**Student's First Symposium: Student Wellbeing in Canada**

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:00:47] Good afternoon, good evening and good morning. My name is Judyth Sachs, and I'm the person that wrangles these webinars, it gives me great pleasure to invite you to this gathering today. Before we begin, I want to acknowledge that I am hosting this online conversation from the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate the diversity of Indigenous people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales and elsewhere in Australia. I also recognize that our panelists and many attendees here on this call are joining from across Turtle Island on the unceded and traditional territory of many nations in what we now know as Canada. We acknowledge and pay respects to past and current custodians of this land. I am the Chief Academic Officer of Studiosity, a role that I've had for a couple of years now. Before that role, I was a full time academic and Provost, and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. I've held other senior roles in Australian universities and I'm pleased that I can look at universities from the outside now, rather than having to manage the multiple challenges and travails of academic and student life. So what I'd like to do, is to invite the members of the panel to introduce themselves and to indicate the expertise to which they bring to this panel today. And if I may invite Joshua Xavier, who is our student representative on the panel. Joshua, could you introduce yourself, please?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:02:30] Yeah, thanks, Judyth. I'm Josh, and I'm currently completing my Masters in Digital Management at the Ivey School of Business in London, Ontario, Canada. And before that, I completed my undergraduate degree in marketing at the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University. During my time there, I was involved with a ton of extracurriculars. I went to an exchange to Tilburg University in the Netherlands for about six months. And I also did a yearlong internship through my courses as well. So pretty much at this point, a professional student to say the least, and I'm happy to be here.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:03:02] Thanks very much. Just going on the panels beside me, Verity, could I ask you to introduce yourself, please?

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:03:11] Thank you so much. So my name is Verity Turpin and I am Vice Provost, Student Affairs at Dalhousie University. I am located in Halifax in Nova Scotia, and I am here on the land of Mi'kma'ki and Dalhousie, which is the university obviously that I work with. We are located in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all treaty people. Land acknowledgments are only a small part to cultivating strong relationships with First Peoples. Acknowledging territory and First Peoples should take place within the larger context of genuine and ongoing work to forge real understanding and to challenge the legacies of colonialism. I would also like to acknowledge the histories, contributions and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and the communities who have been here in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. My pronouns are she and her. I have been working in student affairs for over 20 years. I'm sure everyone's looking at my CPA behind my name and thinking, 'what the heck is an accountant talking to us about student health and wellness for?'. And so the last 10 years of my career has really been focused on supporting students and particularly in the areas of looking at health and wellness systems and clinics, service delivery and that larger concept of student wellness and looking at the social determinants of health, how can we align our university policies and resources and decision making around that larger context of student health and wellbeing. Thank you.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:05:05] Thank you, Verity. Andrea.

**Dr. Andrea Levinson** [00:05:10] Thank you, I am really privileged and thrilled to join this wonderful panel today to talk about student wellbeing, a topic near and dear to my heart. I do acknowledge the land I'm in, in Toronto, which is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississauga of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat Peoples, and is also home to the many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. So I'm a psychiatrist by training and I work in the hospital sector. I was very invested in the area of early intervention for a long time for young people presenting with new onset symptoms of psychosis and bipolar disorder. And over the last eight years, I've been engaged in work in student mental health at the University of Toronto, where I am the Director of Psychiatric Care for our largest campus, one of three campuses where we support about 66,000 students, the St. George campus. And currently I'm I'm involved in a very fascinating overhaul of our mental health on campus. It's a it's a student mental health redesign project, and I'm the clinical lead for it. And I've been doing the work for the past six months and it's being extended into the new year. And this has a presidential and provostiall mandate to really look at overhauling services to provide really timely and easy same day access for students to have co-design. And I'm thrilled that we have a student on our panel today. It's great to have you here, Joshua. In all we do to really look at the umbrella of students, staff and faculty wellness in terms of an entire healthy campus to focus on some redesigning of our spaces to really give the credibility and the respect that the wellness spaces deserve for our students to look at partnerships. This is a specific area of my interest. Partnerships with the acute care system to support students not just in their well-being, but when they become significantly ill and how we actually can't do that alone. And so we are partnering with our neighboring hospitals in that and to really focus on shifting the culture to a culture of caring. So I'm thrilled to be here. Thank you, Judyth.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:07:39] Thank you very much, Andrea. And Professor Anne Duffy, if I may invite you. Anne has done and participated in a few of these for us and I'm number one fan of Anne and the work that she's doing and in particular, the research she's doing. Anne, over to you.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:07:56] Thank you, Judyth. That's a huge endorsement and it's a pleasure. I'm here because I think the work that we're all doing is so important and we really thank everyone for coming. I was going to stay this evening because I'm actually at the University of Oxford at the minute. I'm a visiting professor here, but I'm a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Queen's University in Kingston. And I've just taken over as the acting head of a relatively new division of our department dedicated to student mental health. And that division was really struck because there was a recognition where student wellness sits on the university campus. And we could really benefit, I think, from drawing on the academic experience of the university in terms of developing resources and care pathways to support students and really understanding what it is that students need and why and how can we help. And so I'm an academic psychiatrist by training, and I'm just really delighted to have for 20, I guess, 20 to 25 years to have been studying the onset of mental disorders in young people at familial risk. And then more recently, over the last five years since I joined Queen's, I focused my work as well on student mental health and together with students, we've partnered and we've launched a study that I'll be talking a little bit later about, which we've branded U-Flourish. And it's really to understand what students need in order to really succeed and flourish whilst at university. So I'm really excited to be here and thank you for the invitation.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:09:33] Thank you, Anne. Before I start some questions that we've already put to the panel, could I invite participants to put your questions in the Q&A section of your screen? Not in the chat section. And I'll be visiting the Q&A section from time to time and I will. I will bring up the questions, but I also want to thank the people from a number of universities who have submitted questions prior to the to the session today. So thank you for taking time to do that. So Josh, I'm going to throw the ball to you for the first question. And I think it's really important that we demonstrate our our acknowledgment that what we do in universities is pretty much directed toward students, but also towards a continued social good. So Josh, your question is for a number of years, those of us working in universities have observed an increase in student stress and anxiety. But it goes without saying that the last 18 months have been incredibly tough. To what extent has the pandemic caused increased anxiety and stress for you and your peers?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:10:44] Yeah, I mean, looking back over the past 18 months, I would say it's twofold. I think being a student right now, there's a current state amount of anxiety and stress, but there's also a bit of a future state. Looking at the current state, I think being on Zoom 24-7 really adds a lot of those stressors and that anxiety to your day to day work. So to give you an example, my first semester at Ivey, I had about seven courses at a time, which resulted into about 20 hours of class a week. But that's not even counting the multiple group meetings that I had to be a part of for those classes to get those assignments done. So that ended up being about eight to 10 hours a day on Zoom nonstop. The issue was, you know, it wasn't eight to 10 hours nonstop where you're in Zoom the entire time, you may have had a 20 minute gap here or 10 minutes gap there, which really drove up the amount of time that you're sitting by the computer screen. But it also made it hard to actually do the work for those courses, right? So what ended up happening or what that ended up being was doing all your work on the weekends because you didn't have the time in class because after those eight to ten hours, that Zoom fatigue really sets in and you don't want to do anything else or you don't want to see another screen all night. So, you know, that was definitely a big factor of the stress and anxiety added because of the pandemic. And you really were able to see that burnout in a lot of your group members or the people you were talking to in your same classes. You know, at the beginning of the semester, you had that excitement. And don't get me wrong, in-person or not nearing the end of the semester, you still see that tail end of exhaustion. But I felt like I was a lot quicker during the pandemic than when I was in person in that kind of class setting. But I think the other side of things is the future state of things. So I actually graduated my undergraduate program in May of 2020. So right when the pandemic was starting and in the beginning of the pandemic, it was very difficult to get a job. And that's mainly because you got offers rescinded. There was a lot less opportunities in the overall marketplace. And you know, there is a huge feeling of perceived failure that and it tended to set in, you know, because you don't follow that natural progression of graduating university and finding the job in your specific field, you wanted to, you know? And I felt like that became more daunting as time went on. And when you looked at the market in May 2020, it did feel a bit like a barren wasteland, you know, and the vultures picking it up at those times were actually very highly experienced and highly educated people that also had that same level of desperation sinking in at that time, right, which is why they're applying for the same jobs as someone coming out of university at the moment. So, you know, I think as a student, knowing you're competing with those individuals and applying to jobs with over two thousand applicants, it really became daunting and it started to weigh on you thinking that is this ever going to end. And now kind of looking at the quote on quote light at the end of the tunnel, hopefully fingers crossed that the pandemic is starting to settle out. That feeling of ambiguity and not knowing what's going to happen next is really kind of remaining for the future of whatever this looks like. So when we're done being a student, what does that look like? What will it look like going forward? Will I be in person? Should I move out? Should I go and relocate because of I don't know if I'm going to be in the office or they're going to start cutting down all the office space. So not knowing all those things really became that driver of, I think, stress and anxiety as a student personally.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:14:11] Look, I'm also happy for this to be a bit of a conversation as well, so if members of the panel want to add something or delve into some things that other members of the panel have comments that they've made. Let, let's have it as a conversation rather than Q&A. So do any of the members of the panel want to pick up any of the points that Josh has made? Josh, can I just start the discussion then? Were you given the opportunity to give feedback to your professors and let them know that this intensification of work was having an impact on both student performance and student experience? And if you did, what was done with that feedback?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:14:53] Yeah, so I did have that opportunity in my master's program because everything was a brand new format, and so they were all trying to figure out the kinks of the actual process. The issue was, though, again, it's the changing circumstances. So when we gave their feedback saying, Hey, maybe we should change things up, we started moving to more of a mixed model as the restrictions started going down, so we couldn't even get used to that state for long enough before we got a new evolution of change. I would say our feedback was taken into account. You know, looking at the new cohorts coming in, they have kind of discussed a a better kind of improvement in that online experience. But as the students that are still kind of the guinea pig era of what's the online method look like, we didn't really get to reap those benefits, but we were able to kind of see the benefits start being implemented in the future.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:15:47] So if you have the opportunity to stand back now and say. This is what you need to do, what are the three messages you could give to senior administrators in a university?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:15:58] Yeah, I think limiting the amount of time we would need to be on Zoom would be probably the biggest thing, and I know that's easier said than done. I mean, you have to still teach classes and I know a lot of professors did start trying different things. But if we can kind of create this synchronous and asynchronous culture that allows us to do the work on our own time. And I always save this time on Zoom. I think that would be a huge driver. That would be one. Thay way we can do it on our own time, and we have enough time to sort ourselves out throughout the weeks. I think another big factor would be consistency in the routine. I think there was a lot of changes in time because professors had to go to classes. I mean, if this was in-person, professors would go from one class to another, right? And therefore there would be a little bit of a buffer time for the students. But here they can just log off of one and go to the other. And that became a little harder because you now would have one class ending at 2:05 and the next class starting at 2:10. And that became a little bit of a concern. So I would say keep into account that we have to sort ourselves out between classes, creating those buffer times. And I guess the final one would be really leveraging that online sphere. You know, some professors, did they really try to make that we're in a digital space? Let's do some more digital first solutions. But if every professor can kind of look back and say, "OK, well, now that we're in the digital space, do we have to do this lecture style learning? Or can we start pivoting to more of an interactive based type of learning because we now have more tools and resources that students are familiar with that can now be implemented into our classrooms?". When you're in the in-person environment, I mean, it's harder to say, "Hey guys, we're all in the same room, pull up your computers and do this," right? It doesn't make as much sense as much as the discussion does, but in Zoom, when you're doing things like participation and contribution and those kind of things, raising your hand is very different from the contributions in classroom. You know, you see the enthusiasm. There's body language as to why someone's raising their hands. So those would be my three main points, I think.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:17:55] Thank you. I hope we've got some administrators that can hear that advice. Anne, I'd like to address the next question to you. And the last time that we spoke was early 2021, where you mentioned your research focuses on understanding the onset of mental health concerns and disorders with young people, particularly university students. How have things changed in the last year and in what ways is COVID-19 continuing to impact students mental health?

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:18:23] Well, thanks very much for that question, Judyth. I thought a picture is worth a thousand words, so to speak, so I just wanted to take a few minutes to provide you with an answer to that question. So as mentioned in 2018, so prior to the pandemic, we launched research at Queen's with support from the Rossy Family Foundation and CIHR. And what we did was we decided to start up a conversation with Queen's students, and we worked and partnered with students across every single aspect of the project on the design and how to actually reach out and engage students to come and have a conversation with us. And this is going to be a back and forth conversation. So we would capture students voice as they started university and we would ask them to walk with us or take us along with them in their university journey. And this was through an electronic biannual student survey, and it was getting at some of the aims of all of the white papers that said, "Look, we need some really reliable data to capture the student voice to understand what the need is, what's happening and what might work and for whom." And so that was the the start of the U-Flourish Student Wellbeing Research Survey. And since 2018, you can see here that was cohort one of first year students coming in. We captured almost 60 percent of all first year students at Queen's in this conversation and have followed them forward through the pandemic and then in subsequent years. We've also engaged students or invited students to come in this conversation with us and to to bring us along their journey. And so we have data over the course of the pandemic. And so to answer that question, what's been happening? Well, you can see that what we call screen positives. So these are symptoms now of common mental health concerns. And when we say screen positive, it means that students are reporting symptoms at a level which we would like to access. So that these are potentially clinically significant levels of symptoms. And you can see that in 2017, 2018 and 2019, prior to the start of the pandemic, there were a significant proportion of students who screened positive around a third for depressive symptoms. But that even increased further coming into school during the pandemic. And the trend is looking like it's trending upwards. And in all of these cases, females tend to report higher symptom levels than males. So you can see anxiety levels and anxiety symptoms also increased for a higher proportion of students. And also sleep problems. And Josh, this comes to what you were saying to as students were telling us, we're having a really hard time here because their classes are going all different hours of the day, our day has expanded. We have much less time to balance things and to get involved in hobbies and recreation. And we have very limited time to connect with our peers. And self harm also increased, as you can see over the course of the pandemic in both males and females, as well as suicidal ideation. When we look at these outcomes at the end of the first year, because this is a biannual survey at the beginning and the end of the first year, and we compare the risk of these outcomes in the pre-pandemic cohort of students versus the pandemic cohort. You can see that in every case, there was a much higher risk of students screening positive for anxiety, depressive symptoms and sleep problems, as well as self-harm. Now, students also told us, and maybe I'll leave this for later. But they also told us about particularly what was bothering them in the pandemic. And maybe I'll just stop there.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:22:08] Well, look, thank you for that, and there's a question here from Stephen McNevin and Andrea or Anne can answer this. What strategies can Campus Health Centres use to draw in community based services to collaborate and coordinate care? Andrea, do you want to make a start with that and then Anne can add to it?

**Dr. Andrea Levinson** [00:22:29] Sure. Hi, Stephen. It's a great question. You know, we've been grappling with this at the University of Toronto because we realize [00:22:39]while we're very dedicated to addressing the mental health and wellbeing and the continuum of mental health to illness on our campus, we can't do it alone. And we need partnerships and we need partnerships with teeth. [14.2s] And a lot of the issues we face are really broader than than the university, they are public health issues. They are community issues. We had an access issue and a service issue prior to the pandemic in terms of mental health access for youth. We know that from data actually from ICES and a colleague of mine, Paul Kurdyak, that in a 10 year span there's been a 66 percent increase of transitional youth, which would mostly be post-secondary students using the emergency department as their first point of access, which is not a very holistic and a warm way to meet the mental health system in a first appointment. So we need to develop communication, we need to have relationship building and we need that with community services that have meaning and that are quite differentiated. At the moment, my focus is particularly with the acute care system. And actually, after a series of tragedies, we had a few suicides on campus that spurred the task force that I mentioned and Mental Health Redesign Plan. Our Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which is our large tertiary care hospital in Toronto, came to the table and said, we want to partner and we are partnering. We're going to be starting an acute care navigation project in the New Year, where we will have specific navigators to track students who enter the emergency department will get admitted and develop a coordinated plan of support and case management and redirection back to campus or to other resources. But there are many, many other partnerships that need to exist. There are partnerships we are thinking about supporting students in crisis on campus, for instance, with community agencies to alleviate a police response that is often done when a student is in an acute crisis on a campus. And we know from the pandemic, we know globally, that a police response does not suffice to support someone with a mental health concern. There are partnerships in terms of peer organizations, there are partnerships are, you know, in a whole host of ways. So I think we have to think about it in a very multifactorial way. There needs to be a clear direction and tracking and also, to Anne's point around evaluation when actually when one embarks on partnerships, you actually have to evaluate what's in it, what's in it for the partnering organization, what's in it for the university? Hopefully it's more than one university that's engaging in it. And how successful is it? What tweaks need to happen? How do you evaluate it? How do you improve it? How do you build on it? So, so they're not easy to do, but I think very rewarding, very fruitful. And just my other mention is students need to be front and center of the partnership. So in the partnership, for instance, with CAMH, each that we're embarking on in the acute care system, it's being co-design by students for students. So it's not sort of top down, you know, health care providers or administrators dictating what this partnership should look like. So that would be another another key point to highlight, but it's a it's a really, really interesting question.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:26:16] And I could jump in there. Judyth, and may I?

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:26:20] Yes, please.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:26:22] Great. OK. I was going to say absolutely, Andrea, and I agree. And on the tracking part, I think that, you know, my take on various organizations, various universities is that there's a whole lot of initiatives and a whole lot of resources and and services, but they're not necessarily coordinated or rationalized into care pathways. So I think really, we need to, first of all, track where students are going and understand that and we're actually partnering, we're funded now by the Mach-Gaensslen Foundation to do exactly that. So we're actually tracking the student's journey through services to try to figure out where a student is going and where are the bottlenecks and where are the gaps. So I think that's a really important piece. And then actually creating care pathways based on best evidence and partnering with students to tell us how to tailor those pathways so that they're engaging for students. But the pathways are actually built on evidence. So I think, and rational, you know. So I think that that's, you know, when do you refer a student here where how do you get the student back and and to really kind of not replicate services, either. And to have things that are accessible and moving and not blocked. And [00:27:36]I think the whole partnership with students is an ongoing theme, you know, not for us without us. [4.5s] But on the other hand, I also think that, you know, we have a lot of expertize and so we need to, as I said, base it on the evidence, but partner with students to make sure that it's relevant and engaging for students.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:27:56] Yeah. Verity, do you want to make a comment too?

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:28:02] Thank you, Judyth. I'd just like to focus on two points, partnerships and that Anne and Andrea talked about, we are all as post-secondary sector looking to establish the same pathways and systems to support all our students. So I think it's really important for us to work together, as Andrea said, not just one university, but to coordinate our asks of our government officials, our community agencies, on behalf of our students. In addition, I'd like to just add that we at Dalhousie have had amazing success with our Advancement department and donors coming in to fund those types of programs. And so, these are compelling projects that your Advancement departments will probably just love when we package them together, like Anne talks about using evidence and solid rationale to why these things are going to improve our outcomes and our supports for students. So it's about being innovative and about how do we fund these amazing projects, but also making sure that we make sense when we go to our provincial partners and we make a coordinated ask. Thank you.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:29:19] Now, Verity, I missed that you had your hand up before. In terms of, I think it was something that one of the other panelists had said, I'm giving you the opportunity to to revisit that if you like? Otherwise, I'm going to go to to Josh because he had his hand up. So it's OK. All right, Josh, you had your hand up.

**Joshua Xavier** [00:29:44] Yeah, I just wanted to say from from Dr. Anne, from what you said, I think one of the big things that really stood out to me and I very much resonate with is that engagement aspect. I think you can have as many resources in the world as you'd like, but I think if no one's engaging with it or educated on the value that it's really bringing to the students, no one's going to use it. And I think we've seen that, I personally have seen that in both my undergrad and my master's program, where there has been a ton of supports and there's been a lot of resources available for students. [00:30:12]But when no one feels like it's going to help them or they don't know why, they're going to sign up for this on a deeper perspective than just the fact that it'll help. I think that engagement aspect is so fundamental for the actual success of any type of support for mental health and student health. [14.7s] And you know, I just found that a very meaningful piece of the overall puzzle that seems to be forgotten every now and then. And it really misses the opportunity for students to capitalize on really good resources because they're not engaged with it.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:30:46] Josh, is that they not engaged with it? Or, they don't know it's available? And either answer gives a different response. So can you just give us a sense of, is it lack of knowledge or fear of actually making the step to go forward to try to resolve the issue?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:31:06] Yeah, I mean, it's tough to generalize on what exactly might be the case for these resources, but I find when it's a lack of knowledge, at least in the circles that I've been around, when it's a lack of knowledge, it tends to spread word of mouth, right? If you know, if someone has taken that leap of faith to try something new and they found it valuable, they will start spreading it to all their friends. And then that's when everything starts getting super valuable. But the lack of engagement is hearing a name or hearing something of value. I remember in McMaster, we had this thing called a SWAT program, which essentially was a service that the McMaster Student Union put on to help walk students home from, you know, to have a late night class or whatever. They can get a walk home, because, you know, to stay safe. It's a very great resource, and I've heard people complain about not having that resource when they've heard about the SWAT program, but they didn't feel like it would create value to them. And I felt like that was the biggest tragedy that could happen to that student because they have the things available that they need, but they're not understanding why they should approach it. And so I think that is something that can be fixed and a lack of knowledge can also be something that can be fixed. But it kind of works hand in hand, right you by having to, you know, it's not just educating, but it's also that engagement aspect that I think if someone doesn't know about a specific resource, you have to do both those parts together versus a step by step process. That's because, I mean, in the Generation Z era, we have a, you know, a filter of 15 seconds. If it's not interesting in 15 seconds, we no longer care. And that's unfortunate. But that's why these things need to be done in parallel for the students.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:32:43] Andrea. And then Verity.

**Dr. Andrea Levinson** [00:32:46] Just building on what Josh is sharing, the engagement piece is key, and I know as having worked in the area, we put a lot of effort into building various resources and they can be under utilized. We've been really working on an open access system, using access as the the key point and multiple forms of access, and acknowledging my age, young people know what they need and they need multiple ways to access supports in the way that feels youth friendly and feel student friendly. So using youth to co-design those access points. Virtual. In-person. Web. Asynchronous. Synchronous. And having that sort of point of access when the student needs it right away. We call it same day access with multiple levels of input, I think is key. The other piece as a provider and having worked in the area of youth psychiatry for a number of years, I think we have a lot to learn about. We do a lot of things to to support what we as providers think people need and we really need to be listening to the consumer and in our world, the consumer is the student. So using that, that kind of engagement strategy, we call it kind of recovery focused, not worrying too much. You know, I'm trained in CBT and this is what I'm going to deliver. [00:34:10]Hearing what the student needs and really meeting the student where they're at in terms of their willingness to engage. Some may come in for a one off meeting, not really being sure what they want. Just help with a little bit of navigation to a support that may not even be in the health and wellness centre, and that may suffice. Others need more. So not not one size fits all. [24.2s]

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:34:35] Thank you. Verity.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:34:38] Judyth, I just wanted to add some information to a great question about students knowledge of all the supports that are available. Joshua, loved your comments about engagement. Totally support them. I was part of the National Technical Committee for the Mental Health Commission of Canada and CSA that developed the post-secondary student standard for mental health and wellbeing. It was an amazing project. Huge amounts of engagement and consultation across the country. One of the top concerns or feedback that we heard from the consultation, including huge student engagement, was that they were not aware of the services that were available to support them. [00:35:22]And so as we look at creating all of these amazing support systems for students and programs, Joshua, to your point, we need to make sure that our students see the value, understand that they're available and how do we reach them in a way that's meaningful and provides them with that information when they most need it. Thank you. [23.4s]

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:35:49] Anne, there's a question here from Linda Foster. Did your research identify any unique challenges of international students and would mental health challenges have been similar to domestic students or more pronounced?

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:36:03] That's a great question, and thank you for that. So, yes, so we've actually just submitted for publication a preliminary analysis at Queen's, of international students versus domestic students, mental health and academic outcomes. And the short story is that the symptom levels of anxiety and depression were very comparable actually between international students at Queen's and domestic students. However, international students more often indicated self-harm and suicidal ideation than did domestic students. And I should say that the actual, most disadvantaged group in terms of in terms of self-reported symptoms were actually domestic females. Now the other thing about the international students, though, aside from the self-harm and suicidal ideation which was greater, I'll come back to that point, the international students had struggled more actually academically in their first year, and we had a student focus group to try to capture the student voice of the international students at Queen's to try to understand what might be happening, what might be behind that. And the themes that came up were that, of course, English as a second language, that there were different learning approaches and different learning demands from their home schools. So in other words, more interest in synthesis and participation and discussion rather than memorization and and the ways of learning were quite different. And the other thing that the international students mentioned to us was that they felt that mental health literacy in their home countries wasn't as prominent and wasn't spoken about in the same way, and that perhaps either students were waiting until they were quite in crisis. And that's maybe why self-harm, suicidal ideation was higher. And also maybe in certain cultures, it might be more of an acceptable kind of way of coping in a sense than it would be in North America or Canada. And so that was what the students told us. So of course, we're going to pursue this further. But the implications were that whilst symptom levels were similar in terms of anxiety and depressive symptoms, that self-harm and suicidal ideation was even more prominent in the international students and that perhaps we as the university could do better in terms of helping students feel more prepared academically for the task at hand. The other important finding from that study was that international students more often felt less connected, less membership with the university, and we know that university connectedness is the major protective or a major risk factor for poor mental mental health outcomes.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:39:05] Now, Anonymous has written something here that I'd like anybody in the panel to respond to. So great discretion, everybody. This is from Anonymous. With the ever changing requirements, with COVID restrictions, changes are constantly made to teaching. We provide in-depth support to students. Have a way of finding some students are taking their frustration out on university team members, which could be admin, registrar's office or faculty. Has anyone visited this so far when the university team members are supported? They can in turn get better support, give better support to students during these challenging times. So the question is. Students are expressing their frustration in ways that possibly they wouldn't have. But then what's what's being done by both the university? But what do we need to do to support students. Who'd like to start off that observation, that question? Verity.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:40:03] I think that is an amazing observation to share with this group, so thank you for posting that question. And I think that it's important to acknowledge and this has just come up in conversations at our university. And it's not just about students, it's about our entire community and that our our entire community are tired and fatigued. And so how does that impact how we show up in our daily lives? How does it show up with students, how does it show up with faculty? Andrea talked about the importance of taking a healthy campus approach. So how are we supporting students? Oh, sorry. And how are we supporting the community that is supporting students? And so what we are looking at and universities have healthy campus strategies. They have mental health strategies, they have wellness strategies for workplace. I would make an argument that it is it is a compelling need for universities to have part of their strategic plans a commitment by the institution to care for the entire community with that same intention. Because I think that's the only time you're going to get an opportunity to really move the needle on the things that need to get measured, which includes looking at your policies. It includes, Andrea talked about having a culture of caring. So how do our policies impact students and how can we look at those policies to create a better environment? And Josh, in your early introduction, you talked about just the environment that you were living in and that you were learning it. And how can we create a better environment, not just for students, but for our faculty, for our staff? That includes policies, are community interactions or interventions supports for the individuals. I think it is a huge opportunity and never more has it been more important. And so I think the person who posted this question is really tuning in to what are most of our most important, I think, priorities will be in the coming year and years are to care for our communities.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:42:24] Anybody else want to make a comment on that? So a question that is sort of mulling around in my head in terms of our discussion so far is we're in this transitional moment. We're in the moment of teaching online students learning in a virtual environment. The hope of transitioning back into on campus learning will take place, but with its sort of moment of the development of the virus. Initiatives are taking place to return to campus and then they're put on hold, so that that sense of being resilient to uncertainty is certainly something that everybody's having to manage. Two questions, how do we create a sticky campus for academics and students? Because one of the works that I'm doing at the Australian National University is suggesting to me that academics are wary about returning to campus. But there are a whole lot of issues that are associated with returning to campus so that resistance to returning, but how to create a sticky campus. So who'd like to start off responding to that question?

**Dr. Andrea Levinson** [00:43:33] Well,I'll jump in. [00:43:36]I think that we need to recalibrate a narrative of returning to normal when the pandemic will be over. [9.4s] Because you know it, it's going to be a while. The likelihood is this virus is going to become endemic and we are going to need to adapt and live in a different state. And if we can, without wanting to sound too Pollyanna, if we can try and really capitalize on the silver linings and it's been a real rough haul, and now we're on this precipice of the new variants. And what will that mean? But some of the silver linings are that we do understand that students engage in learning in different ways and we've adapted and there are hybrid formats and there are some advantages to some online forums. When I think about mental health care delivery as a psychiatrist, you know, we were putzing around for eons saying we needed all these infrastructures to be able to deliver online care and within the space of two weeks, we just did it. And and it's never going to go away, and that's something quite wonderful. So if we can, you know, acknowledge the loss, acknowledge that we need to be together as humans, we need to touch each other and hold each other and see each other in person. And we will. But we're never going to revert to the, you know, as it was in 2019. And I think that's that's going to be. I love the sticky campus notion as you describe it, Judyth. So that would be my thinking. That we think of ways to kind of incorporate the learnings as we move forward.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:45:17] Verity, you want to make a comment from where you sit.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:45:23] I would also challenge us all to, to really listen to listen to our communities and in ways that take an EDIA approach. And so we've learned through our communities that COVID has impacted our student communities, and I'm sure this is true for our staff and faculty in different ways. And so throughout COVID at Dalhousie, for example, we listened to our students. And I mean, this is the common I was going to make students when I raised my hand, Joshua talked and you asked a quick question about have your faculty asked you a preference? Has the university engaged you in conversation about how is this impacting you and how can we help you? And so at Dalhousie University, we went into the pandemic in Nova Scotia, March 2020, we closed down. And ever since then, we've been reopening slowly and we started doing assessments with our students every four to six months. And what we learned from our students is that their needs changed from the winter of 2020 to the fall of 2020. We also disaggregated our data, so we saw the differences in how our Indigenous students were experiencing the pandemic. How the differences in how our Black students were experiencing the pandemic, so we could see how we needed to tailor our support to meet the different needs of our communities. We also looked at how the needs and concerns of our students changed over time from financial management. And this is going back to the social determinants of health. And how do we look at wellbeing on that level of how did the university support our students in terms of our financial aid? What does our housing supports and what does our on campus housing look like in terms of meeting our students requirements? So there's all kinds of different ways that our university needed to and has risen to the challenge. And Judyth, you asked some questions about policy. What happened? Well, at Dalhousie University, and I'm sure other universities across the country did the same thing. We looked at our grading policies and we looked at how could we change, how we do things to meet where our students, where they were. And of course, Joshua talked about sense of belonging and how do we make sure students can still connect and that work continues. So one of the things that we have done to really get to how can we best allocate our resources and our priority is really listening to our community and particularly in my role as Vice Provost, Student Affairs, it's listening to our students directly and then making, using that information to actually inform decisions and budget decisions by the university.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:48:18] Anne.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:48:21] Yeah, thanks a lot. I just wanted to add that I'm learning a lot here in the UK about compassionate campus and actually what is it and how do we implement it and how do we measure it? And so we're going to be bringing this back now to Queen's, and it's really part of the Mach-Gaensslen Foundation project that we're doing. And I'll talk a bit more about that. But so compassionate campus is super cool. It's at all levels. So it's talking about sort of a collaborative collective as opposed to an individual competitive environment. And it's about how a way of being in a way of being together kind of like switching from a neoliberalism kind of philosophy to to this collaborative community. And you look at it at all different levels. So it's at the leadership level, at the administration level, at the pedagogy level, the curriculum level, it's also in the physical environment. So it's in the sort of socioecological aspects, you know, sustainability and around sort of environmental angst. And I think it speaks a lot to and it's timely, given the pandemic, speaks a lot to forming an inclusive and community of shared values. We're all different and we can be from varied backgrounds and varied learning programs. But we all need to sort of feel like we're part of a collective community that really fosters wellbeing and health. And I think that will really get out a lot of the things that have been mentioned by Andrea and Verity.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:50:07] Josh. Thank you, Anne.

**Joshua Xavier** [00:50:10] Yeah. I just wanted to get your opinion on this as a group, as Dr. Levinson mentioned, you know, this seems to be this idea of a new normal, right? I mean, I look back at airports and I think everyone sees it as a pre and post-911. But now we look at life as a pre and post COVID-19. Right? So I'm curious on your guys's perspective, how much of this is a change management kind of approach as well, right? I mean, looking at William Bridges, he wrote a book focusing on managing transitions, and he says how change is an external event. But transitions is an internal event, and that's about leaving those endings of a current state in that transition phase and then moving into a new state into that new beginning. And there's a whole emotional valence around that. When you're leaving the endings, you're kind of shocked, angry in denial. When you're in that neutral zone, you're confused. You're disoriented, kind of frustrated and skeptical of the new kind of beginning. And then in that new beginning, when you finally accepted that change, you're excited, energized and ready to take on that new approach. So I'm curious how much of it is it a change in what these campuses are doing versus how much of it is getting students used to this new idea of the new workplace or the new environment?

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:51:22] Well. Josh, do you want to come and sit in my chair?

**Joshua Xavier** [00:51:28] No, too much responsibility.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:51:31] Great question, though. Who wants to respond to Josh? All right. Here's my opportunity to use my Canadian word. I'm going to volun-tell Verity to see if she could start off with her response.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:51:50] I was just going to raise my hand. I think that is a really interesting question, and I think it's the challenge. And you know, as an administrator, there's all of these things that we do as institutions to move processes along. [00:52:09]It is a total other body of work to move people through an experience, which is what you're just talking about. And one of the things that that really resonated with me as an administrator through COVID was the challenges for us as a community. And it wasn't about health, because to be honest, the health was the easy part because we had public health helping us. We put in all of these processes. We move this work forward. It was managing the human experience. Through this process, which is so individual, and so when when we look at managing this, this transition and managing this process with our communities and our people, the importance of being human centered and never losing sight of the fact that we are nothing without our students and our people. That's why we all exist. [60.2s] And so, but I'm understanding that, as I said about disaggregating the data, the importance of understanding that pockets and members of our community are experiencing this transition so differently. And we need to listen to that and respond to that thoughtfully and with compassion. That might not have answered your question directly, but it was my best shot at it, Joshua.

**Joshua Xavier** [00:53:37] No, it definitely did. Thank you.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:53:41] Anne or anyone else want to make a comment?

**Dr. Andrea Levinson** [00:53:50] So many thoughts sort of worrying in my mind. I love the way you know, I agree with all you said, Verity, and I love the way you framed it, Josh. It's really, really interesting. I mean, I think that again, the pandemic has intensified these issues that existed prior, but it's brought them to the forefront. So, you know, we've had a system of fractured mental health system in Canada prior to the pandemic. It's now, you know, it's brought it sort of central. We there were various inequities and they are heightened. And so Veritiy's outlining how this is very differentially affected, more marginalized members of our society. And we need to have even more understanding, compassion, caring moving forward. So it's not so much getting used to, it's actually keeping our foot on the gas pedal and actually, you know, driving the agenda that the pandemic has afforded us. I mean, again, not trying to be a Pollyanna, there's just so much loss. People have lost loved ones. So many, you know, so many lives. I saw one of the questions that was framed was around sort of what's going to be the future psychological impact of the pandemic. And, you know, none of us really know, is this a real biologic impact just in the disease itself? People are struggling with neuropsychiatric sequelae, all sorts of longstanding kind of illness moving forward. But I think it affords us a real, a real energy and a real moral imperative that we we tend to sort of move to being complacent as human beings and we can't be.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:55:45] I would agree with that, actually, I think it's been very stressful in some cases, tragic. My own mother passed away as a kind of indirect result of this. But on the other hand, I would say it wouldn't be naught for naught if we don't use it as an opportunity and these problems were there before, and now they're amplified. So it's a chance to really do the right thing, I think.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:56:07] In terms of the questions that people put up, sent in earlier, the themes of burnout and stress for both academics, professional staff and students was a common theme. How do we identify when people have burnout or are experiencing stress? And what interventions do we need to put in place to to help obviate and then manage that burnout and stress? And while you are thinking, somebody has asked the name of the book that you mentioned, Josh, by William Bridges.

**Joshua Xavier** [00:56:44] Yeah. The book is called Managing Transitions. I'll put that in the chat as well.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:56:48] OK? And then, Verity, somebody asked the name of the study that you mentioned. I'll find it.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:57:02] Is it the the mental health standard is that the reference?

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:57:06] I think so.

**Verity Turpin, CPA, CMA** [00:57:08] I'll put it in the chat.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [00:57:11] OK, thank you. So who wants to give a response to the the idea of burnout and stress, and this probably will be the last bit of the discussion because as we know, time flies when you're having fun.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [00:57:24] I can maybe start a bit and maybe reverse a bit and then start, and that is I think about how can we help in kind of different ways, so we think about universal kind of mental health promotion. One of the things that we're doing and it's with the Mach-Gaensslen Foundation, is we've developed a digital online comprehensive mental health literacy course tailored for targeting university students, understanding the determinants of mental health. Well actually, even understanding what do we mean by mental health? What do we mean by wellbeing? How do we define those and and looking at it from multiple disciplines, from theology, from the humanities, from medicine, from psychology? And what do we know is important in terms of the determinants and how can students help themselves and cope with stress and really succeed in whatever way they want to succeed setting their own goals? And we use some techniques such as self-reflection and active problem-solving and group assignments to really consolidate that learning. And so I think universal mental health literacy can be really effective. And we did that in a reverse mentorship approach with students again. So in partnership with students to try to capture and engage students in the course, other things that we're doing actually both guided and unguided is providing digital resources. Now that we're in the digital world, you know, to give more access and to really help students with common problems. So regulating sleep, managing stress, healthy coping strategies, mindfulness, what do we mean by that? You know, the green movement getting out in nature, the GLAM movement, the garden libraries and museums and really, you know, helping students give themselves permission and the tools to strike a healthy study life balance and to connect and take time to connect with their friends and peers. And then, of course, there's also we're doing another digitally enhanced care pathway, a Queen's student wellness, partnering with Queen's Student Wellness to try to be proactive and titrate visits to to actual clinical need, and to engage the students in their own care by giving them a digital tool which is their own EMR, their own students student health passport that tells them how they're doing it based on their information, signpost them and they can actually carry that with them and share their dashboard with whatever provider and whenever place it is that they're getting help. And that will also help us kind of map their journey so we'll be able to understand and track things. So I think there is student focused things, and then I think it comes back to the idea of the compassionate campus, the context, the community that students exist at, work and live in, and that we, as the university, have an obligation to look at ourselves as well. And how are we doing? How are we supporting our staff or faculty? How are we communicating with each other? And are we actually a healthy, collaborative community in the way that we're treating one another in our organizations and administrations and our employees? And also, how are we communicating and partnering with students in order to help them succeed?

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [01:00:44] Certainly, we've run out of time, but Anne, do you have resources on your website at Queen's that other people could access?

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [01:00:55] Yeah, and I did put that in the chat, so please visit U-Flourish at Queen's U. It's in the chat there. And we also poster papers that if you have any questions, please do email me.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [01:01:08] Anne, thank you, everybody, for participating in what I think has been a really wide ranging and illuminating discussion from my point of view, and I apologize to the people whose questions haven't been answered, but I think that we all had a fruitful discussion and can I wish you all a safe holiday system and I hope that 2022 is better for all of us.

**Dr. Anne Duffy** [01:01:32] Thank you, thanks, everyone.

**Professor Judyth Sachs** [01:01:33] Thank you very much.