

# Towards care-full academic futures?

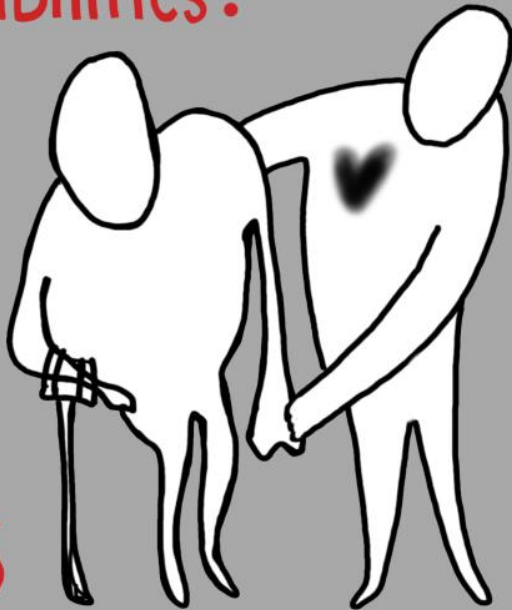
A research-informed  
praxis

Marie-Pierre Moreau  
Artwork: Sally Pirie



Fostering a sense of  
belonging for higher  
education staff and  
students with caring  
responsibilities:

What  
Works



 **AdvanceHE**



Marie-Pierre  
Moreau  
&  
Sally  
Campbell  
Galman

Funded by an AdvanceHE  
Good Practice  
Grant

## Context:

From  
the  
'bachelor  
boy'  
to  
'diversity'

Higher Education has  
been dominated  
by a construction of  
the "good" and "legitimate"  
academic worker as  
white, male, and seemingly  
*carefree* ...  
and this trope has proven  
itself to be durable.



I'm so very  
carefree and my  
elbow patches are  
so very droll, what?  
Also I have  
servants.



What are  
"children"?

My lab coat  
is white and  
so am I!



Context:

Who  
is  
worthy  
of  
research  
?

# And what about support staff?

We know very  
little about  
those who  
work in such  
positions and  
how they  
experience

**CARE  
WORK**





'Guilty

secrets'

and

the

invisibil  
ity

cloak

A more accurate image of an academic is not a "carefree" depiction, but rather a portrait of stressful multitasking, juggling care with academic work while under tremendous pressure to **APPEAR** care-free against a backdrop of

# INVISIBILITY



"I feel like I  
have this

## GUILTY SECRET

that I actually  
have a family."

- Lauren  
PhD Student

From  
invisibility  
to  
(hyper-)  
visibility:  
Space  
invaders



Lifting

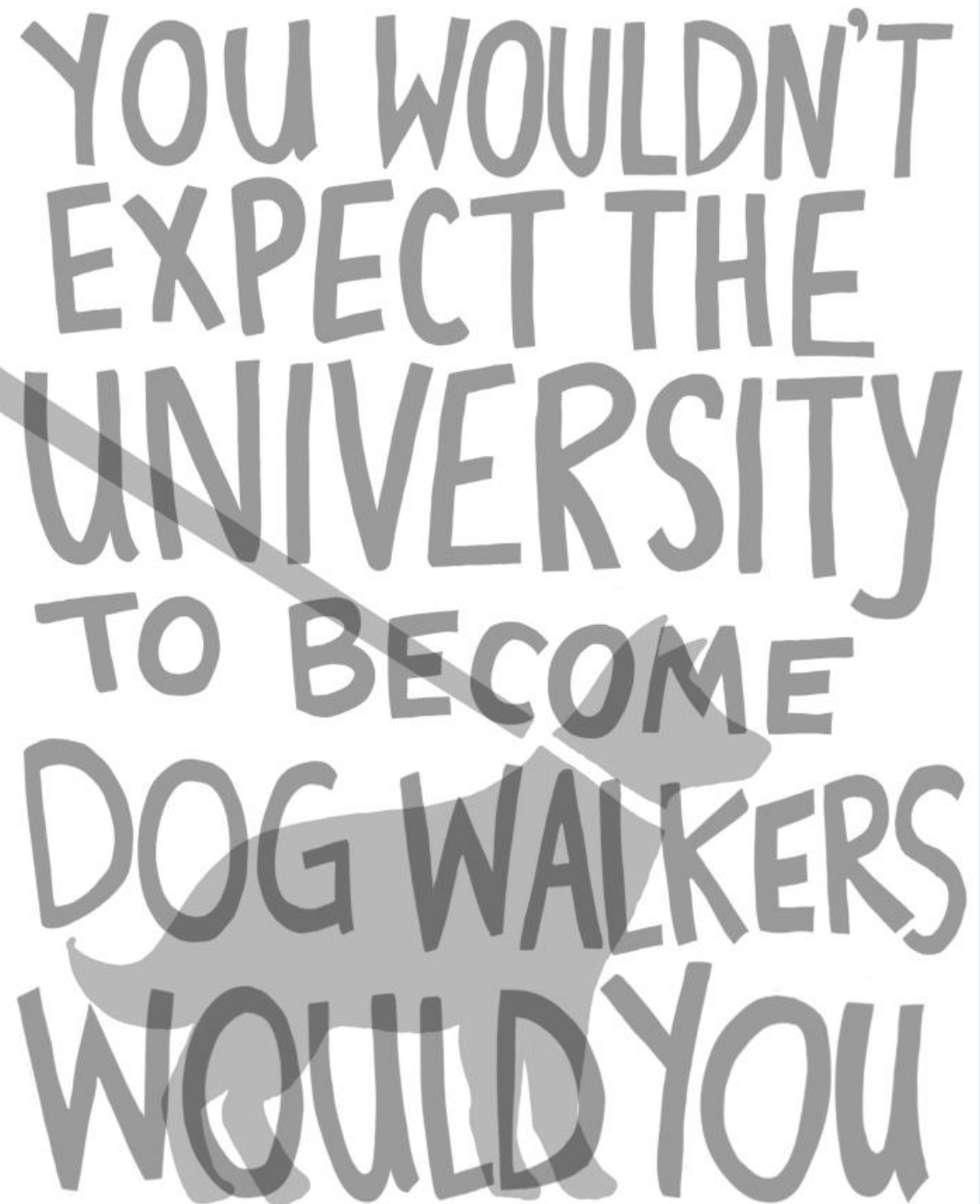
the

invisibility

cloak:

Misrecognition

YOU WOULDN'T  
EXPECT THE  
UNIVERSITY  
TO BECOME  
DOG WALKERS  
WOULD YOU

A large, light gray silhouette of a dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is walking from left to right. It is positioned behind the text on the right side of the image, partially obscuring the words 'UNIVERSITY', 'TO BECOME', 'DOG WALKERS', and 'WOULD YOU'. The dog is wearing a white collar with a tag.

'All carers  
are equal  
but  
some are more  
equal than  
others'?

Privileges  
and  
intersectionality

While most carers navigate **INVISIBILITY**  
and being pushed out as **SPACE INVADERS**,  
caring responsibilities are diverse, complex, and  
shifting, and they exist within hierarchies of care.  
These hierarchies come with differences in  
**VISIBILITY & SUPPORT**





Whose

and

what

care

work

matters?

"At the moment, EVERY PLAN I MAKE includes how I can get back as quickly as I need to and THIS WILL GO ON until father finally keels over. The main thing is the EXTRA BURDEN of having this HANGING over me all the time and wondering what it's going to be **EVERY TIME**"

- Isabella, Lecturer



Gender  
matters

...



"When [son] was born,  
the PR people I work  
with were VERY  
**KEEN** for it to be  
very **PUBLIC**  
that I was  
taking some  
paternity leave  
... to demonstrate  
from the top  
down that we  
thought it was  
a sensible thing  
that **FATHERS**  
took time off work  
and spent time with  
their newborn children."

(Dave, vc)

...a  
lot...



Caring is a virtue signal  
for men, but a professional  
impediment for women.

"[Caring  
responsibilities  
are] NOT  
SOMETHING  
THAT I CAN  
OPENLY  
DISCUSS  
because it would  
be seen as a  
PROBLEM."  
(Kat, professor)

... and so do

**the intersections**

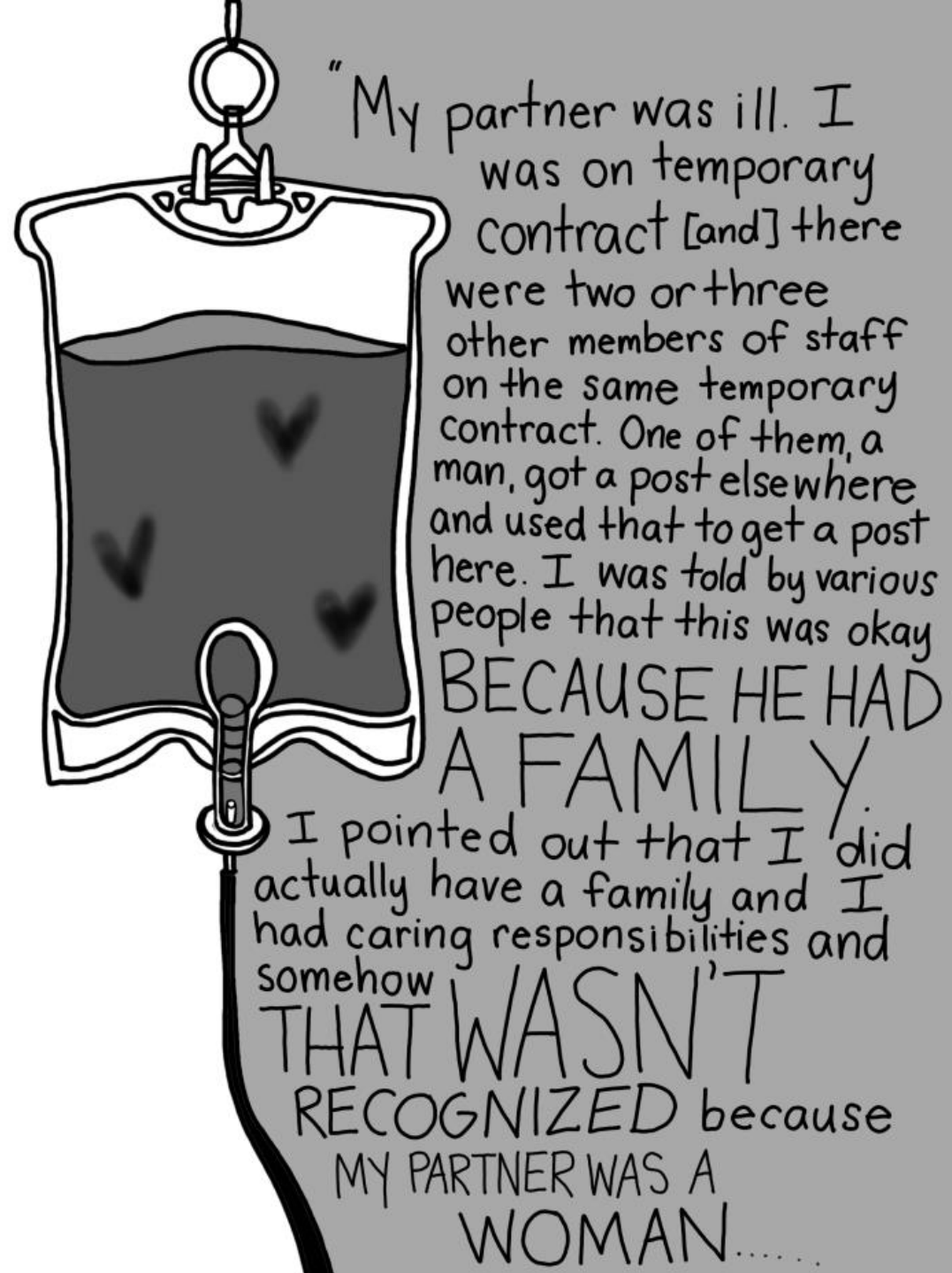
sexuality,

social class,

ethnicity

and

disability.





... and because there weren't children. Because of that I've always been more explicit to make clear what those caring responsibilities are, so people can't

HIDE 

BEHIND

a sense of,

Oh! But it's not kids and you're not a parent!



The possibilities  
of  
more inclusive  
working spaces  
for carers



Good practices  
are multidimensional

Good practices are  
multi-level

Good practices follow an ethic of CARE  
rather than top-down, one-size fits all  
approaches.



**A research-informed  
intervention:**

multi-dimensional

multi-level

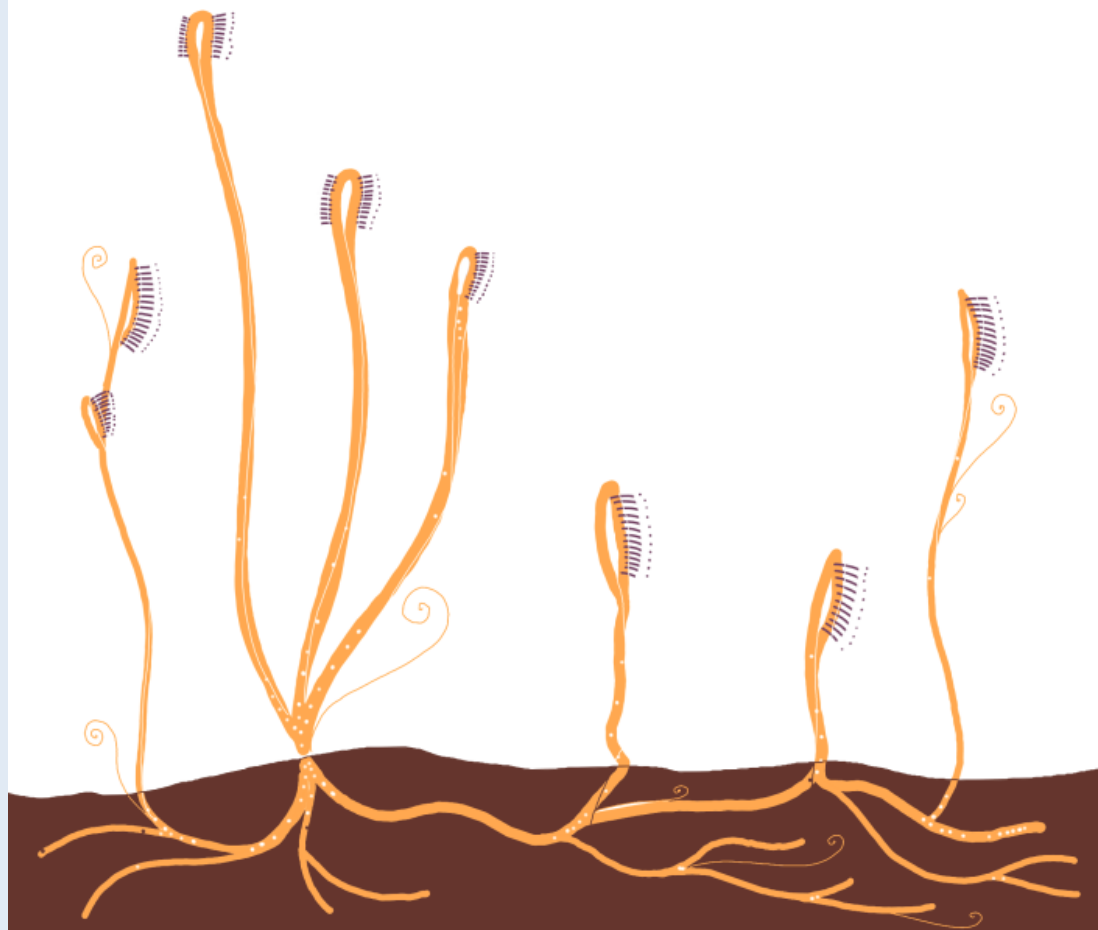
collective

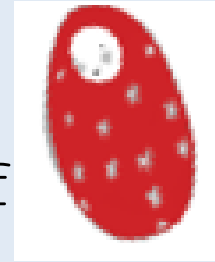
relational

and

intersectional

Good policies work a bit like  
rhizomatic plants: they creep  
along responsively over time,  
making connections and little  
adjustments as needed ...





To access the complete series of illustrated vignettes, go to:

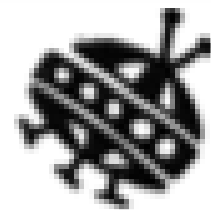
<https://theresearchwitch.wordpress.com/fostering-a-sense-of-belonging-for-higher-education-staff-and-students-with-caring-responsibilities/>

A film, with Tim Bernard: Carers and Careers, funded by Advance

HE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcjUsqA-QcA>







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(images) & Marie-Pierre Moreau (texts)

