

PERMISSION TO FAIL: THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTIVE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION TO THE MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SUCCESS OF STUDENTS

Abstract

As a neuroscientist and university president, Dr. Deborah Saucier understands the pressures today's young adults face from both an administrative and scientific point of view. The transition from high school to university, financial challenges, social adjustments, and high academic expectations are leading many students to ignore one of the greatest benefits of a post-secondary education- the opportunity to experience failure in a safe and supportive setting.

Dr. Saucier's speech will begin by outlining the current state of mental health among university students, highlighting statistics and trends. It will then look at the impact of the decline in mental well-being on students but also the corresponding impacts on post-secondary institutions, which post-pandemic many have found themselves in the position of providing front-line mental health services.

Next, the speech will look at how the pandemic contributed to the mental health crisis by preventing many students from having their social needs met, including the need to try out new things and fail in a safe and supportive space. The pandemic prevented students from experiencing new places and things at the time in their lives these experiences are necessary to becoming adults. The speech will look at how experiencing failure in a safe and supportive space such as university, develops resilience and sets the stage for reaching goals.

Dr. Saucier will conclude by looking at ways universities can provide a space for students to experience failure and most importantly, how to encourage them to risk failure.