

Busting Impostor Syndrome



Beverly Chen, LCSW
Director, Wellbeing Education and Training
Boston University Student Wellbeing

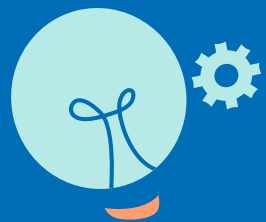
Goals



Describe Impostor Syndrome and How it Impacts You



Identify Five Types of Impostor Syndrome



Strategies for Busting Impostor Syndrome

What is Impostor Syndrome?

“An internal Experience of Intellectual Phoniness” -Dr. Clance and Dr. Ines

Feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy and incompetence despite contradictory evidence

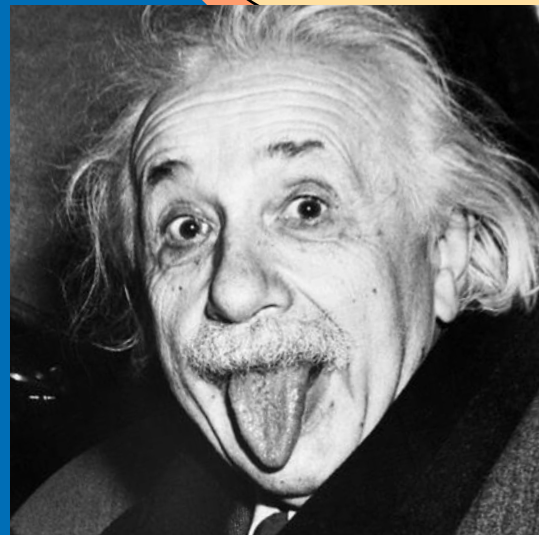
Most common among high achieving people

Amazing People Who Struggle with Impostor Syndrome

“The exaggerated esteem in which my lifework is held makes me very ill at ease.

I feel compelled to think of myself as an involuntary swindler.”

~ Albert Einstein




“I still have a little imposter syndrome. It doesn't go away. That feeling that you shouldn't take the place you're taking. You're not good enough.”

–Michelle Obama

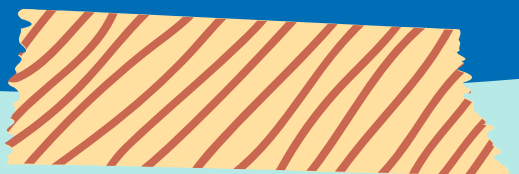
“I have written eleven books, but each time I think, ‘uh oh, they're going to find out now. I've run a game on everybody, and they're going to find me out.’” ~ Maya Angelou



Group Discussion



What unique challenges have you faced in your academic and professional journey?
How have these shaped your view of your own abilities?"

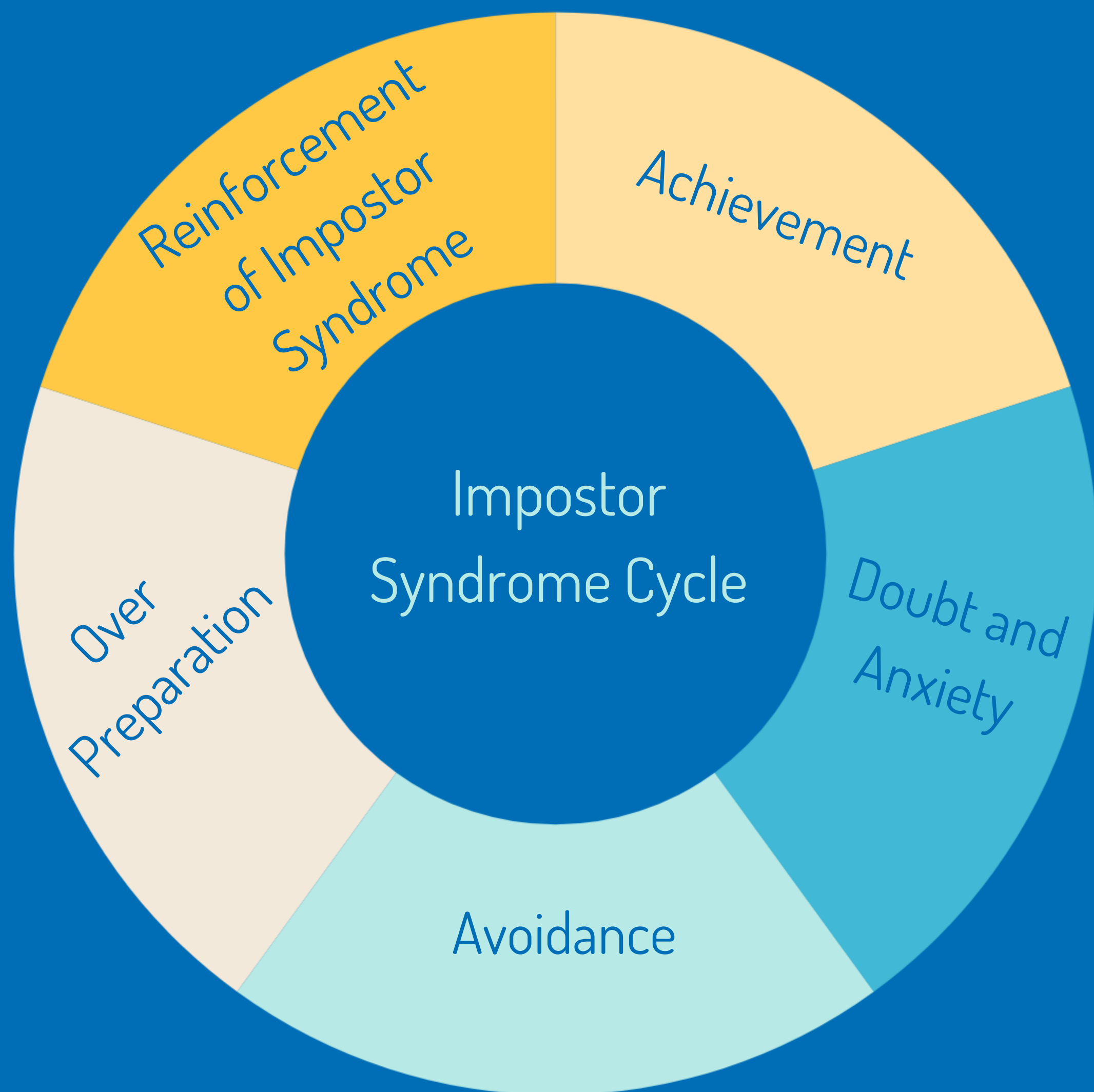


In what ways do external influences—like the educational system, media representations, family upbringing, and cultural expectations—contribute to feelings of impostor syndrome?"

External Influences on Impostor Syndrome

- Cultural expectations
- Lack of role models
- Socioeconomic barriers
- Stereotype threat
- Lack of diversity and inclusivity in academic and professional environments
- Family dynamics
- Peer comparisons
- Mental health stigma





Busting Impostor Syndrome

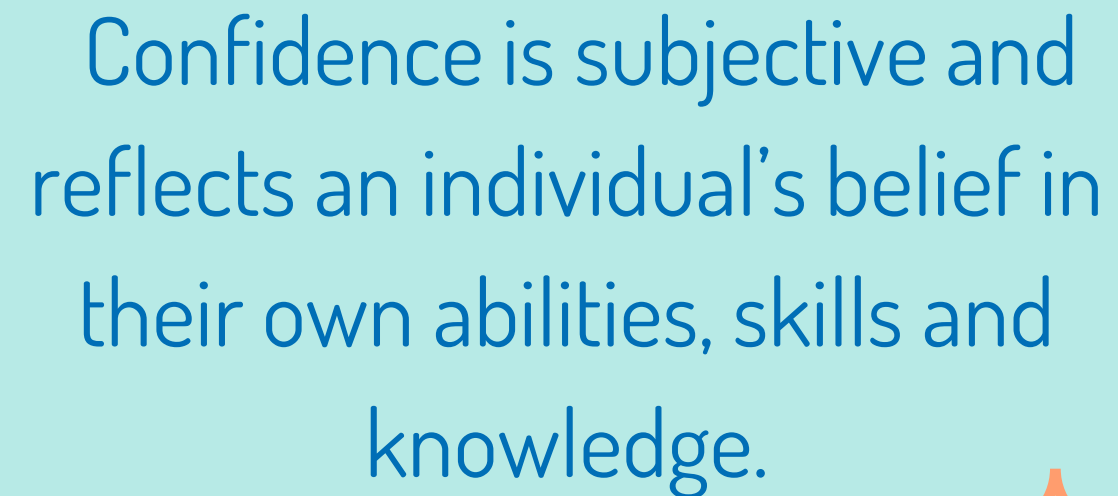


Understand the five types of impostor syndrome and shift your perspective on competence.

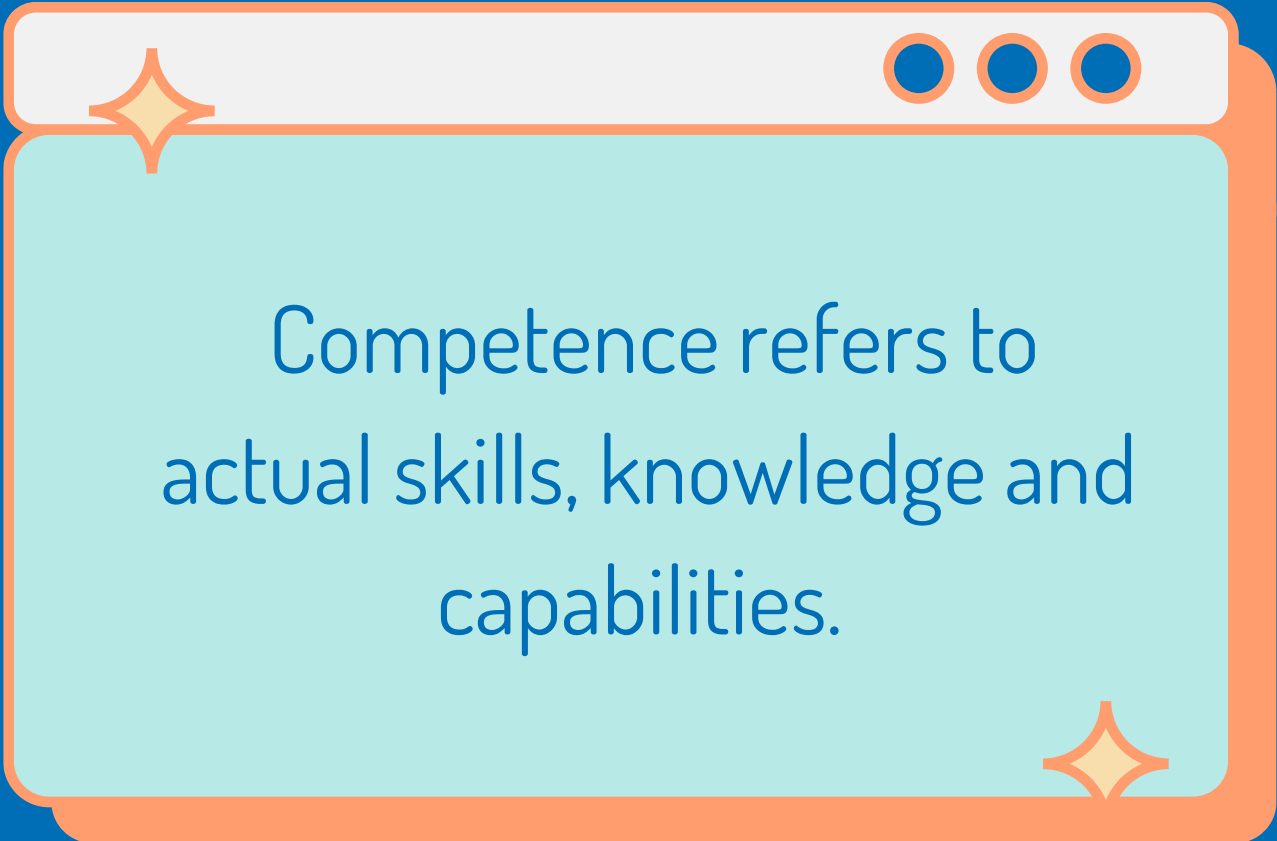
Reframe your thoughts using the TLC method.

Transform an impostor moment into a growth opportunity and keep moving forward!

Confidence vs. Competence



Confidence is subjective and reflects an individual's belief in their own abilities, skills and knowledge.



Competence refers to actual skills, knowledge and capabilities.

How do You Define Competence?

I know I'm competent at _____, when

If I were really smart,

I should always _____.

If I were really qualified, I would_____.

5 Types of Impostor Syndrome

5 Types

Perspective on Competence

● The Perfectionist

I should deliver an unblemished performance 100% of the time.

● The Natural Genius

If I were really smart, I would be able to understand everything the first time I hear it.

● The Rugged Individual

If I were really competent, I could do everything myself.

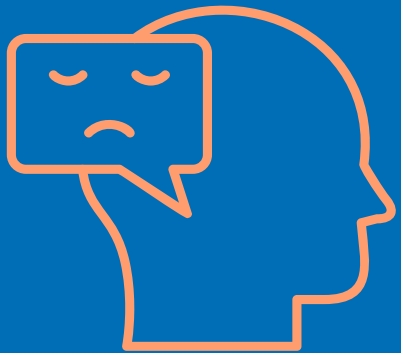
● The Expert

If I were really competent, I would know everything there is to know.

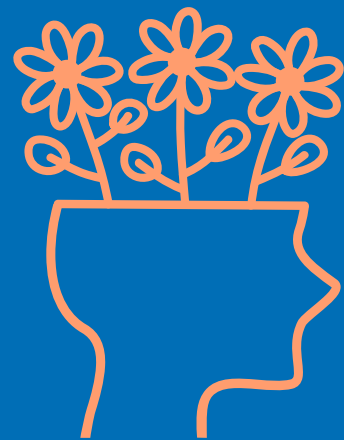
● The Super Student

If I were really competent, I would be able to do it all.

Thoughts & Performance



What is a Performance Inhibiting Thought (PIT)?



What is a Performance Enhancing Thought (PET)?

Reframe Your Thoughts

Performance Inhibiting Thought (PIT)

I chalk up my success to luck,
timing, or other external factors.

I am not very good at this task
so I shouldn't do it.

I worry it is a matter of time that others
will find out I am not as smart or capable
as they think I am.

I shouldn't do it because I might fail.

I can't do it because it has to be perfect!

Performance Enhancing Thought (PET)

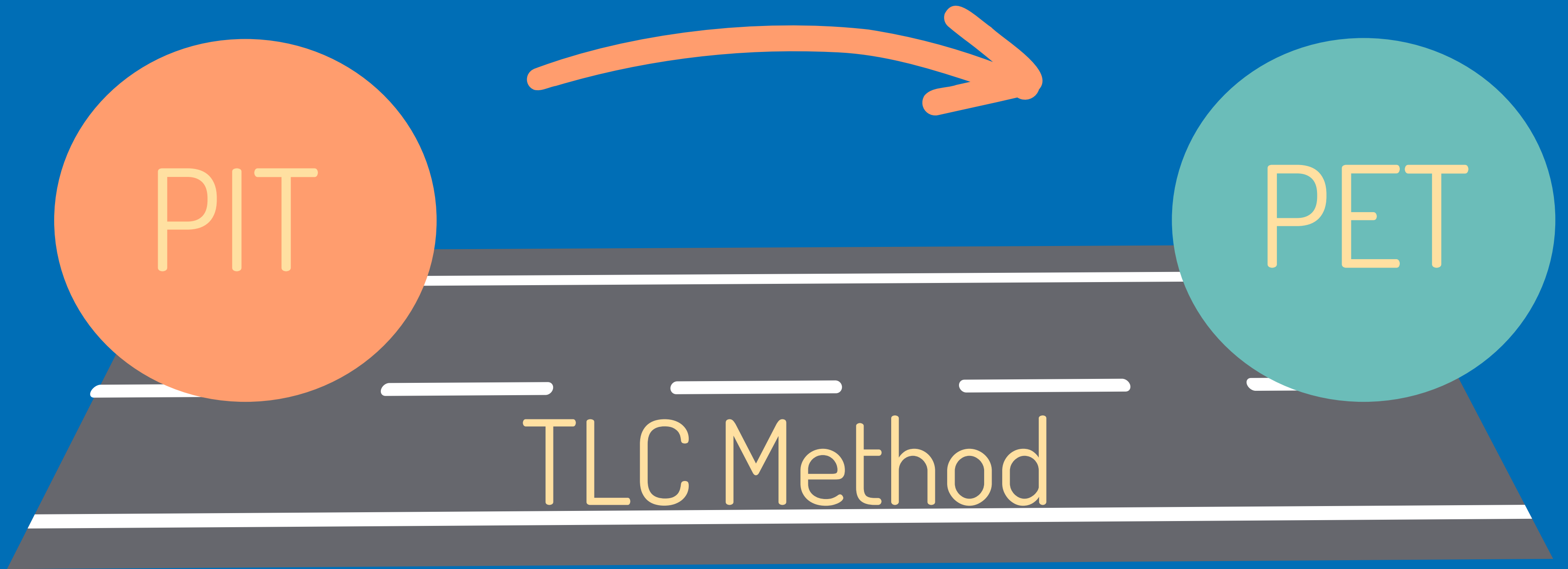
"My success is a combination of
my efforts and the circumstances around me,
which highlights my ability to adapt and seize opportunities.

I am not very good at this YET, but I will continue to learn and
adapt. Doing the task will strengthen my skills and confidence.

When I worry about being discovered,
I can focus on my growth and acknowledge my progress and
contributions.

I will take action because every experience, whether
successful or not, is an opportunity to learn and grow.

I am not perfect, but I can take it one step at a time.
I can do this with a bit of time and support from others.



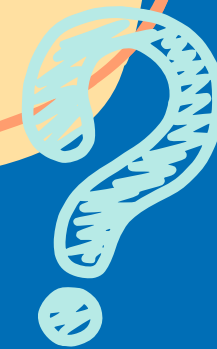
3 Components of “TLC” Question

IS IT TRUE?

(Stick with the facts,
evidence-valid,
reliable, sufficient)

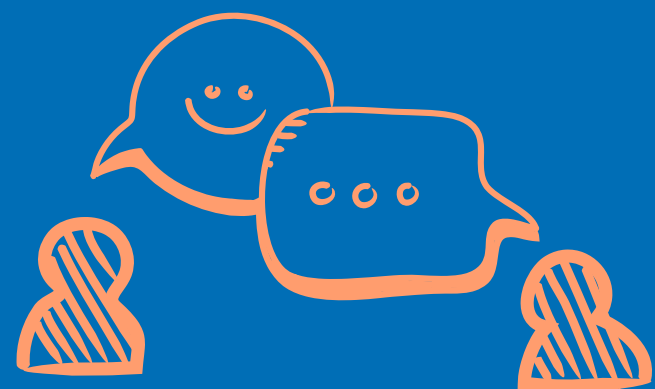


IS IT LOGICAL?



Is it Constructive?
(Does it help me or
others?)





Your Turn!

Share an example
of a PIT.

Share ideas of
how to convert
it into a PET.

Turn Impostor Moments into Growth Opportunities

Act as if you are humble realist

- Focus on progress over perfection
- Don't expect to feel confident 100% of the time
- Keep going regardless of external factors and focus on what you can control
- Focus on the facts:
Your knowledge and skill sets

VS.

Fake it 'til you make it

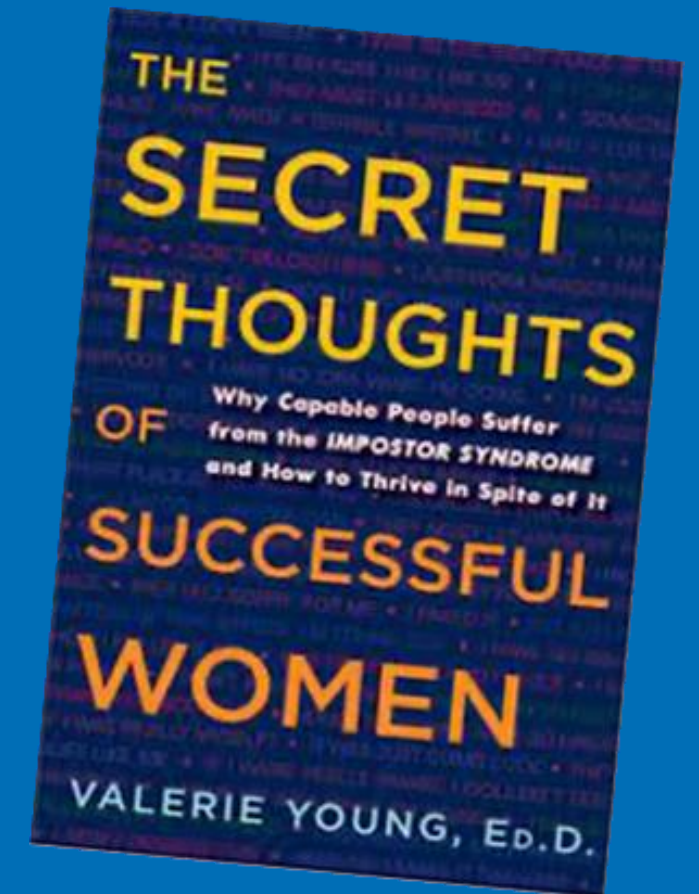
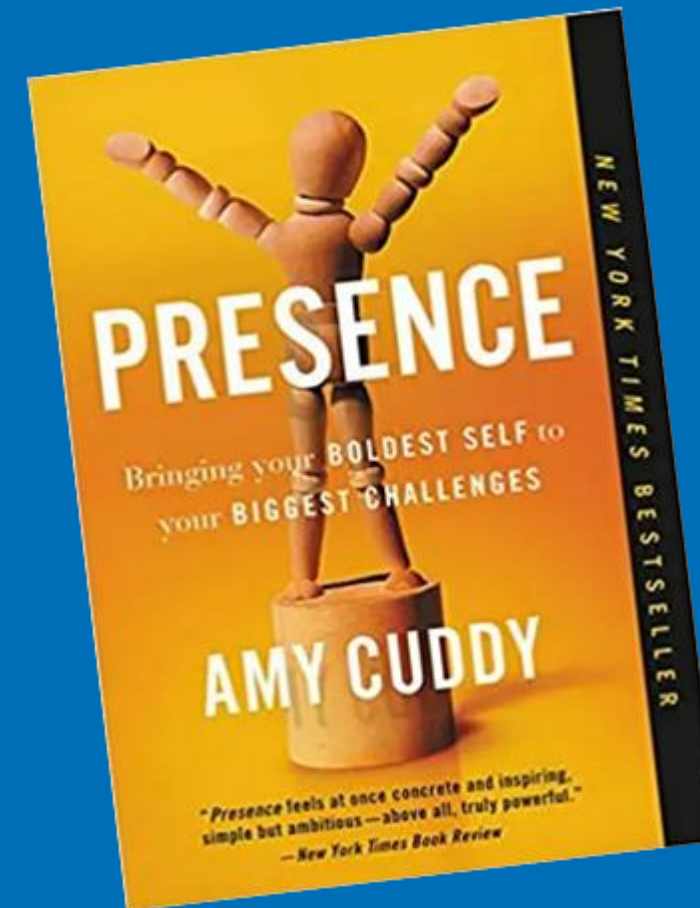
- Ignores weaknesses and limitations
- Overestimates one's abilities and exaggerates one's achievements, potentially leading to reckless risks.
- May lie to cover up mistakes or ineptness

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

“Confident people aren’t any more intelligent, capable, or talented than the rest of us. Instead they think differently about 3 things: Competence, Failure/Mistakes/Criticism, and Fear.”
– Valerie Young

Questions and Resources

- Beverly Chen, LCSW,
bevchen@bu.edu
- Wellbeing Instagram: @bu_wellbeing



Workshop Evaluation



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PARTICIPATION!

2-Min Survey about Resources and Access to Mental Health from SAO



Coming up...

Zentangle 12/12 at 12pm

An easy-to-learn, fun, & meditative art form that involves drawing repetitive "tangles" to create beautiful patterns! Zentangle teaches us how to embrace being present, release perfectionism, and realize that we can all create art.

