

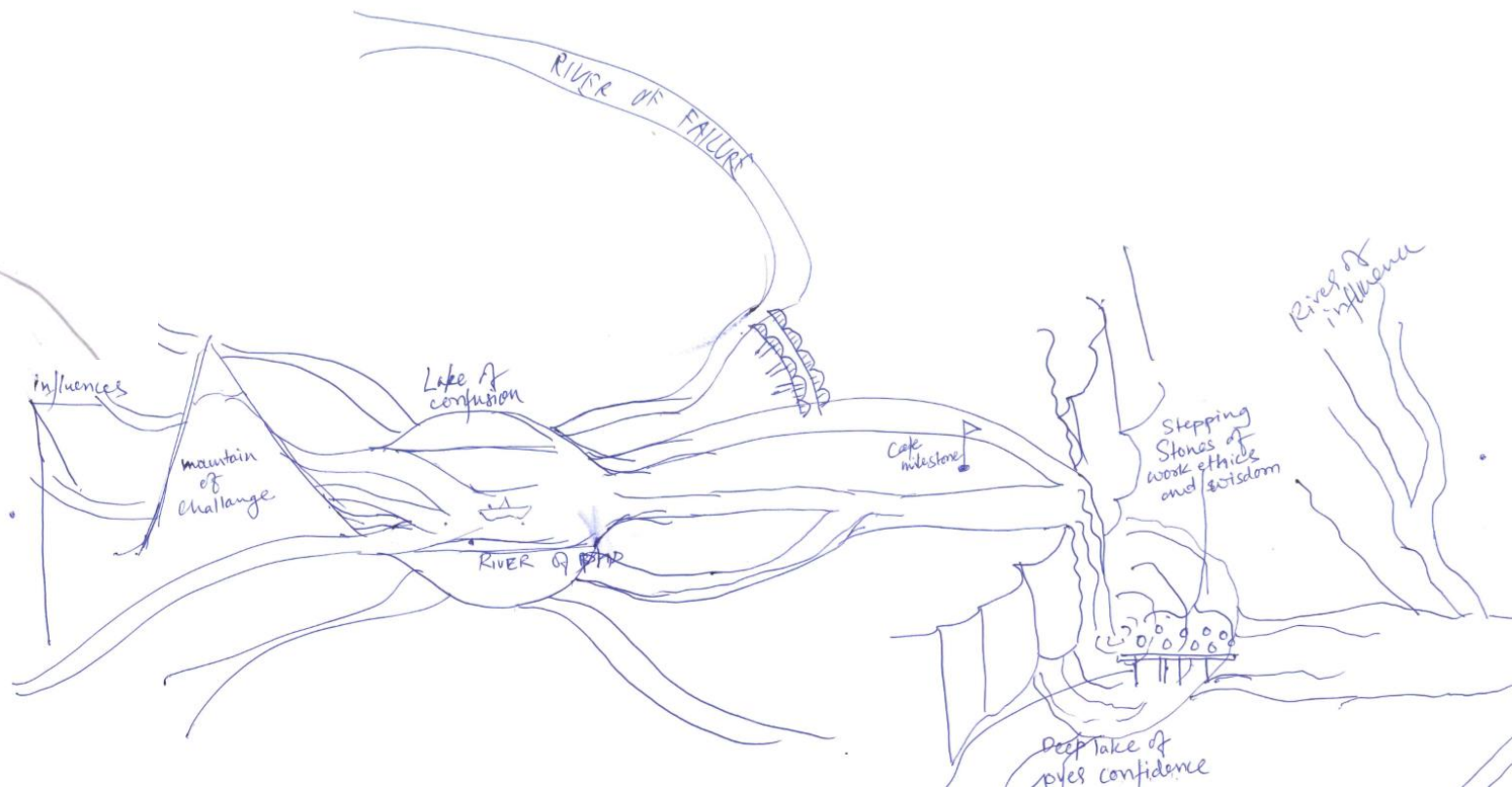
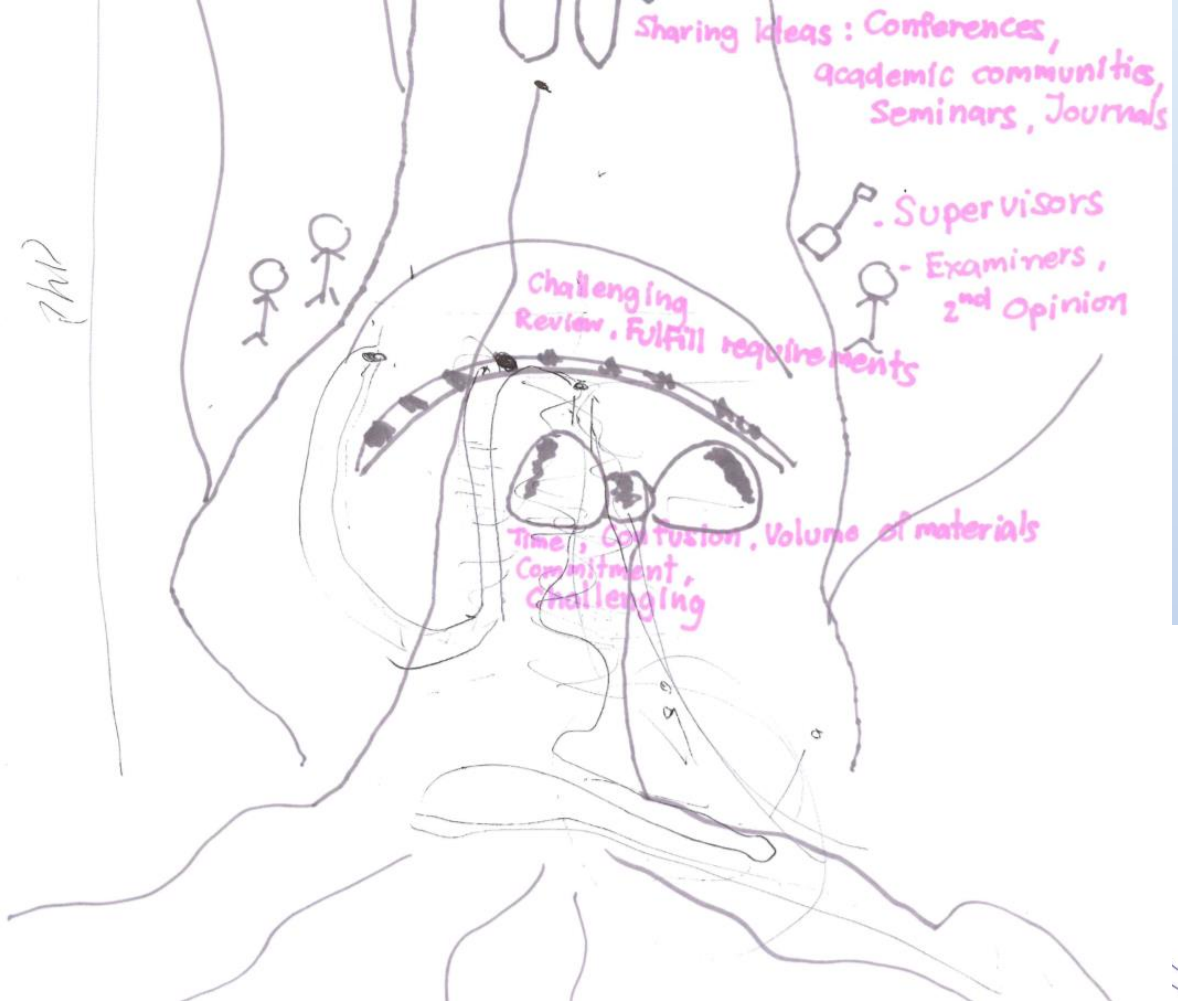
# Using creative methods for self- reflection to support PhD students' well-being



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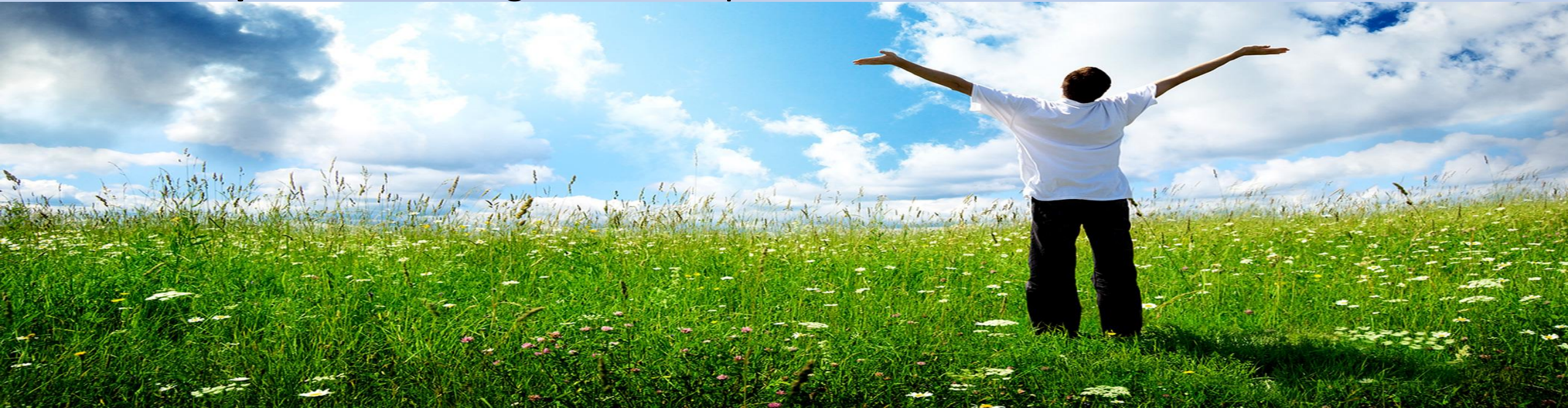


# Overview

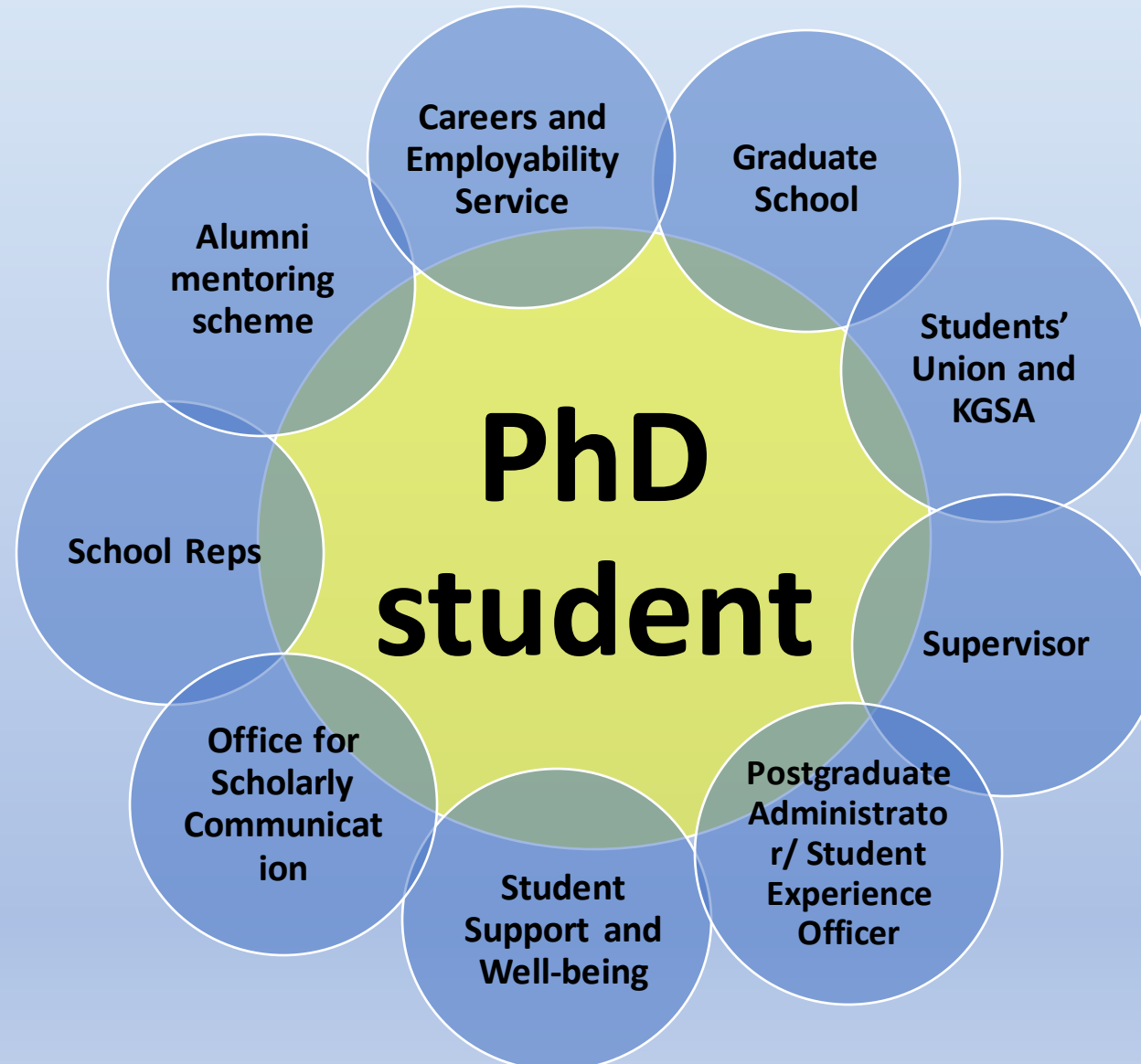
- Context of workshop
  - Kent Graduate School
  - Relevance for PhD students
- Elements of the student workshop
- Building models and feedback
- Evaluation of activity

# Graduate School support for PhD students:

- **Workshops:** Mindfulness/Dealing with Stress/Giving and Receiving Feedback/Procrastination/Imposter Syndrome/Supervisor training
- **Events:** Research Café, Postgraduate Festival and Wellbeing Week, Yoga and Writing Retreats, Shut up and Write
- **Competitions:** Postgraduate Experience Awards



# Student Support at the University of Kent



# Emotion work

- Hochschild (1983)
- Surface Acting
- Deep Acting
- Emotional Dissonance



- (<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=smack+the+pony+season+4%2c+doctor+sketch&&view=detail&mid=5D56A5228D258F01FE2A5D56A5228D258F01FE2A&&FORM=VDRVRV>) 113-252

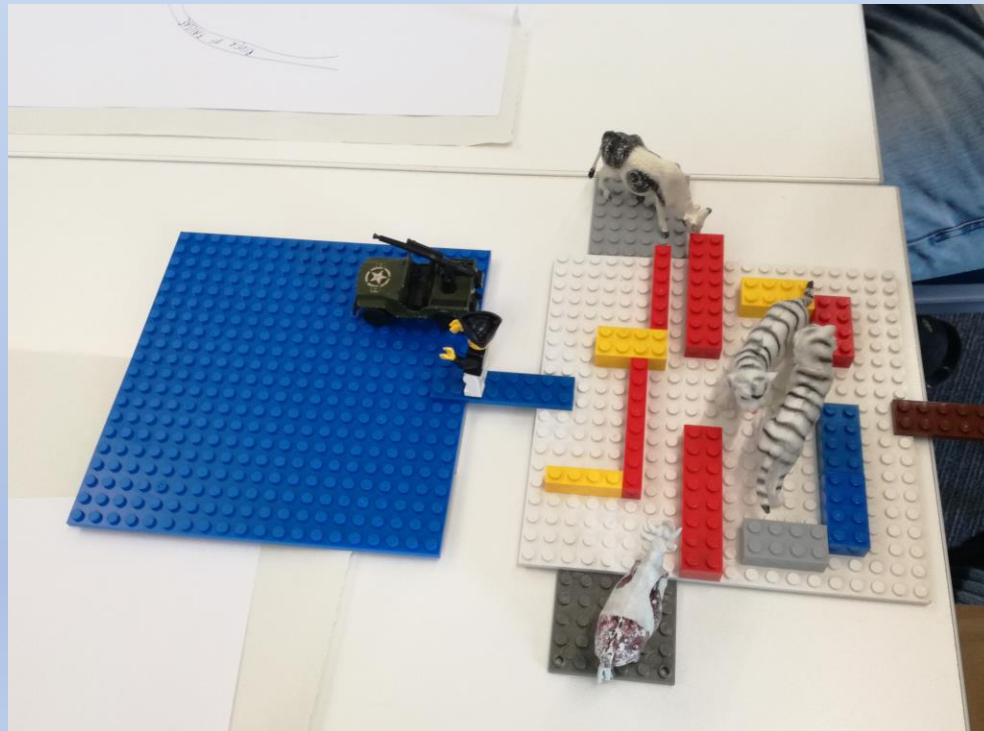
# Elements of the workshop

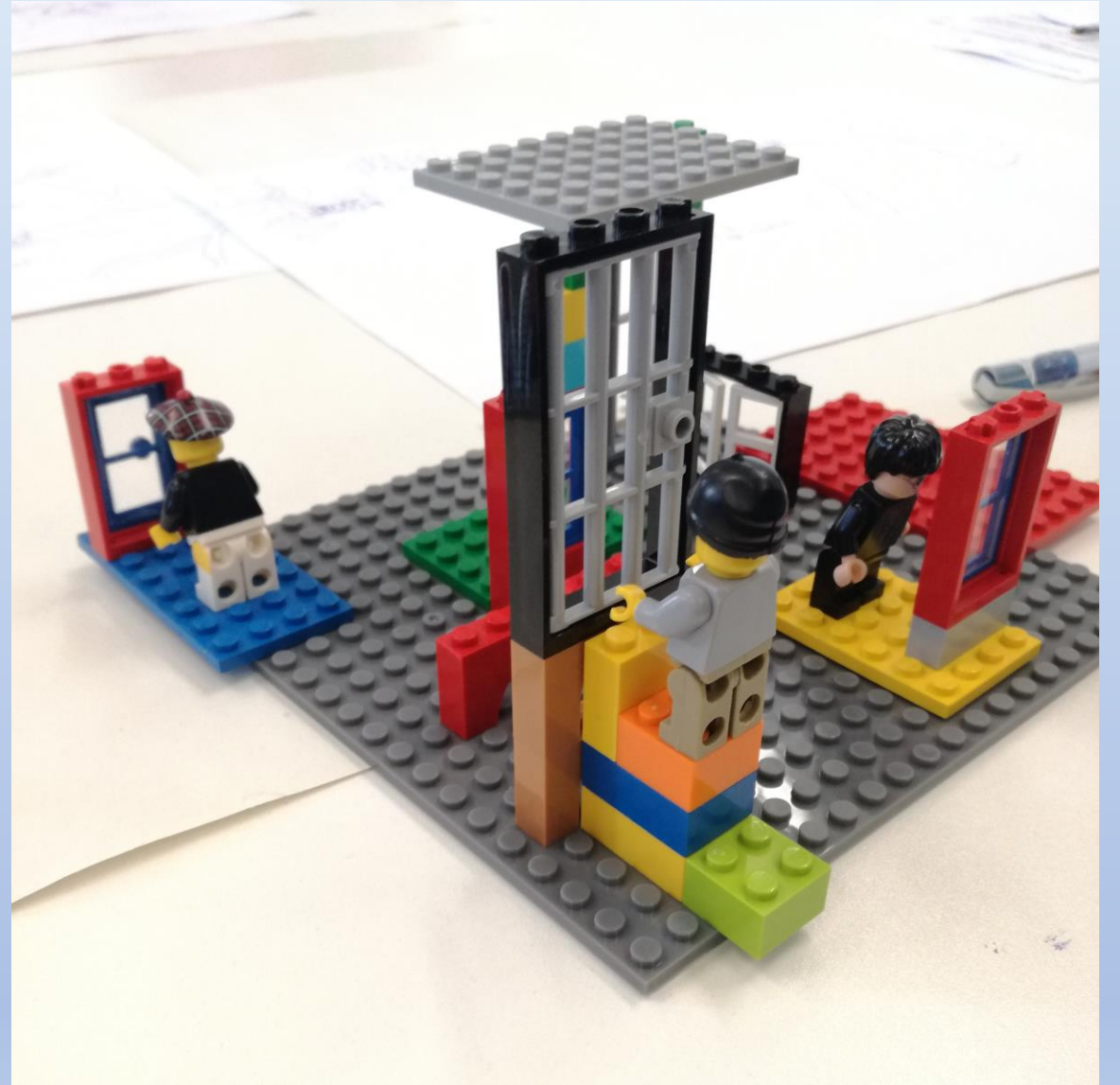
- Objects: Who am I?
- River-drawing: What does your learning journey look like?
- LEGO<sup>®</sup>: What is your PhD?



# PhD Challenges

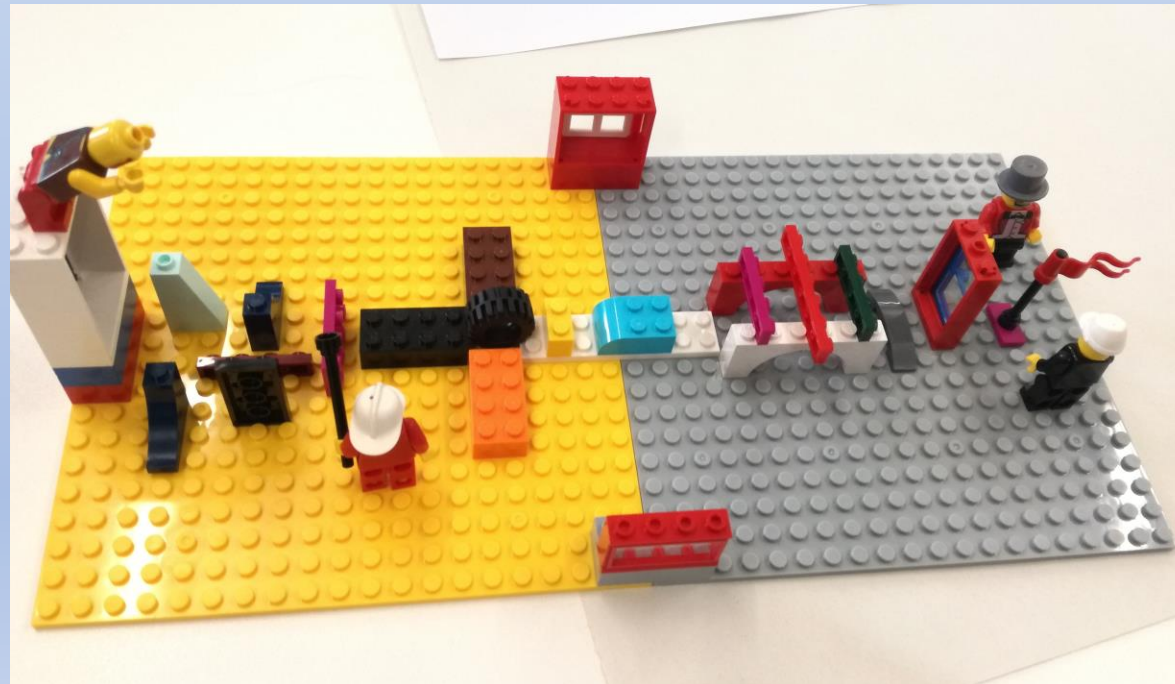
- “[...]some communities within the PGR population are likely to be more susceptible to developing a mental health condition [...including] those working in isolation” (Metcalfe, Levecque & Wilson, 2018; 6)

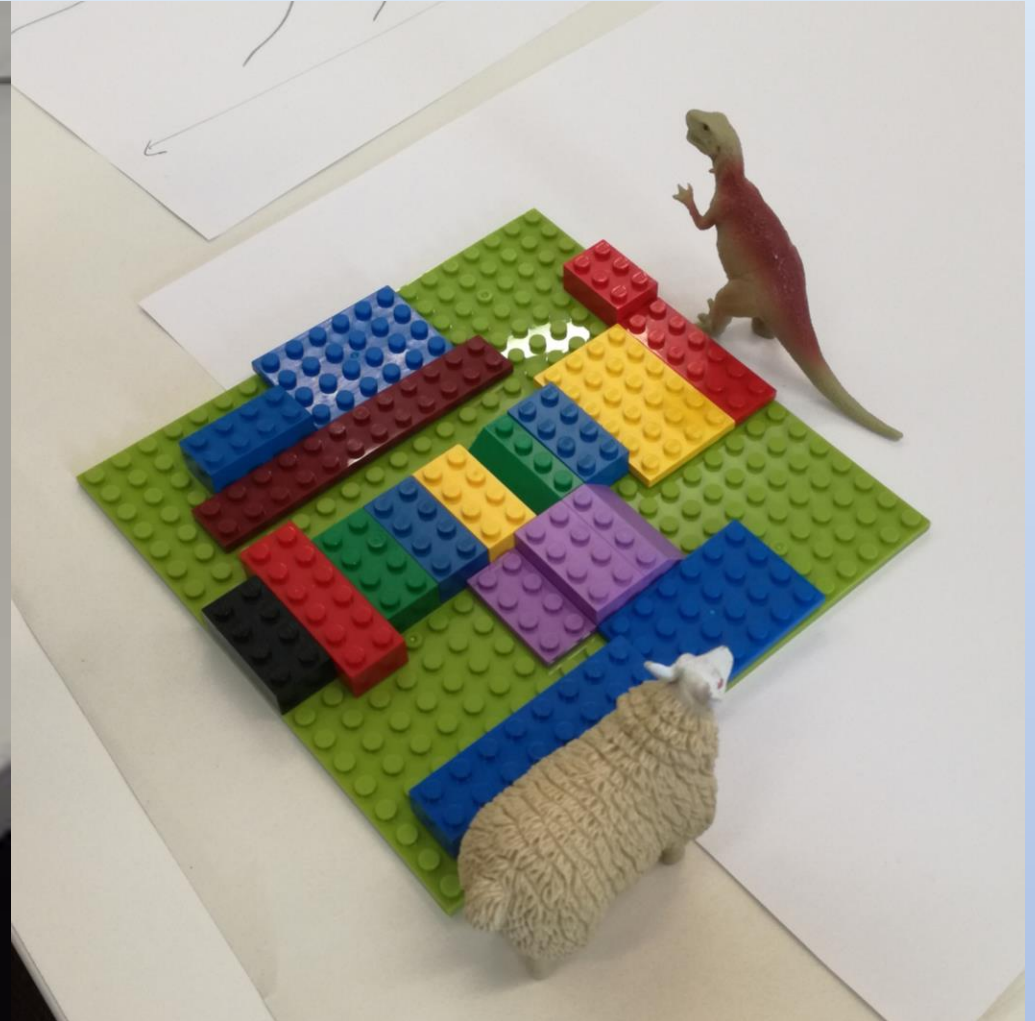
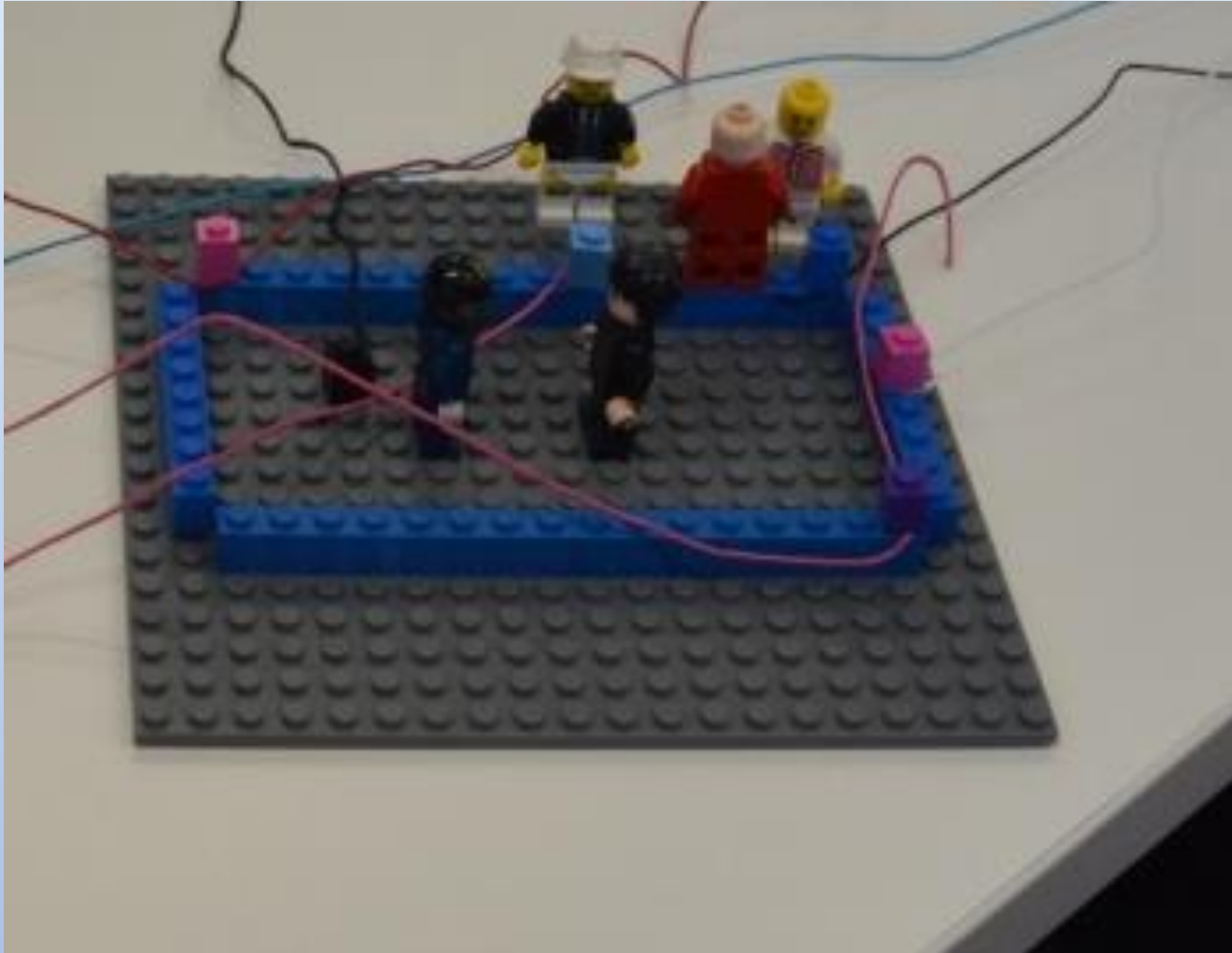




# PhD challenges

- “Expectations of high achievement and high workloads associated with doctoral degrees may create an environment which can trigger imposter syndrome in PGRs who experience self-doubt” (Metcalfe, Levecque & Wilson, 2018; 11)





“[Students] adjust to the reality of their academic context and appropriately handle its requirements and expectations” (Skakni, 2018: 14).

# Why PhD students' Well-being?

- Challenges:
  - Conceptual sophistication/advancement of the field
  - Motivation
  - Scope of project
  - Uncertainty
  - Work/life balance
  - PhD as 'initiation' (Skakni)

Let's make and do....



# What does wellbeing look like to our workshop participants?

- “The workshop has been useful in allowing us to see that persistence and an embrace-the-challenge mind-set are required to all that embark in [PhD] this journey.”
- “Listening to the other students was fascinating and moving and I valued the opportunity to share my own thoughts. [...] The effect of the workshop is the encouragement it’s given me.”
- “It’s been beautiful: I didn’t know I could do that!”

# What is Well-being

- Not the same as happiness
- Not reducible to a mental state
- “a **dynamic** state in which the individual is able to develop their potential” (National Accounts of Wellbeing (2009))
- Not something that can be done to an individual!



# What is Well-being?

- POSITIVE EMOTION
  - ENGAGEMENT
  - RELATIONSHIPS
  - MEANING
  - ACHIEVEMENT
- 
- These “measurable elements, each a real thing, each contribute[...] to wellbeing, but none defin[es] wellbeing” (Seligman, *Flourish*)

# Using creative methods to support PhD students' well-being



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