



‘That Inner Critic & Imposter Syndrome’

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Friday, 28th March 2025

**A TRADITION OF
INDEPENDENT
THINKING**



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Let's get the most out of this morning



Email: Switch it off & be present



Microphone: When not speaking, please keep it on mute



Camera: If possible, do have your camera on

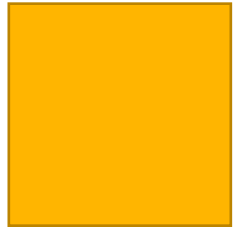


Participate: Just use the 'raise hand' function if you have a question or wish to comment & click to take it down afterwards. The more interactive, the better!



Confidentiality: Everything we discuss is confidential

Introductions.....



- How are you this morning?
- Who are you?
- Where do you work?

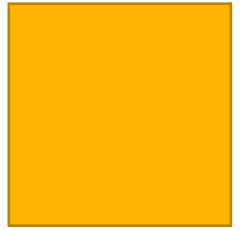


Workshop Objectives



- What is Imposter Syndrome?
- Some symptoms
- Role of Self-Belief
- Growth V Fixed Mind-set
- Triggers
- Strategies to deal with it

Can you answer YES to below?



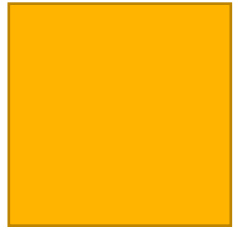
Have you lied or fabricated your

- previous exam results or qualifications?
- experience?
- abilities?

An Imposter = Person who pretends to be somebody else in order to trick people

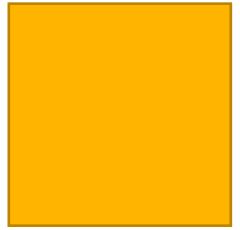
Oxford English Dictionary

Any sound familiar?



1. You won't let go the email/paper/dissertation, you need to keep fixing, redrafting, re-reading it....
2. You are dreading a forthcoming presentation. What if you cannot answer a question or just go blank?
3. You see a job advertised you would love but do not apply. Why not? *'I won't get it, too many others far better.'*
4. You've just been promoted but you are now terrified. What if you are "found out" as being incompetent?
5. You second-guess yourself & avoid putting yourself forward for new opportunities.

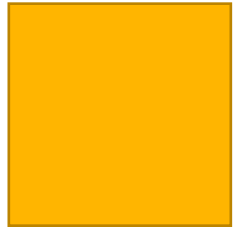
What is Imposter Syndrome?



'That feeling of being a fraud despite **evidence** that you are not'. Hugh Kearns

- Up to 70% of people have suffered from the syndrome at some point. Forbes, 2014
- Between 30-50% of people = consistent imposter feelings that affect what they think, feel & do.
- Usually associated with high performers.
- Affects each of us differently

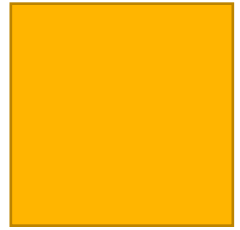
Some common symptoms & feelings



- Feelings of self-doubt
- Fear of failure (consciously or unconsciously)
- Over-preparation for tasks
- A tendency to discount praise
- Feeling like a fraud
- Feeling like you need to be the very best
- Comparing yourself with others

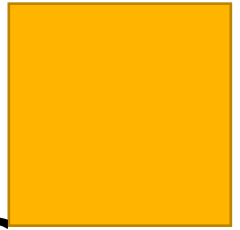


Knowing what it is & is not....



1. Identify an experience, a situation, a time you have felt like an imposter.
2. What symptoms did you feel?
3. Where was the evidence to back up your feelings?
4. Challenge your beliefs - are they providing an evidence-based narrative?

Critical Role of Self-Beliefs



**"Our beliefs control our bodies, our minds,
and thus our lives..."**

(Bruce Lipton, Biology of Belief)

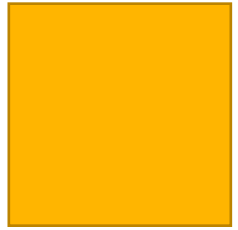
Opponent in our head is much stronger than the opponent opposite.

Ask yourself...*'Do my attitudes and beliefs serve me positively?'*

If not, work to replace negative with positive thoughts.

Best way to get rid of something you **don't** want is to replace it with something you **do** want.

Critical Role of Self-Beliefs (2)

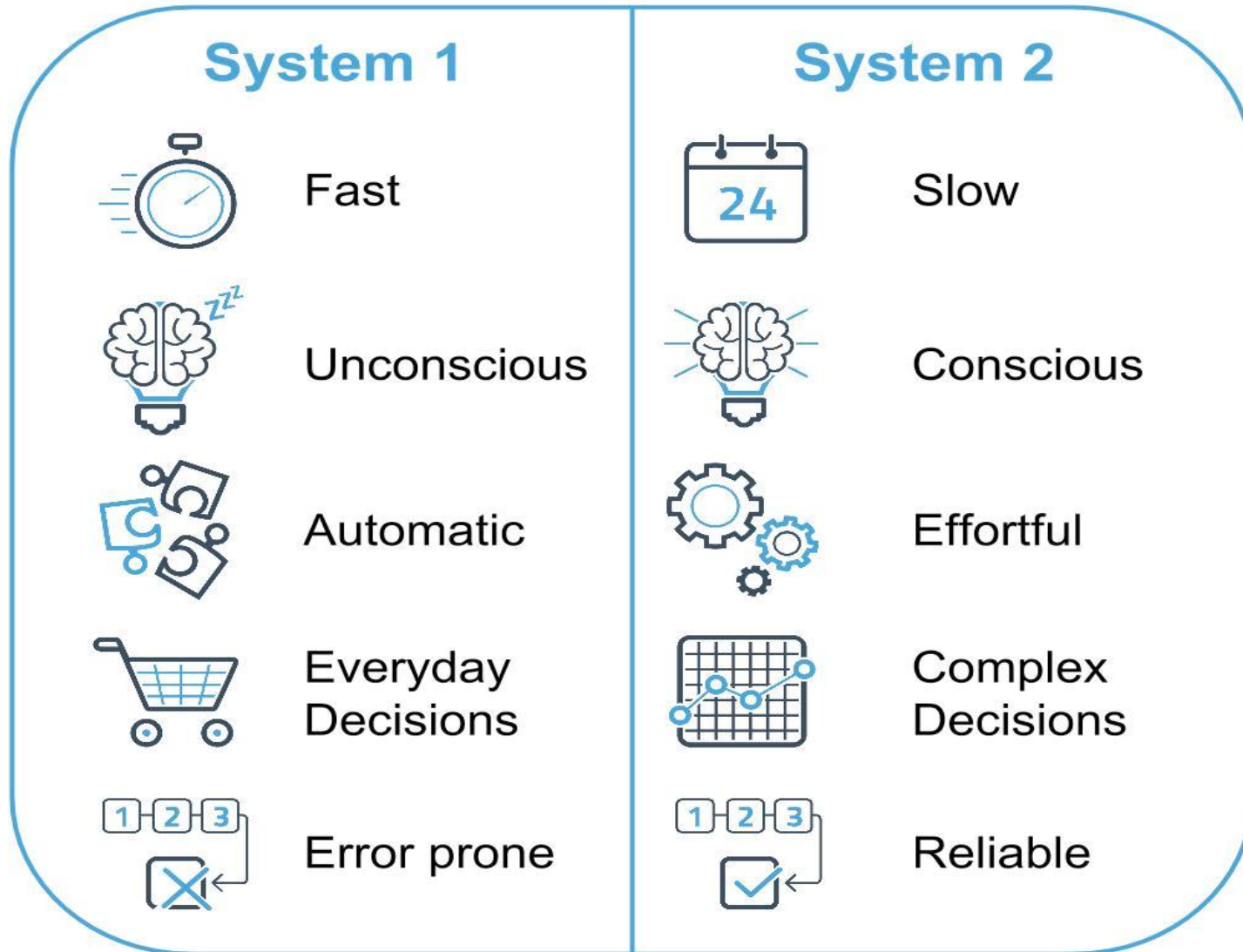


'Greatest revolution of our generation = the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives'. (William James, Philosopher)

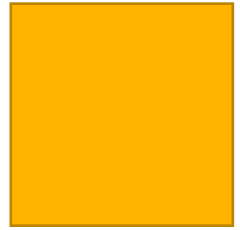
**** It takes practice but you can teach yourself to think more accurately. ****

Challenge your assumptions, your black and white thinking, your mental filters and your tendencies **to jump to conclusions.**

Machine for jumping to conclusions!

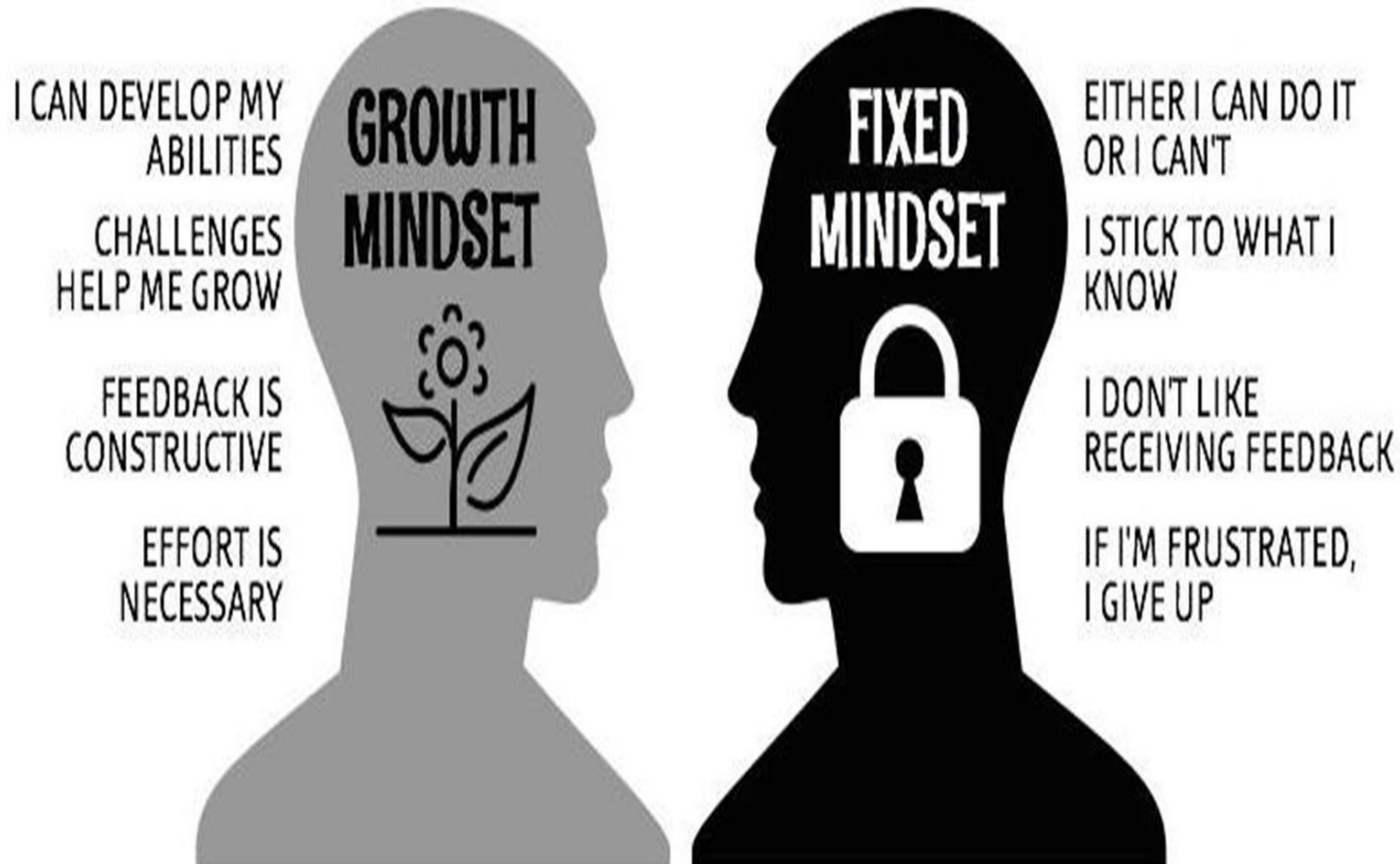


Growth v Fixed Mind-set

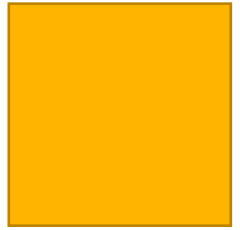


I believe I can

I don't believe I can

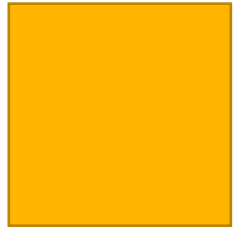


Use of Language



Whenever I am tempted to say,
"I can't" or "I haven't,"
I will say
"I can't YET..." or "I haven't YET..."

How is your language creating your world?



It is hard to get up in the morning.

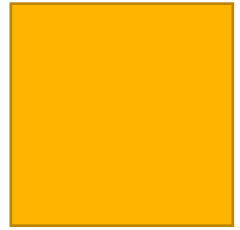
I just can't stop smoking.

I should have mentioned 'x & y' in the interview.

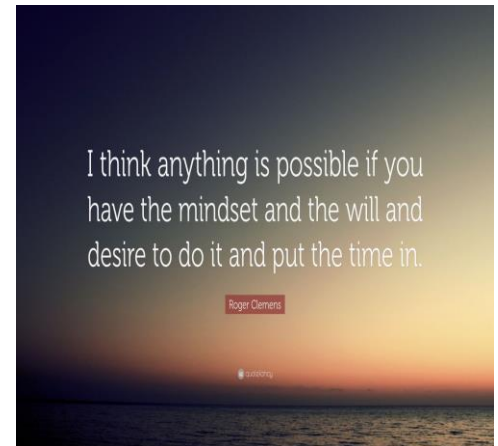
I would never have managed to do that on my own.

(Shouldistic language)

The 'As if' Frame

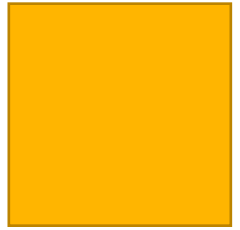


- Think of a situation where you have felt / do feel like an imposter
- Act now as though something were already true - the **positive outcome** has already been achieved and the senses experience it.
- Act "as if" you were.....What would it be like?"
- What would you be thinking, doing and believing differently? How would you be speaking to yourself?



"We see the world not as it is, but as we are." William Shakespeare

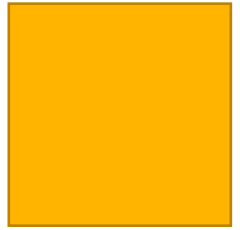
Identify your triggers



Do I self-sabotage?

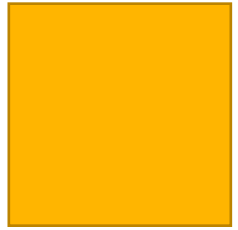
- Perfectionism (high achievers)
 - Giving your best is not the same as 'being the best'
 - Perfectionism is the enemy of the good or just 'good enough'
- Procrastination
- Overcommit

Some Strategies (1)

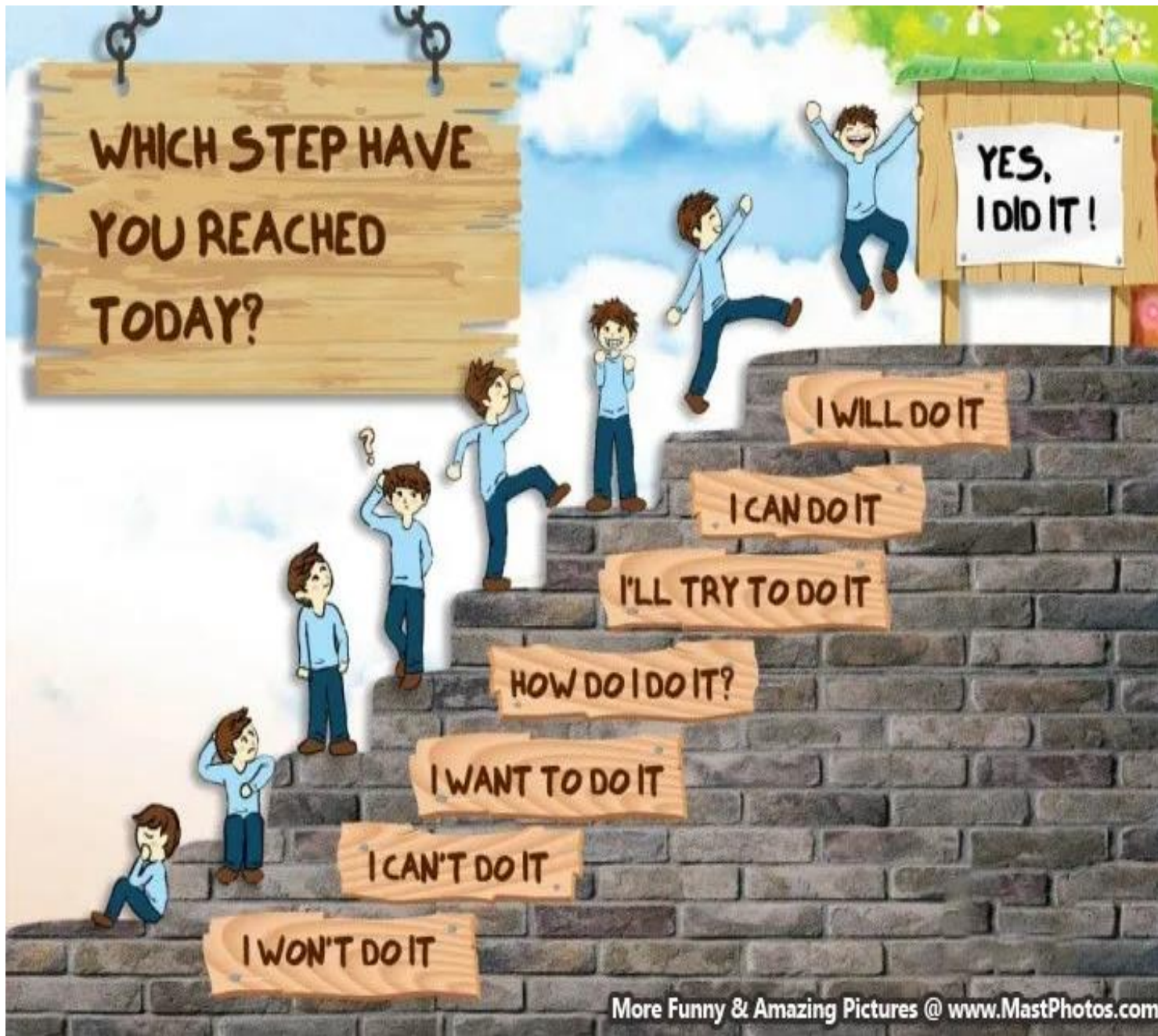


- Identify your triggers
- Be objective / set realistic goals & standards
- Be prepared to make mistakes
- Do not criticise your own performance
- Watch your language - is it positive or negative, fact or fiction?
- Keep a written note of positive feedback, achievements.
- Be brave – what is the worst that can happen? F.A.I.L
- Reflect on what was/wasn't without guilt or blame

Some Strategies (2)



- Recalibrate who you compare yourself to
- Look for support from people outside your circle
- If you're performing, remind yourself of it
- Adjust your definition of competence
- Focus on your strengths & accept your accomplishments
- ** Ask yourself – might COACHING help? **



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A key takeaway for you?



Resources

- The Time Ferriss Show (14 July '21) - [Anne Lamott on Taming your Inner Critic](#)
- All in the Mind BBC 4 (7 January '20) – [Imposter Syndrome](#) (10:22 – 17:48 mins.)
- All in the Mind ABC (February 2022) – [Controlling the chatter in your head](#)
- Mike Cannon-Brookes Ted Talk (21 Dec. '19) - [How you can use Imposter Syndrome to your benefit](#)
- Melody Wilding, HBR (May 2021) [Stop being so hard on yourself](#)
- Sherrie Haynie, Forbes (November 2020), [Why knowing your personality type is critical to a growth-mindset](#)
- Margie Warrell, 'Afraid of Being 'Found Out?' How to Overcome Impostor Syndrome' at: [forbes.com](#) (3 April 2014).
- [Do You Apologize Too Much? | Career Contessa](#)

SUPPORTING UCC STAFF

RESOURCE TREE SHOWING STAFF RESOURCES

The "Acorn to Mighty Oak" has come to symbolise students' academic and professional development journey throughout their time at UCC. We believe this is also true for our staff. In alignment with this rich metaphor, the support services available to our staff are presented in the form of a [Resource Tree](#). This tree depicts the support services and resources available to staff and provides links to further information about each service.

