



Research Methods in Science in Engineering

Psychological Aspects of Graduate School

Slide 1

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Disclaimer

I am not a psychologist or psychiatrist.

I cannot diagnose nor treat mental health.

Please contact the correct professionals for help.



Slide 2

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Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is when a person *doubts their skills* and fears they will be *discovered as a fraud*.

Many people seek advanced degrees because they are insecure about their level of knowledge.

You will likely never feel like an expert. There are no experts. There are only people who get stuff done anyway.



PhD Guilt

PhD guilt is the guilt associated with doing things other than research that make a person feel like they are neglecting their research.

Work as hard as you possibly can so that you are still enjoying the research.

You need breaks and a life outside of research. It helps maintain energy, stamina and sanity. Getting out of your environment also helps you be more creative.



Post-PhD Guilt



Post-PhD guilt is when you look back at your research and feel guilty and underserving because you could reproduce all of your research in a very short amount of time.

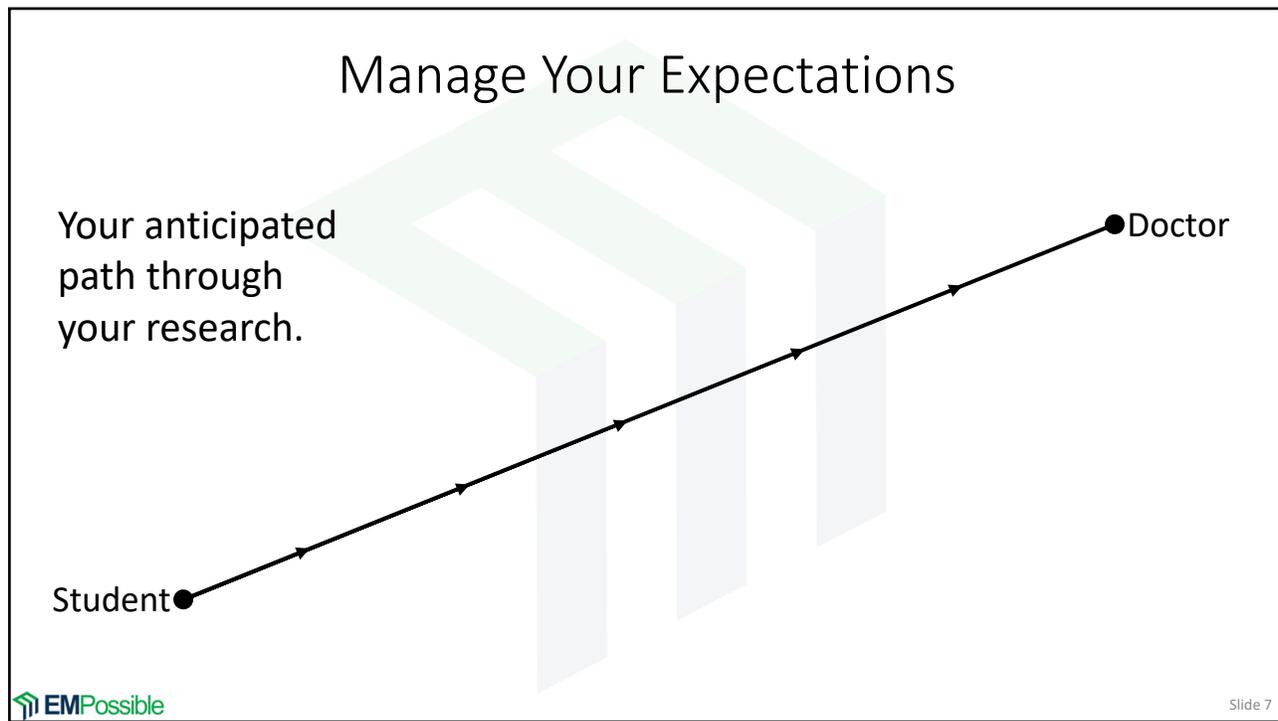
The reason you can reproduce your research in such a short amount of time is why you have earned the PhD.

Significant Others

Significant others (and family) may struggle with your graduate studies and research.

- SO/family may feel your research is more important to you than them.
- SO/family may feel neglected and lonely.



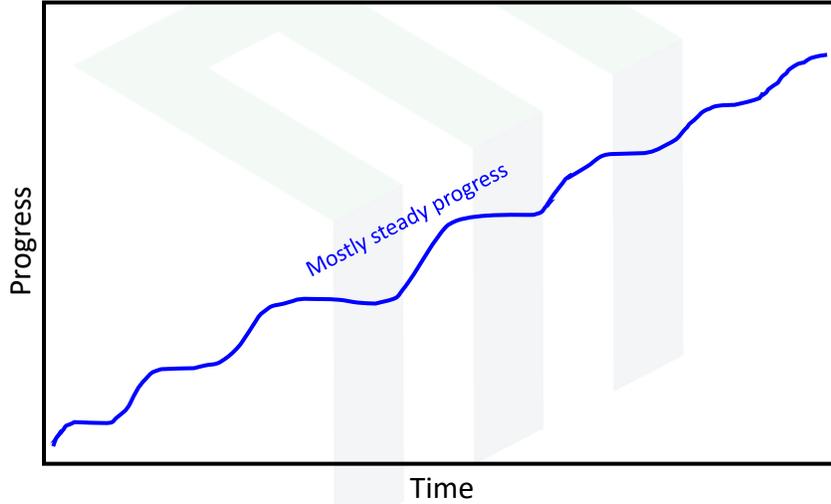


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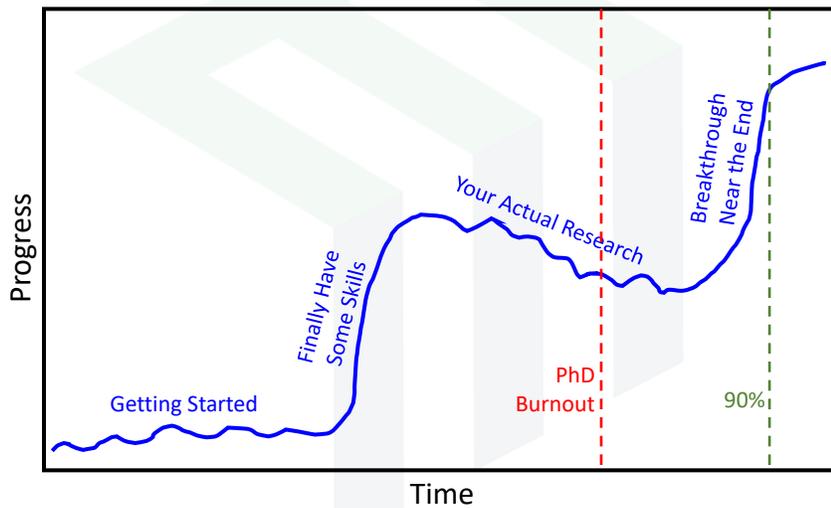
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What You Think Your Progress Will Look Like



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What Your Progress Will Actually Look Like



When you are 90% done, you are only half way there.

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What it Really Takes to Get a PhD

~~Intelligence~~

Stamina

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Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety are likely the most common negative psychological conditions suffered by graduate students.

Learn to deal with and manage stress and anxiety.

Manage your personal bandwidth to prevent being overworked and getting in trouble with deadlines.

Create a support network.

Get a hobby. You need regular breaks and a release from the stress of graduate school.



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Wise Advice

- Have a sense of humor about the frustrations and struggles of graduate research.
- Take breaks and find a release (i.e. sports, games, movies, hobbies, etc.).
- Enjoy the journey! Don't be in a rush to finish.
- Keep talking to your advisor and make sure what you need to accomplish for graduation is clear and specific.
- It is not your professor's job to layout HOW you get these things accomplished. A PhD is an independent researcher.



Conclusion

You are not alone and your feelings are likely not unique.

In fact, these psychological conditions are much more the norm than the exception.

Seek help if you need it!

UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services

Web: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/counseling-services/>

E-Mail: caps@utep.edu

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