



**GHENT
UNIVERSITY**

WELLBEING TOOLKIT

Tips for getting local wellbeing initiatives off the ground

WHY TAKE ACTION NOW?

WELLBEING CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS



Data: A wide range of surveys at different levels (central, faculty, specific departments) show that COVID (measures) are affecting PhD candidates' mental health and their research activities

Vulnerable groups: certain PhD candidates (e.g. International, starting PhD candidates) have no network to fall back on outside of the university to cope

Timing: the recent extension and tightening of COVID restrictions in the short term exacerbates this challenge and the transition back to the office / hybrid working in the mid-long term will present new challenges

WHAT WORKS?

ACTIONS THAT MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUNG RESEARCHERS' WELLBEING



Setting the tone: while most are aware of the wellbeing challenges and how they are amplified during the COVID pandemic, it's difficult (yet vital) for supervisors/mentors to (continue to) translate that overall awareness into practical support

Take the lead: the supervisor/mentor – PhD candidate relationship shapes young researchers' work, but is also the most impactful relationship when it comes to wellbeing

WHAT HAS WORKED ELSEWHERE?

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE (ONLINE) NETWORK FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Case study: Faculty of Law and Criminology

Common mental health challenge
Initiative(s) at local level (research group) with mixed success

Success story: workshop series

Title 'key to doctoral success'
Led by a senior researcher
Regular semi-structured online meetings

Key characteristics

Themes chosen by PhD candidates
Breakout rooms
Low threshold (for organiser and attendee)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

SETTING UP A(N) (IN)FORMAL NETWORK FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Setup

- **Reach out** to local PhD candidates in your research unit, especially ones that started recently
- Prepare an initial **icebreaker session** focusing in informal introductions
- **Let PhD candidates determine/shape topics** for subsequent sessions (e.g. finding your research niche, navigating online resources, fear of failure, etc.)

Structure

- **Book time** in people's diaries for a fixed, recurring session (e.g. bi-weekly) on an easily accessible online platform (e.g. Microsoft Teams)
- **Send out a short description** ahead of each session, setting out the topic(s) and format
- Focus your preparation on ways to **encourage discussion** rather than in-depth teaching

Your role

- **Leading:** use your own experience to throw typical challenges starting researchers face into relief, such as scoping your research topic or positioning yourself within your field of research.
- **Facilitating:** encourage PhD candidates to discuss what they are finding difficult, from navigating practical issues such as how to access library materials to broader concerns about their research and how they should tackle it

Practical

- **Breakout sessions** in small groups on specific topics bookended by general discussion tend to work well (and most conference call software has the option to do this built in)
- Asking a PhD candidate to give an informal presentation on a specific topic can **make a topic more accessible**
- Make it clear from the start that the session is a **safe space** for people to openly discuss challenges and issues they are facing

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

QUICK PRACTICAL GUIDES TO HELP YOU GET SET UP

How to organise a recurring
calendar invite with built-in
Teams link

Ctrl +
click here

How to organise
breakout rooms in
Teams

Ctrl +
click here

How to create and share a
Sharepoint site for participants
to use

Ctrl +
click here

WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THIS ISSUE?

RECENT WORK PROVIDING USEFUL CONTEXT –CLICK THE ICONS TO LEARN MORE



ONLINE
SUPERVISION

A guide to online supervision



GRADUATE
NETWORKS

**Graduate networks: practical case study
University of Sussex**



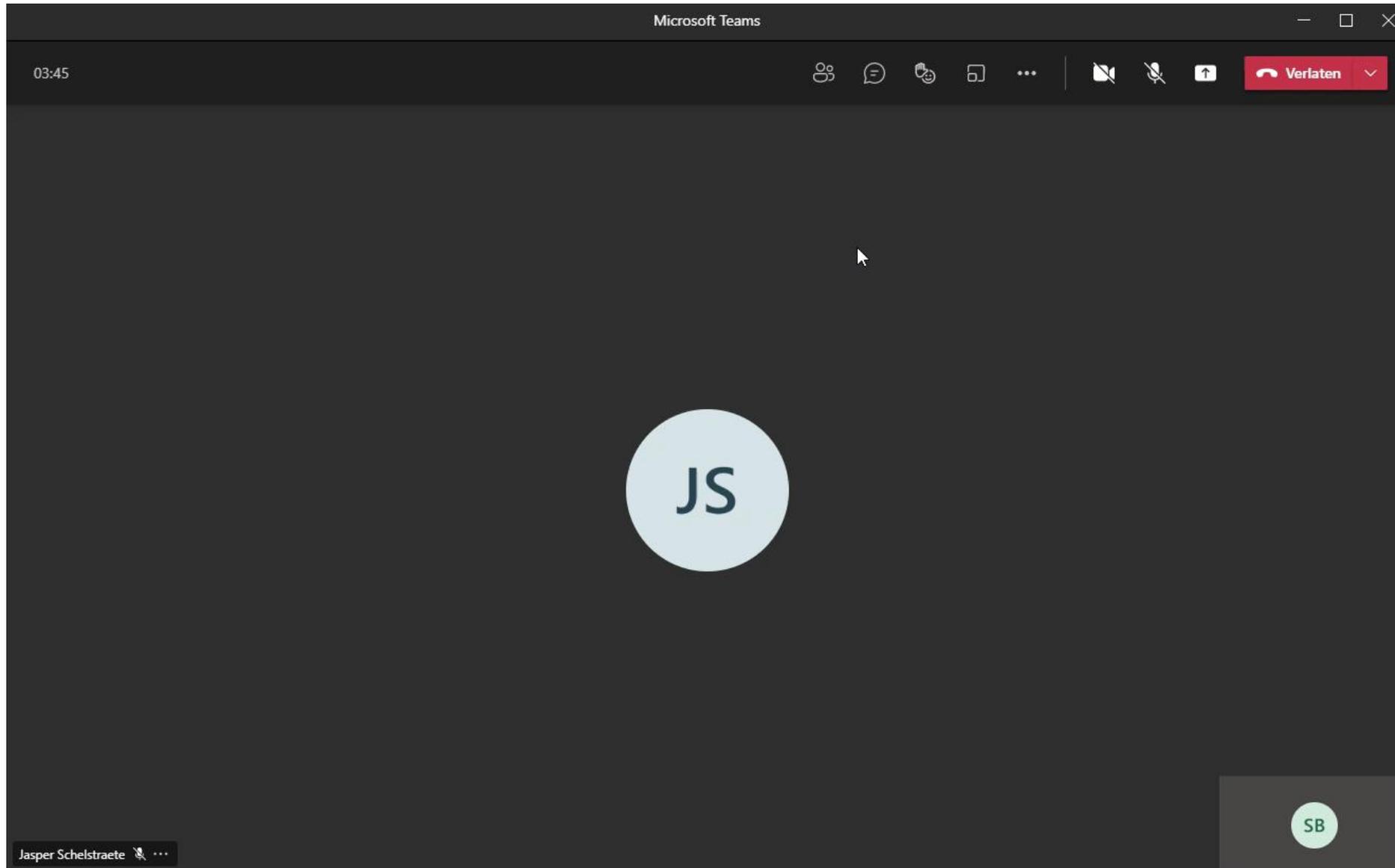
VITAE

Vitae: practical advice for doctoral candidates

HOW TO ORGANISE A RECURRING CALENDAR INVITE WITH BUILT-IN TEAMS LINK

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Outlook calendar interface. At the top, the ribbon includes options for 'New Appointment', 'New Meeting', 'Meet Now', and 'New Teams Meeting'. The main area shows a weekly calendar view for '20 - 26 juli 2020'. The days of the week are listed as 'maandag' through 'zondag'. The time slots range from 07:00 to 23:00. On the left side of the calendar grid, there is a vertical button labeled 'Previous Appointment'. The bottom status bar indicates 'Items: 0' and 'Connected to: Microsoft Exchange'.

HOW TO ORGANISE BREAKOUT ROOMS IN TEAMS



- General information on Sharepoint:

<https://helpdesk.ugent.be/office365/sharepoint.php>

- Practical guide to setting up Sharepoint:

<https://sharepoint.ugent.be/sites/LearnSharePoint/SitePages/Home.aspx>

For questions about this toolkit,
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