

Exploring Imposter Syndrome International Women's Day

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Session objectives:

1. Explore the concept of imposter syndrome, how it manifests itself and the impact on the individual
 2. Know why these feelings can occur, in particular recognising situations which can trigger these feelings
 3. Review some of the techniques for overcoming them, and to identify sources of help and support for this
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**You are with some of the brightest,
most gifted and talented people.**



Imposter Phenomenon to Imposter Syndrome

*1978 article by Professor Paulene Clance and Dr Suzanne A. Imes
Georgia State University*

- Interviews with 150 high achieving women
 - Recognised for their excellence and academic achievements (ranking and testing)
 - Despite external validation, these women lacked the internal acknowledgement of their accomplishments and abilities
 - Individual experience of self-perceived intellectual phoniness (fraud)
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Imposter syndrome is:

- Psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent, internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud
- Fear that your true abilities will be found out
- Feeling of not being good enough
- Feeling that other people have an inflated perception of your abilities
- Incorrectly attributing success to luck.

Imposter syndrome is:

- Persistent tendency to attribute success to factors such as luck
 - Not deserving of what you have achieved
 - Feeling of self-doubt – even when you are very well qualified and able
 - Collection of feelings or attitudes around not being good enough which can undermine your confidence.
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Impact:

1. Increased levels of stress and anxiety
2. Over-preparing
3. Incredibly high standards
4. Own worst/hardest critic
5. Work longer and harder
6. Holding back – playing safe (fear not good enough)
7. Undermine the value of their work
8. Fatigue

Ref: Clance and Imes/Collins

What feelings are typically associated with Imposter Syndrome?

1. Fear of failure
2. I must not fail
3. Feeling like a fake
4. Feel as though you just got lucky
5. Feel as though they're not good enough or as good as they should be
6. Denial or discounting praise
7. Feeling fear and/or guilt about success

Feelings of Imposter Syndrome may come from:

- Family dynamics-early messages (praise, recognition, feedback)
- Frequently compared to others (siblings or close relatives)
- Being identified by teachers as being gifted
- Bias (unconscious or implicit bias)
- Not living up to the expectations of your family, community, self
- The first professional in your family, the first to go to university
- The first to hold a particular job
- High achieving/outstanding parents
- Feeling that you have to live up to the expectations of others
- Always under pressure to achieve
- Having achieved success unusually early or easily
- Working in creative activities or who work alone

Ref: M. Collins

Q. What are the reasons or excuses for success?

- They were lucky
 - It was just good timing
 - They were desperate to appoint someone
 - They received a lot of help
 - What a fluke
 - I was successful only because I worked so hard
- No mention of deserving it, or talent / capability

(Ref: M. Collins, *Beyond Imposter Syndrome*)

Techniques / ideas

1. Awareness-recognise the feelings you have.
 2. Write down your thoughts, feelings and ideas.
 3. Write down what you have achieved (exams, qualifications, awards, work, home).
 4. What would your best friend say if asked about what you have achieved.
 5. Reconsider perception of failure-view failure as a step on the journey towards success.
 6. Don't set such incredibly high standards (all the time).
 7. Allowable permission-good enough is ok.
 8. Show self some compassion (be a less hard self-critic).
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Techniques/ideas

9. Reaffirm self worth (and check the facts).
 10. Reframe thinking (from negative to positive).
 11. Move beyond imposter and be the best version of yourself.
 12. Life/situational positions and choice.
 13. Give self and others feedback (positive feedback).
 14. Accept genuine positive feedback (and thank people).
 15. Thinking fast and slow (system 2 thinking).
 16. Allowable permissions.
 17. Top 10 achievements-write them down (and keep them handy).
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Strategies

1. Decide to change.
2. Recognise and anticipate when your imposter appears.
3. Use your logical brain to reduce imposter feelings.
4. Have a plan for more helpful behaviours.
5. Think more helpful thoughts.
6. Show yourself some compassion.
7. Impulse control-take a deep breath/pause
8. Test/try new ideas.

(Ref: M. Collins, Beyond Imposter Syndrome)

MINDSET

<https://your.mindset.co.uk/d24d6330ca789d75730c206af1f711a6/>



Next time you walk into a room and feel like an imposter, remember 70% of people feel the same (so there are probably several imposters already in the room)