



Academic Mental-Health & Well-Being

A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner features a large white swirl that overlaps several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in various colors: yellow, green, blue, red, and black. The circles are arranged in a fan-like pattern, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Online Workshops,
webinars & more
2022/2023

Serving the academic community worldwide...



Online Workshops, webinars & more 2022/2023



Workshops

Over a full day (9-17) or two half-days (9-12)

Resilience & well-being
in Academia

**Mental clarity
& decision-making** in Academia

NEW

Decision-making
for (future) **team leaders**

NEW



Webinars

60 or 90 minute sessions

click on the boxes!

Strategies for managing our
well-being in research

Navigating uncertainty in
research

Burnout and well-being

Taming the **inner critic**

**Perfectionism &
imposter syndrome**

The power of **saying no**

NEW

Isolation & belonging

Motivation & procrastination

Rethinking **productivity**

Shifting the **spotlight**

Filling your bucket

Managing **conflict**

Navigating **supervision**

Parenting and academia

NEW

Changing course:
transitioning away from
academia

NEW

90 min.
sessions

Supervisors track

NEW

Supporting student mental
health and well-being

The multiple **roles** of a
supervisor

Leading a **team**

Effective **communication**

Managing conflict in a team

Motivation & productivity

Content & Consulting

Resilience & well-being in academia

Workshop

Academia is an ultramarathon that we try to run as a sprint. We quickly run out of time and energy and can experience waning motivation, burnout, and a sense of failure. Although the environment certainly plays a role, we as individuals can address the way we approach academia to buffer us against stress and burnout, worry and fear, and the toxic competition we are often surrounded by.

A healthier approach to research is possible!

In this workshop:

- We address the self-sabotaging thought processes that underlie **perfectionism, imposter syndrome** or **worry** and learn to reframe them.
- We identify maladaptive coping strategies (e.g. **avoidance** and **procrastination**) and explore more effective (and healthier) strategies.
- We discuss the need to *fill your bucket* and why balance in our lives is essential to **creativity, insight, motivation**, and our ability to deal constructively with feedback and rejection.

Format

Online workshop (mixed live sessions with self-paced learning modules).

The workshop includes an **in-depth workbook** with content and self-guided work.

20 participants maximum.

The workshop is run over a full day (e.g. 9-17h with breaks) or two half-days (e.g. 9-12h).

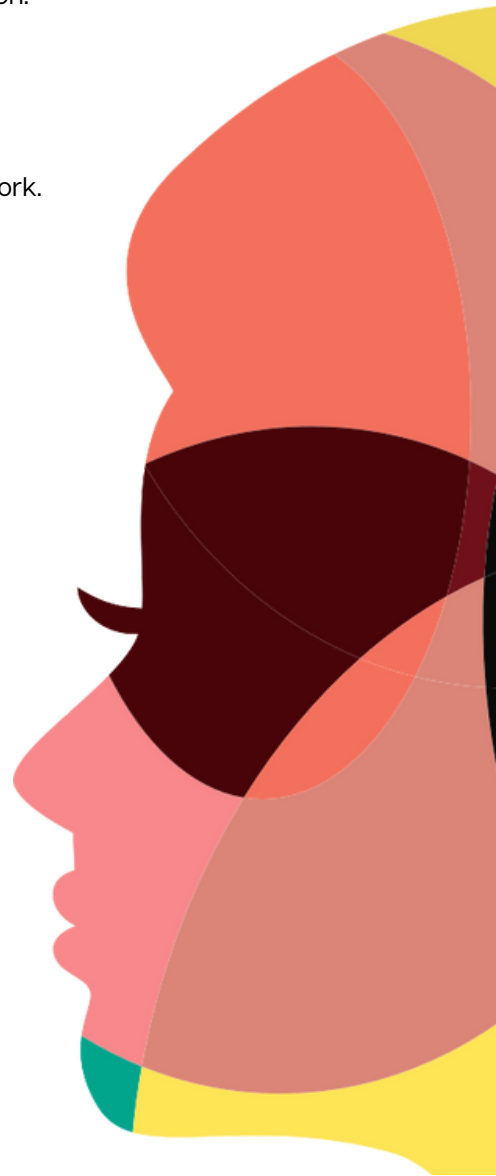
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

BOOK NOW

"It changed the way I see things now, and I really believe the techniques we've learned will be super useful in my career in the near future. **Best workshop ever.**"

PhD Student, University of Vienna



Mental clarity & decision-making in academia

Workshop

How do we create the mental clarity to make big decisions when academia leaves us with so little time or energy? Often, we are left trying to make big life changing decisions from a place of self-doubt, emotional reactivity, and exhaustion. Fortunately, we can learn some tools and strategies to lessen the pressure of decision-making and gain confidence with our decisions, big and small.

In this workshop:

- we discuss the role our **biases**, **thinking patterns**, and **behavioural choices** play in how we evaluate situations and available options.
- we explore the forces that **keep us from making decisions**: the worry, the overwhelm, the self-critical inner voices.
- we put in practice **concrete strategies** to **improve** our decision-making and compensate for some of the most common cognitive biases and thinking traps.

Format

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20 participants maximum.

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Facilitators

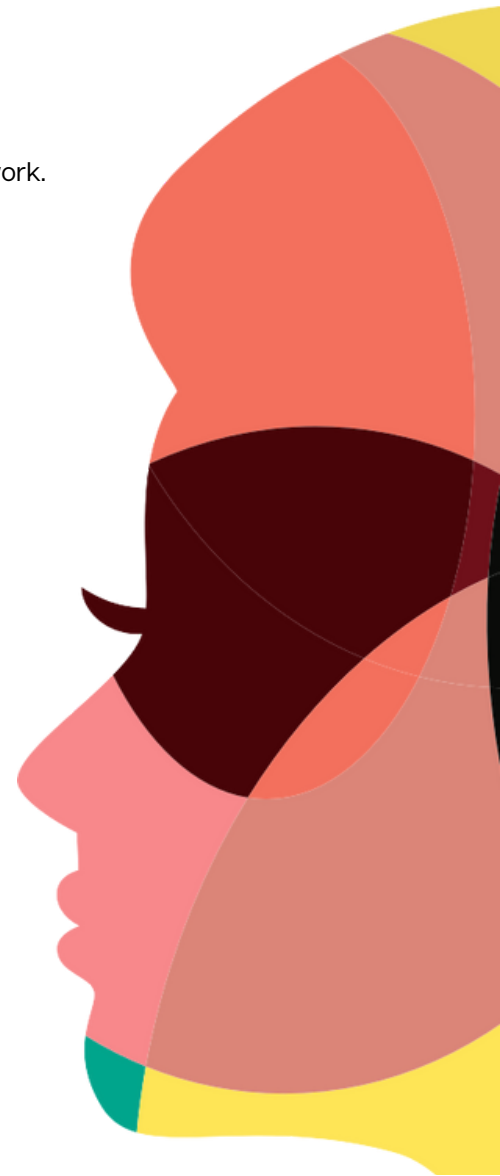
Desiree Dickerson, PhD

Vicent Botella-Soler, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"I am very **inspired** by this workshop and have made a lot of **progress** in my decision. I will definitely **recommend** it to my colleagues and would be happy to attend other workshops by these speakers."

Postdoc, University of Hamburg



Deciding with Others: Decision-making for (future) team leaders.

Workshop

Making decisions comes with many challenges. Even simple decisions can feel hard and have us worry over them. It only gets more challenging when we have to decide with others or for them, as team leaders, managers or in a consulting or expert capacity. With little experience and practice under our belts, the transition from student to leader can feel very daunting.

In this workshop:

- we discuss the **main hurdles in our decision-making**, as individuals, as teams and as leaders.
- we emphasize the **importance of clarity** and communication when leading a team.
- we discuss the **main dangers and sources of conflict** when making decisions with others.
- we detail and practice some **concrete tools** to help us improve our decision-making and **leadership skills**.

Format

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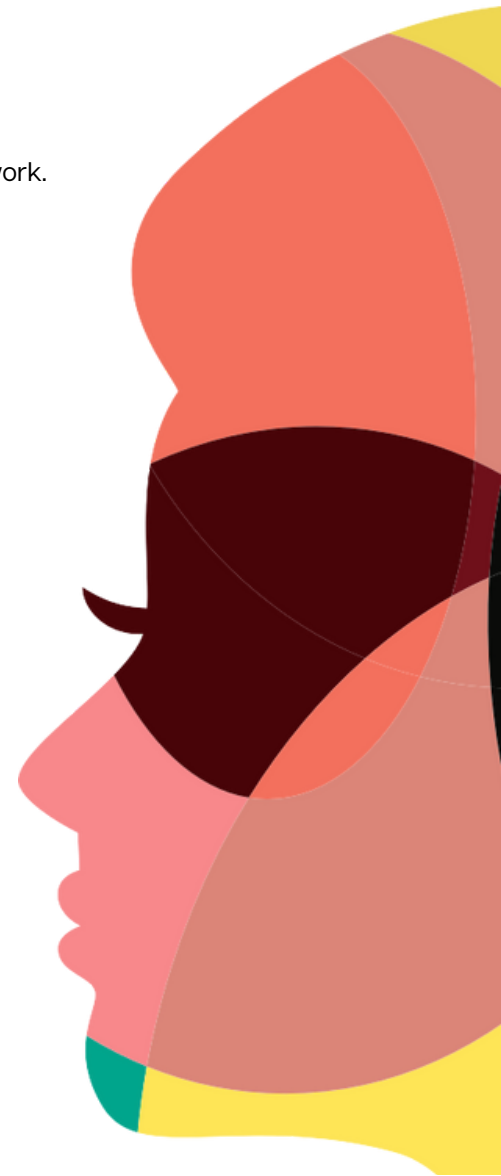
Facilitators

Vicent Botella-Soler, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"What a great feedback, especially that 100 % of the responses think **they can use what they learned**.
That is rare!"

Career Development Officer, University of Hamburg



Strategies for managing our well-being in research

Webinar

In this webinar we explore the many ways in which academics are trying to navigate their roles and their well-being in the research world.

We highlight the need to:

- recognise the varied environmental challenges to our well-being in the academic world.
- start to make the invisible, visible again – stop normalising the stress you experience.
- identify and develop healthy coping strategies for stress in the moment.
- recognise the impacts of chronic stress – e.g. languishing & burnout.
- fight for systemic change.
- discover the antidotes to (at least some of) the stress you experience – finding your people, checking your headspace, and acknowledging your right to joy.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

Includes handout/summary sheet for distribution to attendees.

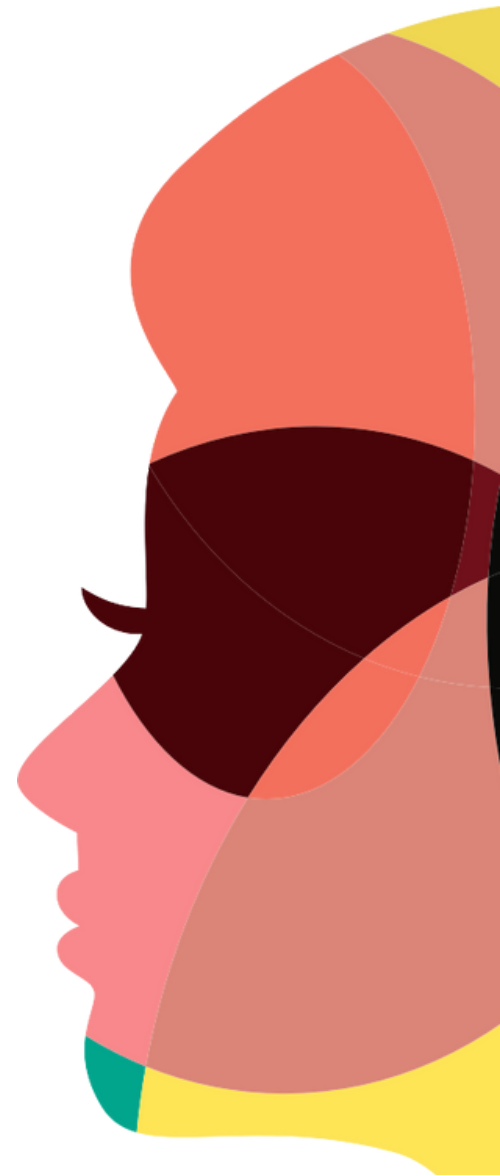
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"An insightful speaker who **really understands** the pressures and stresses on academics."

Associate Professor,
University of Portsmouth



Navigating uncertainty in research

Webinar

Academic life is a precarious one for many. Contracts are short-term, mobility is expected, and the future feels outside of our control. We are forever facing new challenges and constant change. Arguably, that is part of what we love most about academia. But over time, the uncertainty and instability of the situation can take a toll. Worry, doubt and fear can begin to settle in.

In this webinar, we will explore how to:

- give yourself permission (to be where you are and feel what you feel!)
- make micro-changes to maintain a solid emotional and mental foundation.
- navigate uncertainty and worry.
- recognise the controllable from the uncontrollable and learn where to spend your emotional and mental energy.
- *fill your bucket* when life is constantly emptying it.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

Includes handout/summary sheet for distribution to attendees.

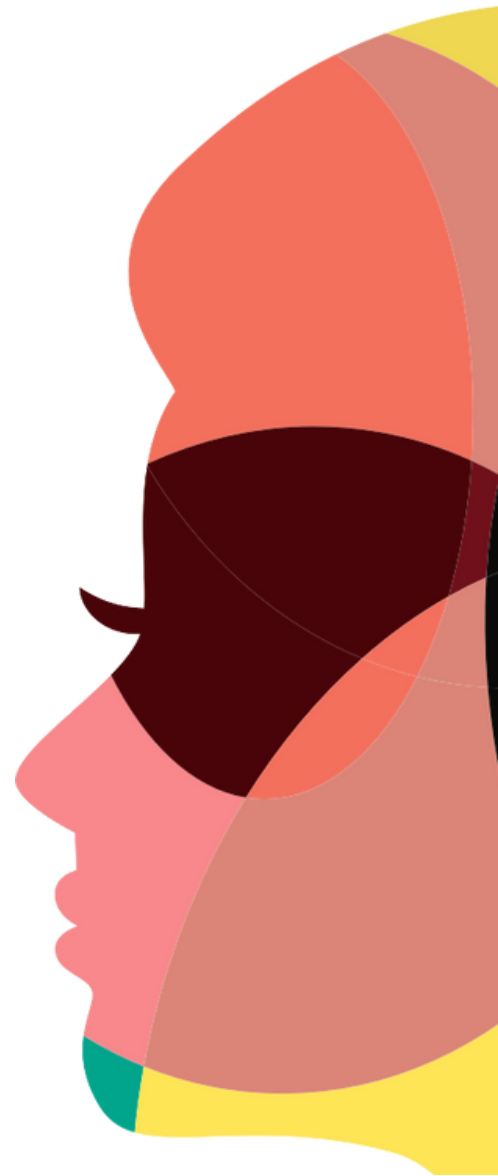
Facilitators

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"She spoke with such **passion** and conviction, with **answers**, and counterarguments against, almost every situation of doubt and fear that arises during PhD studies."

PhD student, University of Glasgow



Burnout & well-being

Webinar

Burnout is more than exhaustion. Burnout is mental, physical and emotional and it leaves us feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, unmotivated. Unfortunately, burnout is something academics are experiencing in high numbers currently.

In this webinar, we will learn:

- what burnout is (and isn't)
- why it happens, the key triggers
- what to do if you find yourself burnt-out.
- what we can do to avoid it if you think you're getting close.
- how to put the necessary fail safes in place so that it doesn't happen to you.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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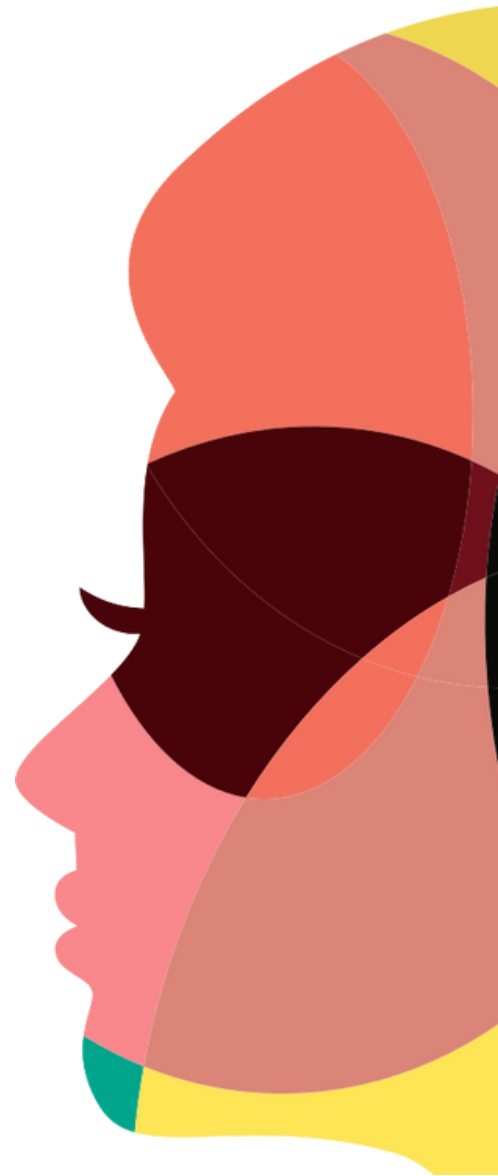
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"I think every academic needs a pocket Desiree."

Professor, University of Otago



Taming the inner critic

Webinar

We all have an inner voice in our heads. It is an essential part of what makes us human and it is designed to help us navigate the world and to keep us safe. The problem is, in order to keep us safe it tends to focus on the negatives, the perceived threats, and all the possible ways that we might mess up, fall down, or embarrass ourselves.

In this webinar:

- we explore how our inner voice shapes our thoughts, our mood, our choices, and our productivity;
- we address the critical inner voices that drive perfectionism, imposter syndrome, and self-doubt that sabotage our motivation and enjoyment for our work;
- we learn how to rewrite that inner critic to a voice that allows for more mental space and energy to think, create, be present, and thrive.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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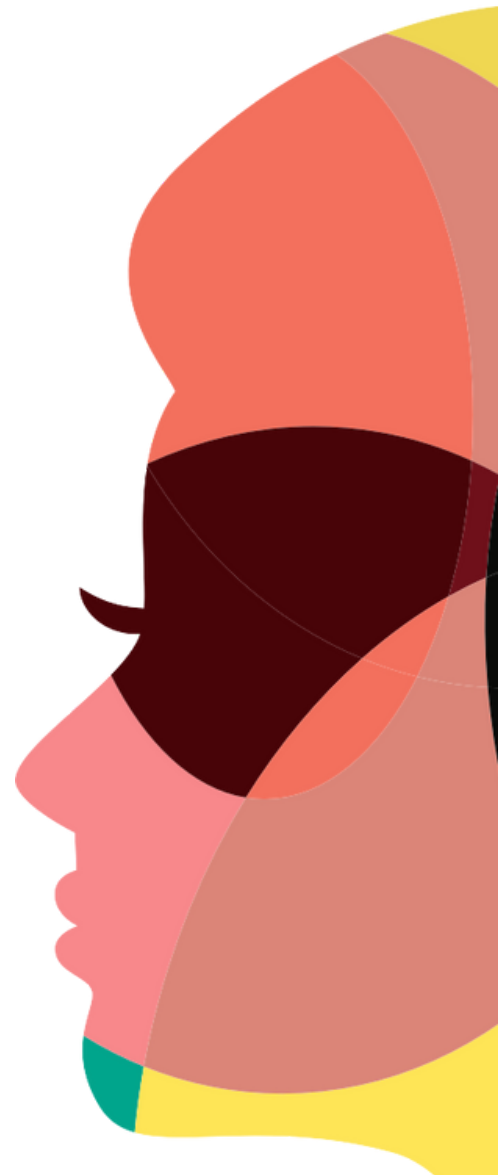
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

BOOK NOW

"A wonderful, **engaging** and
insightful presenter."

Associate Professor, University of Auckland



Perfectionism & Imposter syndrome

Webinar

We argue that our perfectionism drives us to great heights, to excel, and to maintain our edge. We rarely stop to see the costs it carries. Imposter syndrome distorts the way we see ourselves, our performance, and our capabilities. Both reflect our doubts and fears – fear of being judged, fear of failing, fear of not being good enough, fear of not belonging. They are the product of distorted thinking patterns that **we can change**.

In this webinar we explore:

- the true costs of these doubts and fears, and the extent to which they impact on our productivity, mental clarity, and our joy for what we do.
- simple ways to notice when our perfectionism or imposter syndrome is tripping us up.
- simple ways to reshape our inner critic to be more objective and more compassionate, so that we can thrive thanks to the voice in our head rather than in spite of it.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

Includes handout/summary sheet for distribution to attendees.

Facilitators

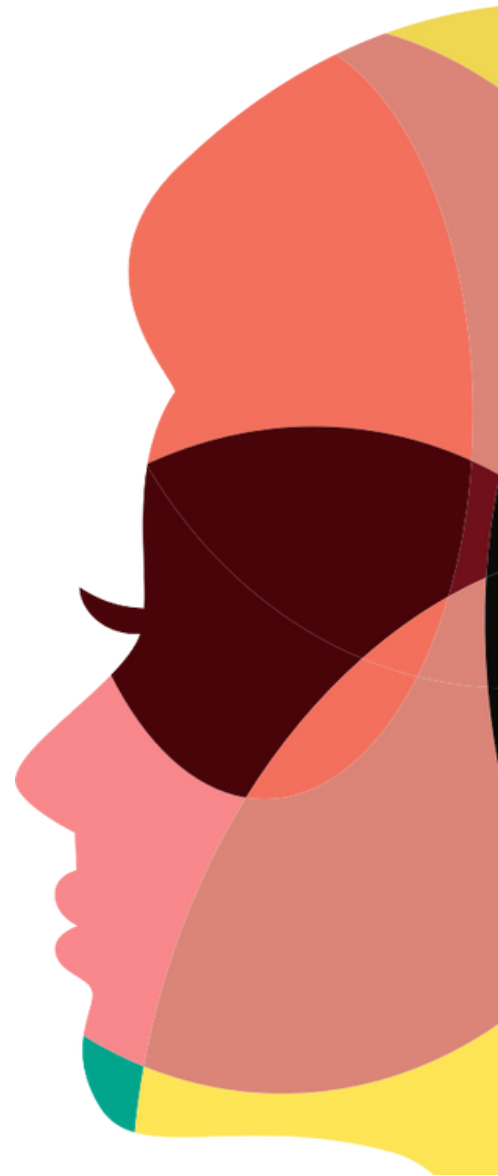
Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"She is a former academic speaking directly about a serious problem in academia.

She knew what she was talking about."

Senior Research Fellow, University of Portsmouth



The power of saying no

Webinar

When everything feels like an opportunity, a priority, or an obligation, how do we say no? The truth is we cannot start saying no until we get clear on why we keep saying yes to everything.

In this webinar we explore:

- why we tend to say yes (people-pleasing, scarcity and uncertainty, perceived opportunities, regret minimisation, emotion, obligation, the path of least resistance).
- the impacts of saying yes to everything: time poverty, exhaustion, loss of self and loss of joy for what we do.
- why we need to start saying no.
- how to start saying no (clear boundaries and priorities, with confidence and without guilt).

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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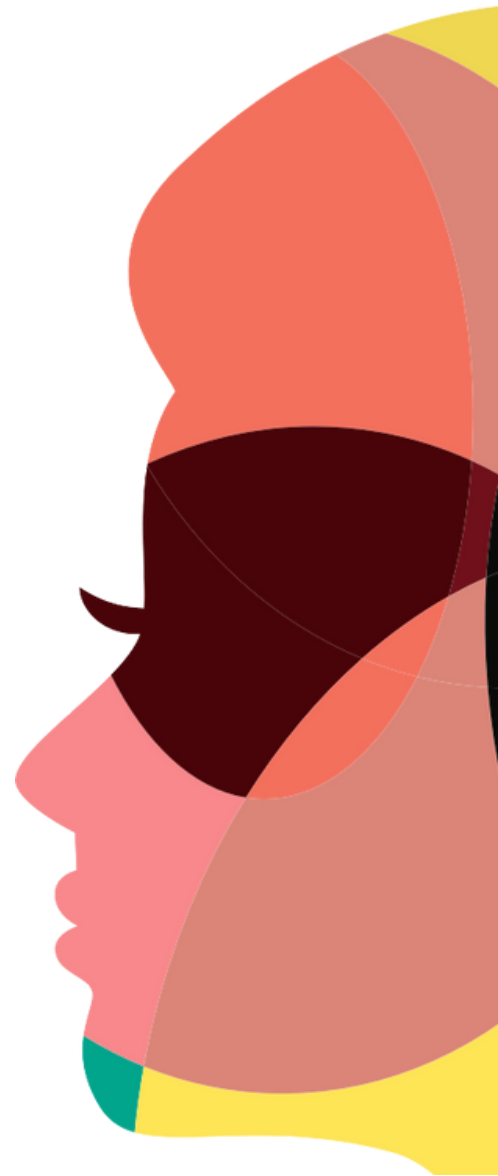
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"She created a **friendly atmosphere** and she was genuinely interested in our problems and challenges."

PhD student, Università della Svizzera italiana



Isolation and belonging

Webinar

Academic life can be an isolating experience for many people. For some, the role requires them to live far from home and those they love. For others, the workload can impact significantly on their ability or desire to socialise and maintain relationships.

In this webinar we explore:

- the most common sources of isolation and loneliness in academia.
- why is isolation so bad for us? Threatening our sense of belonging and identity.
- how we can begin to change it – concrete tools to increase our sense of belonging within the academic and local community through creating a sense of safety, connection and common threads.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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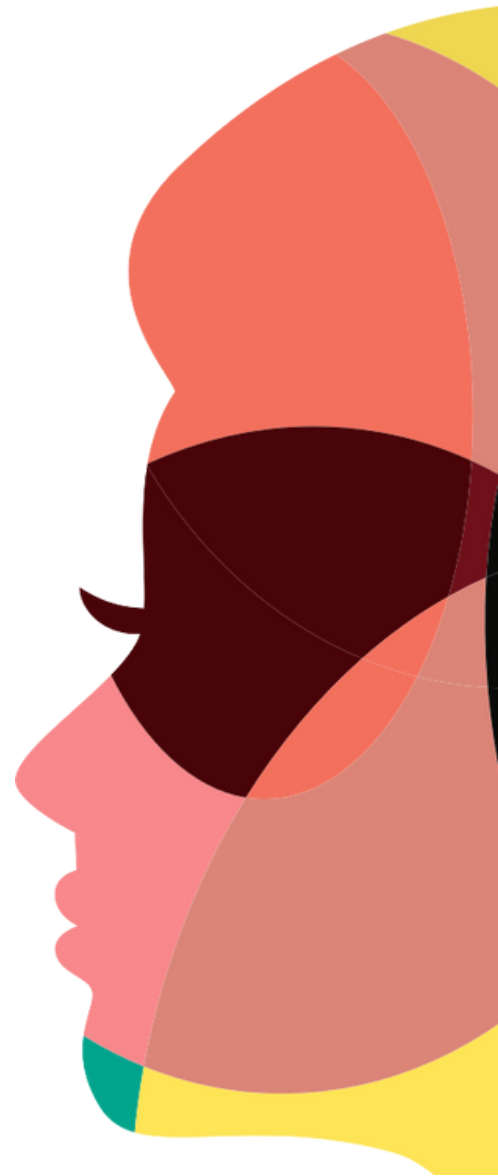
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"I would consider it as **one of my most useful experiences** since my doctoral studies started."

PhD Student, Università della Svizzera italiana



Motivation and procrastination

Webinar

Procrastination is a way of easing our own discomfort. Discomfort because the task is too hard, too boring, too big, too scary. The difficulty with procrastinating is that it makes you feel better for a moment but it does nothing to fix the reason the task feels uncomfortable to begin with. It is still too big, too hard, too scary, or too boring the next time you sit down to do it. And so the cycle repeats.

In this webinar we discuss ways to:

- identify these procrastination loops when they start to unfold.
- identify some of the thoughts underlying the discomfort and reframe them.
- employ alternative strategies that can alleviate the discomfort and make the task less difficult, scary, hard or boring.
- explore drivers of our motivation.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

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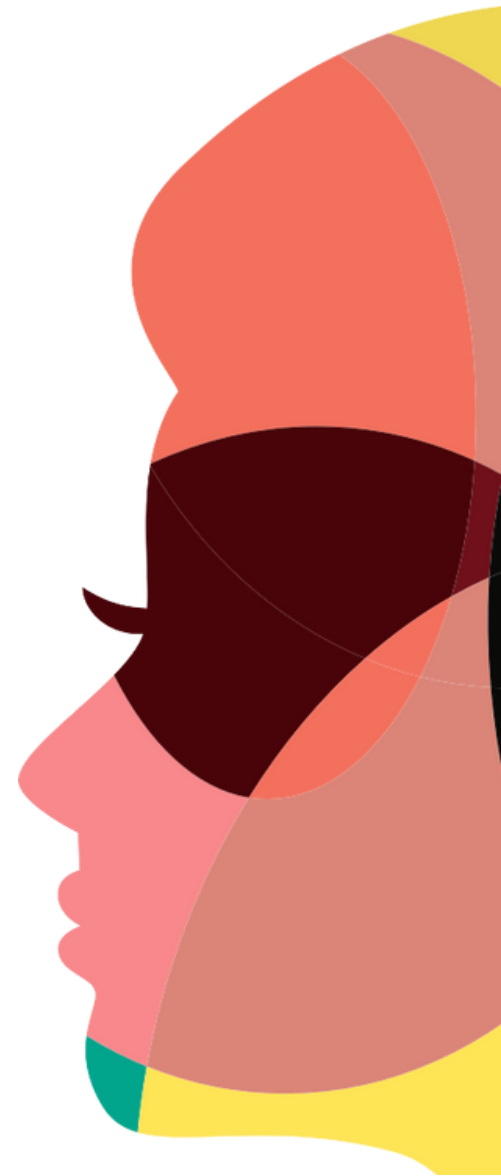
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"She spoke with such **passion** and conviction, with **answers**, and counterarguments against, almost every situation of doubt and fear that arises during PhD studies."

PhD student, University of Glasgow



Rethinking productivity

Webinar

Learn to see productivity through a well-being lens. Learn how to structure your day in a way that aids your concentration and focus, rather than constantly detracting from it.

In this webinar we discuss:

- how to create a routine during times of constant change.
- learning to ride the productivity wave.
- creating a rhythm that works for you, rather than against you.
- navigating the balancing act of families and research.
- how to plan to be (realistically) productive.
- using breaks to optimise efficiency.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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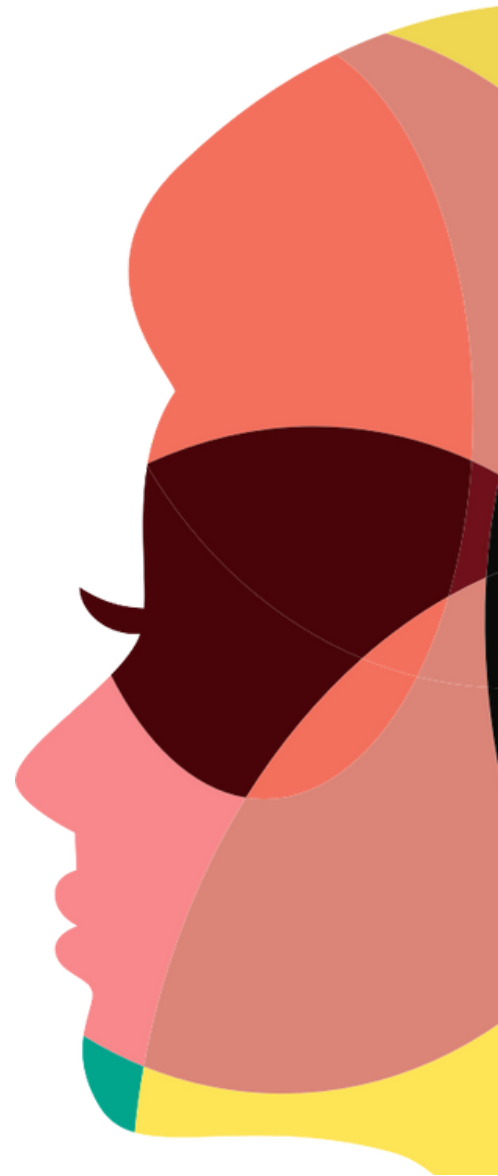
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PhD student, University of Glasgow



Shifting the spotlight

Webinar

In the academic world, we spend a lot of time focusing on our weaknesses in the hope of improving our skills and sharpening our arguments. But what about our strengths? Research tells us that we can enjoy our work and achieve more when we pay attention to our strengths. How our work aligns with our values has a direct impact on our joy for our work as well. It impacts on our motivation dramatically. When was the last time you checked to see if how you spend your days still aligns with your values?

In this webinar, we explore:

- how to identify and play to our strengths.
- using our values as a compass.
- shifting the spotlight, seeing the light in the cracks.
- finding connection in a time of isolation.
- how to support others.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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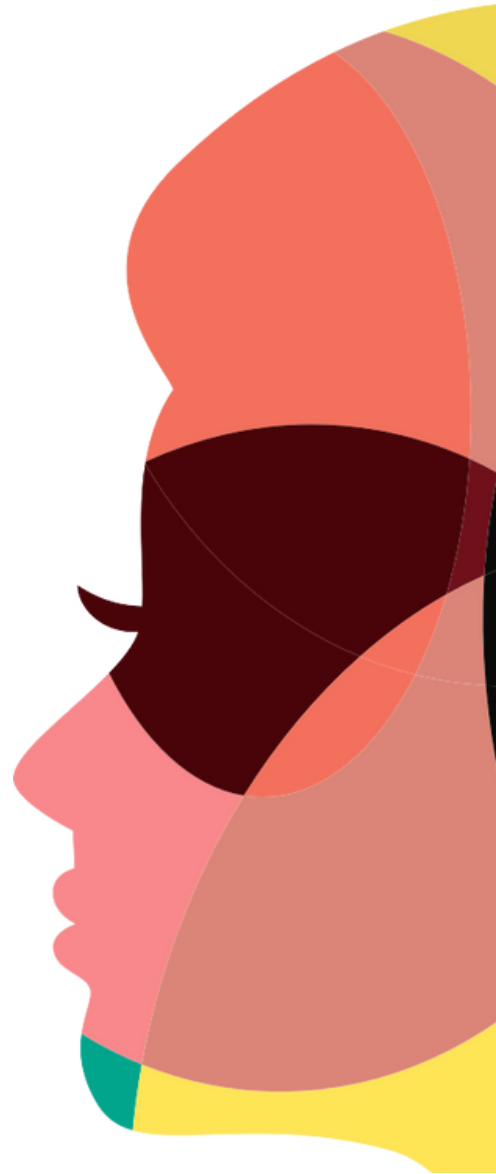
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

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"A wonderful, **engaging** and
insightful presenter."

Associate Professor, University of Auckland



Filling your bucket

Webinar

My academic colleagues and I had a phrase that we used to signify that we needed help/time/support/a lifeline. A simple phrase: "my bucket is empty". To me it captures beautifully the constant pouring of ourselves into our work and projects. But we cannot pour from an empty bucket. And **our buckets do empty.**

In this webinar we explore:

- the many ways that we drain our bucket day-to-day. The physical, the emotional, the mental, the social drains that we often don't acknowledge.
- the cost of trying to achieve and excel with an empty bucket.
- key tools that help you fill that bucket – from the micro-changes that help you to keep going, to the bigger shifts that allow your bucket to truly fill.
- finding your *why* in order to drive meaningful changes.
- setting your bottom line and protecting it.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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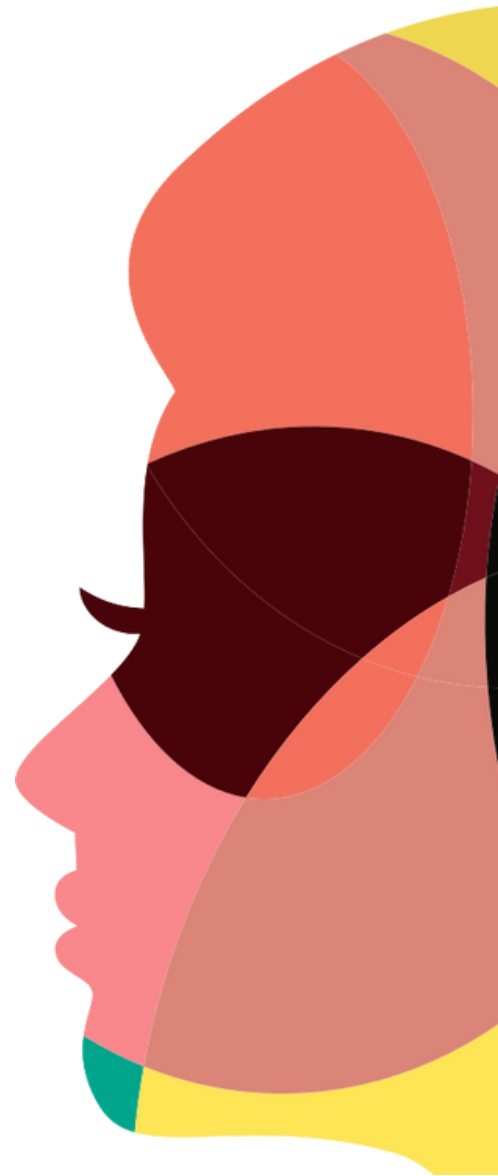
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"I think every academic needs a pocket Desiree."

Professor, University of Otago



Managing conflict

Webinar

Conflict is a part of any relationship. And is more frequent when, like in academia, stress is high and resources scarce. How we navigate conflict is what matters most.

In this interactive webinar we explore how to:

- recognise key triggers for conflict in academic and supervisory relationships.
- learn to recognise our working style and our working needs (and those of our colleague or students).
- identify where our styles clash and how to navigate these clashes.
- develop practical tools to approach important discussions – phrases and words that can either help to escalate or resolve situations.
- learn to uncover the real issues underpinning the conflict and the role that context plays.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

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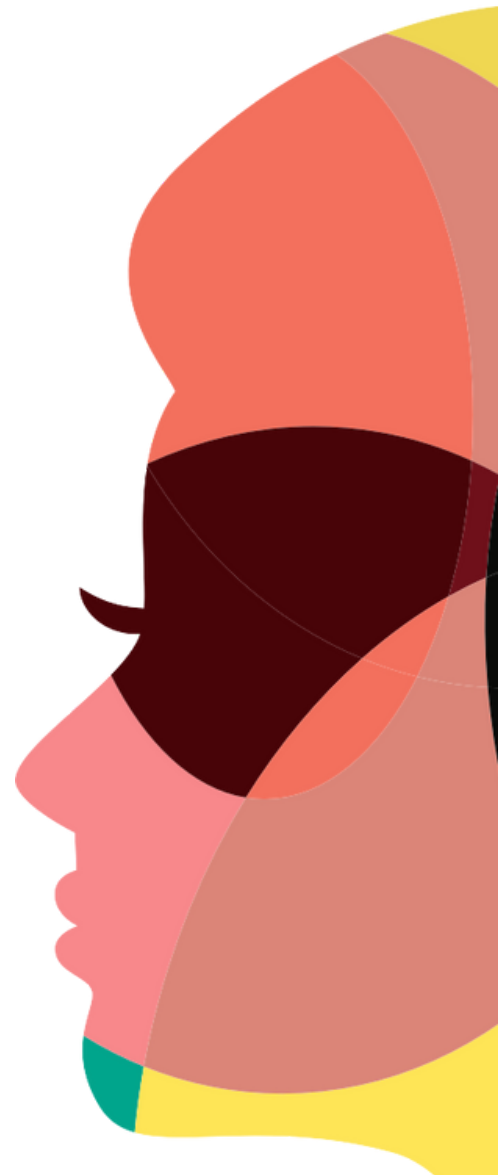
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

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"An insightful speaker who **really understands** the pressures and stresses on academics."

Associate Professor,
University of Portsmouth



Navigating supervision: supervisors, communication & boundaries

Webinar

Learning to navigate the supervisor-supervisee relationship is critical to positive outcomes in our PhD or Postdoc experience but this dance is not always easy.

In this webinar, we will discuss ways to:

- create and foster a healthy relationship.
- manage expectations, set boundaries, and communicate clearly.
- recognising when our assumptions, thoughts and behaviour patterns aren't helping us.
- interpret feedback (and not take it personally).
- navigating different types of Supervisors.
- recognise when to walk away.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

60/90 minutes options available.

Includes handout/summary sheet for distribution to attendees.

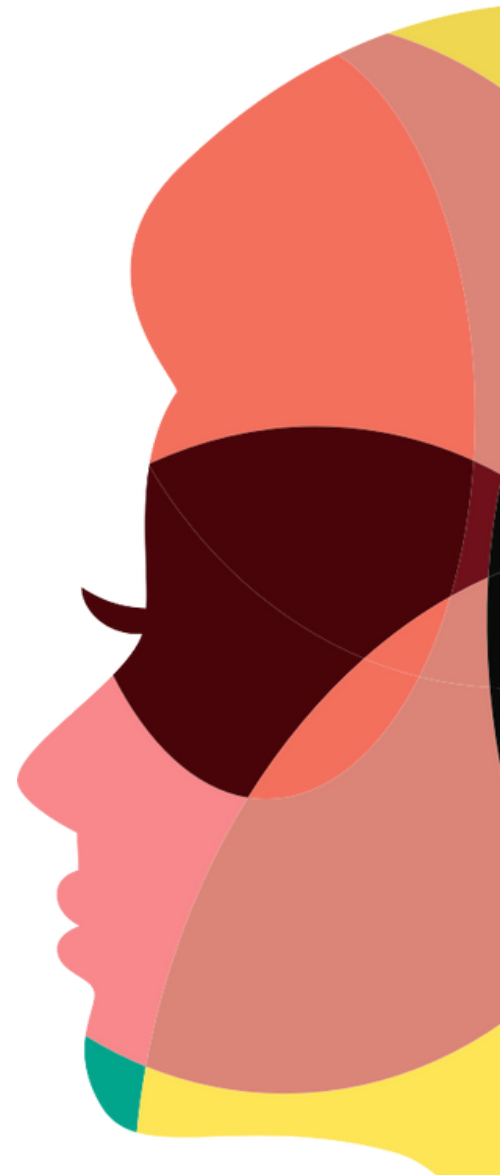
Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"We can **heartfully recommend** her to everybody interested in topics around wellbeing in academia"

Leibniz Postdoc Network



Parenting and academia: managing the mental load

Webinar

How do we juggle work life balance when “life” comes with such a huge mental load? When the family to-do list is three times as long as the work to-do list and it seems you are always the one that has to remember everything? The thinking part of having children is permanent and it is exhausting. How can we thrive at work while navigating the worry and guilt of managing a family at home? How do we learn to share the planning and management of our homes effectively instead of just delegating tasks? It is possible.

In this webinar, we will:

- explore what mental load is, how it manifests in our daily lives, and why it's harmful.
- learn to check in with our expectations.
- learn to decontaminate our time so that we can be more effective in our work and more present at home.
- identify worry and self-doubt loops and how to stop them.
- learn to zoom out to fit everything in.
- explore mindfulness and self-compassion as tools to help us be present.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

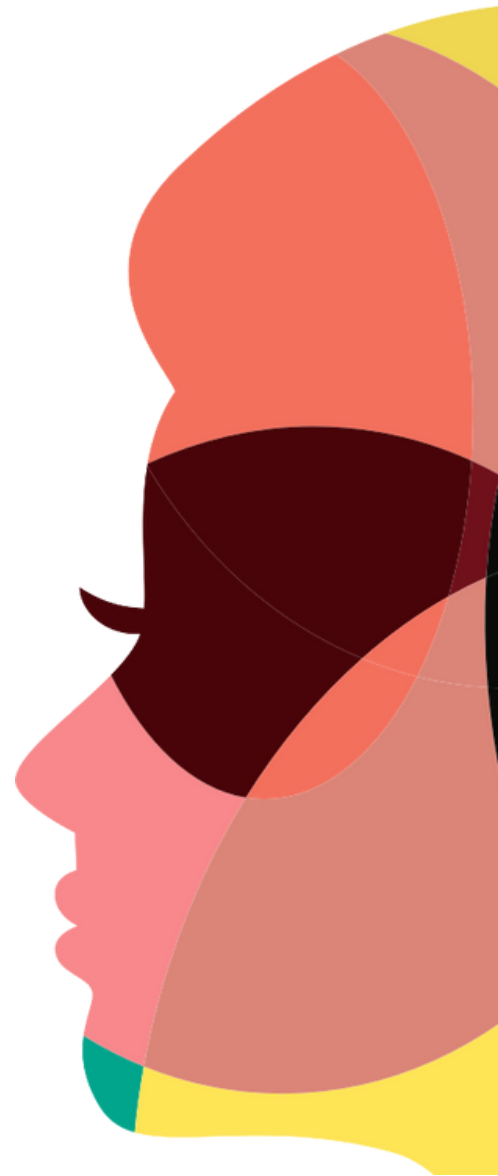
90 minutes.

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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)



Changing course: Insights on transitioning away from academia

Webinar

Eventually, many academics face this possibility: leaving, quitting academia. Often, it is a decision fraught with much emotion, perceived as a threat to our identity, to our sense of self and pride. The uncertainty of our prospects in the outside world also fuels fears and doubt.

In this talk we introduce some helpful strategies in transitioning away from academia and dispel some common misconceptions and biases. Among other things, we will discuss:

- The importance of movement and expanding your context.
- Understanding your leverage and the role of luck.
- The primacy of soft over hard skills: communication and empathy.
- Initiative: finding the right balance.
- Incentives and constraints: academia vs industry.
- Identity threat: who will you be moving forward?

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.
50 min. talk + 30 min. Q&A

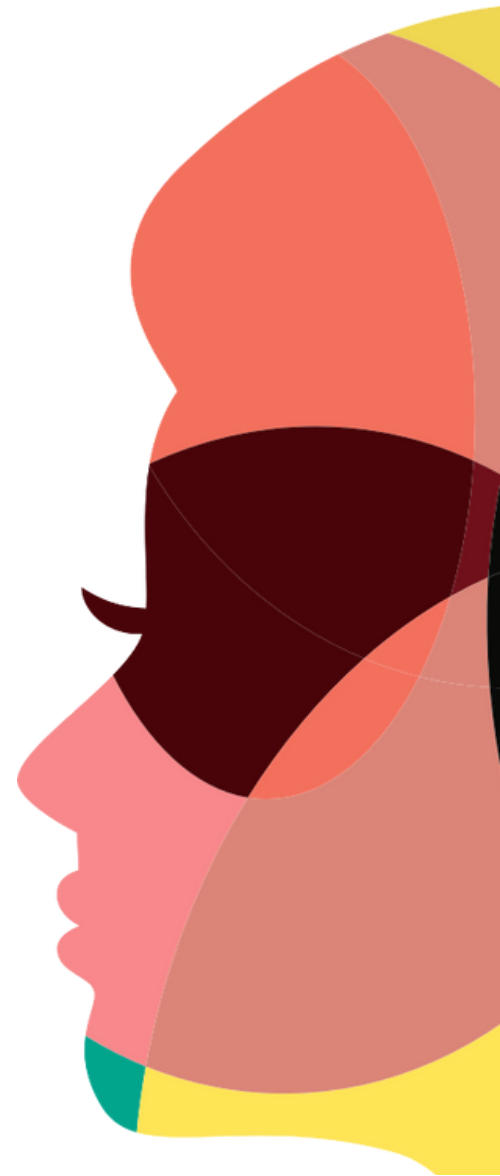
Facilitators

Vicent Botella-Soler, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)

"Very good speaker, inspiring talk!"

PhD student, Universität Hamburg



Supporting student mental health & well-being

Supervisors

"I'm an academic, not a therapist. How do I support my students' mental health and well-being?"

Some group leaders operate on a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy with their group members and students when it comes to one's life and its challenges. Some may have the sense that their people are struggling and simply not know how to approach them or the subject. In this interactive session we will develop a toolbox for navigating students' mental health and well-being.

In this webinar we will explore:

- how to ask the right questions.
- why number of interactions matters
- having a genuine open-door policy.
- the role of belonging, self-worth, and capability, and how to foster it.
- caring for yourself first.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

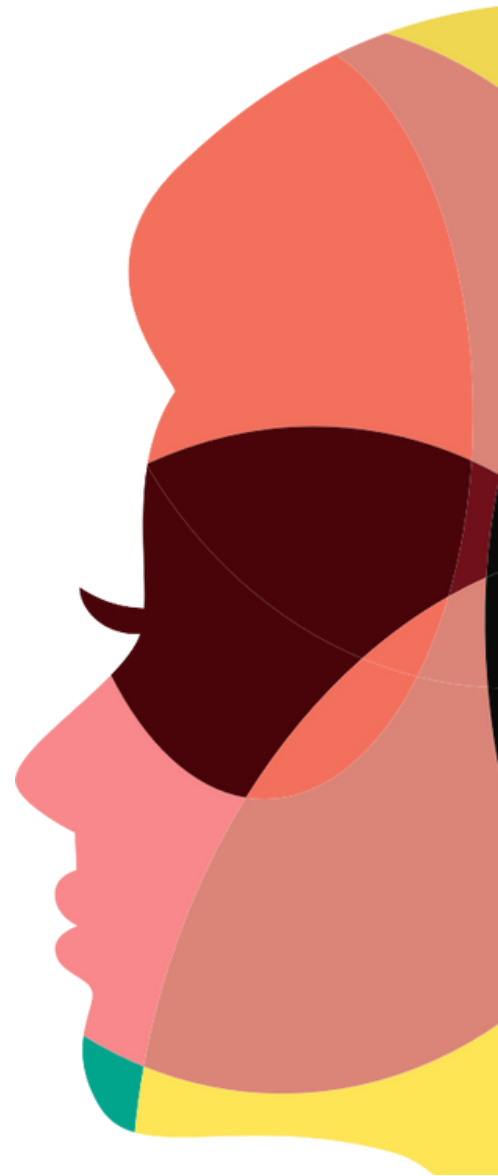
90 minutes.

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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

BOOK NOW



Strategies for managing our own well-being

Supervisors

We explore the many ways in which academics try to navigate their roles and their well-being in the research world.

In this webinar we highlight the need to:

- recognise the varied environmental challenges to our well-being in the academic world.
- set a solid foundation.
- manage our own expectations and the expectations of those around us.
- identify our red flags (our first signs of stress).
- learn how to de-escalate our thoughts, sensations, and emotions when we feel overwhelmed or stressed.
- press reset when your day is not going to plan.
- managing the burden of responsibility for others.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

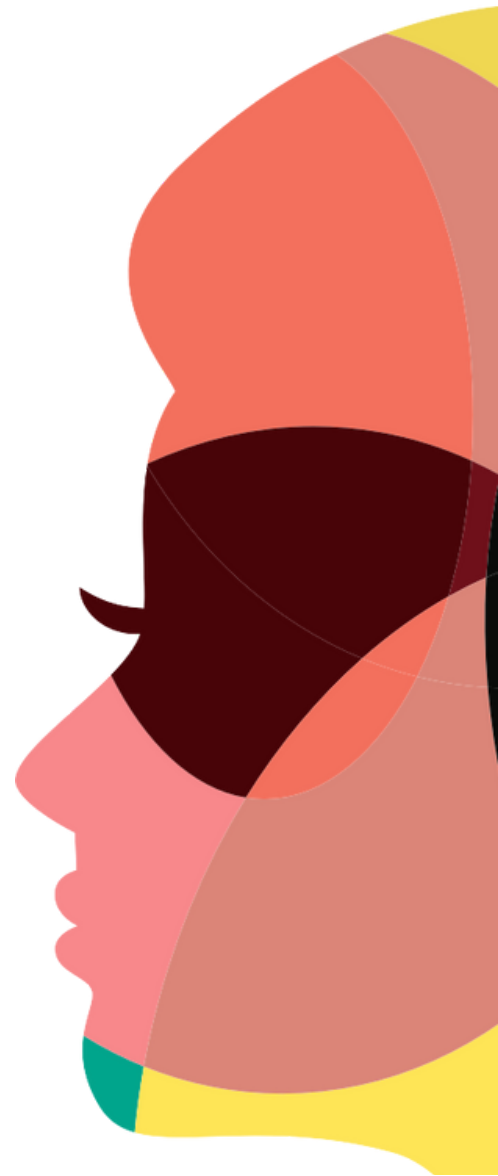
90 minutes.

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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

BOOK NOW



The multiple roles of a supervisor

Supervisors

Supervision is a role many of us look forward to embracing. A chance to help grow and shape the minds of future researchers. In this current academic system, however, where time is short and competition is everywhere, there are a number of pressures and challenges to navigate. Depending on your own experiences in academia, you may or may not feel equipped to deal with the supervision space. Academic supervision is a **relationship**, and any relationship is built on **trust**, mutual **respect** and **expectations**. As a supervisor you are expected to fulfil many **roles** (e.g. mentor, coach, colleague).

In this webinar we explore what these roles are, why they should (or shouldn't) be fulfilled and the importance of clear expectations for an effective supervisory experience.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

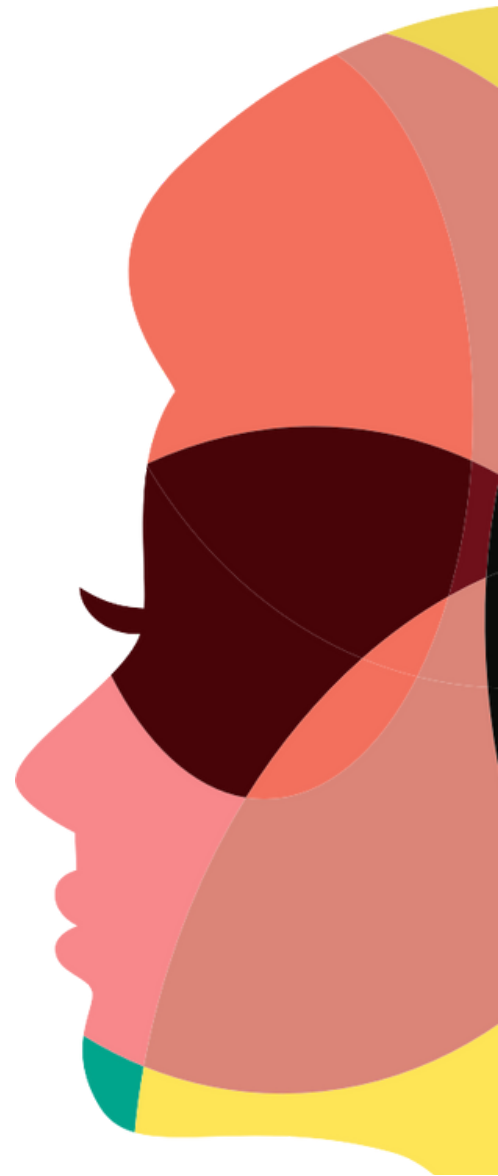
90 minutes.

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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)



Leading a team

Supervisors

Becoming a supervisor is a challenging move from the research-focused, hands-on routine of the individual researcher to a **people-focused** leadership role. You are a leader now. And the success of your team depends partly on how you choose to **lead**, on the **tone** you set, on how you model **collaboration and collegiality** with others, on how you **narrate failure** and how you lift others up when they stumble, as well as on how you **navigate conflict** and seek to understand the position and path of those you are working with.

In this webinar we will discuss these topics and explain how to lead and motivate your team members effectively.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

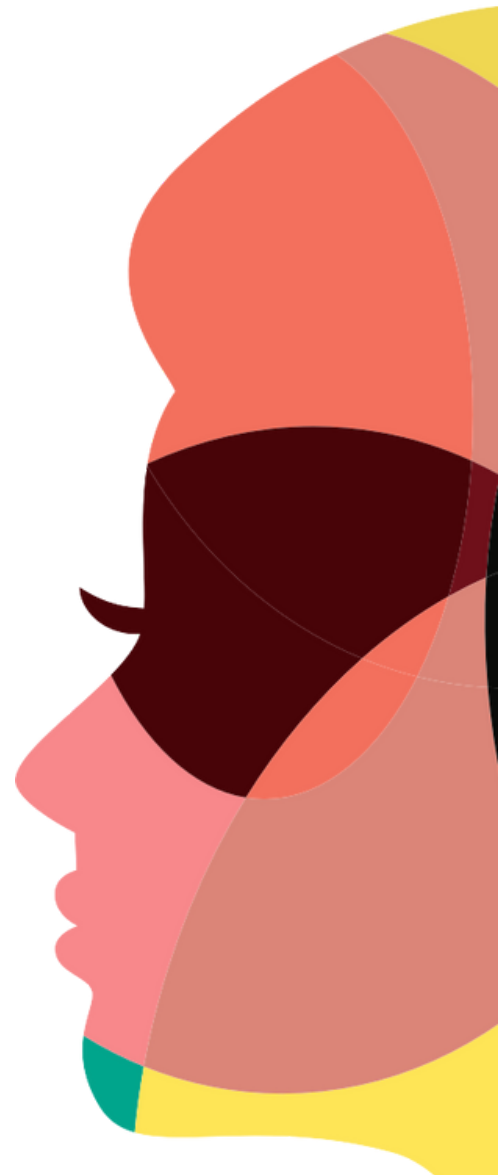
90 minutes.

Includes handout/summary sheet for distribution to attendees.

Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

[BOOK NOW](#)



Effective communication

Supervisors

As leaders, we need to **communicate** effectively and use **feedback** as the powerful and motivating tool it can be. Also, good communication is a **skill** our students need to develop whilst in our research group, as it is essential to problem solving, working in a team and adapting to various situations and individuals.

In this webinar we describe different tools and strategies to improve our communication skills and our ability to provide **efficient feedback**.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

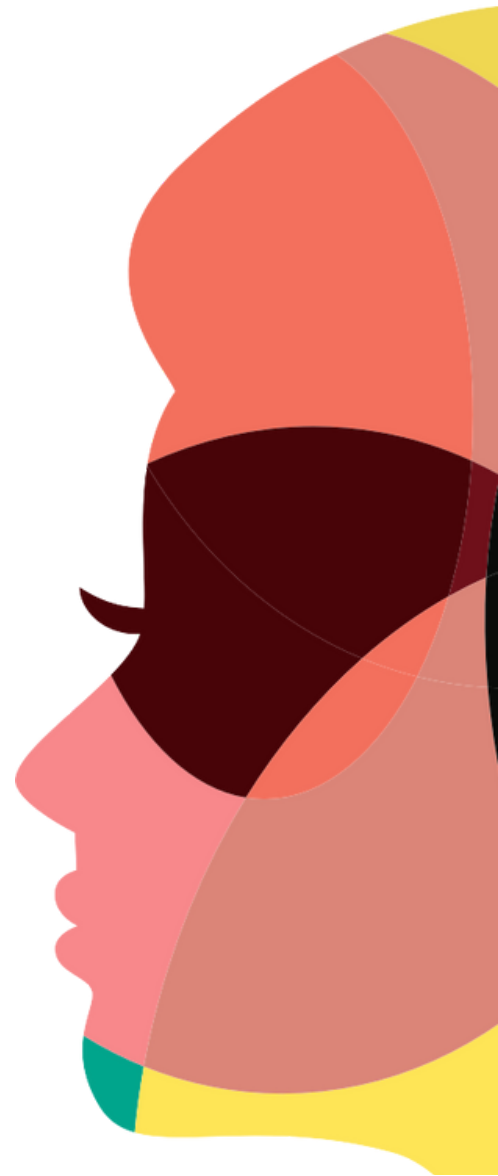
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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

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Managing conflict in a team

Supervisors

Conflict is a natural part of working with other people, we cannot be always in full agreement with everybody. Managing conflict well is a fundamental part of **good leadership practice** and essential for the **mental health** and **well-being** of all research group members.

In this webinar we will explore how to better manage conflict in our day-to-day work by looking into the most common types of conflict, the early warning signs, our beliefs about conflict as well as some tools for navigating conflict and creating a safe environment that can help us avoid the harmful sides of conflict.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

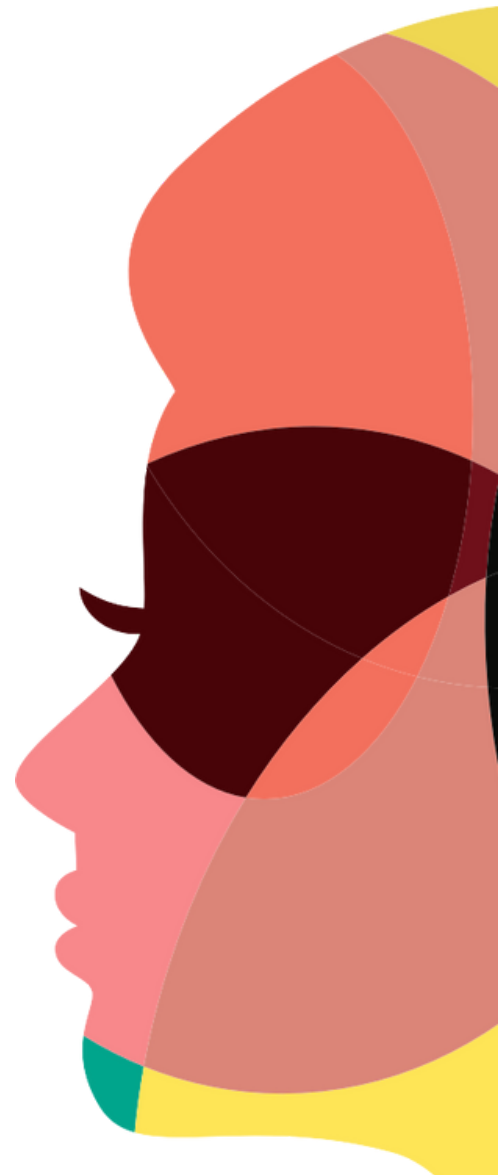
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Facilitators

Desiree Dickerson, PhD

BOOK NOW



Motivation & productivity

Supervisors

In an already high-stress, performance-driven environment, the role of a supervisor is a complicated one to manage. There are many things that can slow our progress and that of our students - mental and emotional, as well as environmental.

In this webinar we discuss:

- rethinking **productivity and efficiency** and how to improve our **time management**.
- recognising triggers for **procrastination** and **low motivation** and how to adopt alternative approaches
- building the scaffold - helping students develop a framework to help them structure their knowledge in an effective and useable way.
- the true drains on our mental and emotional energy, including **decision fatigue** and the **inner critic**
- prioritising **mental space** and energy for our work and goals - how to navigate *busy work* and external demands.

Format

Online webinar with Q&A.

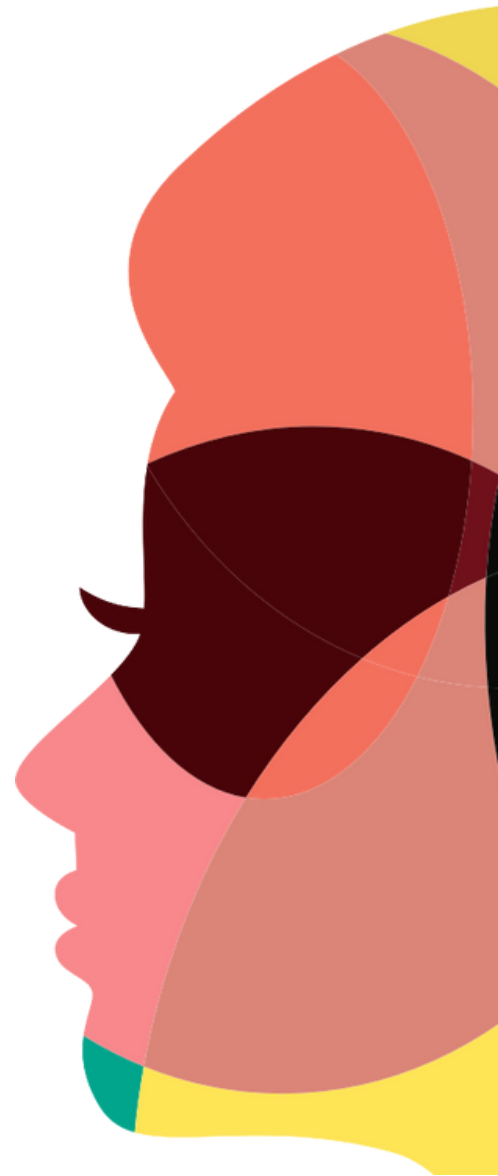
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Content



On-demand well-being videos

Why make your people wait? We have prepared a set of short academia-focused well-being videos that you can **embed** on your institutional website or intranet for your community to **access it when they need it**. Topics include Foundations of well-being, Procrastination, Perfectionism, Imposter Syndrome, Productivity or The inner critic.

Get in touch with us to know more!

Self-coached Confidence Building Programme

A **6-session** confidence building programme with all the materials you need to run it at your institution. It includes an in-depth participant **workbook** with exercises, **video content** and **slides** with presenter notes to help you facilitate the sessions. The sessions are very interactive and focus on concrete skills that will improve our confidence to move forward effectively in the academic environment.



Consulting



Want to take a different approach to the well-being and productivity of your staff and students? Want to **train your staff** to design and implement well-being practices throughout your institution? Want an **expert perspective** on your well-being programme? We consult regularly with academic institutions worldwide, **assessing the well-being** of their students and researchers and helping them **develop and implement effective policies** to improve it.

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The team



Desiree Dickerson, PhD

As a former postdoctoral researcher in the neurosciences and a **clinical psychologist**, Desiree has worked at both ends of the spectrum - from (lab) bench to bedside. After working in research in New Zealand, Australia, and Austria, she now lives in Spain and helps academic institutions worldwide and academics themselves pursue **a healthier approach to research**.

[Check Desiree's full CV here.](#)



Vicent Botella-Soler, PhD

Vicent has been a PhD student (physics), a postdoc (neuroscience), a machine learning consultant for startups, a R&D manager for a tech company. With extensive international experience in both academia and industry, he now works as a freelance consultant and author, helping academics and industry professionals snap out of cognitive traps and long-held beliefs hindering their development. He specializes in **critical thinking** and **decision-making** for individuals and teams.

[Check Vicent's professional bio here.](#)



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