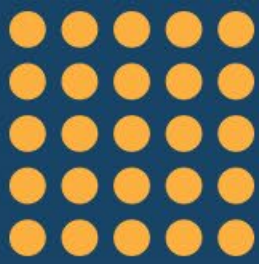


# RESEARCH SPEAKER SERIES



**Creating communities of care for  
academic spaces - a critical,  
collective, and pragmatic approach**

December 10, 2024, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.



**Dr. Petra Boynton**



Hosted by Gwen Nguyen and Leva Lee, Teaching & Learning Advisors @BCcampus



**BCcampus**  
Learning. Doing. Leading.

BCcampus' office is situated on the unceded territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich) and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples. As both individuals and as an organization, we continue to learn and build relationships as we actively respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Creating communities of care for  
all who work or study in academia.  
A critical, collective, and  
pragmatic approach.

BCcampus: Research Speaker Series  
(December 2024)  
Petra Boynton



Pause for a moment to check  
in with yourself

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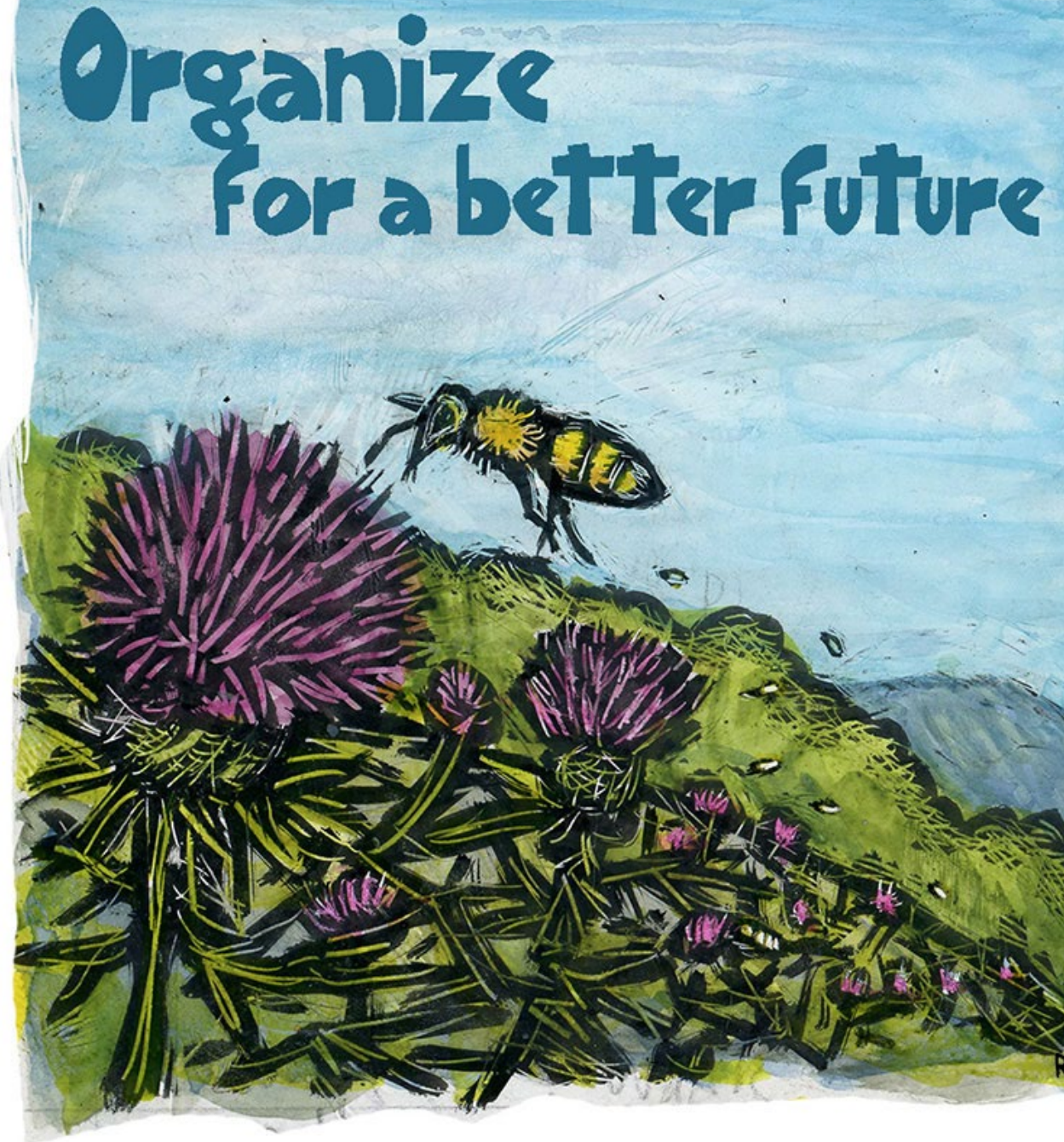


*“Hope is essential to any political struggle for radical change when the overall social climate promotes disillusionment and despair”*

bell hooks

*“To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing”.*

Raymond Williams



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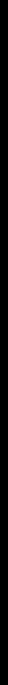
Who does this bring in?

Who does it leave out?

Who might it help?

Who might it harm?

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What is a 'Community of Care'?

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## Networks and groups that are:

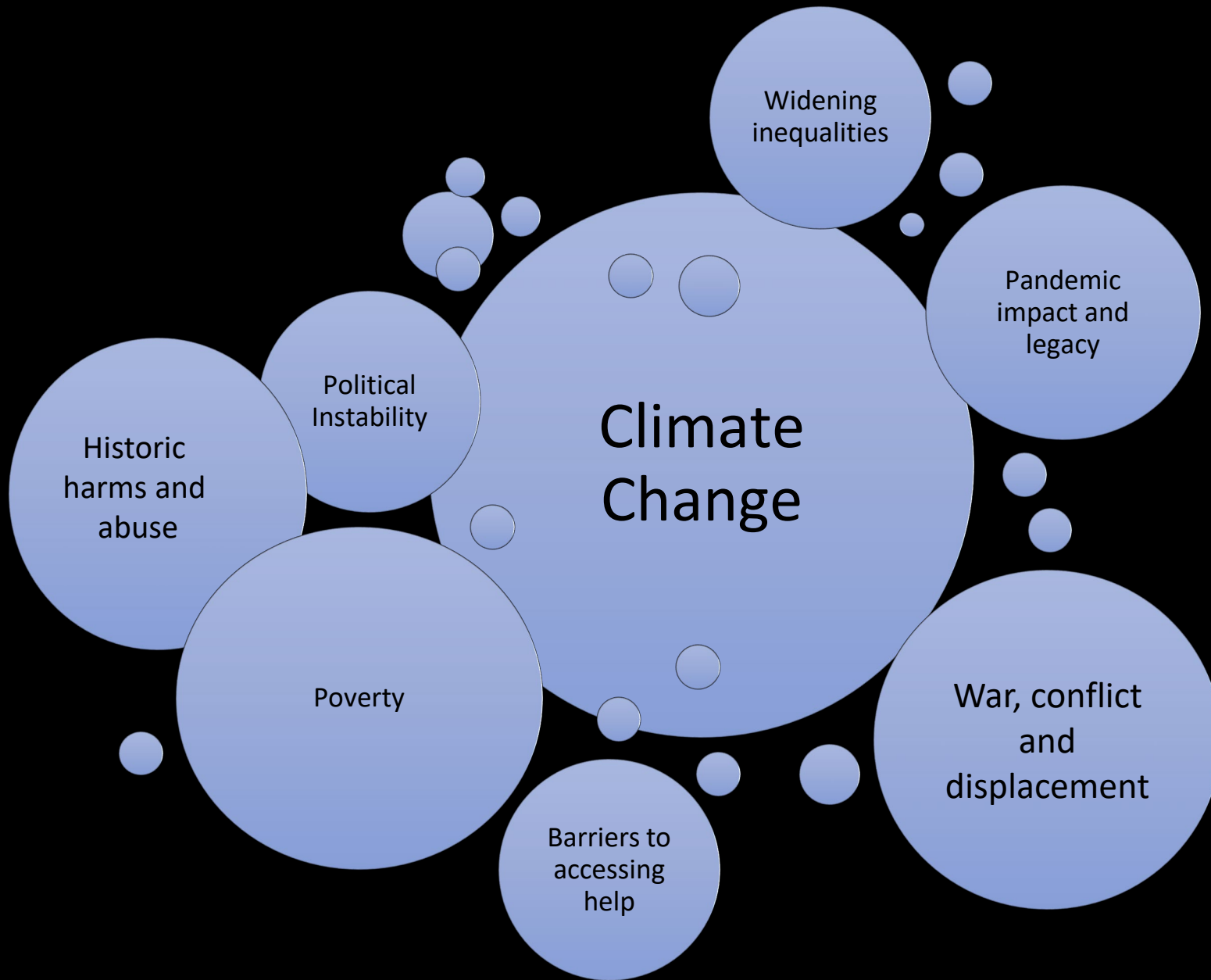
- Formal or informal
- On or offline
- Created in response to need
- Focused on turn-taking and mutual assistance
- Built on connectedness, reciprocity and flow
- Welcoming of diversity and difference
- A space where everyone can contribute
- Collectively organised





What's going on outside  
academia?

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Why do we feel the way we do?

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<b>Industrial action (all sectors)</b>	<b>Publish or perish</b>	<b>Metrification</b>	<b>Competition and glorifying overwork</b>	<b>Precarity</b>	<b>Funding cuts/deficits “I have to pay to work”</b>
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	<b>“Suffering is a badge of honor”</b>	<b>Widening inequalities and reduced accessibility</b>	<b>Inadequate, inaccessible, or culturally irrelevant pastoral care</b>	<b>Problems with pensions and pay and low wages</b>	<b>Bullying and sexual harassment</b>
<b>Inadequate training, supervision, instruction and equipment</b>	<b>Evidence and legacy work ignored or avoided</b>	<b>Visa/access and hostile environment</b>	<b>Rapid transitions</b>	<b>Extractive practices</b>	<b>Student and staff histories, needs, and changing circumstances</b>
<b>Relocation for work or study</b>	<b>Loneliness and isolation</b>	<b>Emphasis on research (but patchy tuition, impacting on ethics and quality)</b>	<b>Safety and wellbeing issues (including studying sensitive topics and secondary data)</b>	<b>Silo working</b>	<b>Research waste</b>
<b>Violence on campus; within the university system; enacted by academia</b>	<b>Drop-outs and other leavers</b>	<b>Legal changes and challenges</b>	<b>Closures and redundancies</b>	<b>Pandemic gaps and catch ups</b>	<b>Employment prospects</b>

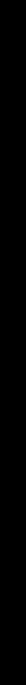
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It's difficult to build or  
maintain communities  
in systems that are  
broken.

So, what do we do?

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# Putting things in perspective

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Is there a global mental health crisis across academia?



Are discussions about problems in academia making things worse?



Are we in danger of using mental health discourses when talking about difficult but understandable and normative issues?

Papers on 'academic mental health' over the past 25 years





+  
• ○ Identify barriers to  
getting help and  
building community

+  
• ○

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- Time
- Cost
- Trust
- Availability
- Rationing
- Eligibility
- Awareness
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Confidence
- Appropriateness
- Safety
- Negative past experiences
- Refusals and rejection

# Students and staff who may be particularly vulnerable



- Low income
- Estranged
- Working class
- From an ethnic minority
- Disabled
- Have learning difficulties
- Physically or mentally ill
- Parents or carers
- Care experienced
- Self-funding
- Refugee or asylum seeker
- At risk of violence
- Of faith

- Part time
- LGBTQ+
- On placement or doing fieldwork
- International
- Older/mature
- Working or studying remotely
- Women
- Indigenous
- First-gen
- Bereaved
- Living with past or current trauma
- Have social and emotional problems

**Support Those  
most vulnerable**



#TeamMuskOx

Be an active bystander

Join a union

Make #GoodTrouble

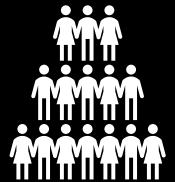
Enforce boundaries

An aerial, isometric illustration of a city. The city features a mix of building heights, from low-rise structures to tall skyscrapers. A prominent river or canal winds through the center of the city, bordered by green trees and walkways. A large, solid black silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is positioned on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the city's edge. The overall style is clean and modern, using a color palette of greens, blues, and earthy tones.

Build your community!  
Places and spaces to get help

- Supervisor/manager
- Graduate office (school or programme)
- Pastoral care, guidance, or welfare
- Counselling (on or offline)
- International Student Office
- Disabled Student Office
- Student Support Services
- Campus healthcare
- Chaplaincy
- Food bank
- Library
- Student/union

- Security
- Mentors and representatives
- Peer support
- Funders
- Ombuds
- Mediators
- Third party monitors
- Human Resources
- Occupational Health
- Proactive or Environmental Investigations
- Witnesses, allies and upstanders
- Societies and Hubs



# Further sources you can draw upon

- Research Integrity and Culture
- Ethics
- Engagement
- Research Concordats
- Stated aims from Research Councils
- Mental health manifestos, pathways and protocols
- Academic media
- Research evidence base
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB)
- Health and workplace rights, safety and wellbeing guidelines and legislation
- UN General Assembly: Resolution on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (June 2023)



# Check in with each other



- ❑ Accessible instructions and guidelines (aka 'what to expect, what to do, and how to do it')
- ❑ Places and spaces to work and study
- ❑ Training and supervision
- ❑ Support and encouragement
- ❑ Reflection and feedback
- ❑ Opportunities for practice and making mistakes
- ❑ Strategies when things (inevitably) go wrong
- ❑ Managing expectations
- ❑ Multiple explanations in varied formats
- ❑ A focus beyond academics, the university, and STEM
- ❑ Mental Health First Aid/Psychological First Aid
- ❑ Trauma-informed approaches
- ❑ Better liaison between schools, colleges and universities; AND communities
- ❑ Effective signposting

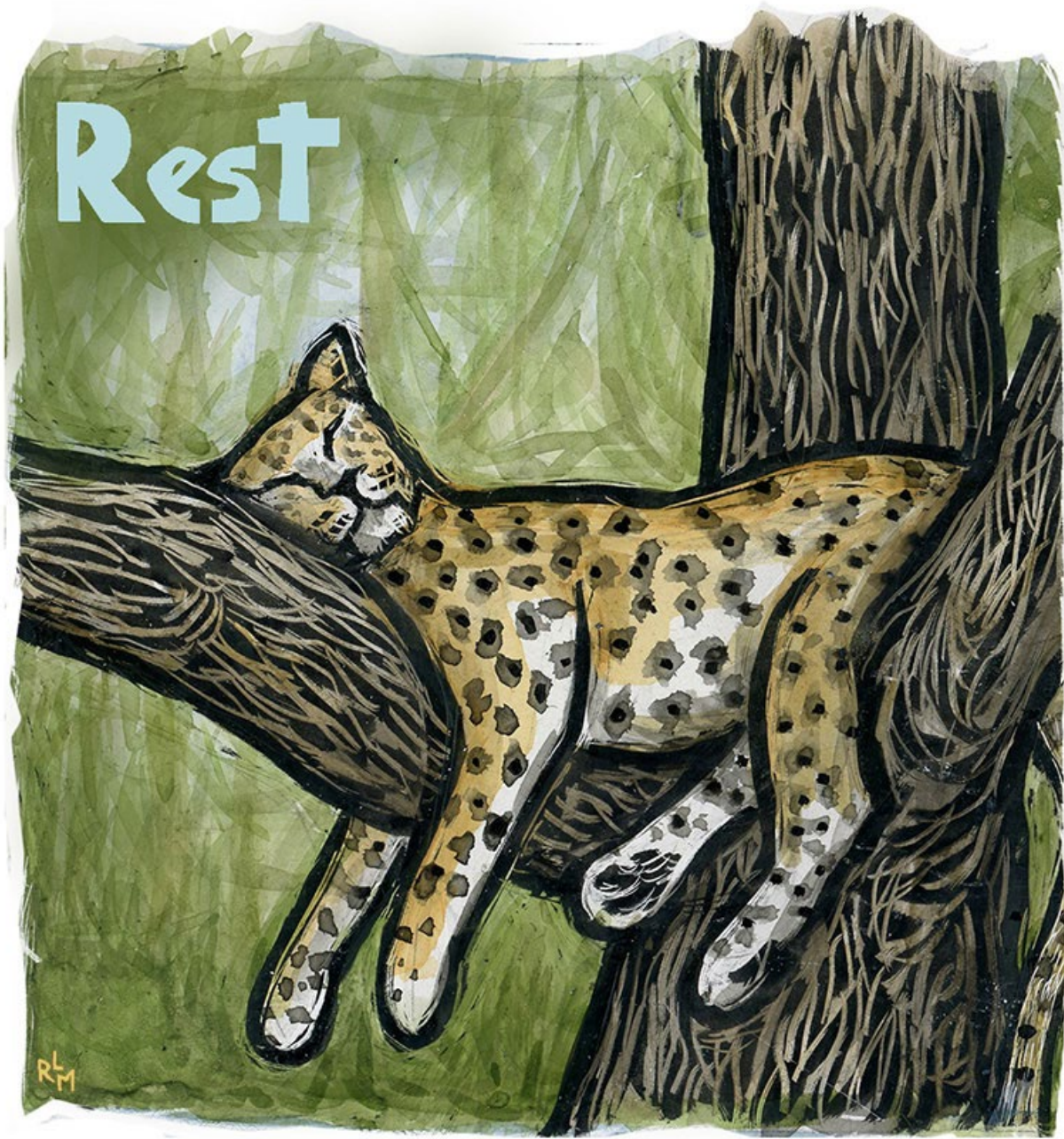


What additional local support is available?

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Your wellbeing ideas



- Rest periods and holidays
- Hobbies (e.g. sport, crafting, cooking)
- Bathing, hair washing or brushing
- Venting and righteous anger
- Catching up with friends and family
- Being in nature
- Gentle exercise
- Anxiety busting techniques
- Film or TV (favourite shows)
- Relaxation and meditation
- Reading or listening to stories
- Pick your own treats
- Care for yourself as well as you would your phone!



# Academic Wellbeing Bingo

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<b>Resilience</b>	<b>Wellness</b>	<b>Trauma informed</b>	<b>Belonging</b>	<b>Academic Mental Health</b>
<b>“Just reach out”</b>	<b>Positivity</b>	<b>Empowerment</b>	<b>Imposter syndrome</b>	<b>“Time to talk” (and a cup of tea)</b>
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Burn out</b>		<b>Self-care</b>	<b>Mindset</b>
<b>Healing</b>	<b>Intentionality</b>	<b>Recovery</b>	<b>Detox</b>	<b>Readiness</b>
<b>Decolonization</b>	<b>Mindfulness</b>	<b>Buoyancy</b>	<b>Authenticity (aka “whole self”)</b>	<b>Therapy dogs</b>

**”Hope is a discipline...  
we have to practice it  
every single day”**

**Marianne Kaba**

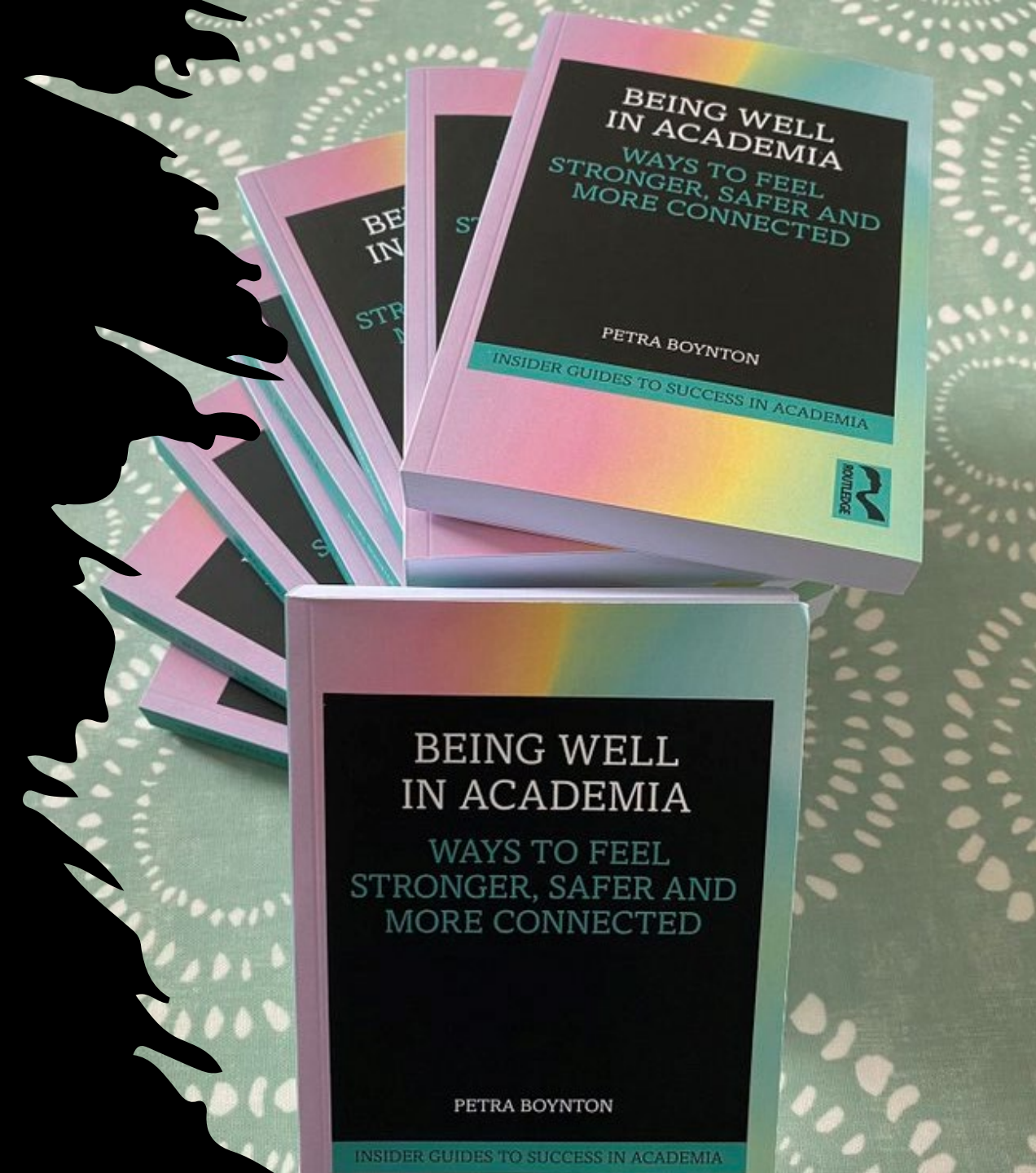
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# Keep in touch!

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<https://bsky.app/profile/petraboynton.bsky.social>





A still life composition featuring dried lavender in a glass jar, a lit candle in a glass jar, and several balls of yarn on a textured surface.

# Researcher Renew

January 2025

[www.theresearchcompanion.com/blog](http://www.theresearchcompanion.com/blog)