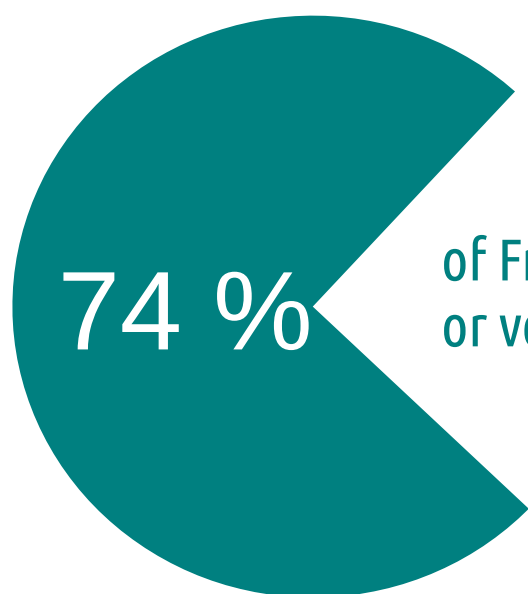


THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE PHD

PhD is awesome...

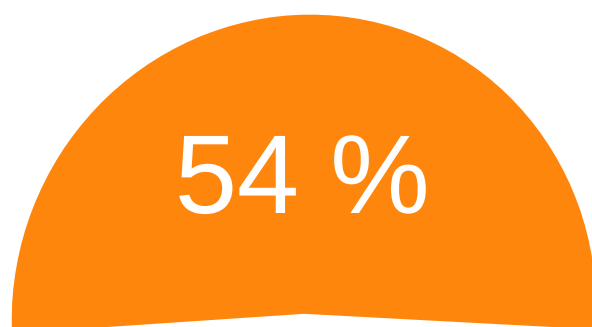


of French PhD doctorates are satisfied or very satisfied with their thesis

...but harder than it should :(



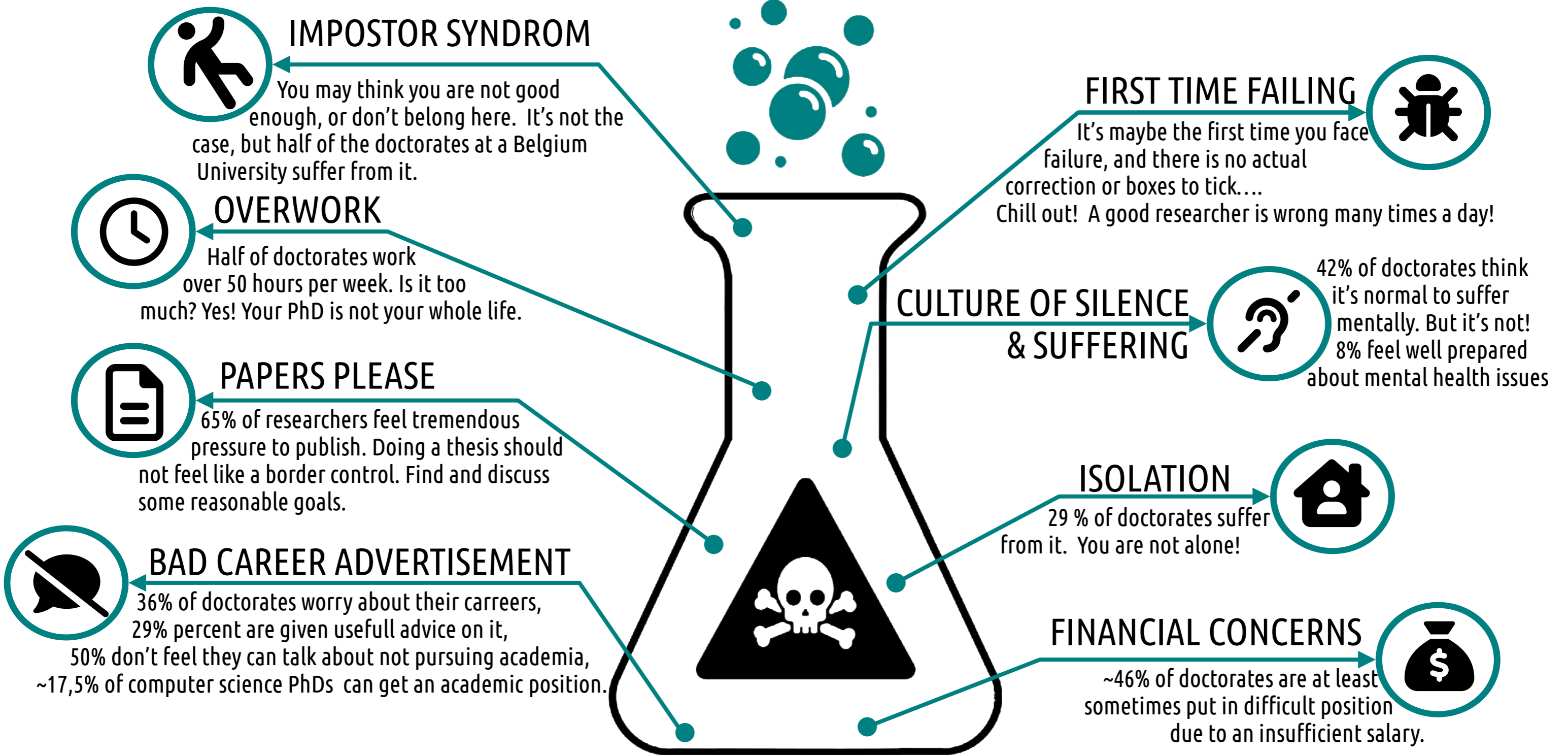
of PhD doctorates feel or are clinically depressed



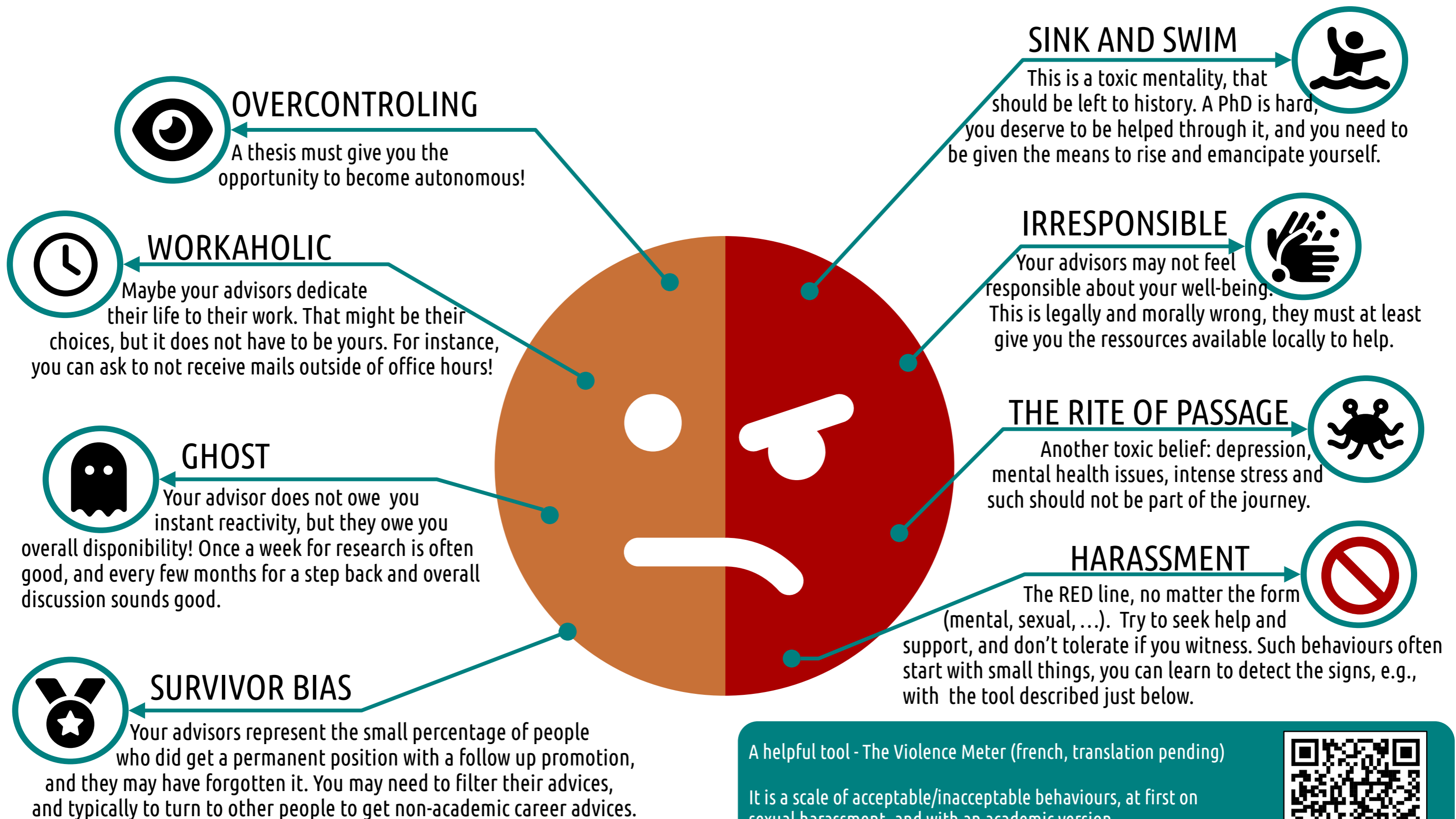
of French PhD doctorates suffer from stress

Why the heck, and what to do?

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT – Part 1: any PhD is HARD



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT – Part 2: Advisors

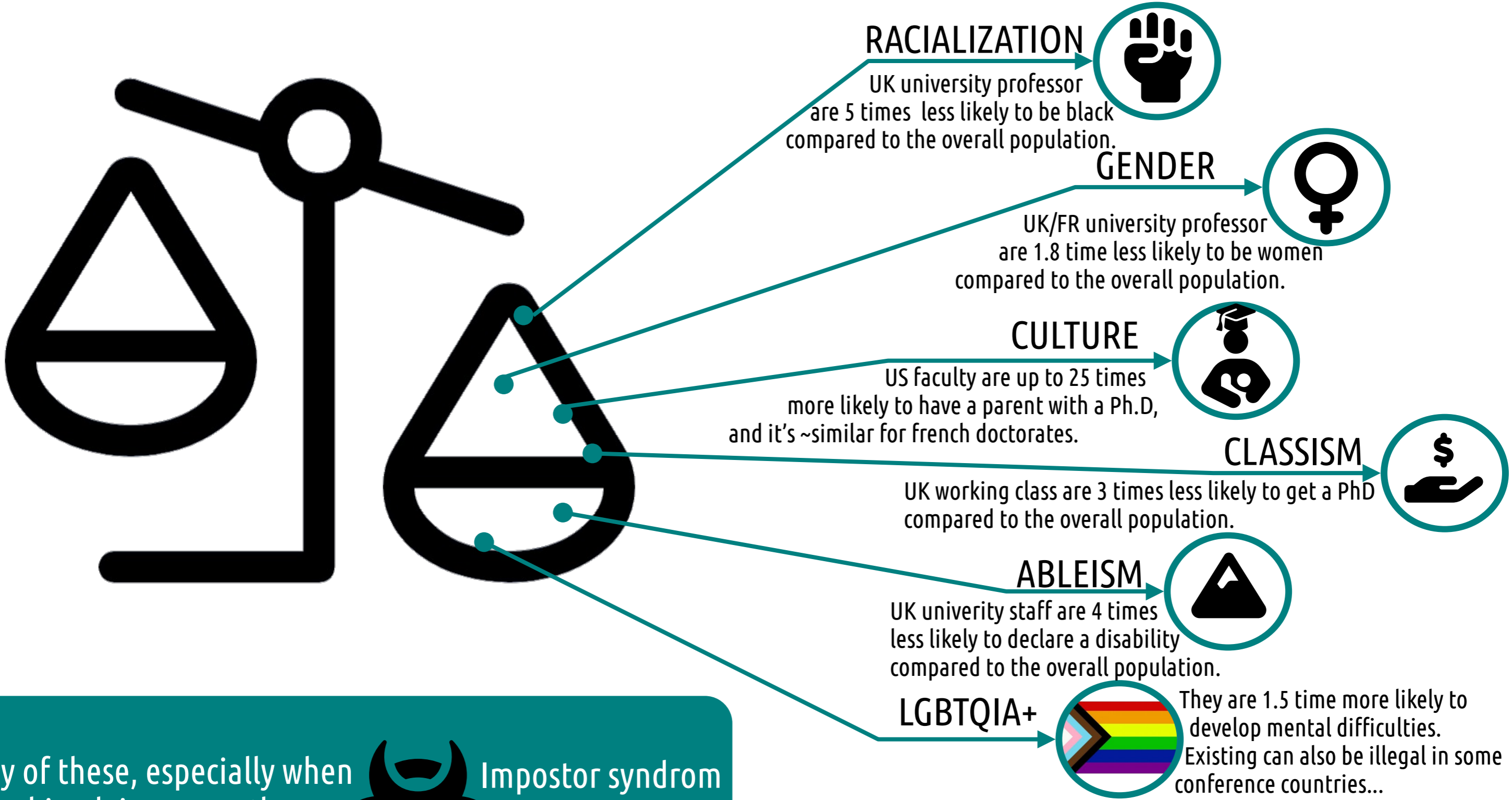


A helpful tool - The Violence Meter (french, translation pending)

It is a scale of acceptable/inacceptable behaviours, at first on sexual harassment, and with an academic version.



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT – Part 3: Inequalities



Any of these, especially when combined, increases the likelihood of suffering from  Impostor syndrom
Bullying
Harassment

A FEW IDEAS



ACCEPTANCE

There will be some scientific difficulties: if your project was easy, it would already be done. Do not be ashamed to struggle and don't isolate yourself.



FUN

A PhD can be an awesome experience, full of learning, discoveries, emancipation and... fun! It can be a very special work environment where you may be free to have fun and be full of quirks, so do use this freedom!



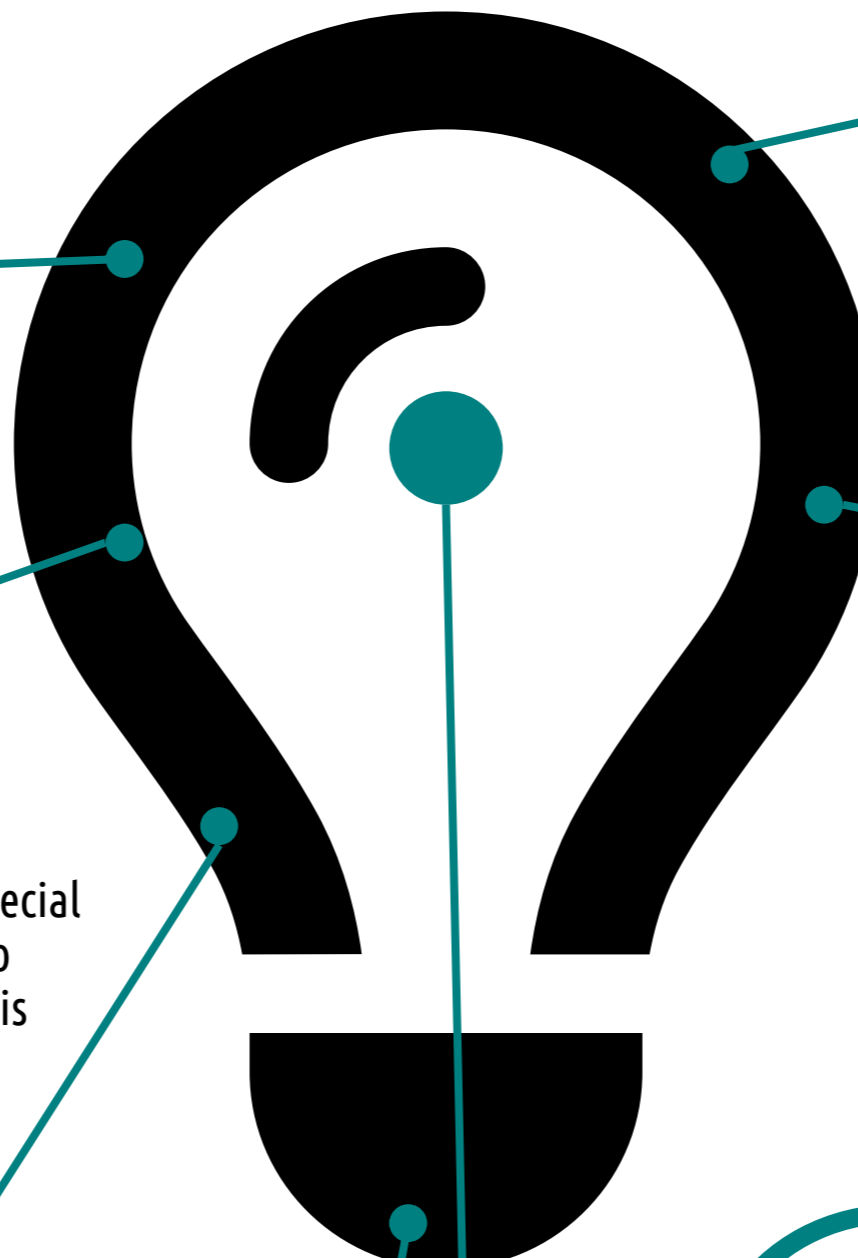
GROW TOGETHER

Your advisors will not be perfect. Encourage them to follow a course on advising if they never did. If they are bad at communicating, conflicts may arise from basic miss-understanding, don't hesitate to ask for clarifications. Talk to them about what you can accept or not, what are your limits, what bothers you in this relationship. If you have specific needs, try to be open about it.



BIG CHANGES

If nothing works, your doctoral school must help you change your advisor. Finally, stopping your thesis is always an option, and honestly not such a big deal.



LEARN



Many methodologies can help you through the scientific parts of your PhD, with often dedicated courses. Also, redaction group where you write and criticize between doctorates are known to help. And Some books are dedicated to help you. See next page for resources.

BASIC NEEDS



It's basic but we forget it when we are low. Take care of yourself, food/sleep/free time all affect directly mental health.

TOGETHER



Share and compare experiences to understand what is normal and what isn't. If needed, you can set up dedicated groups, such as those for doctorate or groups where certain identities feel more comfortable participating.

TALK!



INSTITUTION



Your lab/uni must provide official points of contacts, and unions can also help. Institutions may also help the previous point, by organizing meetings, seminars, pizza time, WEI, ...

MEDICAL



Most people would benefit from seeing a therapist, and there is no shame in doing so. Friends and colleagues cannot do nor provide what professionals can.

CONTACT POINTS ?



As mentioned your lab/uni should provide official points of contacts. If as a newcomer, you don't get such a list, complain to people, and ask why! This page can be edited and used by institutions to provide this. A QR code to some easy access webpage summarizing the local informations is great!

Harassment hotline:

Harassment institutional mail support:

Mental health hotline:

University occupational health-care professional:

University therapist:

University social worker:

Informal trained listeners:

Local doctorate association:

Doctorate/student/researchers unions:

Example webpage for my lab,
the LORIA!

<https://intranet.loria.fr/vss/>



RESSOURCES

- Managing your Mental Health during your PhD: A Survival Guide. Dr Zoe Ayres.
- Comment l'université broie les jeunes chercheurs. Précarité, harcèlement, loi du silence. Adèle B. Combes.
- Guide to a Doctorate in France — ANDès & CJC.
French: <https://spartacus-idh.com/076.html>
English: <https://spartacus-idh.com/104.html>
- Doctorate schools often have charters/guideline, to which the advisors officialy commit. It can actually be an interesting read.
French example:
[http://doctorat.univ-lorraine.fr/sites/default/files/user/futurs%20doct
orants/charte du doctorat.pdf](http://doctorat.univ-lorraine.fr/sites/default/files/user/futurs%20doct%20orants/charte%20du%20doctorat.pdf)

SOURCES

Statistics are mixing many studies from US/UK/France/Worldwide, see here for all the detailed references, additional ressources and editable version :

<https://not-in-our-labs.github.io/>



If you are suffering or overthinking,

For doing something about it, **you are not alone.**

REMEMBER

We can fight back !



We are all in this together. We can spread awareness , support and ressources. We can refuse to normalize toxic behaviours and denounce them. We can join our local PhD association to set up social events or discussion groups. We can set up reading groups in our team. We can join a union to help those abandoned by institutions, or to fight back about the big political things like academic freedom or the « publish or perish » culture. And even if sometimes we do make sacrifices and follow the « publish or perish » mentality to get a position, we must keep talking about it, and keep saying it is not normal. And for those that want and get a permanent position, we can fight this in every comittee we set foot.

DISCLAIMER

Booklet by Charlie Jacomme, heavily inspired by work from Dr Zoe Ayres (the Toxic Mix poster and her book). Similar to her, I am not a medical professional, this was put together from a mix of scientific ressources and experiences. I am responsible for any innacuracies.

Suggestions of ressources, modifications and anything are more than welcome at charlie.jacomme@inria.fr