

Co-Creating Holistic Caring Spaces  
for our Postgraduate Students &  
Early Career Researchers

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A network of educators, researchers, industry actors, and community members

**Mission:**

to be the leading, forward-looking network inspiring, informing, & supporting tourism educators & students to passionately & courageously co-create tourism for a better world.

# Research Context

- A mental health crisis in graduate education (Evans et al., 2018)
- Stress & anxiety (Myers et al., 2012)
- Work-life balance (Benjamin et al., 2017)
- Trainee-adviser relationships (Boluk & Miller, 2021)
- Additional caring roles and/or work responsibilities (Evans et al., 2018)
- The pandemic has exacerbated these concerns, contributing to the already challenging learning environment

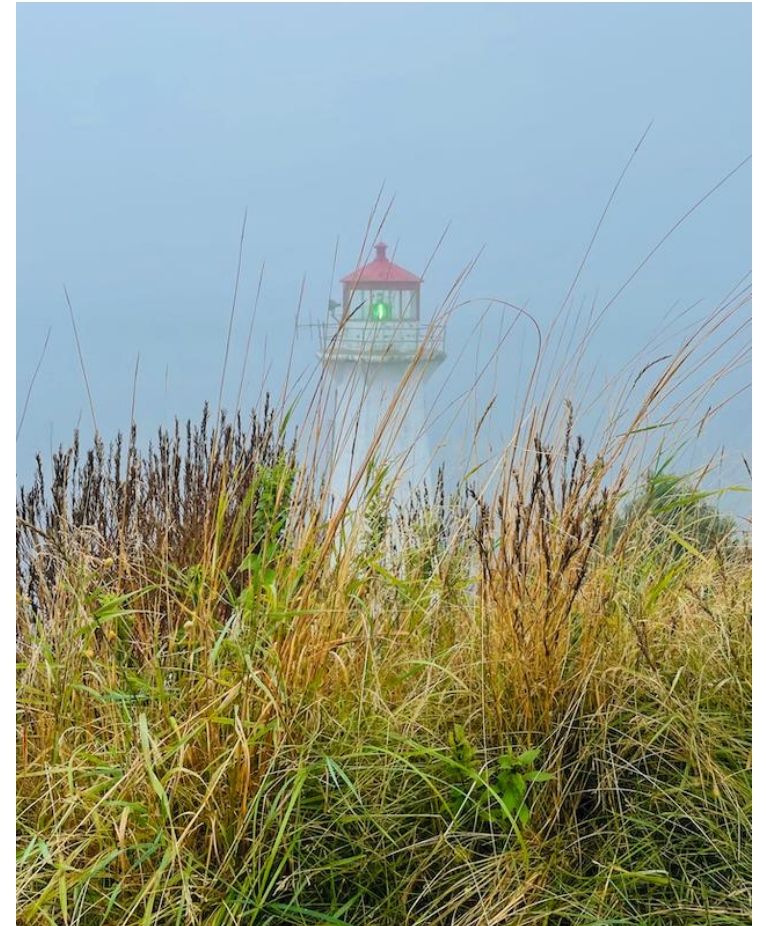
# Online Symposium

- Two-days
- Co-Creating Holistic Caring Spaces
- Free
- Graduate student-led
- Creative Analytic Practice (CAP)



# Taking the Pulse

- 1) What unique challenges has the pandemic presented?
- 2) What are the impacts of such challenges?
- 3) What supports are required to enhance work-life balance and support the general well-being and educational experiences of graduate students & ECRs?



# Creative Analytic Practice



**Unruly heat.** Throughout both pandemic summers, I spent a lot of time watching the hops in my yard grow, a practice of slowness partially-gifted by my supervisor. Attending to plants, but also attending to patience. Hops are rhizomatic and come back stronger each year (or so my partner tells me). On bright, sunny summer days they can grow over a foot a day—it's remarkable to watch. I also grew other things: sunflowers, house plants, tons of weeds. We moved an errant walnut tree further into our yard and somehow it is still alive. I'm mostly shocked.



## BEAUTY

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Deadlines, and milestones.

Did I do enough? Am I on track?

I pace myself, sit with it for a while; I'm learning to think and engage in new ways.

Fresh air! Breathe it in.

Stay until sunset. "Thumbs up kiddo, you were so brave". I don't want to miss this.

Take it *all* in.

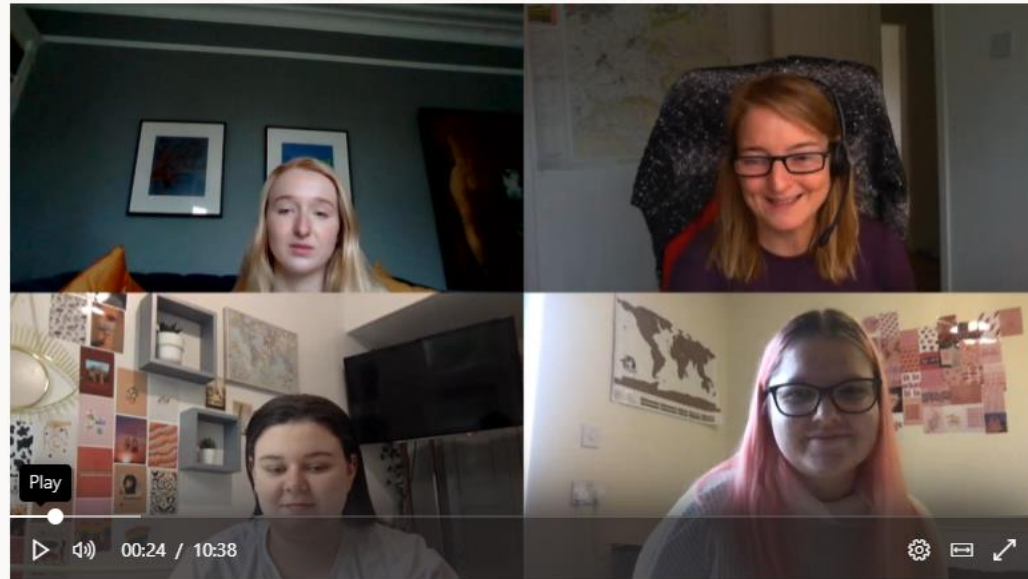
“in my hammock”

Slowness creeps, invades

Like a weed we'll toil to kill




Till we learn its gifts.

*I was anxious and angry but whom to blame,  
Being an international student was a messy game,  
COVID 19 was hard to tame,  
What was supposed to be mine, I could hardly claim.*



Details

BMT4001M Tourism Industry Seminar

Published on 10/12/2020 by Jenny Hall  Limited 2  0 

Screw academia

We really want to say that.

Or do we?

We just want to be heard, seen, acknowledged, valued, validated.



## CLOSENESS

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I'm a Ph.D. student; my intentions are real.

Collaboration, collegial formations, learning, together, but apart.

Can I do this?

It's so beautiful here.

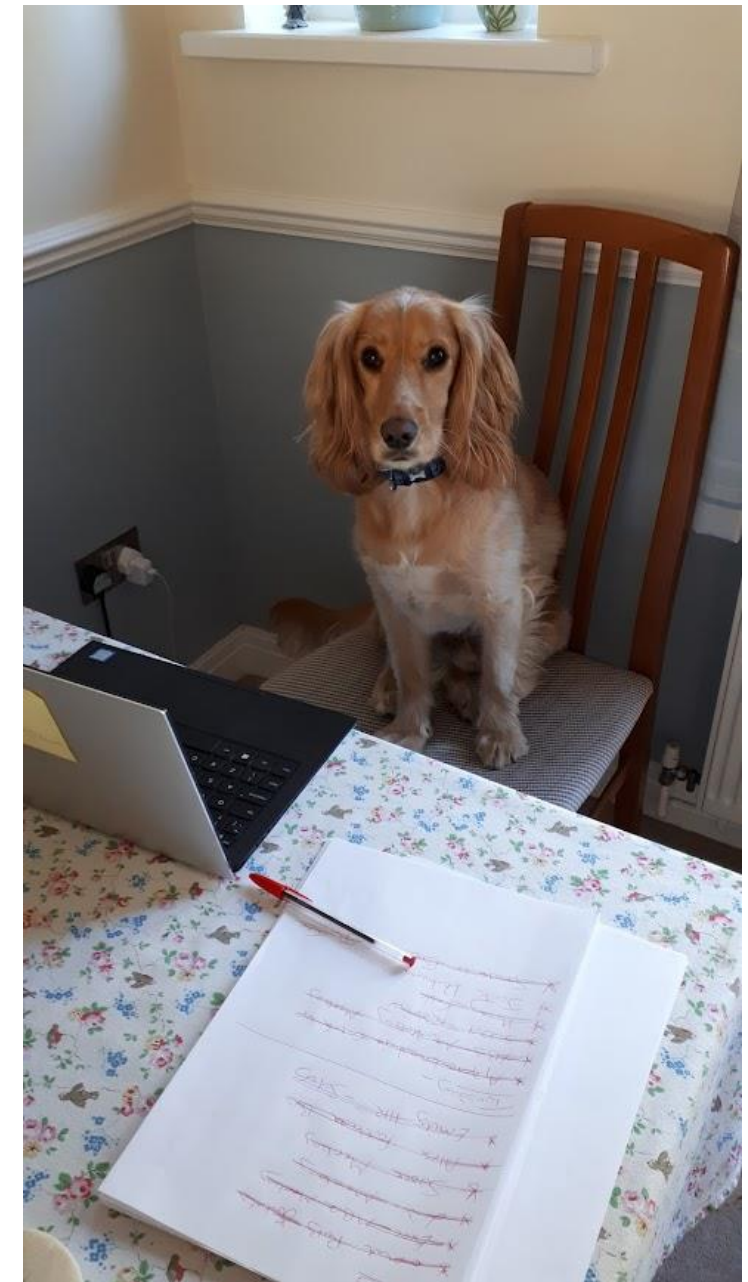
When is that dentist appointment? Must get more Tylenol!

Breathe mama, it's going to be okay, just keep them close.

### Beat and Breath

I felt COVID-19 in waves. The shock, reprieve, action, and pause.

COVID shocked our collective breath. It took all the air out, suddenly. Panic ensued and we couldn't catch back up with the breath. The chaos from COVID was shock, through our loss of breath, physically through those who were sick, and emotionally, through fear of the unknown. Urban neighbors became cold and hardened as we quarantined each other. Our own families became the other: potential harborers of the virus through which we were becoming familiar. We forgot to breathe and we were forced to be careful of where we breathed. In the home and outside in the chaos. Acceptance into the Ph.D. program and the first year. The shock.





# Finding your People: Panel Discussion

- From early career researchers, to seasoned & established scholars
- Shared stories of their graduate experiences & how this shaped their trajectory
- This informed a dialogue on how we might better support graduate students & ECRs



# How might we demonstrate care?

- Be a role model of self-care
- Celebrate work-life balance
- Cultivate safe spaces
- Celebrate achievements
- Active check-ins



# How might our networks support & show care?

- Free events and conferences
- Mentorship
- Training and skills development
- Creating opportunities to publish
- Safe spaces to be personal and vulnerable
- Challenge the capitalist model of HE



# So, what next?

- Continue to facilitate dialogue
- Collaborate within and across networks
- Reduce barriers
- Build on the creative elements
- Professional development opportunities



# References

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Thank you!

Any questions?

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