

Who Cares About Fieldwork? A Person-Centred Framework for a Compassionate Early-Career Fieldwork Pedagogy

Sophie Standen ¹  and Andy Harrod ² 

¹ Lancaster University Library, Lancaster University, UK

² School of Health in Social Science, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Correspondence: Sophie Standen (sophie.e.standen@gmail.com)

Submitted: 15 February 2026 **Accepted:** 1 September 2026 **Published:** 30 September 2026

Issue: This article is part of the issue “Compassionate Futures for Collective Well-Being” edited by Natalia Martini (KU Leuven) and Karin Hannes (KU Leuven), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.i477>

Abstract

The concept of “fieldwork” has been subject to longstanding critique, particularly regarding unequal researcher–participant dynamics, and the extractive colonial legacies that shape knowledge produced in the “field.” Early-career fieldworkers often operate within neoliberal, productivity-driven norms that reproduce unequal researcher–participant dynamics in the field and leave little room for researcher care. This article proposes understanding fieldwork as an inherently relational, pedagogical process. We use person-centred psychotherapy to advance a framework in which to understand fieldwork as a relational, pedagogical process. Building on vignettes from our experiences of ECR fieldwork, we outline three key pillars on which a compassionate fieldwork pedagogy can be built. These are (a) embedded institutional enablers that encourage care and compassion; (b) person-centred care throughout the fieldwork process; and (c) researcher self-awareness. We suggest that understanding fieldwork as a relational pedagogy, through core person-centred psychotherapy principles, is an important first step in co-creating compassionate fieldwork futures.

Keywords

care; neoliberalism; relational; research

1. Introduction

Hearing the trials of the people there
Who's to care if they lose
(Nick Drake, *Parasite*)

Within geography, fieldwork is often understood as a key means of data collection and as a rite of passage within early-career research (doctoral and post-doctoral, henceforth: ECR; Bruun & Guasco, 2023). Despite this, longstanding accounts of research extractivism, vulnerability, and trouble related to marginalised positionalities in the “field” remain persistent and have led to calls for fieldwork research praxis and process to be reinvigorated (Berry et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2022). Feminist geographers have long paid attention to issues of reflexivity, power and positionality in the field (Katz, 1994; G. Rose, 1997), heroic and masculinist tropes that permeate expectations in fieldwork (Sundberg, 2003), as well as the embodied, emotional dimensions of fieldwork (Ross, 2015). Indeed, many personal accounts surrounding mental health struggles, violence, sexual violence, and harassment in fieldwork have also been documented (Douglas-Jones et al., 2020; Hirsch, 2020; Taylor, 2019). Scholars who highlight the inherent coloniality of research have also pointed to the epistemological research extractiveness and contradictions of the “field” (Berry et al., 2017; Smith, 2008).

Neoliberalism has been widely noted as shaping higher education (HE) practices. Neoliberal ideology marketizes HE as a private rather than public good, applies “free market” individualising and competitive principles into management logics of the public HE sector, and has meant that HE has been systematically defunded, to the detriment of both staff and students (Mintz, 2021). Competitive and individualising neoliberal tendencies within the academy also exacerbate gendered, classed, and racialised vulnerabilities for researchers and for those who participate in research projects (Mountz et al., 2015; Pickerill, 2024). Studies highlight poor rates of mental health amongst ECRs (Bergvall et al., 2025), whilst uncaring pedagogical practices within doctoral education exacerbate existing power imbalances in neoliberalised academia (Castelao-Huerta, 2026). Additionally, ECRs are often employed on precarious contracts. Precarious contracts in HE create a transient lifestyle that is isolating and stressful, which, alongside high expectations and demands on researchers’ time, can lead to mental health issues and departure from academia (Nordling, 2023; Woolston, 2020).

Large numbers of proposals challenge the individualisation and competitiveness of the neoliberal university by provoking us to enliven teaching and research practices and create acts of solidarity. Such proposals have centred on slow scholarship (Mountz et al., 2015), becoming humble (Saville, 2021), playing with time within the pressures of the neoliberal university (Pickerill, 2024), increasing emotional support and promoting self-care (Butler-Rees & Robinson, 2020; Jones & Whittle, 2021), advancing gentleness within methodological approaches (Pottinger, 2025), and encouraging relational pedagogical education (Hickey & Riddle, 2024). For fieldwork, calls have centred on taking a “compassionate turn,” whereby both the wellbeing of the researcher and their participants is attended to (Taylor, 2019; “Towards a compassionate turn,” 2019).

The key factor in these proposals is the fostering of an environment, which facilitates an interdependent, non-judgemental, empathic, authentic, and emotionally aware way of being. However, whilst the proposals make several suggestions about why it is important to enact interdependent, non-judgemental, empathic, authentic, and emotionally aware approaches, there is little engagement with how to enact these suggestions. While calls for more relational, empathic, and authentic pedagogy in HE (which is understood as fostering belonging through the important relational dynamics between “teacher,” “student,” and “knowledge production”) advance movements towards inclusive and dialogic teaching (Hickey & Riddle, 2024), the role of the intra- and interpersonal relations of fieldwork in discussions of relational and inclusive pedagogies has

been absent. This is despite the fact that fieldwork is central to research (Naveed et al., 2017), and that it is inherently a dynamic, relational, and pedagogical process between the university as an institution, supervisor(s)/principal investigator (PI), ECRs, and participants (Moser, 2008; Taylor, 2019).

In this article, we take the “field” in fieldwork as a fluid, political, and spatial-analytical category (Sultana, 2007) to illuminate the difficulties of fieldwork for ECRs within the context of the neoliberal university. Responding to the above calls for care, solidarity, and compassion in HE, we propose that engaging with person-centred psychotherapy provides an intra- and interpersonal relational underpinning for the co-creation of compassionate fieldwork within a care-full university environment; one that treats care and compassion in fieldwork as a political act of resistance against dominant logics within the neoliberal university environment. We contribute to discussions surrounding the problems *in* and *of* fieldwork by arguing that ECR fieldwork should be approached by researchers, supervisors/PIs, and universities as a relational and pedagogical endeavour. As such, we advance the term “fieldwork pedagogy” to underline how and why fieldwork needs to be approached as a relational and pedagogical process. We suggest that understanding fieldwork as a pedagogy creates the foundation for moving towards safe, equitable fieldwork research experiences and compassionate futures for researchers by facilitating researchers’ trust in their experiences, values, and self.

This article therefore aims to advance the notion of fieldwork in HE as a relational and pedagogical endeavour. Due to the high prevalence of harassment and assault in fieldwork, with marginalised researchers such as LGBTQ+ individuals, people of colour, and women facing particular harm (Clancy et al., 2014), we respond to growing calls for safe, inclusive and equitable fieldwork in HE (Taylor, 2019; “Towards a compassionate turn,” 2019). We further suggest that person-centred psychotherapy can support the relational qualities required to ensure a compassionate fieldwork pedagogy. This is because person-centred psychotherapy can provide a therapeutic framework in which to support a researcher in preparing for and processing their fieldwork encounter(s).

Fieldwork pedagogy involves several distinct and interconnected relationships between universities, researchers, and participants. In this article, we solely focus on the relationships between researchers, supervisors/mentors, and their institutions. While vital and needed, it is beyond the scope of this article to conceptualise a fieldwork pedagogy regarding the relationships between participants and researchers, and researchers, participants, and knowledge production, specifically via decolonial and Indigenous scholarship. We suggest that focusing firstly on the relationships between researchers and their institutional context could be a first step in moving towards grappling with broader issues of marginalisation, decolonisation, and production of knowledge in academia.

2. Who Cares About Fieldwork?

The “field” in field-based disciplines such as human geography has long been understood as the epistemological and physical site in which knowledge and data are produced (Berry et al., 2017). Fieldwork belongs to a broader base of research approaches such as ethnography, qualitative inquiry, and case study approaches (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Fieldwork in disciplines such as human geography can be understood as “living with a group of people for extended periods...in order to document and interpret their distinctive way of life, and the beliefs and values integral to it” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019, p. 17). Moser

(2007) highlights how fieldwork is key to “the development of ideas, research themes and methodologies” (p. 235) and how fieldwork is, as such, intrinsic to the development of a disciplinary research culture. Fieldwork is therefore a key part of research praxis and is shaped by contextual, relational, embodied and political factors (Sultana, 2007), both in the “field” and by research institutions.

As Cîrstea et al. (2024) ask: Who bears the responsibility for fieldwork care? Work in universities is becoming increasingly complex and precarious (Ivancheva et al., 2019), and institutions often pass the “burden of care” onto individual researchers (Cîrstea et al., 2024). Practices of care within universities have become antithetical to dominant market-driven values and norms within the neoliberal university environment (Ivancheva et al., 2019). Consequently, a culture of carelessness has emerged within HE, which neglects and devalues relational, emotional, and care-based work (Lynch, 2010). Care and its concurrent emotional labour in HE also meet at intersectional racialised and gendered axes (Magoqwana et al., 2020).

Recent reflections on fieldwork have recommended embedding researcher care within institutional ethical processes for fieldwork. Embedding care within ethical processes for fieldwork would mean that universities take responsibility for this required care. For example, Cîrstea et al. (2024) propose a praxis of care, which includes recommendations for a range of support from the institution, supervisors, mentors, and peers that focuses on staying connected, self-care practices, and rest when in the field. Meanwhile, Gatwiri et al. (2025) recommend a trauma-informed framework to facilitate researchers in developing self-awareness, connection with participants, access to emotional support, reflection, and rest in the fieldwork process.

Intersections of care, gender, emotions, race, and personal life play out in key ways in fieldwork. In line with a critical feminist ethos, the researcher “cannot conveniently tuck away the personal behind the professional, because fieldwork is personal” (England, 1994, p. 85). In recognising the time constraints, pressures to publish, and limitations of care in the neoliberal university (Jones & Whittle, 2021), it remains important to question what role care has within fieldwork pedagogical praxis. Enacting an ethics of care in fieldwork pedagogy before, during, and after fieldwork could assist with difficulties regarding mental health, loneliness, violence, and sexual violence in the field, and combat the culture of shame in which expressing fear or difficulty in and of fieldwork is a sign of research failure. “Care,” as Mountz et al. (2015, p. 1238) argue, “is not self-indulgent; it is radical and necessary.” Care is therefore a complicated but vital part of ensuring compassion in fieldwork.

3. Problems in and of Fieldwork

The concept of the “field” has been shaped by historical and present-day legacies of US and European imperialism and colonialism (Berry et al., 2017; Smith, 2008). Indeed, dominant understandings of ethnographic fieldwork involve the (mostly white and often male) researcher who goes to the “field,” who then brings back information to be analysed, processed, and turned into knowledge in the Global North (Hirsch, 2020). The concept of the “field” involves an intrinsic othering of (sometimes violent, unruly) places “out there” to be studied and analysed (Smith, 2008). We acknowledge that the term “the field” contributes to this continued othering but deem its use necessary to encapsulate and engage with the multiple politics of the “field.”

Staying with the well-documented trouble (Haraway, 1988) of and in fieldwork means debunking the trope of the often Western, heroic, white, cis-male, economically secure, and able-bodied researcher (Sundberg, 2003).

Inherent to this trope is an expectation that in the complex process of preparing, conducting, and returning from the “field,” fieldwork “does not involve the researcher emotionally” (Hirsch, 2020, p. 211). The lack of regard for researcher emotions in the field props up the image of an ideal researcher as an objective, “rational,” and detached observer (Taylor, 2019), leaving little space for tending to care and compassion as an intrinsic part of research before, during, and after the field. Risks of and in fieldwork are also shaped by a growing economic and social precarity amongst ECRs (Hamdan, 2025). Research expectations that idealise the ideal researcher as white, male, unafraid, economically secure, and able-bodied, in combination with precarity and the research pressures in the neoliberal university, render many ECRs with many often invisibilised barriers to conducting safe, compassionate, and equitable fieldwork for researchers and participants.

For example, Pollard (2009) notes that fieldwork can be “an intense time of vulnerability” (p. 1), due to acute feelings of loneliness and fear, shame surrounding failure in the field, harassment, sexual violence, and navigating mental health concerns. In regard to gendered risks of fieldwork, it is estimated that over 64% of fieldworkers experience sexual harassment and almost 20% experience sexual assault, with the majority of those experiencing harassment and assault being women and ECRs (Simmonds, 2014). Regarding mental health struggles during and after the field, Taylor (2019) describes his experience of receiving a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis after witnessing violence during fieldwork. Moreover, emotional impacts on researchers who conduct research with participants who are experiencing significant hardship and distress (Reed & Towers, 2023) have also been little engaged with by universities and academic research praxis. Shame around researcher mental health struggles, instances of sexual violence, and a general disregard for non-positivist research stifles conversation around emotion, violence, and difficulty in fieldwork (Hirsch, 2020). Fieldwork can have significant impacts on the mental health of the researcher and exacerbates vulnerabilities that fall along the lines of sexuality, gender, race, class, age, and disability, to name a few (Taylor, 2019). It is particularly common for fieldworkers to experience direct or vicarious trauma, where little to no training on how to emotionally manage complex challenges in fieldwork leads to a culture of silence and shame (Reyes-Foster & Lester, 2019). Shame and silence around fieldwork arises ultimately to the detriment of all those who participate in the research process.

Berry et al. (2017) reflect on the “inherent contradictions of politically engaged research” (p. 537), in which the researcher often examines the political, social, and emotional contours of the “other,” yet this reflection is not often expanded in scope to the political, social, and emotional hierarchies which a researcher experiences themselves in the “field.” They examine how the “givenness of the field often obscures its constitutive interlocking racial and gender hierarchies” (p. 537). They go on to argue that “activist research that does not pursue epistemological decolonisation will...inevitably reproduce the very hierarchies of power that it seeks to help dismantle” (p. 538). The question therefore arises of how a collective imagining of, and action towards, more equitable, compassionate fieldwork can occur.

Fieldwork is an inherently relational process. Despite a lack of engagement with fieldwork ethics and risk at ECR level, fieldwork is still formed and executed within relational parameters. Such relational parameters involve students, educators, and the university environment, leading to the creation of plural relations when we travel to multiple field sites (Poopuu & van den Berg, 2021). Despite fieldwork being a core part of research and HE, it is still often viewed as belonging outside of the debates within the politics of research (Berry et al., 2017) and the politics of teaching within neoliberal university environments. As such, encapsulating ECR fieldwork as an *intrinsic* part of HE teaching pedagogical models can help us move towards creating a more caring, equitable, and compassionate approach to fieldwork.

4. Person-Centred Psychotherapy: Radical Care

Psychotherapeutic qualities, including interpersonal, listening, and responding skills, have been highlighted as important in processing fieldwork experiences (Tolmos et al., 2023). Turning to person-centred psychotherapy reasserts the importance of intra- and interpersonal relationality and provides a framework for the co-creation of a compassionate fieldwork pedagogy. Carl Rogers developed person-centred psychotherapy, where he brought to the fore the role of the therapeutic relationship and the agency of the client, who is active and dynamically involved in the process of therapy (Rogers, 1951, 1957). Person-centred psychotherapy influenced the development of humanistic approaches to psychotherapy throughout the 1950s–1960s (Schmid, 2007) and has been demonstrated to be therapeutically effective (Elliott et al., 2021; Joseph, 2018). Person-centred psychotherapy has been applied outside of therapy within the workplace (Henderson et al., 2007), education (O'Hara, 2006), and nature-based interventions (Harrod et al., 2024). Finally, person-centred psychotherapy is considered to be a socio-political approach, with Rogers (1977, p. 14) stating the approach involves “a conscious renunciation and avoidance by the therapist of all control over, or decision-making for, the client,” which challenges the dominant hierarchies and structures that seek to exert control over people (Schmid, 2012).

The relationships people are part of exert influences on each other's sense of self, including the personal, cultural and socio-political factors considered when making choices and taking actions (Rogers, 1951). Rogers (1957) proposed specific qualities within relationships that co-create nurturing/therapeutic encounters and support personal growth. These proposals are underpinned by Rogers' (1959) *Theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships*, which accounts for a person's development, constructive and unconstructive ways of being, and a process for moving from emotional distress to individual and collective flourishing. To understand the significance of intra- and interpersonal relational dynamics for underpinning a compassionate fieldwork pedagogy, we first discuss the development of a person's sense of self. Secondly, we highlight the qualities involved in nurturing relationships.

The development of a self-concept (a representation of who a person perceives and believes they are) involves a process of differentiation, whereby an organism (a holistic human) differentiates between self and not-self experiences (Rogers, 1959). This process is centred on the actualising tendency, which drives an organism to maintain and enhance itself (Sanders, 2007). The actualising tendency is prosocial and supports social relationships and action, which facilitates personal growth (Kim, 2018). The actualising tendency is expressed through an organismic valuing process, which evaluates experiences and their influence on survival and development of the organism (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). The organism values and moves towards beneficial experiences, and away from detrimental experiences. This process is accompanied by emotions, which facilitate the organism's behaviour. Relational environments which are supportive affirm people's trust in their own feelings and appraisal of their experiences as an accurate guide to acting and living interdependently (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). This leads to the formation of an internal locus of evaluation.

However, people's experiences/actions are typically selectively responded to, depending on how their experiences/actions are accepted and/or valued by others. People can internalise these value judgements into their self-concept and act in ways which satisfy others instead of relying on their own judgement. These internalised value judgements produce conditions of worth, where experiences are not evaluated depending

on whether they enhance or diminish the organism but on receiving approval from others, creating an external locus of evaluation (Rogers, 1959). As a person responds to these conditions of worth, they become estranged from their organismic valuing process, via denying and distorting their own appraisals of their experiences. As such a self-concept that is out of kilter with the organism develops, leading to incongruence. This leads to personal and/or relational difficulties as the person's actions are not informed by their direct experience, but by conditions of worth.

A person's self-concept develops through and with experience, and in and with relationships. As such, whilst a self-concept may become fixed, it is possible for shifts to occur towards a more authentic self-concept, within unthreatening relationships. Rogers (1957) suggested six conditions that must be present for a sufficient duration for meaningful personality change to occur. Personality change involves a person developing improvements in self-awareness, self-worth, and reductions in internal conflict, supporting flexible actions relevant to the situation:

1. The therapist and client are in a relationship.
2. The client is experiencing emotional distress.
3. The therapist is authentic within the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences non-judgemental acceptance for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's inner world and communicates this to the client.
6. The client perceives the therapist's empathy and non-judgemental acceptance.

Through the presence of these conditions, the therapist and client co-create a therapeutic relationship. This occurs as, through the process of the client being unconditionally and empathically "met," their experiences are validated and feelings of being trusted, of being able to be oneself without fear of reprisal, and of belonging emerge (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). This supports the client in focusing on the change they desire, as well as reappraising their sense of self (Cornelius-White, 2007). The client experiences less emotional distress as incongruence is reduced between their experience of their world and their actions within it. This occurs because their self-concept begins to align more fully with their organism, meaning the person becomes more authentic in how they experience and respond to the world, which reduces alienation and the unhealthy behaviours developed to cope with this estrangement from self and others (Rogers, 1961). Meanwhile, the client's locus of evaluation also shifts from external to internal, as they trust responding to situations based on their own feelings and thoughts rather than through seeking approval and avoiding rejection (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). Clients express these changes as improvements in their self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-worth and sense of belonging.

Rogers' approach was influenced by the Western individualistic culture that he belonged to. Despite Rogers stating people are prosocial, his ideas have been criticised as emphasising individualism and autonomy over interdependency and social relationships (Kim, 2018). As such, the self-concept proposed is not considered to reflect aspects of collectivistic cultures (e.g., Eastern), specifically social norms concerning maintaining social harmony or respecting hierarchies (e.g., elders, superiors). However, Rogers' emphasis on the actualising tendency and an internal locus of evaluation is not concerned with positioning oneself before others, but rather about not conforming to external and social control, which is detrimental to self and society (Rogers, 1977). As such, whilst culture is a mediating factor in people's self-concept, the process of movement towards an authentic prosocial self remains the same.

Person-centred psychotherapy, along with all psychotherapies, has been criticised for not including the cultural, social, and political factors involved in fostering people's wellbeing (Smail, 2015). However, Schmid (2012) argues that person-centred psychotherapy is a socio-political endeavour due to its stance that the client is the expert, in control, and their agency is respected. This is underpinned by Rogers' proposal that conditions of worth are not just placed on a person by their caregivers, but also by "social others" (e.g., teachers, politicians), recognising influences beyond the family on a person's sense of self (Lago, 2018; Rogers, 1959). Lago (2018) develops this argument with "culture-specific conditions of worth," which represents the structural and material inequalities within societies (e.g., institutions, ideologies) that can have a particular impact on minority groups.

Due to the presence of these power imbalances in influencing psychological distress, therapists need to be politically engaged and challenge structural inequalities, as neglecting structural inequalities risks therapists becoming agents of social control through reinforcing unequal relational situations (Schmid, 2012). Politically aware therapy aligns with the call to decolonise therapy and challenge the dominant discourse regarding the medicalisation of emotional distress and the silence over the influence of ancestral and intergenerational trauma on people's emotional health (Mullan, 2023).

Recognition of the personal, cultural, social, and political factors involved in the development of relational environments parallels the factors involved in a fieldwork pedagogy: Neither are endeavours that are neutral and individually constructed and maintained, but instead are dynamic and fluid encounters, which, depending on how and for whom they are co-created, influence the present and ongoing experiences of those involved. Subsequently, a person-centred psychotherapy-informed fieldwork pedagogy that centres the role of lived experience, relational dynamics, and the structural social factors that shape ECRs' educational experiences, could facilitate fieldwork which supports ECRs' emotional health and socio-political engagement.

5. Practicing Caring and Compassionate Fieldwork

Anti-colonial, critical, Indigenous, and black feminist scholars have long noted that education and pedagogy can be a practice of freedom and a radical space of possibility (Bishop, 2023; Freire, 2018; hooks, 1994). We argue that fieldwork needs to be included in pedagogical debates. In conversation with person-centred psychotherapy, we advance a relational fieldwork pedagogy that centres compassion and care for researchers. The vignettes come from our ECR experiences and highlight different aspects of pre-, during, and post-fieldwork experiences.

We write from two perspectives with excerpts from three different fieldwork projects. Both authors are ECRs; one is a white Welsh woman who managed and experienced chronic illness, harassment, and assault in the field. The second is a white British man who experienced grief (childless-not-by-choice and animal companion loss) and shame (Harrod, 2021) during fieldwork, and is a person-centred psychotherapist who specialised in sexual abuse and violence. We recognise that our relational selves have been shaped by various personal, cultural, social, and political factors which influence our experiences and responses to them. However, through discussion with colleagues and in conversation with the literature (e.g., Butler-Rees & Robinson, 2020; M. Rose, 2022), we also recognise that our experiences are common within ECR fieldwork.

The vignettes are informed by reflexive fieldnotes which were kept by the two authors as part of their ethnographic or phenomenological fieldwork. Reflexive fieldnotes support the researcher in attuning to their positionality and conversing with themselves about the research process, including the research environment and participant engagements (Frechette et al., 2020). The vignettes were chosen based on the dissonance and distress felt by the authors during the experiences. The projects involved intermittent fieldwork in Ghana (PhD) between January and December 2022, online fieldwork with participants in nature-based interventions (PhD) from October 2020 to June 2021, and fieldwork at a forensic inpatient hospital in England (ECR) between June and September 2024. Fieldwork can be considered a relational pedagogy, which we explore via five vignettes based on our own fieldwork experiences.

6. Risk (Non)assessments

Prior to going to the field, I completed a risk assessment form, which asked me to explore the risks involved with fieldwork. One example was how to mitigate kidnapping, where the only suggestion was to “lock the car door.” This risk assessment did not prepare me for what to do in case of a severe car accident, sexual assault, mugging, or, indeed, kidnapping. I felt that there was a mismatching of experience and emotion between me and the almost non-existent fieldwork processes set out in the university. I was more concerned about how to navigate lone working and what to do in case of an emergency, how to navigate (gendered) danger and risk. The university, on the other hand, did not require checks regarding my fieldwork. I received no training or discussion of what to expect regarding danger and risk, and what to do in risky situations. I felt ashamed that I was worried about fieldwork, as my questions regarding fieldwork were met with a sense of shock that I could be worried. I felt that I should be a brave, independent, and confident researcher, and that I was also ungrateful for questioning the opportunity to conduct fieldwork abroad. (vignette from fieldwork)

The relational environment present does not meet the researcher within her experience of the world, but with disdain for her concerns. There is an absence of empathy, accompanied by judgement over what is worthy of consideration by a university and its members regarding fieldwork preparation and scenarios. The researcher is left with a set of conditions of worth, which implies that, to be a good researcher, she needs to be independent and to be able to face any scenario with bravery and confidence, regardless of the risk to life involved. These conditions are subsumed into the researcher’s self-concept, moving it away from the organism, creating emotional distress (Rogers, 1959); they also create a set of barriers to asking for support (Gatwiri et al., 2025). If the researcher were instead met with empathy, non-judgement, and authenticity, then her concerns could have been openly explored (Rogers, 1957). Despite the researcher being aware of heroic and masculinist researcher academic tropes, they persist, as the researcher’s own experience is rejected. Whereas if the researcher’s own experience is validated, this supports them in rejecting such tropes, reducing emotional distress and the impact on their sense of self (Mearns & Cooper, 2018). Whilst what may happen in the field remains unknown, a supportive conversation will have begun, which could foster constructive actions that could allay the impact of distress in the field.

7. Danger and Harassment

During the field, I pushed myself into situations that I knew were dangerous because I didn’t feel I was a worthy enough researcher, and I felt ashamed that I was scared. Despite my best attempts, I also

did not know how to deal with my presence there due to what I felt to be the extractive nature of my research. Several incidents occurred in the field that shook my sense of self. For example, I was stalked and harassed by a man who followed me from my interview sites and hung around outside the place I was living. This significantly impacted my ability to build relationships and interview the people I was working with. A man with a machete also tried to mug me; however, due to a fortunate turn of events, I managed to escape. I was also fortunate to have survived an almost car accident on a motorway that led us to spin off the motorway at high speed. I was also subject to frequent sexual harassment and incidents of sexual assault. Overall, I dealt with these incidents alone as I didn't feel able to share them, which resulted in me withdrawing, ruminating, and spending a lot of time alone indoors. (vignette from fieldwork)

The researcher enters the field with conditions of worth (e.g., a good researcher is masculine, heroic, and confident despite the dangers), which supports an external locus of evaluation. This leads her to deny her experiences and override her organismic valuing process (going into dangerous situations) and limits how she acts in response to threats to herself (Sanders, 2007). These conditions of worth, alongside the perceived and real absence of an empathic, non-judgemental and genuine network, leave the researcher feeling unable to discuss her experiences. The researcher is left alone with her emotional distress. The resulting sense of shame impacts the researcher's choice of actions, which causes further detriment to her wellbeing (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). Whilst the availability of a warm relational environment for the researcher cannot stop other people's actions and the harm caused by these, it can facilitate people in developing ways to engage constructively with social situations and respond in ways which mitigate their impact (Warner, 2018). This doesn't imply it is the individual's responsibility to account for others' actions, but rather that whilst we may wish for the situation to be different, we can act in ways that are helpful rather than diminishing to ourselves.

8. Shame and Denial

Upon return, I struggled to understand what happened in the field. There was a sense of incongruence between what happened to me and what a "good researcher" should look like. I felt a shock in returning to analyse the "data" in an objective sense, and found re-listening to my interviews difficult. I was not met with a sense that my colleagues felt similarly about fieldwork. The denial of fieldwork difficulty contributed to my temporary withdrawal from research. I sought therapy to discuss my fieldwork and how it had impacted my sense of self. I felt a sense of compassion in therapy that I had not found in the university environment and began to process the fieldwork experience(s). (vignette from fieldwork)

The researcher's experiences are not met on her return, and through the reinforcement of conditions of worth, the researcher's emotional distress increases. This occurs because the dissonance between her experience and how it is responded to reinforces a sense of "having got it wrong," which parallels a growing dissonance between their organism and their self-concept (Rogers, 1959). Subsequently, the researcher becomes estranged from her lived experience, causing them to withdraw. The withdrawal mechanism protects her self-concept but thwarts her actualising tendency. Only upon being received in an empathic and non-judgemental environment is the researcher able to integrate her experiences as they are and revise her sense of self (Cornelius-White, 2007). Whilst therapeutic relationships are unique, their qualities are transferable to our everyday lives. These qualities support the co-creation of relational environments that enable people to trust in themselves to appraise and respond to their experience (an internal locus of

evaluation), which reduces emotional distress and supports constructive action (Henderson et al., 2007; Rogers, 1961).

9. Disenfranchised Grief

Sadly, one of my cats, Charley, died towards the end of fieldwork. My arms ached without her, and my lap felt empty. I gave a lot during the interviews, and one way to recover was to spend time with Charley. Due to being inconsolable and unable to facilitate affective interview spaces, I postponed the final interviews, despite feeling I should carry on. These feelings arose from a sense that a good researcher would put research first and not let their emotions get in the way. Being honest with the participants about why I was postponing the interviews helped them to understand. I am grateful for their kindness and for respecting my need for space by agreeing to the postponements, despite the disruptions to their schedules. During the first interview on my return, the participant referred to her cat when offering an analogy regarding the uniqueness of the community garden she attended. As I had been honest about my situation and begun processing my grief, my emotions were not ambushed by her reference to her cat. Instead, I very much understood what she meant, due to the depth of my own loss. (vignette from fieldwork)

The researcher's choice to meet his participants with authenticity facilitates a reduction in the power imbalance, as it expresses respect for them as equals in the research process, and shows him as a person with emotions and difficulties (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). Through the researcher reflecting on his experience in the moment, he was able to be congruent and meet his experience as it was and not through conditions of worth, which are likely to have led to actions that would have compounded his grief (Rogers, 1961). Through being congruent, the researcher was able to stay with the participant during the interview and maintain it as a safe and open space for the interview.

10. Second Chances

The participants were kind, caring, and motivated to change their lives towards constructive ways of being, both individually and socially. As the research progressed, I began asking myself how I felt about working with participants whose pasts may have involved physical and sexual violence. I felt especially conflicted due to my previous experience of working with survivors of sexual violence. I was also aware that their previous actions would be situated within their experiences and arising from within relationships and not centred on individual attributes. It was clear that both the participants and I wanted the research to demonstrate the role of therapeutic gardens in mental health care. In the end, I continued as I began, meeting the participants with a non-judgemental and empathic attitude. This decision was supported by an open discussion with the garden manager who met my difficulties regarding sexual violence, not knowing the participants' histories and the role of second chances in complex lives, with acceptance and warmth. (vignette from fieldwork)

The researcher approaches the research encounter with the relational qualities of non-judgement and empathic understanding as a basis of his approach. However, this approach is tested when the researcher's experience is confronted with behaviours from others that are inconsistent with aspects of his values. This leads the researcher to question his perception of violent actions and to seek further understanding.

The researcher responds to his dissonance between his self-concept and his experience of the participants with an open and constructive attitude, which is supported by the garden manager's care and non-judgemental attitude. This reduces the researcher's distress as fixed ideas regarding what being a good person involves are loosened through recognition of the complexity of human experience (Rogers, 1959). This enables the researcher to approach his encounters with the participants informed by the present moment rather than preconceived ideas. This supports the researcher in their endeavour for research to be open to all and have meaningful impact on individuals and society.

11. Recommendations for ECRs Conducting Research in the “Field”

We recommend the following actions for consideration by universities, supervisors, and researchers. Advocating for the creation of a person-centred fieldwork pedagogy urges universities, supervisors, and researchers to begin to foster a supportive and compassionate environment for ECRs, supporting the co-creation of current and future compassionate research praxis.

11.1. Embed Institutional Enablers That Encourage Care and Compassion

Have you, as an institution or supervisor, created enablers that reward, rather than penalise, care and compassion prior, during, and after fieldwork?

1. Embed time, support, and resources in funding models, timelines, and budgets for community/research participant dialogue.
2. Embed care criteria into research ethics review and workload models to reward compassionate practice, for example, the creation of open, pedagogical spaces for researchers to discuss distress and difficulty regarding fieldwork.
3. Ensure support and guidance, for example, support ECRs to consider worst-case scenarios in the field. Set up a telephone tree, which details what to do and who to contact in these scenarios (Pollard, 2009).

How universities view and relate to people will influence the processes and practices in place (Lago, 2018; Schmid, 2012). Institutions and supervisors embracing relational qualities of empathic understanding, non-judgement, and authenticity will facilitate people to act from their internal locus of evaluation, reducing distress and enabling care-full and compassionate fieldwork.

11.2. Ensure Person-Centred Care Throughout the Fieldwork Process

Do you, as a permanent member of staff, ensure there is care for ECRs prior to, during, and after fieldwork?

1. What is your role within the university? Do you have the power to push for person-centred care for ECRs?
2. Are safe, open spaces available to explore fieldwork concerns prior to departure?
3. Are fieldwork dangers and risks acknowledged, and is training provided to counter these risks and dangers?
4. Are pre-existing health conditions acknowledged and discussed?

5. What protocols are provided in case of accident, emergency, mugging, sexual assault, kidnapping, illness, arrest, death, etc.?
6. Is there a provision for a buddy or group mentoring system?
7. Is there access to field-informed counselling for researchers?

Developing relational environments that value lived experience, empathy, non-judgement and authenticity centres care towards ECRs in the research process (Rogers, 1957). This will enable discussions that value and support ECRs with their concerns and facilitate acting constructively in difficult situations, supporting their emotional health (Warner, 2018), thus taking a step towards the co-creation of a compassionate fieldwork pedagogy.

11.3. Understand Yourself, Your Motivations, and How Your Research Environment Shapes Your Research

Do you, as an ECR, have an awareness of yourself and how your experiences and values shape your research?

1. Who are you? What assumptions do you hold?
2. How will you connect to people in the field?
3. What pressures do you feel shape your actions and encounters in the field?

As the researcher develops their self-awareness, (which can be in conversation with peers or mentors), including the role of conditions of worth on their actions, they will be able to understand their needs and barriers regarding support, their impact on others, and their aims for research (Rogers, 1961).

Ensuring compassion and care within ECR fieldwork pedagogy is contrary to prevailing neoliberal individualising, competitive, and “fast scholarship” tendencies within HE (“Towards a compassionate turn,” 2019). Our three recommendations above encompass, but do not limit, the potential caring practices that can be embedded within our proposed fieldwork pedagogy.

Throughout this article, we have argued how and why fieldwork needs to be situated within pedagogical theory. Fieldwork needs to be understood and practiced as a relational pedagogy in order to support inclusive and compassionate research environments, so that ECRs are able to undertake care-full research. We have demonstrated that the relational person-centred psychotherapeutic qualities of non-judgement, authenticity, and empathy are essential in facilitating care, trust, and constructive actions. We propose that a fieldwork pedagogy, supported by these principles of person-centred psychotherapy, can co-create facilitative relational environments to respond to the problems *in* and *of* fieldwork.

12. Conclusion

Despite long-standing calls for change in fieldwork research praxis, little has been done by universities to confront issues inherent to fieldwork. In this article, we explored the numerous calls for more care in neoliberal HE, in conversation with literature detailing the problems *in* and *of* fieldwork, particularly for ECRs (Pollard, 2009; Taylor, 2019). While such calls for change in neoliberalised HE and fieldwork are important, we have suggested that these calls require deeper engagement with the intra- and interpersonal relational

dynamics required to foster an environment that would support compassionate fieldwork experiences. We argue that viewing fieldwork as a pedagogy, which is embedded within webs of (un)supportive relations, can help advance the creation of more compassionate fieldwork research praxis. Moreover, viewing fieldwork as a relational pedagogy, underpinned by the qualities of person-centred psychotherapy, can provide a framework for compassionate intra- and interpersonal relations in fieldwork praxis. A person-centred relational pedagogy advocates for institutional- and supervisory-level relational environments that provide supportive networks and spaces, which facilitate researchers to be met with and act with care throughout the research process. Future research could include engaging in decolonial, Indigenous, and pedagogical scholarship to widen our discussion of the role of relational environments, self-concepts, and the more-than-human, for movement towards an inclusive, care-full, and compassionate fieldwork pedagogy for researchers, participants, and universities. Understanding fieldwork as a relational pedagogy therefore is an important first step in co-creating compassionate fieldwork futures.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the ECRs we have spoken to who have motivated us to write this article. Thank you to the two reviewers for their engagement and considerate comments.

Funding

Publication of this article in open access was made possible through the institutional membership agreement between Lancaster University and Cogitatio Press.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability

The data that supports this article is from reflective and personal fieldnotes. As such, data sharing is not applicable.

LLMs Disclosure

The authors did not use LLM tools to formulate or write this article.

References

- Bergvall, S., Fernström, C., Ranehill, E., & Sandberg, A. (2025). The impact of PhD studies on mental health—A longitudinal population study. *Journal of Health Economics*, 104, Article 103070. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2025.103070>
- Berry, M. J., Chávez Argüelles, C., Cordis, S., Ihmoud, S., & Velásquez Estrada, E. (2017). Toward a fugitive anthropology: Gender, race, and violence in the field. *Cultural Anthropology*, 32(4), 537–565. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.05>
- Bishop, M. (2023). Humility. Listen. Respect: Three values underpinning Indigenous (environmental) education sovereignty. *Progress in Environmental Geography*, 2(3), 191–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27539687231190658>
- Bruun, J. M., & Guasco, A. (2023). Reimagining the “fields” of fieldwork. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 14(2), Article 20438206231178815. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20438206231178815>
- Butler-Rees, A., & Robinson, N. (2020). Encountering precarity, uncertainty and everyday anxiety as part of the

- postgraduate research journey. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 37, Article 100743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2020.100743>
- Castelao-Huerta, I. (2026). Violence in doctoral education: Uncaring/uncareful practices of supervisors, co-supervisors, professors, and institutional authorities. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 34(1), 101–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2025.2463452>
- Cîrstea, A.-M., Johnson, L., & Phiri, C. (2024). Towards a praxis of care in post-pandemic fieldwork: Comparing ethnographic encounters during Covid-19. *SSM. Qualitative Research in Health*, 5, Article 100387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2023.100387>
- Clancy, K. B. H., Nelson, R. G., Rutherford, J. N., & Hinde, K. (2014). Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault. *PLOS One*, 9(7), Article 102172. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172>
- Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Congruence. In M. Cooper, M. O'Hara, P. F. Schmid, & G. Whyatt (Eds.), *The handbook of person-centred psychotherapy and counselling* (pp. 168–181). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Douglas-Jones, R., Mathur, N., Trundle, C., & Vaeau, T. (2020). Trial by fire: Trauma, vulnerability and the heroics of fieldwork. *Commoning Ethnography*, 3(1), 91–116. <https://doi.org/10.26686/ce.v3i1.6650>
- Elliott, R., Watson, J. C., Timulak, L., & Sharbanee, J. (2021). Research on humanistic-experiential psychotherapies: Updated review. In M. Barkham, W. Lutz, & L. G. Castonguay (Eds.), *Bergin and Garfield's handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change* (7th ed., pp. 731–795). Wiley.
- England, K. V. L. (1994). Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer*, 46(1), 80–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0033-0124.1994.00080.x>
- Frechette, J., Bitzas, V., Aubry, M., Kilpatrick, K., & Lavoie-Tremblay, M. (2020). Capturing lived experience: Methodological considerations for interpretive phenomenological inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920907254>
- Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin Classics.
- Gatwiri, K., McPherson, L., Canosa, A., Day, K., & Kim, S. (2025). Reflections of “doing” research that involves trauma: A methodological guide and framework for researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, Article 16094069251350310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251350310>
- Hamdan, A. (2025). Fieldwork in precarious times: Reflecting on “dangerous fields.” *Qualitative Research*, 26(1), 160–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941251390798>
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575–599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Harrod, A. (2021, July 9). Never good enough: The untangling of shame. *Voices of Academia*. <https://voicesofacademia.com/2021/07/09/never-good-enough-the-untangling-of-shame-by-andy-harrod>
- Harrod, A., Benzon, N., & Limmer, M. (2024). ‘It’s probably more about the people’: For a person-centred approach to understanding benefits of nature-based interventions. *Area*, 56(4), Article 12867. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12867>
- Henderson, V. L., O'Hara, M., Barfield, G. L., & Rogers, N. (2007). Applications beyond the therapeutic context. In M. Cooper, M. O'Hara, P. F. Schmid, & G. Whyatt (Eds.), *The handbook of person-centred psychotherapy and counselling* (pp. 305–324). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hickey, A., & Riddle, S. (2024). Proposing a conceptual framework for relational pedagogy: Pedagogical informality, interface, exchange and enactment. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(13), 3271–3285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2259906>
- Hirsch, L. (2020). Mental health, coloniality and fieldwork in the European university: A reflection in three challenges—commentary to Taylor. *Fennia*, 198(1/2), 210–213. <https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.90763>

- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Ivancheva, M., Lynch, K., & Keating, K. (2019). Precarity, gender and care in the neoliberal academy. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 26(4), 448–462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12350>
- Jones, C. H., & Whittle, R. (2021). Researcher self-care and caring in the research community. *Area*, 53(2), 381–388. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12703>
- Joseph, S. (2018). Mental health and the person-centred approach. In S. Joseph (Ed.), *The handbook of person-centred therapy and mental health: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 3–10). PCCS Books.
- Katz, C. (1994). Playing the field: Questions of fieldwork in geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 46(1), 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0033-0124.1994.00067.x>
- Kim, J. (2018). Consideration of the applicability of person-centered therapy to culturally varying clients, focusing on the actualizing tendency and self-actualization—From East Asian perspective. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 17(3), 201–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14779757.2018.1506817>
- Lago, C. (2018). A person-centred perspective on diagnosis and psychopathology in relation to minority identity, culture and ethnicity. In S. Joseph (Ed.), *The handbook of person-centred therapy and mental health: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 177–185). PCCS Books.
- Lynch, K. (2010). Carelessness: A hidden doxa of higher education. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 9(1), 54–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022209350104>
- Magoqwana, B., Maqabuka, Q., & Tshoaedi, M. (2020). “Forced to care” at the neoliberal university: Invisible labour as academic labour performed by black women academics in the South African university. *South African Review of Sociology*, 50(3/4), 6–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2020.1730947>
- Mearns, D., & Cooper, M. (2018). *Working at relational depth in counselling and psychotherapy* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Mearns, D., & Thorne, B. (2007). *Person-centred counselling in action* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Mintz, B. (2021). Neoliberalism and the crisis in higher education: The cost of ideology. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 80(1), 79–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12370>
- Moser, S. (2007). On disciplinary culture: Archaeology as fieldwork and its gendered associations. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 14(3), 235–263.
- Moser, S. (2008). Personality: A new positionality? *Area*, 40(3), 383–392. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2008.00815.x>
- Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd Zilber, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., Basu, R., Whitson, R., Hawkins, R., Hamilton, T., & Curran, W. (2015). For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 14(4), 1235–1259.
- Mullan, J. (2023). *Decolonizing therapy: Oppression, historical trauma, and politicizing your practice*. W. W. Norton Professional.
- Naveed, A., Sakata, N., Kefallinou, A., Young, S., & Anand, K. (2017). Understanding, embracing and reflecting upon the messiness of doctoral fieldwork. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(5), 773–792. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1344031>
- Nordling, L. (2023). Falling behind: Postdocs in their thirties tire of putting life on hold. *Nature*, 622, 881–883. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-03296-9>
- O'Hara, M. (2006). In search of the next enlightenment? The challenge for education in uncertain times. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4(2), 105–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344606287920>
- Pickerill, J. (2024). Challenging neoliberal time: Creating space for radical praxis in geography. *Area*, 58(1), Article 12981. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12981>

- Pollard, A. (2009). Field of screams: Difficulty and ethnographic fieldwork. *Anthropology Matters*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.22582/am.v11i2.10>
- Poopuu, B., & van den Berg, K. (2021). Becoming fluent in fieldwork: (Un)learning what is good/ethical/responsible fieldwork. *Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences*, 2(2), 236–260. <https://doi.org/10.1163/25903276-bja10028>
- Pottinger, L. (2025). Treading carefully through tomatoes: Embodying a gentle methodological approach. *Area*, 57(3), Article 12650.
- Reed, K., & Towers, L. (2023). Almost confessional: Managing emotions when research breaks your heart. *Sociological Research Online*, 28(1), 261–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13607804211036719>
- Reyes-Foster, B., & Lester, R. J. (2019, June 8). Trauma and resilience in ethnographic fieldwork. *anthro{dendum}*. <https://anthrodendum.org/2019/06/18/trauma-and-resilience-in-ethnographic-fieldwork>
- Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory*. Constable.
- Rogers, C. R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21(2), 95–103.
- Rogers, C. R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships, as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science. Volume 3: Formulations of the person and the social context* (pp. 184–256). McGraw-Hill.
- Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Constable.
- Rogers, C. R. (1977). *Carl Rogers on personal power*. Constable.
- Rose, G. (1997). Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), 305–320. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913297673302122>
- Rose, M. (2022). Stuck in the mud? Finding the glee in all fieldworking bodies. *Area*, 54(4), 536–540. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12840>
- Ross, K. (2015). “No sir, she was not a fool in the field”: Gendered risks and sexual violence in immersed cross-cultural fieldwork. *The Professional Geographer*, 67(2), 180–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2014.907705>
- Sanders, P. (2007). Introduction to the theory of person-centred therapy. In M. Cooper, M. O'Hara, P. F. Schmid, & G. Whyatt (Eds.), *The handbook of person-centred psychotherapy and counselling* (pp. 9–29). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saville, S. M. (2021). Towards humble geographies. *Area*, 53(1), 97–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12664>
- Schmid, P. F. (2007). The anthropological and ethical foundations of person-centred therapy. In M. Cooper, M. O'Hara, P. F. Schmid, & G. Whyatt (eds.) *The handbook of person-centred psychotherapy and counselling* (pp. 30–46). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schmid, P. F. (2012). Psychotherapy is political or it is not psychotherapy: The person-centred approach as an essentially political venture. *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 12(1), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14779757.2012.682441>
- Simmonds, A. (2014). Women scientists sexually harassed while doing fieldwork. *Nature*, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2014.15571>
- Smail, D. J. (2015). *Taking care: An alternative to therapy*. Routledge.
- Smith, P. L. T. (2008). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.
- Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 374–385. <https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v6i3.786>
- Sundberg, J. (2003). Masculinist epistemologies and the politics of fieldwork in Latin Americanist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 55(2), 180–190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-0124.5502006>

- Taylor, S. (2019). The long shadows cast by the field: Violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher. *Fennia*, 197(2), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.84792>
- Towards a compassionate turn. (2019, February 26). *The New Ethnographer*. <https://thenewethnographer.com/the-new-ethnographer/2019/02/26/towards-a-compassionate-turn>
- Thornton, S. A., Cook, S., Cole, L., Hapsari, K. A., Zin Zawawi, N., & Page, S. E. (2022). From “Muddy glee” to muddy reflections on fieldwork and writing. *Area*, 54(4), 525–530. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12833>
- Tolmos, L., Hannes, K., & de Andrade, M. (2023). Autoethnography as a debriefing strategy: The creative-relational foundations for a transformative ethico-onto-epistemology in the academy. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 17(1), 49–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19408447231188044>
- Warner, M. S. (2018). A person-centred view of human nature, wellness and psychopathology. In J. Stephen (Ed.), *The handbook of person-centred therapy and mental health: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 92–115). PCCS Books.
- Woolston, C. (2020). Postdoc survey reveals disenchantment with working life. *Nature*, 587, 689–692. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-03235-y>

About the Authors

Sophie Standen is a social scientist who recently completed a PhD in geography at Lancaster University. Sophie’s current research focuses on the power and politics of seafood systems, as well as learning and pedagogical approaches within HE.

Andy Harrod is a lecturer in counselling, psychotherapy and applied social sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Harrod’s research focuses on people’s encounters with “nature” and how these influence individual, community, and ecological long-term wellbeing, as well as on the application of person-centred psychotherapy in understanding relational encounters.