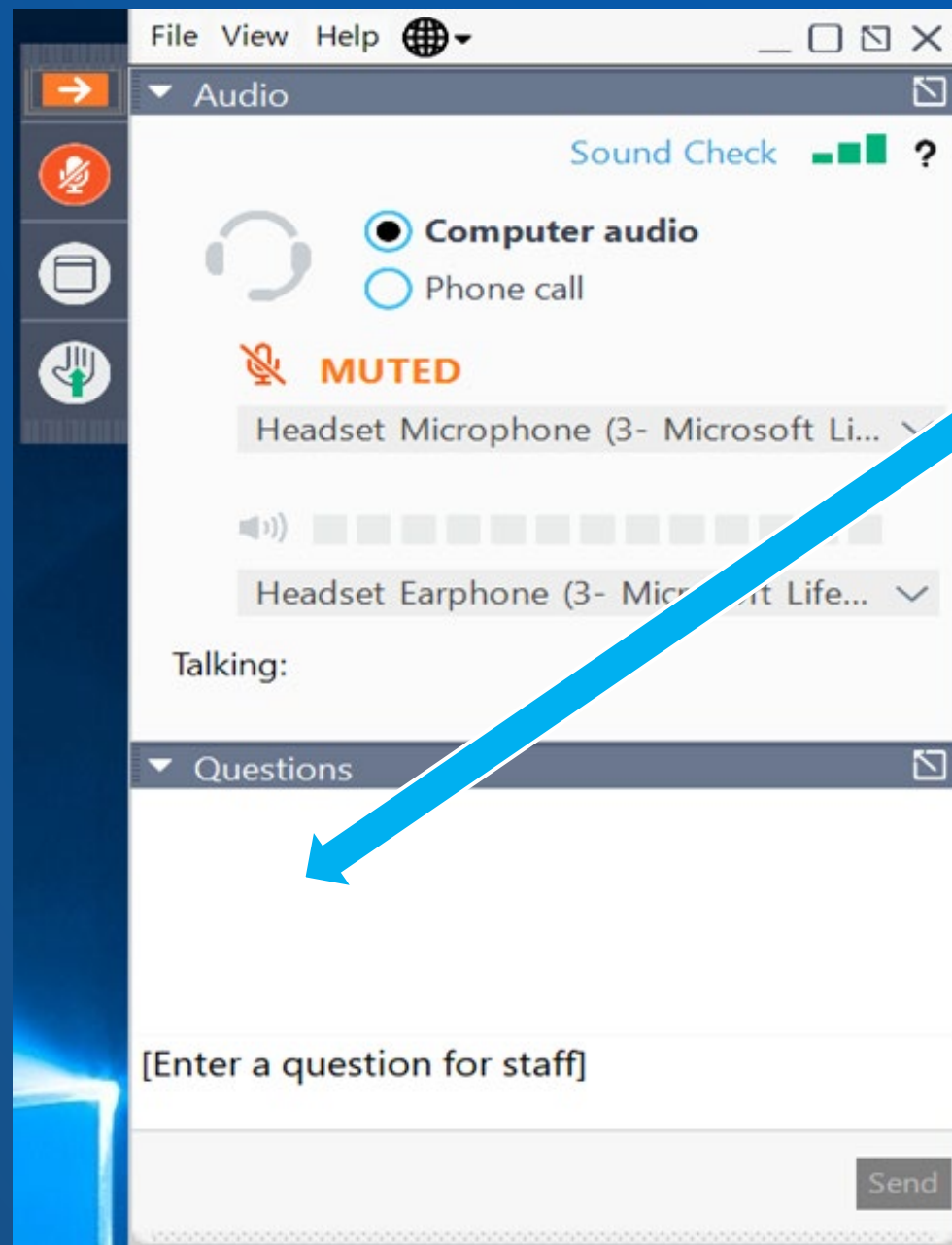



The Imposition of Impostor Syndrome



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The Imposition of Imposter Syndrome



Chan McDermont
Workforce Development Coordinator
HHSC Family Health Services





The Imposition of Imposter Syndrome

A Model for Working Through It

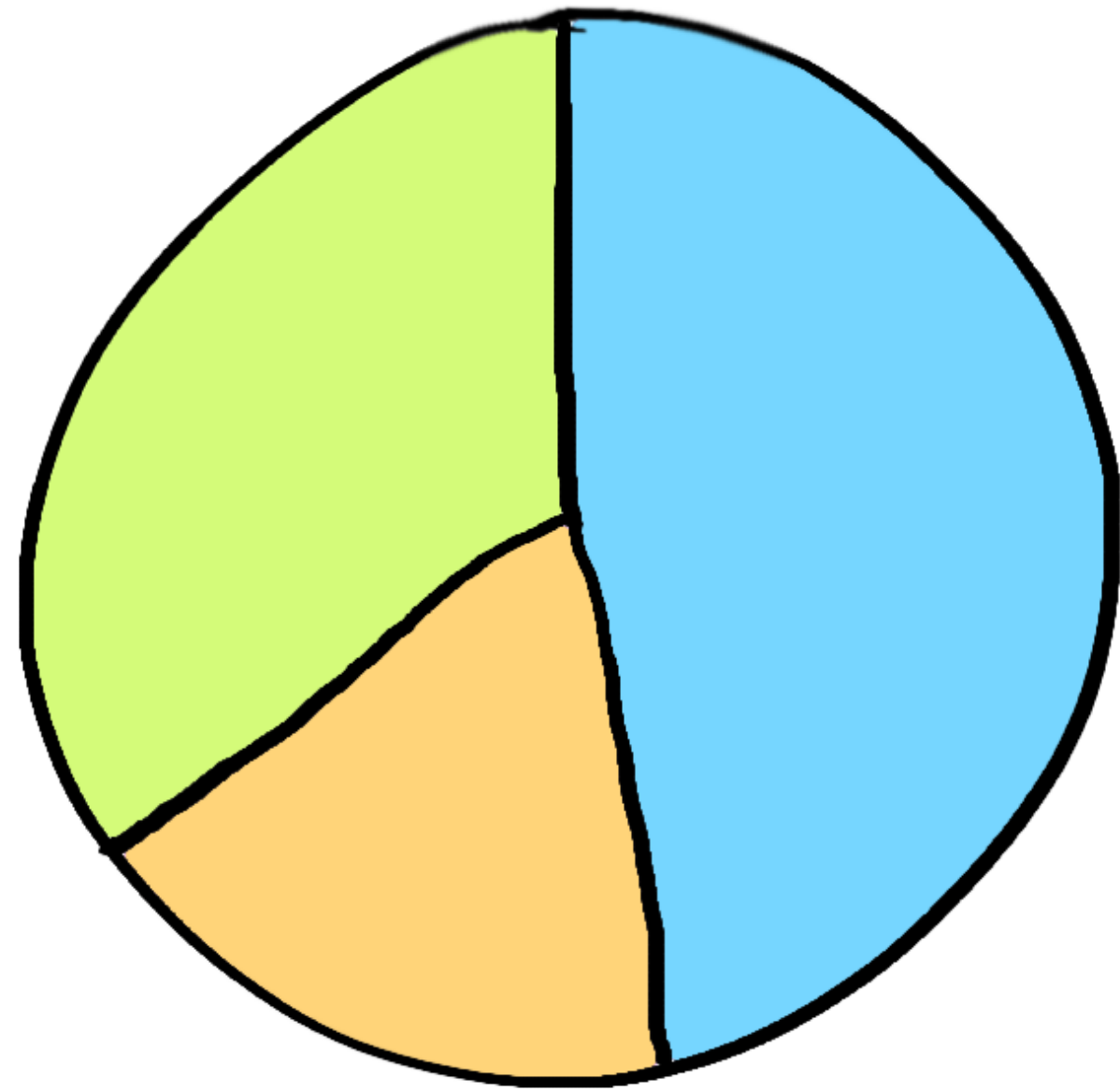





“In a lot of ways, I’m quite proud that I’m still getting jobs. Because of falling into a job, you always feel like you’re a **fraud**, that you’re going to be thrown out at any second.”

-Robert Pattinson

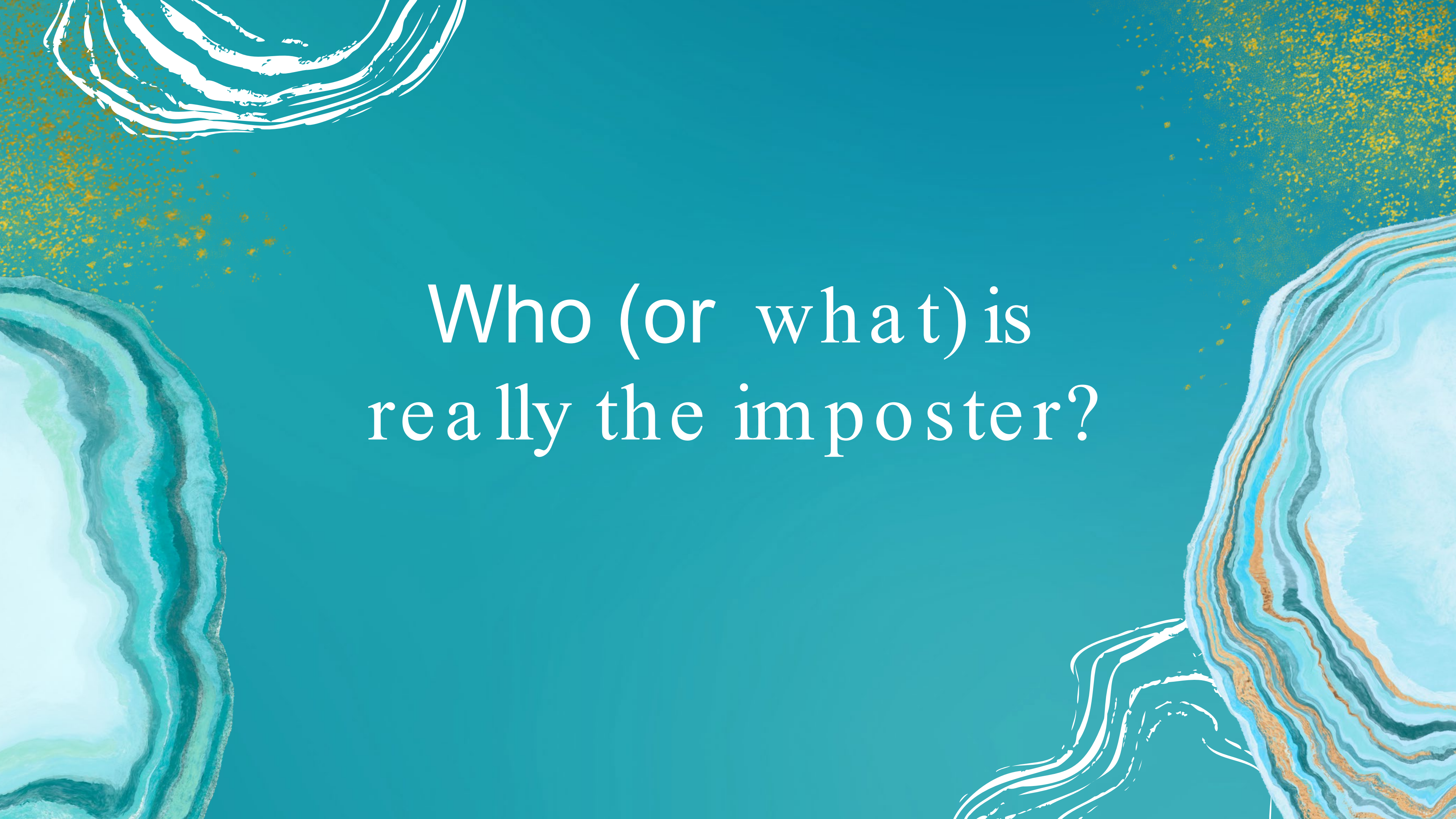
All these people really seem to have it together,
and I still have no idea what's going on.





-  PEOPLE WHO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME
-  OTHER PEOPLE WHO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME
-  LITERALLY EVERYONE ELSE (THEY ALSO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME)

EVERYONE FEELS LIKE AN IMPOSTER
SOMETIMES, AND THAT'S OKAY

The background is a vibrant teal color with abstract, organic patterns. In the top left and bottom right corners, there are white, swirling, brushstroke-like lines. The right side features a large, intricate pattern of concentric, wavy bands in shades of teal, light blue, and gold. The top right corner has a gold-colored, speckled or starburst pattern. The overall aesthetic is artistic and layered.

Who (or what) is
really the imposter?



“It’s almost like the **better I do**, the more my **feeling of inadequacy** actually increases, because I’m just going, ‘Any moment, someone’s going to find out I’m total **fraud**, and that I **don't deserve** anything I’ve achieved.’ ”

-Emma Watson



Where we're headed

01

About Imposter
Syndrome

02

Signs of
Imposter Syndrome

03

A Model for working
through Imposter Syndrome



01

About
Imposter
Syndrome



Neil Gaiman: described fear
of being busted by the
“fraud police,” telling him
he had **no right** to live the
life he was living.

The Backstory

- Interviewed 150 “successful” women in the 1970s
- Women described sensation of “intellectual phoniness”
- Published “The **Imposter Phenomenon** in High Achieving Women” in 1978
- Concept had an “underground” following for decades
- Rebranded as **Imposter Syndrome**
- Really took off with rise of social media
- Up to 82% of people experience it at some point in their lives

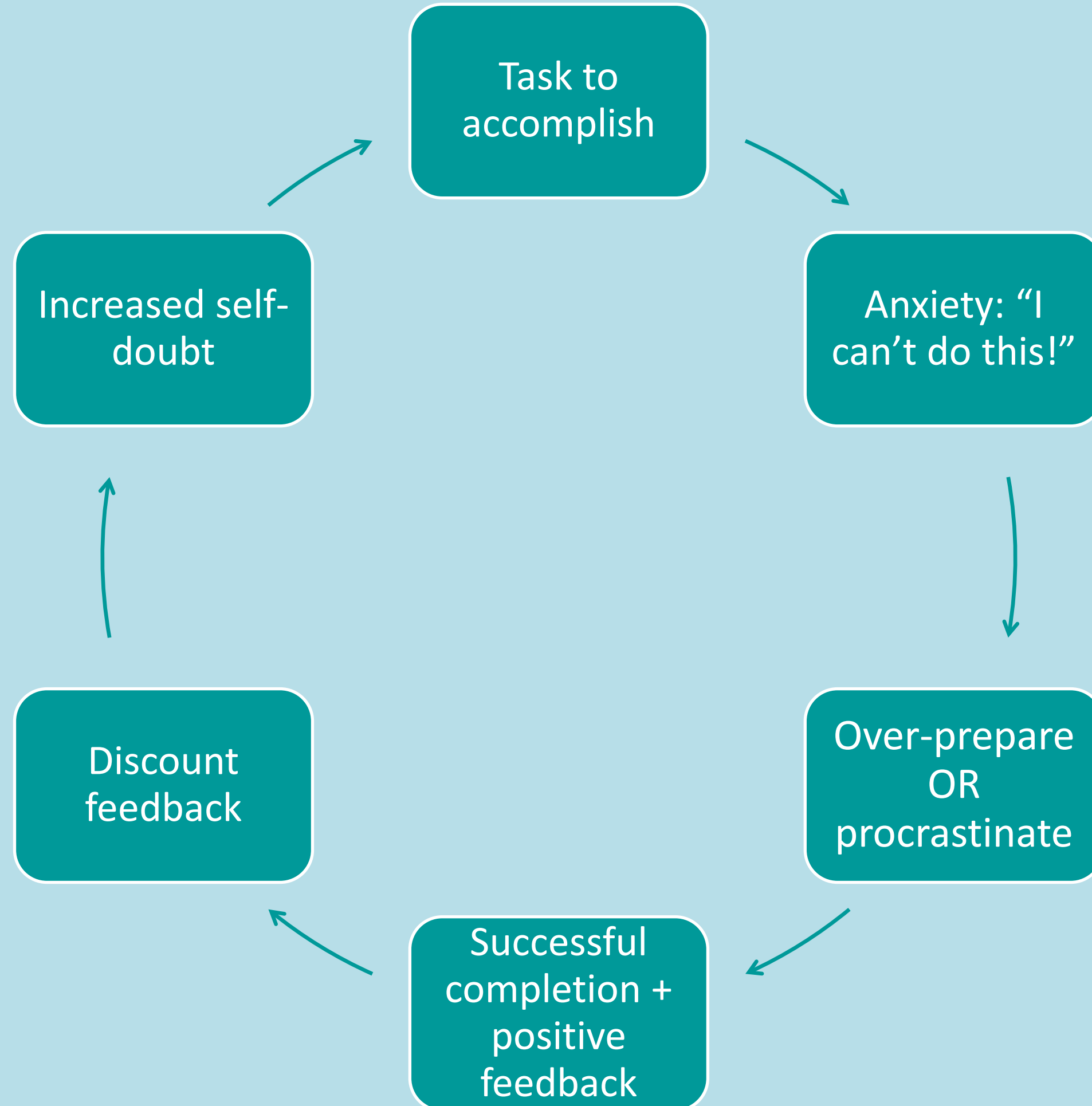


Pauline Clance



Suzanne Imes

Imposter Syndrome Cycle



How it
shows up in
different
populations



Current research

- No “cohort effect”
- Looking at:
 - cultural impact
 - Correlation to shame



What's the problem?

- Getting stuck in unhealthy work dynamics – can decrease job satisfaction
- Not seeing your value – can impact promotion and salary negotiation
- Can decrease academic and work self-efficacy
- Often increases organizational loyalty – to your detriment.
- May increase chronic burnout, anxiety, depression
- Limits professional advancement through reduced knowledge of the job market, institutional loyalty
- May lose track of your dreams and plans for the future



02

Signs of
Imposter
Syndrome



“I have written eleven books, but each time I think, ‘Uh-oh, they’re going to find out now. I’ve **run a game** on everybody, and they’re going to find out.’ ”

-Maya Angelou

Signs

- Self-doubt
- Fear of failure and fraud
- Unable to internalize success
- Exaggerate shortcomings
- Avoid opportunities & challenges
- Inability to accept praise
- Difficulty asking for help
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Practice overwork or self-sabotage to cover feelings of inadequacy



Diligence & Hard
Work

Intellectual
Inauthenticity

Four
Hallmarks

Charm &
Perceptiveness

Seeking Mentorship
for External
Validation

Supervisors with Imposter Syndrome

May

- micro-manage
- model over-working
- have difficulty with delegating
- struggle to articulate their value against their peers





03

A model for
working
through
Imposter
Syndrome



“No matter what we’ve done,
there comes a point where
you think, ‘How did I get here?
When are they going to
discover that I am, in fact, a
fraud and take everything
away from me?’ ”

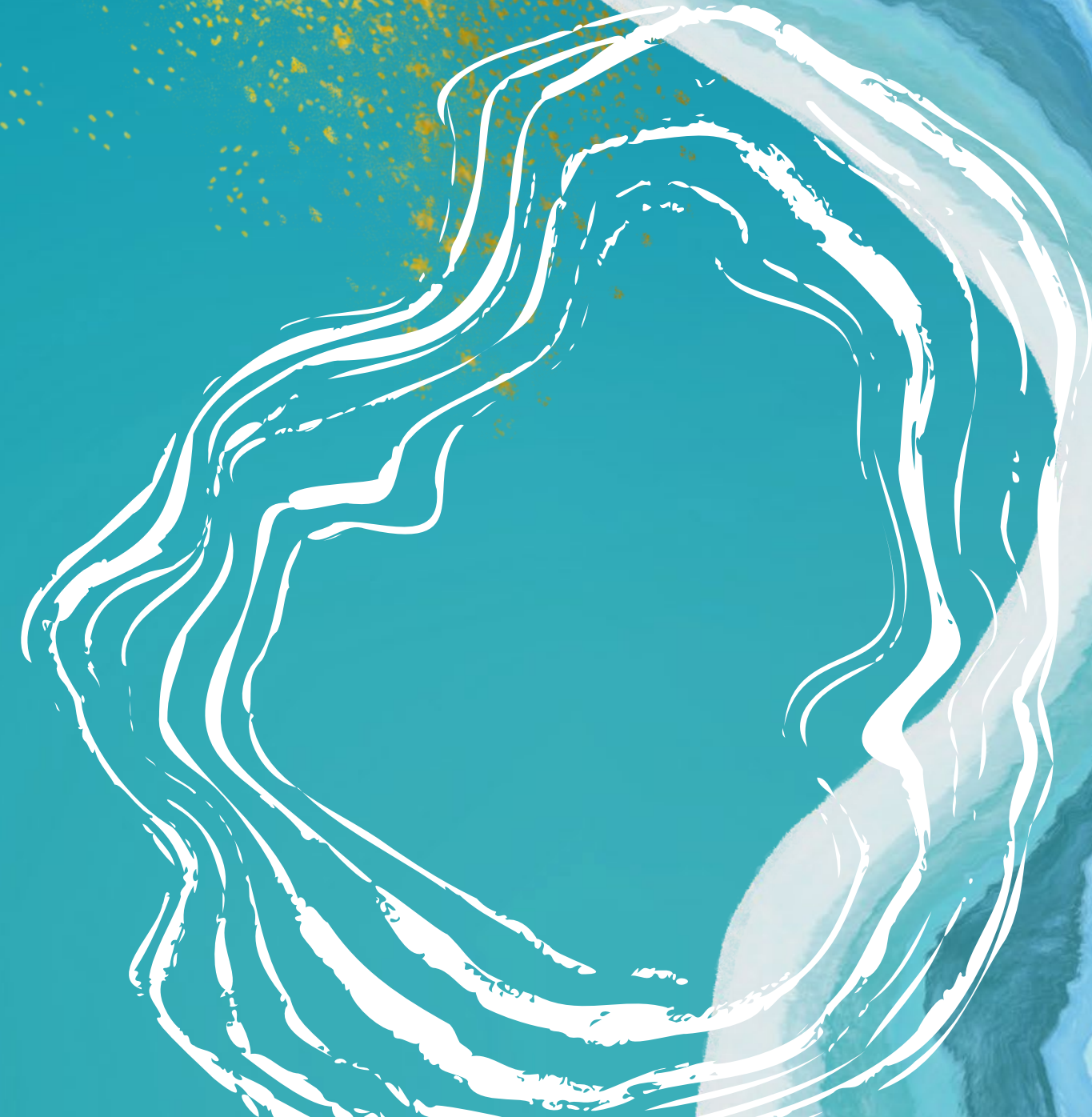
-Tom Hanks



OWN YOUR GREATNESS

**Overcome IMPOSTOR SYNDROME,
Beat Self-Doubt, and Succeed in Life**

**Lisa Orbé-Austin, PhD
and Richard Orbé-Austin, PhD**



Three C's Model

- **Phase 1: Clarify** - understanding the **fundamentals** of your Impostor Syndrome
- **Phase 2: Choose** - making **conscious choices behaviorally** to break the Impostor Cycle
- **Phase 3: Create** - creating **environments** around you that support moving away from Impostor Syndrome

Source: Drs. Lisa and Richard Orbé-Austin



Clarify

- Identify your imposter syndrome origin story

What's the narrative you're communicating about yourself?



Clarify

- Identify your imposter syndrome origin story
- Know your triggers and traps
- Change your narrative

What's the narrative you're communicating about yourself?



Defining your success

- Change your narrative to address your true competency
- What does success mean to you?
- How can you internalize this?
- How can you celebrate your successes?



Choose

- Speak your truth
- Silence automatic negative thoughts (ANTs)

Approach this from a growth mindset.



About those ANTs

- Thoughts that pop into your head when facing a trigger
- Learn to respond rationally
- “We are not our thoughts. We are the **observer** of our thoughts.”

-Amit Ray



Choose

- Speak your truth
- Silence automatic negative thoughts (ANTs)
- Value your self – and your self-care

Approach this from a growth mindset.



FIXED

I'll never be as smart as that person.

I can't do it.

This is too hard.

I'm not good at this.

I made a mistake.

I give up.



GROWTH

Everyone is talented in many ways.

I'm still learning. I'll keep trying.

With more practice it will be easier.

This may take some time and effort.

Mistakes help me learn.

I can try a different strategy.



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UPDATED EDITION

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.

mindset

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

HOW WE CAN
LEARN TO FULFILL
OUR POTENTIAL

1.8
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- *school
- *relationships

"Through clever research studies and engaging writing, Dweck illuminates how our beliefs about our capabilities exert tremendous influence on how we learn and which paths we take in life."

—BILL GATES, *GatesNotes*



Create

- Experiment with new roles

Challenge yourself to break out from your role.



Roles that lead to Imposter Syndrome



- **The Perfectionist:** competence = perfection. Sometimes “good enough” really is good enough.
- **The Natural Genius:** competence = inherently intelligent. Challenges are opportunities to learn and grow, so embrace them!
- **The Expert:** competence = knowing everything there is to know. You don't *need* to know everything. You just need to know someone who knows what you don't.
- **The Rugged Individualist:** competence = doing everything yourself. Identify the resources you need to do your work.
- **The Superman/Woman/Person/Student:** competence = doing all the things and doing them well. It's okay to say no. In fact, you *need* to sometimes!

Source: The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women, Valerie Young



Roles to experiment with

The Help Seeker – seeking advice and assistance from others

The Risk-Taker – learning to take calculated risks for yourself and your dreams

The Collaborator – working on team cohesion

The Knowledge-Receiver – admitting knowledge gaps and learning from other experts

The Visible Leader – being more visible and prominent in high stakes situations

Create

- Experiment with new roles
- Build your dream team

Challenge yourself to
break out from your role.



About your dream team

- The Mentor
- The Cheerleader
- The Grounder
- The Action Planner
- The Big-Picture Person
- The Imposter Expert



Bringing in your supervisor(?)

- Depends on your relationship
- May not know how to help
- Explain how it's impacting you in your role
- Give them ideas of how to help you

Supervisors as triggers

- Perfectionist bosses
- Erratic bosses
- Insecure bosses



Create

- Experiment with new roles
- Build your dream team
- Create conditions for optimal performance

Challenge yourself to break out from your role.



The 4th C: Community

Need support peers who are:

- lateral and higher on the chain than you to reenforces messages of your worth
- Along your “identify line”
- Who can identify with what you’re experiencing

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together .”

-African Proverb



Moai

- A group of lifelong friends
- A social support group that forms to provide support from social, financial, health, or spiritual interests

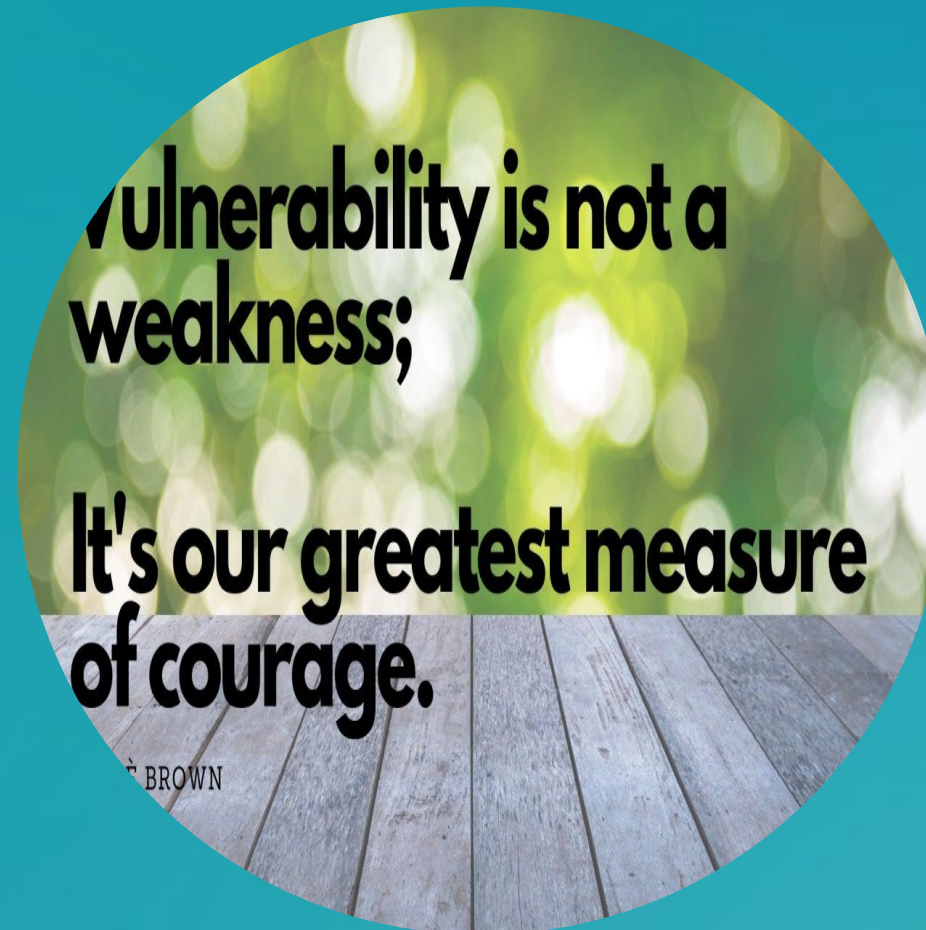
“It’s much easier to go through life knowing there is a safety net.”



Three Key Practices



Self-Compassion



Vulnerability



Curb Perfectionism

Self-Compassion

Showing self-compassion means:

- Being aware of the words you use to speak **to** yourself and **about** yourself;
- **Valuing** your self-care and **prioritizing** it in your life;
- Believing your **dreams** deserve time and space and should not be an afterthought;
- Choosing to **accept** and **believe** your cheerleaders and to **temper** the words of your harshest critics;
- Treating yourself with **kindness** – it will benefit your advancement and future more than criticism.



“It means being kind to yourself when you do make mistakes because you realize that *this is human*.”

Vulnerability

As you practice vulnerability around your Imposter Syndrome, remember to:

- Work on **trusting** the positive feedback
- Know that people in your trusted circle won't always "get it right" or say the appropriate thing
- Give those people **constructive feedback** when it's warranted about what you need in a given moment
- And if you receive negative feedback after being vulnerable, find someone to support you while you **process** and **make sense** of it.



Vulnerability is not a weakness;
It's our greatest measure of courage.

BROWN

“Feeling uncomfortable after being vulnerable is normal. Allow yourself to get used to experiencing it in small steps.”

Curb Perfectionism

- Remember: **good** is better than perfect
- Recognize mistakes as an aspect of **growth**, not something to beat yourself up over
- Work to **decrease rumination** about what others are thinking about you and your “non-perfect” performance
- Allow yourself to set **realistic expectations**
- Consider how your **procrastination** may be related to your perfectionism
- **Stop comparing** yourself to others
- Appreciate the beauty of **compromise** and **collaboration**
- Value **self-compassion** and know that it does not impede your performance or accomplishments



“We have to leave perfectionism behind if we’re going to leave Imposter Syndrome behind.”

You are
enough!





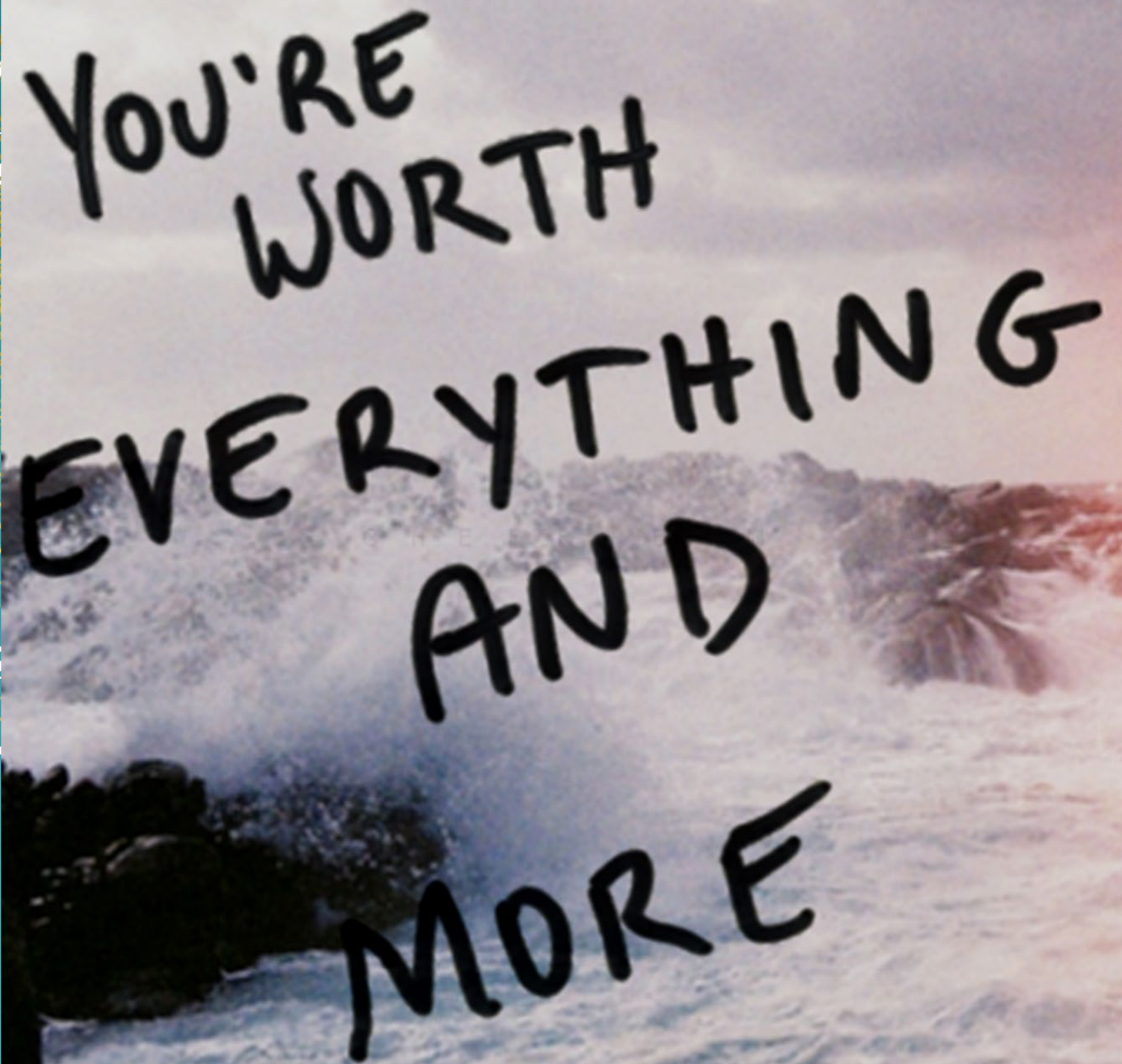
“Not only does every cat know they’re a cat, I think every cat believes firmly, with conviction, that they are the best possible cat, the prime example of a cat, the most cat a cat could be.”

-Jennifer Adcock



Thank You!

Chan McDermott
Workforce Development Coordinator
HHSC – Family Health Services
chan.mcdermott@hhs.texas.gov



YOU'RE
WORTH
EVERYTHING
AND
MORE