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Gender equality & ethics of care

An illustration of three diverse women in a protest or activist setting. The woman on the left has brown hair and is wearing a yellow and green chevron-patterned top, holding a large orange megaphone. The woman in the center has dark skin and curly hair, wearing an orange top with green floral patterns, with her right fist raised. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and is wearing a teal top with orange patterns, also with her right fist raised. The background is a dark teal color with stylized purple and green foliage.

Envisioning the university of the future



Equity and ethics of care

- What is ethics of care
 - Care-lessness
 - Revaluing care work
 - Taking care of each other
 - Taking care of ourselves
 - How to institutionalize care work?
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Care-lessness is normalized

Greedy institution (Hey 2004; Bone, Jack & Mayson 2018)

- Long hours work culture / intensification of **work** (Sang et al 2015)
- Unstable work relations/ insecurity/ **fixed term contracts** (Herschberg, Benschop, & Van den Brink 2018; Murgia & Poggio 2019)
- International mobility / **academic nomad** (Vatansever 2018)
- Well-being is under pressure (Nicholls et al 2022)
- **Passion-trap** (Armano & Murgia 2013)
- **Competition erodes collegiality** (Broadbent, Troup, and Strachan 2013)



Care-lessness is normalized

Gender+ Inequalities

- **Bias and stereotypes leading to gendered career paths** (Herschberg et al 2019; Mitchell & Martin 2018; Boring, 2015)
- **Less support** (Bakioğlu & Ülker 2018; O'Connor et al 2020; Van Helden et al 2021)
- **Less material resources, lab space, finances** (Van Veelen & Derks 2016; Holliday et al 2014)
- **Intersecting with ablism, racism, ageism, classism, homophobia** (Essanhaji & Van den Brink 2021)
- **Increased inequality during COVID pandemic** (Cui, Ding, & Zhu 2021; Oleschuk, 2020)



Care-lessness is normalized

Social (un)safety / gender-based violence

- Power abuse and (sexual) harassment (Ellemers et al 2022; Naezer et al 2019; Täuber et al 2022; UNISAFE project)
- Failing structures of complaint/grievance procedures (Kalev & Dobbin 2019; Ahmed 2021; Essanhaji 2024)





Re-valuing care work

- Women do disproportionate amount of:
 - Care work (for colleagues, students, junior staff) (El-Alayli, Hansen-Brown, & Ceynar, 2018)
 - Academic housework (Guarino & Borden 2017; Heijstra, Steinhorsdóttir & Einarsdóttir 2017; Jang, Allen & Regina 2021)
- Care and academic housework are considered “Non-promotable tasks” (NPTs)



Re-valuing care work

- Advise has been: don't do it (the NO-club)
 - Essential for academic work/ healthy climate
 - Unintended consequence: other women are asked (Babcock et al 2022)
- **Collective responsibility**
 - Academic leaders share tasks equally among teams
 - Caring part of our academic jobs
- What can we do?

Care for each other

- Across career stages and positions (Breeze & Taylor 2020; Heijstra & Pétursdóttir 2021)
 - Avoid queen bee-syndrom (Faniko, Ellemers, Derks 2021)
 - Support marginalized students (Essanhaji & Van den Brink 2021)
 - Respectful engagement with support staff
 - Mentoring and sponsoring



Care for each other

Sponsorship

- A sponsor is a person who is in a position of influence (with access to networks and resources) who actively promotes the career of a protégé (Van den Brink, 2024)
- Women are over-mentored and under-sponsored (Ibarra et al 2010)

Care for each other: Sponsorship

(de Vries & Binns 2018; Utoft & Cecchini 2022; Van den Brink, 2024)



Mirroring: asking questions, reflecting on career



Advising: giving advice and learn 'the rules of the game'



Guidance/ encouraging encouraging to take the next step, proactive advice and thinking along



Connecting: introduce to key people and networks, invite for committees, memberships



Making visible: endorsements, letters of recommendation, nominating for prizes, positions and awards



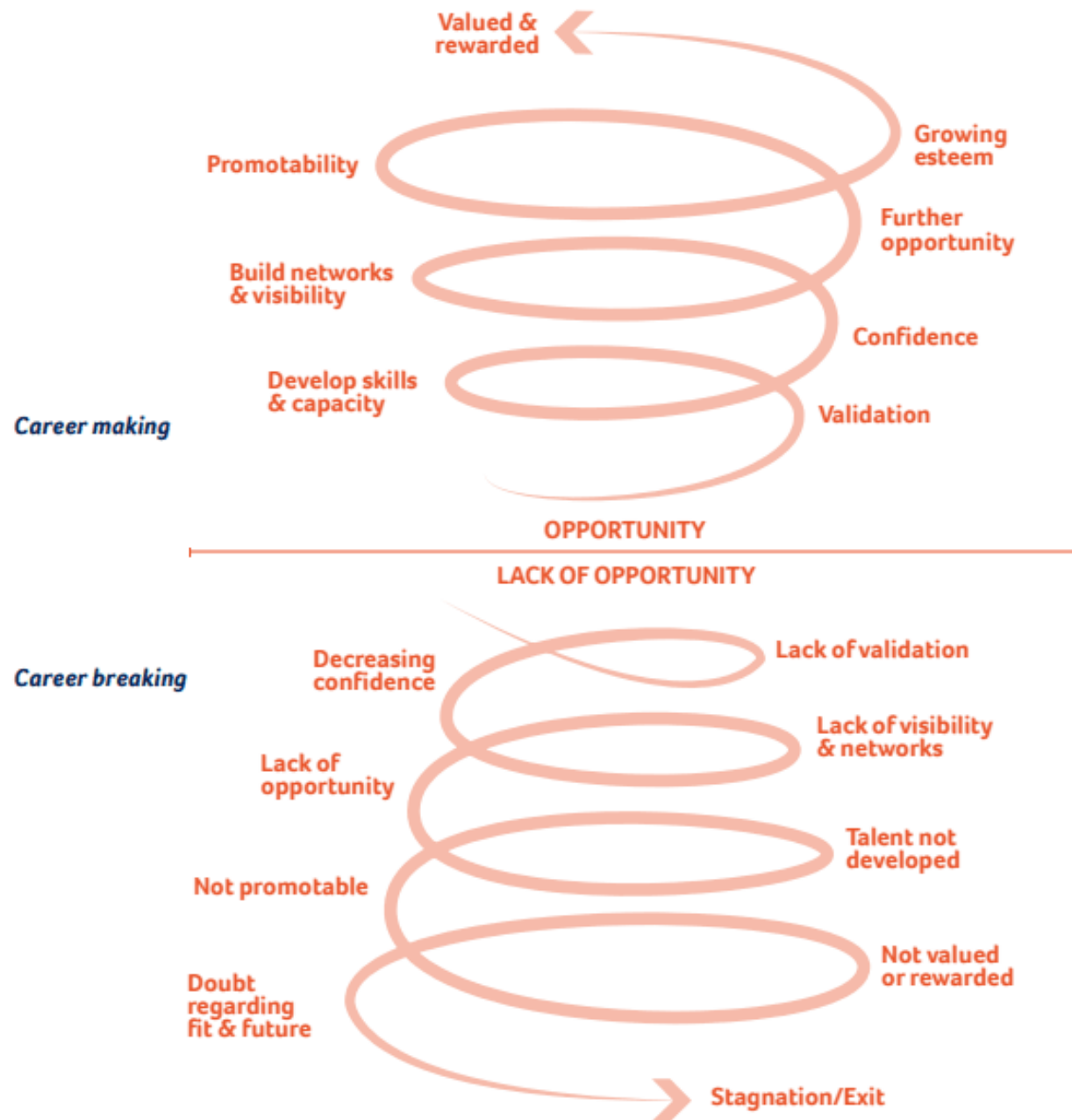
Creating opportunities: include on grant proposals, co-authorships, co-presenting keynotes, organizing conferences



Advocating / Endorsing: recommend for prizes, promotion/job/position

Sponsorship practices

- It all started three years ago when I was hired as a student assistant ... and then I was invited to join a summer school even though it was only for PhDs and I was just a[n undergraduate] student ... and then one thing led to another, and I remained within the research group ... and then I planned to apply for a PhD, but they had already found some money and wanted to hire me as a PhD, so I was hired.
- And this other professor I know, she once took me to an international conference, and the whole time she was like, 'Oh, you need to meet this person and this person'.



Care for each other

- **Across career stages** (Breeze & Taylor 2020; Heijstra & Pétursdóttir 2021)
 - Mentoring and sponsoring
 - Avoid queen bee-syndrom (Faniko, Ellemers, Derks 2021)
 - Support marginalized students (Essanhaji & Van den Brink 2021)
- **Peer support** (Bayfield et al 2020)
 - Share failure, uncertainty, grief, loss, worry and fear
 - Supporting marginalized colleagues: citing is politics!
- **Collectives & Networks** (Dennissen et al 2019)
 - Collectively complain (Ahmed 2021)
 - Agenda setting (De Vries & van den Brink 2016)



Care for each other

Collective agenda setting (Dennissen, Benschop & Van den Brink 2019)

More powerful as a collective

Collective complaint (Sara Ahmed 2021)

- *Mentee Susan: We noticed that there was a supervisor who did not treat this students well. I mean, forms of intimidation, sexual and sexist jokes, undervaluing women students' input. They did not dare to report this to the dean, as it might harm their career. But as a collective, we dared to say something about this, and an investigation was started.*
- *I found a mentor with cognitive disabilities as well, and we discussed that no extra facilities were provided by the university. We scheduled a meeting with the university board – he had easy access - , and now there is a taskforce to provide support for students and staff with (cognitive) disabilities.*



Care for ourselves

- Caring for our bodies:
 - Rest (Hersey 2022)
 - Trauma/ grief / burnout
 - Menstruation, menopause, miscarriages, pregnancies.




Facilitating care: university policies

- Ethics of care part of good leadership & ideal academic norm
 - Changing practices and norms needs institutional support
 - Dutch context: “Recognition & Rewards”: new image of the ideal academic
<https://recognitionrewards.nl/>
- Connect existing policies:
 - Connecting DEI with evaluations, wellbeing & mental health and inclusive leadership development



Imagine the
university of
the future:
Creating
spaces of care

- How does the institution look like, where you aspire to work in?
 - What other ways of care can we practice in our daily work?
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Literature

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