinet)





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Thank you for your attention!