

Supporting online information for *Committed to work but vulnerable: self-perceptions and mental health in NEET 18-year-olds from a contemporary British cohort* by Goldman-Mellor et al.

Table S1. Brief description of E-Risk work engagement and work preparedness measures, assessed at age 18 years

Measure	Description
Commitment to work	Work commitment was measured with self-report interview questions that tapped the study members' behavioural and psychological commitment to the concept of working. ¹ Work commitment was assessed with an 7-item scale, including "If I won a lot of money on the lottery I would want to continue working," "Having a job is very important to me," "I would get bored without a job," "I really must have work or I will lose self-respect," "Being unemployed is one of the worst things that could happen to me," "Having a job means more to me than just the money," and "If unemployment benefit was really high I would still prefer to work." Possible responses included "Not true," "Somewhat true," and "Very true," corresponding to scores of 0, 1, or 2. Scores on each statement were summed to create an index of how committed the twin was to work (mean = 9.74, SD = 2.99, range = 0 to 14, alpha = 0.72); higher scores indicated more commitment. ²
Job search effort	Participants' job search activities were assessed using questions that queried whether the twin had ever done any of the following to find a job: Read the classified ads; used the Internet to locate vacancies; listed him- or herself as a job applicant in a newspaper, shop window or a computer service; sent his or her CV to potential employers; talked to people (e.g., friends, family members, previous employers) about job leads; applied for a job; had a job interview; registered with an employment agency; contacted a potential employer; or voluntarily attended a job training program. Positive responses were summed to create a single score (mean = 5.03, SD = 2.43, range = 0 to 11, alpha = 0.75).
Professional/technical skills	Participants were asked whether they had any of the following special skills to sell to a potential employer: Word processing, computer programming, a second language, a musical or artistic talent, sales skills, customer service skills, writing skills, "chef" or cooking/catering skills, repair/carpentry/plumbing/construction skills, business management, or other skills. Positive responses were summed to create a single score indexing the number of professional/technical skills each twin believed him- or herself to possess (mean = 4.96, SD = 1.82, range = 0 to 11, alpha = 0.64).
"Soft" skills	Soft skills are behavioural competencies such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication that enhance an individual's interpersonal interactions, job performance and career prospects. ³ At age 18, all study members were asked whether a series of 20 phrases described them (yes or no). The phrases reflected soft skills such as "good at solving problems," "a leader," "able to explain complicated things in a simple way," "good at communicating with others," "able to manage time effectively," "able to adapt well to new situations," "someone who works well in a team," and "able to get job advice when needed." Positive responses were summed to create a single score indexing the number of soft skills each twin believed

him- or herself to possess (mean = 16.94, SD = 2.66, range = 0 to 20, alpha = 0.70).

Perceptions of ability to get ahead A 10-item scale developed for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 3-site study in the United States assessed study members' expectations for getting ahead by asking about agreement with statements such as "A person like you has a pretty good chance of obtaining a college or university qualification," "The job market is usually good to people like you," "Your family can't give you the opportunities that most people have," and "As you get older, things will get better."⁴ Statements indicating pessimism about the future (e.g., "You will never have as much opportunity to succeed as other people") were reverse scored. Scores were summed to create a single score indexing optimism about future labour market prospects, with higher scores indicating greater optimism (mean = 16.09, SD = 3.21, range = 1 to 20, alpha = 0.68).⁵

¹ Greenberger E, O'Neil R. Spouse, parent, worker: Role commitments and role-related experiences in the construction of adults' well-being. *Developmental Psychol* 1993; **29**:181-197.

² Roberts BW, Caspi A, Moffitt TE. Work experiences and personality development in young adulthood. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2003; **84**(3):582-593.

³ Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. What Work Requires of Schools. U.S. Department of Labor, 1991.

⁴ Huizinga D, Weiher A, Menard S, et al. Some not so boring findings from the Denver Youth Study. In: Thornberry TP, Krohn M, eds. Taking stock: An overview of findings from the Denver Youth Study. New York: Plenum Press, 1998.

⁵ Moffitt TE, Caspi A, Harrington H, Milne B. Males on the life-course-persistent and adolescence-limited antisocial pathways: Follow-up at age 26 years. *Dev Psychopathol* 2002; **14**(1):179-207.

Table S2. Education and work among E-Risk youths at age 18

	All E-Risk youths (n=2,066)
Studying at university only, n (%)	153 (7.4%)
Studying other subject only (e.g., vocational qualifications), n (%)	504 (24.4%)
Working only, n (%)	365 (17.7%)
Both working and studying, n (%)	805 (39.0%)
Neither working nor studying (NEET), n (%)	239 (11.6%)