

Fiasco Fiesta 2025





Event Overview

Thursday July 10, 2025

Navigating Uncertainty –
an **ENTREPRENEURIAL BOARD GAME**



Friday July 11, 2025
FIASCO FIESTA

- 8h30 Welcome Coffee - Workshop Team Confirmation
- 8h45 Intro & Keynote **"Trial and Error can be published"**
- 9h30 About Entrepreneurial Mindset
- 9h45 **Celebrating failure in an interactive workshop**
- 12h *Walk over to TP area*
- 12h45 Burning Fiascos & BBQ Lunch



Fiasco Fiesta Workshop

- Personal Tops and Flops on a 2-sided „CV“
Twilight Exhibition on glass wall
- Talk: Understanding Career Crisis and Growth
- Find your own resources & reframe fiascos
- Burn fiasco & let go!



RESILIENCE

Resources

- Social / ^{economical} security in Germany
- Savings
- cultural acceptance of failure
- podcasts
 - ↳ family
 - ↳ friends
 - ↳ networks
- therapy
- finding a safe-space to talk about it
- Mentors (with training)
- going for walks / physical activity
- imagine the worst
- asking questions
- "does it still matters in 5 years?"
- setting boundaries

arQus
European University Alliance

Understanding
Career Crisis
and Growth

Workshop on Dealing with Failure

Fiasco Fiesta, DKFZ Heidelberg
July 11, 2025

career service alumni relations

fiasco literature.pdf

dkfz.
GERMAN
CANCER RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

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The Body-Workplace Connection

Strong physical reactions to social/professional stressors

- **Physiological** issues (Sleeplessness, heart rate / weight fluctuations)
- **Cognitive** difficulties (memory, circular thoughts, concentration)
- **Psychological** reactions (self-confidence, hopelessness, tension, behavioural changes, emotional turbulence)

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Social-Biological Interplay

- Experiences at work impact developing brain/body
- Our physical state influences how we engage socially

→ Social, cultural, economic, and biological factors shape our health

Bottom, Dennis & Grant (2010): The Biopsychosocial Model of Health and Disease

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Anatomy of a Fiasco

- ⚡ Surprise (emotional response, inner conflict)
- ⚡ Perceived obstacle (resource deficit)
- ⚡ Narrowed perception (threat to life balance)

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The Crisis Journey: Initial Stages

1. **Shock** – paralysis, sadness
2. **Reaction** – chaos, emotions
3. **Action** – seeking resources
4. **Reorientation** – reframing

Kris och utveckling
JOHAN CULLBERG

Cullberg, Johan (1975): Crisis and development, revised 1992.

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Transformative Potential of Crises

Verena Kast's Model of Growth-Inducing Crisis

1. Denial
2. Emotional chaos
3. Meaning-making & responsibility
4. New identity & values

Kast, Verena (2013): The Creative Leap: Psychological Transformation Through Crisis

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Demands vs Resources

Stress = Demands < > Resources

Job Demands-Resources Model:

Autonomy/support/feedback → engagement

(or vice-versa → burnout)

Richard S. Lazarus
Susan Folkman

Demerouti et al., J Appl Psych (2001): The Job Demands-Resources Model of Burnout

Lazarus, Richard S. (1966): Psychological stress and the coping process

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Moving Forward

The Appraisal Process

- **Primary appraisal:** What is this crisis? What might it mean?
- **Reframing:** Use reflection and support → transform your Fiasco
- **Secondary appraisal:** Evaluate resources
What do I have to handle this?

Appraise → Reframe → Resources → Grow

THE HANDBOOK OF STRESS AND HEALTH
A GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

JANE L. COOPER AND JAMES CAMPBELL QUICK

WILEY Blackwell

Biggs et al. in Cooper & Quick (2017). The handbook of stress and health: A guide to research and practice (p. 351-364)

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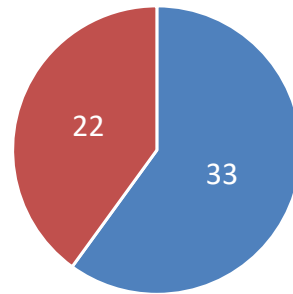
TIME TO Celebrate Failure

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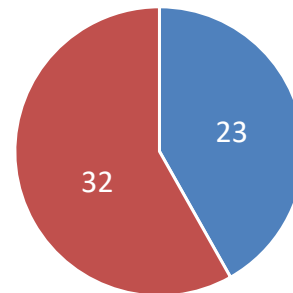
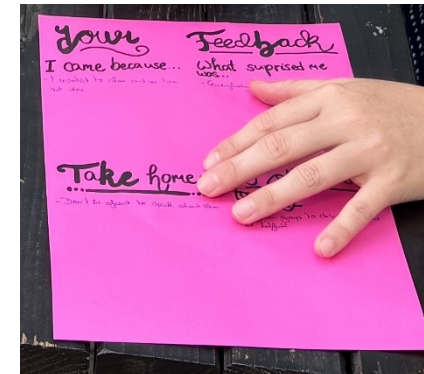
Participant Feedback

Attendance:

81 registrations, 55 participants from diverse career backgrounds & education

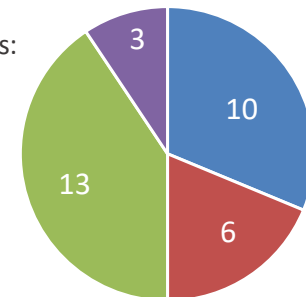


■ DKFZ ■ other



■ Administration ■ Scientists

Scientists:



■ Doctoral Researchers

■ MSc Students

■ Postdocs

■ Group Leaders/Professors

Paper feedback provided by 24 participants

I CAME BECAUSE	WHAT SURPRISED ME WAS	TAKE HOMES	I STILL WANT TO SAY
I wanted to share and see I am not alone	Everybody on similar failures	Don't be afraid to speak about them	Regular group to discuss would be helpful
I was curious about the board game and how to deal with a fiasco. What other people do view. There is a Fiasco and a reminder that I am not alone	The board game. I enjoyed the workshop.	I am not alone in Fiascos. Embrace the Fiasco!!	Repeat the board game, Its very fun!!!
Sounded interesting & couldn't really imagine what would it be about	There is a journal of Trial & Error	More successes than failures	Great event, Thank you so much for organizing!!
I am in the process of developing career curiosity	How nice and open people are lots of nice people	resilience & positivity Impressions and things to think about	Should offer more of these or similar events(very positive experience) Thank you!!
I want to share my story and this made it clearer to myself and able to hear other stories and because Marion & Barbara told me :)	how many 'failures' others had	Putting your story onto paper helped made it clearer	An explosion would have been interesting:) or a fire tornado:)
I wanted to learn about the ways to cope with the fiascos	How many people had similar experiences	Celebrate more small wins	In the next workshop: more bathroom breaks/better time-management!
I thought it will be a lot of fun. Wanted to hear how other people cope with failures	The people that joined came from very diverse backgrounds. It was a huge crowd. People were very open about their failures.	Fiascos make you grow. Everyone experiences fiascos. It is fun to learn fiascos.	Event was really fun and nicely organized. BIG KUDOS to the organizers!!!
I wanted to explore ways to deal with fiascos.	The number of participants.	Fiascos can offer a great pivot point in our life if we can utilize them properly.	
I wanted to get a better attitude towards failures.	That so many people have similar fiascos	Be resilient. Fail fast. Fail forward.	Thank you!!
I wanted to connect with people & explore new culture.	People are genuinely great. Everyone has a talent.	A new mindset with me. Things take time. Keep doing your best!	We are not behind. It is okay to take a break:)
I wanted to embrace failures	Shifting careers from academic to research or vice versa is okay	Embrace changes.	Enjoy the present moments.
To make a better mindset to handle failure	Listening to others stories	Everything happens for a reason	Thanks for the efforts to make to make this event great
I want to know more about the techniques to tackle failure	There are a lot of people sharing the experience with me.	There are professional Psychological support from the DKFZ	Thanks very much for and to the organization
I wanted to share and talk to others	How everybody had the same kind of fiascos	Continue sharing. No fiasco cannot be turned into an opportunity to learn	I hope we get to do this again
I found the idea really cool!	How we all feel the same event failures!	Celebrate failures. You are not alone. Practice self care.	I hope that the system in academic changes to embrace the results!
I wanted to know about different ways to handle failure	Everyone is having problems and failure and its just not me	Fear of failures> Failures. It is okay to fail, break and go in one pace.	Really liked the workshop. Would be grateful to attend more.
Learn from other senior PhD or post-doc experience.	Treat the failure positively.	Not everyone has a successful research life, I am not alone	
To get inspired and learn to celebrate failure, to connect and network with peers and to enjoy the BBQ.	Diversity of the audience. Openness and willingness of people to share. Open forums and discussions.	Failure is a part of success. Once it passes, you can work back and smile. Building up resilience prepares you for future failures.	Despite the difference in opinions, there was a lot to learn. The barbeque was a great idea. More DKFZ career and BiomedX interactions in the future.
			SPECIAL NOTE: Thanks for the organization. Greetings from Team NST from BioMedX (Stepanie, Galia, Fialeaun, Victoria, Aashritha)
I was curious	That everyone had so much in common	Embrace Failure	Don't be simple. DO IT AGAIN!
I feel curiosity about how managed this topic	Feel people felt the same as me. Union between preferences.		Mental peace, Relax, Feel better
I liked the idea to treat Failure as part of growing, Learning in life, reflect on acceptance and it's a process to better deal with fiasco. The flyer email was inviting!!	Group work, interactive, Emphatic, friendly, well prepared and organized(Flyers, emails, beverages, food, papers, pen, decorations, burning ritual)	Listening to yourself & to others on their journey. to grow it is important to social interaction and to better understanding life's phases and coping/acceptance. Listening is also a skill.	Thank you! Do it yearly!
Science will only improve if we start celebrating failures (or at least accept them)		Failures are part of everyone's life. Its important to learn from your failures.	The size of the workshop groups was good (not bigger). It was a little loud in the communication hall.
Marion & Barbara	confirmed that everyone shares comparable 'fiascos'		thank you for organising. I will attend more workshops & events of the Career Service in the future!

Reasons to join:

- To hear from others / to learn how to deal with failure
- For personal career development
- Out of curiosity / for fun (+Board Game!)



- To share experiences
- To connect with people
- To not feel alone



- Because of Career Service marketing (campaign & people)

What surprised participants:

Failure is common!

across backgrounds, careers, and even among very talented people

→ High attendance

→ Well organized

*(promotion, merch,
catering, activities)*



Big career changes are okay!

Failure can be positive!

People are nice & open about their failures

+ Workshops, Board Game & Journal of Trial & Error

Key Takeaways:

Professional support is available at DKFZ !

- Embrace & talk about failure – and listen to others
- Fiascos help you grow
- Resilience, positive mindset, self-love



- # Fear of failure is bigger than the failure itself
- # Focus & celebrate even small victories
- # Failure is part of a successful research life

Constructive Feedback

Interest for regular initiatives to discuss fiascos/failures (+repeat the board game)



generally very positive feedback
for the event's organisation



Quotes

Don't be simple. DO IT AGAIN!

Thank you! Do it yearly!

Continue sharing. No fiasco cannot be turned into an opportunity to learn

I hope that the system in academia changes to embrace the results!

There is a journal of Trial & Error

Regular group to discuss would be helpful

Be resilient. Fail fast. Fail forward.

People from very diverse backgrounds. It was a huge crowd.