

PHD PSYCHOLOGISTS NEWS

March, April, May 2026

PhD Psychologists team

Because Well-Being Builds
Empowered Professionals and a
Thriving University.



Universiteit
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CONTENT

1. Find the PhD psychologist's support in one place
2. Recommendation for PhD supporters:
Supervision Relationship: Leading with Kindness and Clarity
3. Upcoming activities
4. Building well-being awareness together:
Creating a safe and supportive supervision relationship
5. Your story, your strength:
Finding Support and Tools for Navigating Difficult Conversations
6. How can the PhD psychologist help?
7. Contact information



1. FIND THE PHD PSYCHOLOGISTS' SUPPORT IN ONE PLACE

We Have a New Webpage

Thanks to the collaboration with the **Editorial Team of the staff website**, we have updated the [Psychologist for PhD Candidates webpage](#) and moved it to a new location to make the information you need more accessible.

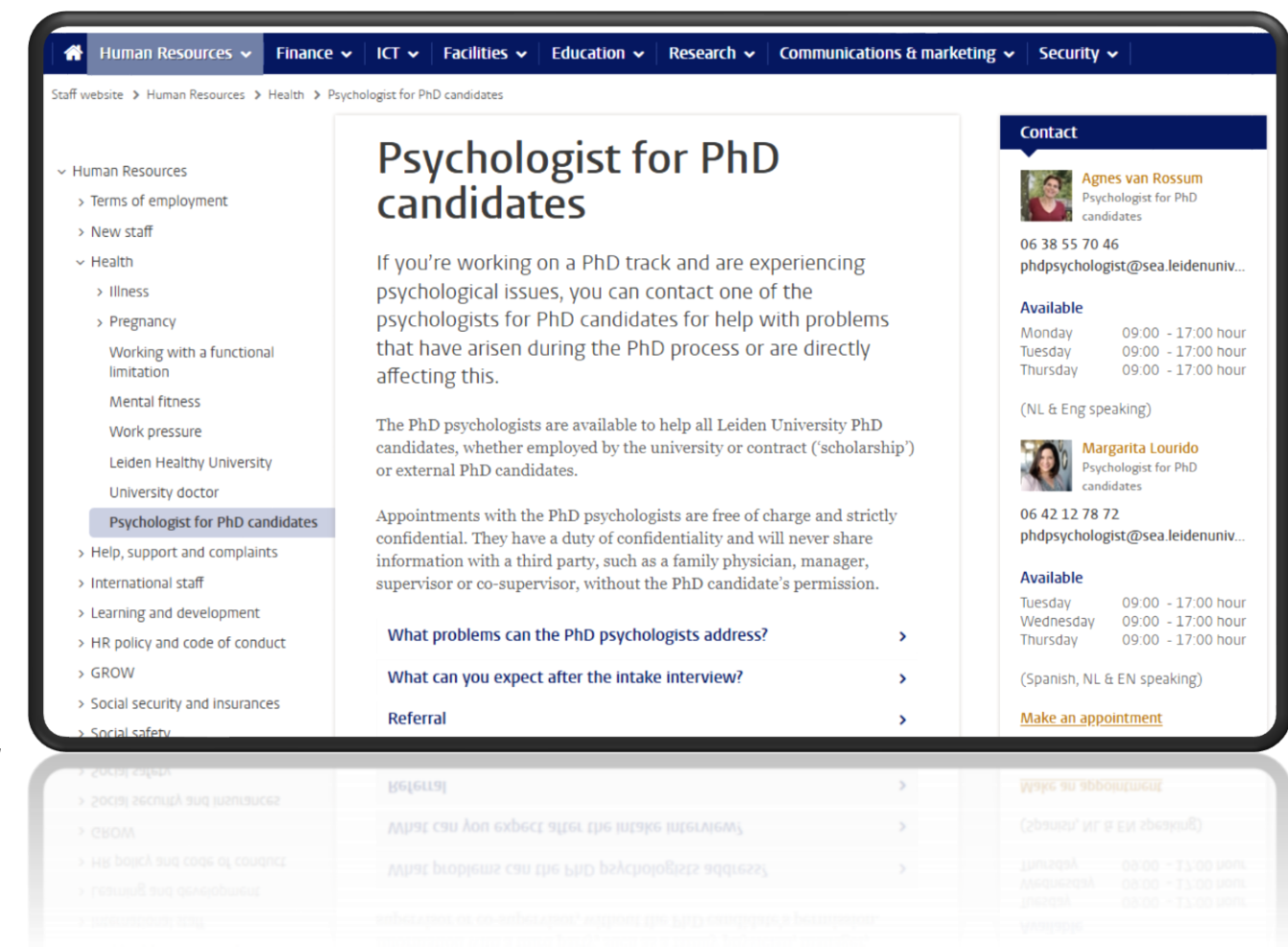
As always, the website provides information about the type of support available, how to access it, a list of emergency contacts, and what PhD candidates can expect from the service.

On the new website you will also find:

- An easy-access button to make an appointment with the PhD psychologist
- A list of workshops, training courses, and peer support groups – **all in one place!**
- The last three editions of the PhD Psychologist Newsletter

We hope these changes will help PhD candidates and those who support them find our resources and support more easily.

Visit our new website soon!



2. RECOMMENDATION FOR PHD SUPPORTERS

Our recommendation today is exploring the concept **Compassionate Candor** to create stronger supervision relationships.

Supervision Relationship: Leading with Kindness and Clarity

Some of the PhD candidates who seek support from our service share concerns about the feedback they receive from supervisors. For these PhD candidates the feedback feels unclear; other times it may be delivered in a way that feels discouraging, leaving candidates unsure about how to improve.

In professional development, areas for improvement and challenging interactions are inevitable. The question then becomes: **How can critical feedback be delivered in a constructive way that supports both the progress of the research project and a healthy supervision relationship?**

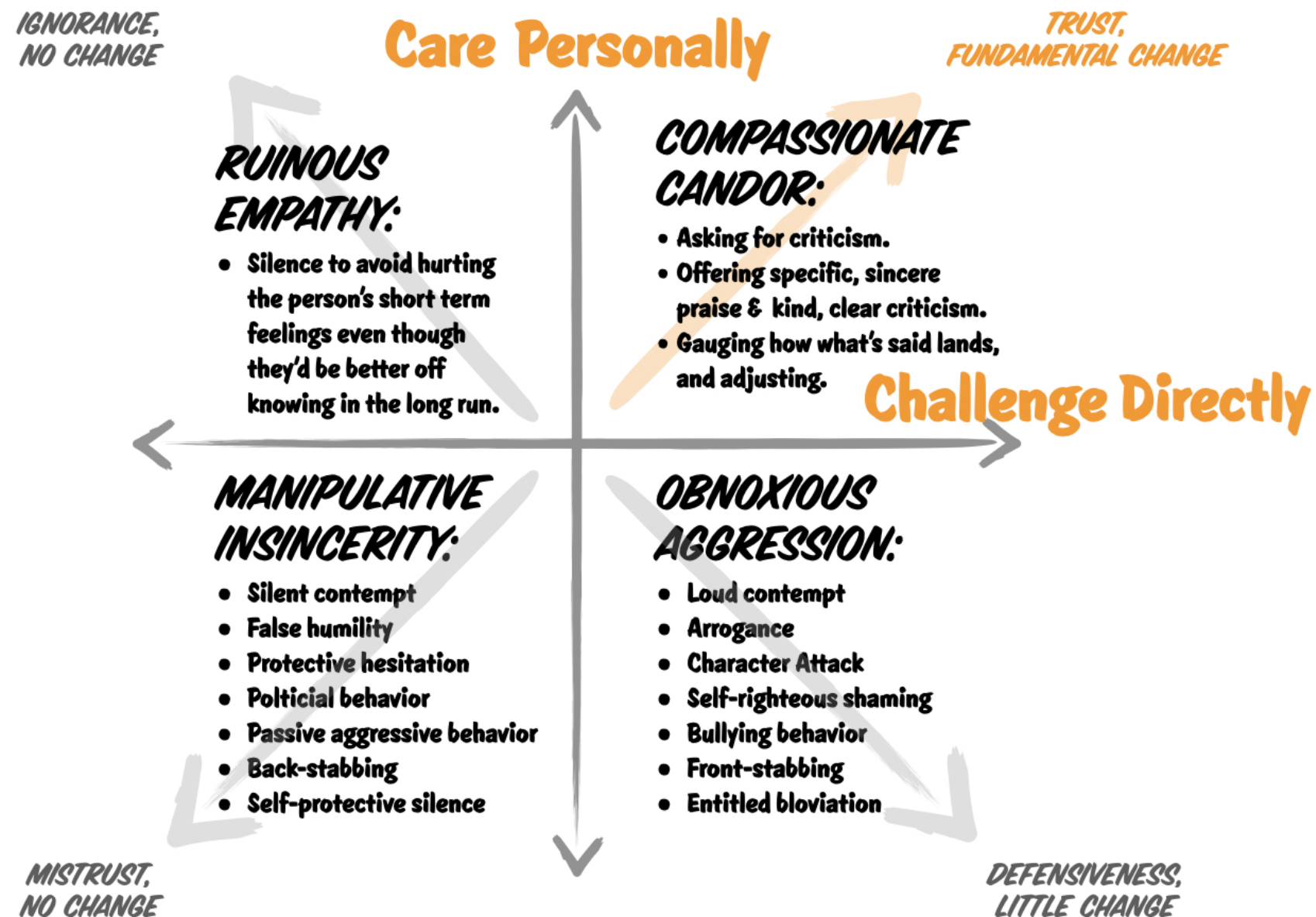
While exploring this question, we came across the concept introduced by Kim Scott called **Radical Candor**, later reframed by the author as **Compassionate Candor**. This approach emphasizes the importance of **Caring Personally while Challenging Directly**. Compassionate Candor means offering constructive criticism that is both kind and clear, and giving praise that is specific and sincere.

By practicing this balance, supervisors and PhD candidates can create an environment that encourages trust, open communication, and professional growth.

If you would like to learn more about this concept, you can watch Kim Scott's materials (Book, TED talk and information online)

2. RECOMMENDATION FOR PHD SUPPORTERS

RADICAL CANDOR 2X2



Resources:

Book: Radical candor by Kim Scott

[Ted talk – How to lead with radical candor](#)

[Podcast: Radical candor](#)

Source: Kim Scott – @kimballscott

3.1 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



ACT TRAINING **For Dutch speakers**

Next edition:
April 7, 2026

In deze ACT-training leer je anders met moeilijke situaties om te gaan, vanuit acceptatie en aanvaarding.

[Link ACT TRAINING](#)

NAVIGATING A NEW CULTURE WORKSHOP SERIES

Next edition:
2nd semester 2026

International PhD candidates face many challenges living abroad. Overcoming cultural barriers boosts their success.

[Link NAVIGATING A NEW
CULTURE WORKSHOP SERIES](#)

ROUWGROEP/ GRIEF GOUP **For Dutch speakers**

Next edition:
2nd semester 2026

Connect with peers experiencing loss and find support to move forward in your PhD journey.

[Link ROUWGROEP](#)

For signing up, please send an e-mail to
phdpsychologist@SEA.leidenuniv.nl

3.2 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



HOOGBEGAAFDHEID/ GIFTEDNESS PHD PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Status:
**Registration
permanently open**

Gifted individuals may set exceptionally high standards for themselves, leading to potential anxiety and difficulty with self-acceptance.

[Link GIFTEDNESS PHD PEER
SUPPORT GROUP](#)

AD(H)D PHD PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Status:
**Registration
permanently open**

A safe space for PhD candidates with signs of AD(H)D to share, connect, and grow together.

[Link AD\(H\)D PEER SUPPORT
GROUP](#)

For signing up, please send an e-mail to
phdpsychologist@SEA.leidenuniv.nl

4.1. BUILDING WELL-BEING AWARENESS TOGETHER

Creating a safe and supportive supervision relationship

On December 2, 2025, PhD psychologist Dr. Margarita Lourido delivered a workshop titled **“Bridging the Gap: Building a Safe and Supportive Supervision Relationship”** for HAIG Science Day, LUMC.

The session brought together PhD candidates and supervisors to reflect on the supervision relationship beyond academic tasks. Participants explored pressures, and emotional experiences that both sides may encounter during the PhD journey.

The workshop focused on how miscommunication can arise when perspectives differ, and how these challenges can be understood as a natural part of collaboration and intellectual growth.

By encouraging empathic listening and open dialogue, the session highlighted practical ways to build psychological safety, trust, and constructive communication within the supervision relationship.



4.2. BUILDING WELL-BEING AWARENESS TOGETHER



Please let us know how we can help you create well-being awareness in your faculty. Invite us to talk in your event, these are the options that we have to offer you:

- 10 – 15 min presentation. **Introduction to PhD psychologists' services.**
- 45 min presentation. **Bridging the Gap: Building a Safe and Supportive Supervision Relationship**
- 90 min (online or live) workshop. **How to deal with stress during the PhD journey**
- 90 min workshop. **From Surviving to Thriving in PhD Life: Leading Your Path to Success by Overcoming Self-sabotage**

Invite us to be part of your event (with anticipation) by sending an e-mail to phdpsychologist@SEA.leidenuniv.nl

5.1. YOUR STORY, YOUR STRENGTH

Finding Support and Tools for Navigating Difficult Conversations

A PhD candidate can have a different point of view and work ethic than her/his supervisor and still they can work together and communicate effectively.

A PhD is not only an intellectual journey but also a relational one. Open and effective communication with supervisors is essential, yet it can sometimes feel difficult to express concerns, ask questions, or address misunderstandings.

Having a safe space to reflect on these challenges can help PhD candidates develop the confidence and skills needed to navigate these conversations.

In the following testimonial, a PhD candidate shares how psychological support helped to communicate more effectively and approach the PhD journey with greater clarity and resilience.



5.2. YOUR STORY, YOUR STRENGTH

TESTIMONIAL FROM PHD CANDIDATE WHO ATTENDED TO INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

Working with the PhD psychologist has been a truly transformative experience during my PhD journey.

She brings a combination of deep psychological insight, warmth and empathy, and very practical guidance. Her structured approach helped me to gain more understanding and confidence in who I am as a person and who I want to be (come) as an academic.

*Her support has been pivotal in helping me understand how I could relate to my supervisors and communicate more effectively with them. **Instead of feeling overwhelmed, I feel more equipped now with tools, perspective, and a resilient mindset.***

I have not only gained a solid internal foundation, but also more clarity and a sense of purpose. I cannot recommend the PhD psychologist enough!



6.1. HOW CAN THE PHD PSYCHOLOGIST HELP?

You can turn to the PhD psychologist with problems arising from your PhD trajectory and other related personal problems, for example:

- Excessive (work) pressure, work-life imbalance
- Physical and mental stress
- Exhaustion and burn-out
- Concentration problems
- Motivation problems
- Procrastination
- Anxiety issues, including fear of failure and panic attacks
- Mood issues, including grief
- Perfectionism, imposter syndrome
- Uncertainty (about your future)
- Difficulties being assertive
- Low or negative self-esteem
- Social isolation, loneliness
- Adjustment problems, culture shock
- Neurodiversity (AD(H)D, giftedness, Autism)
- Problems with supervision or other aspects of the working environment

6.2. OUR TEAM, OUR VISION

We believe that behind every PhD candidate is a human being with unique needs, strengths, and challenges.

In our team:

- We work with empathy and professional expertise
- We offer a place where vulnerability is welcomed and growth is supported



6.3. OUR TEAM, OUR VISION

Through our guidance, those who seek our support find:

- **A sense of being seen and heard**
- **A safe space to reflect, feel, and grow**
- **A stronger foundation for moving forward in life**

They learn to say:

“I am good enough.”

“My emotions are human.”

“Mistakes are part of the PhD journey.”

“I can do this.”

Most importantly, **they discover that seeking help can be a positive and empowering experience.**

6.4. WHO ARE THE PHD PSYCHOLOGISTS?

Agnes van Rossum



Agnes van Rossum worked for many years as a scientist in the position of technician, PhD candidate and post-doc, obtaining her PhD in 2006. She quit science in 2010. Agnes studied clinical and health psychology at Utrecht University, after which she started her own practice as psychologist and walk-and-talk coach. In the role of PhD psychologist, Agnes brings her two worlds together.

Margarita Lourido



Margarita Lourido obtained her PhD in Clinical Psychology in Barcelona in 2016. She has an extensive international background which has included work and study in numerous countries such as Colombia, the USA, Spain and the Netherlands. Since 2018, she has had her own practice as a coach-psychologist through which she channels her passion for helping highly-educated internationals navigate the challenges of establishing a life and career abroad.

CONTACT US



Visit our [website](#) by scanning the QR code.
Don't hesitate to contact us, send an email to:
PhDpsychologist@sea.leidenuniv.nl

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