

dcm

Member Webinar

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome





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About Me

Passionate about supporting individuals become more effective, fulfilled, happier and healthier in their personal and professional life.



Webinar Session

Outline

- Defining Imposter Syndrome
- Recognising Its Strengths
- Learning Strategies To Overcome It



What Is Imposter Syndrome?



Imposter Syndrome

A phenomenon also called 'Perceived fraudulence',

It is the persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of competence,

It represents a conflict between your self perception and how others see you.

It is not a medical diagnosis but a valid psychological phenomenon.

First documented in high achieving women in the 1970's by Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imess.





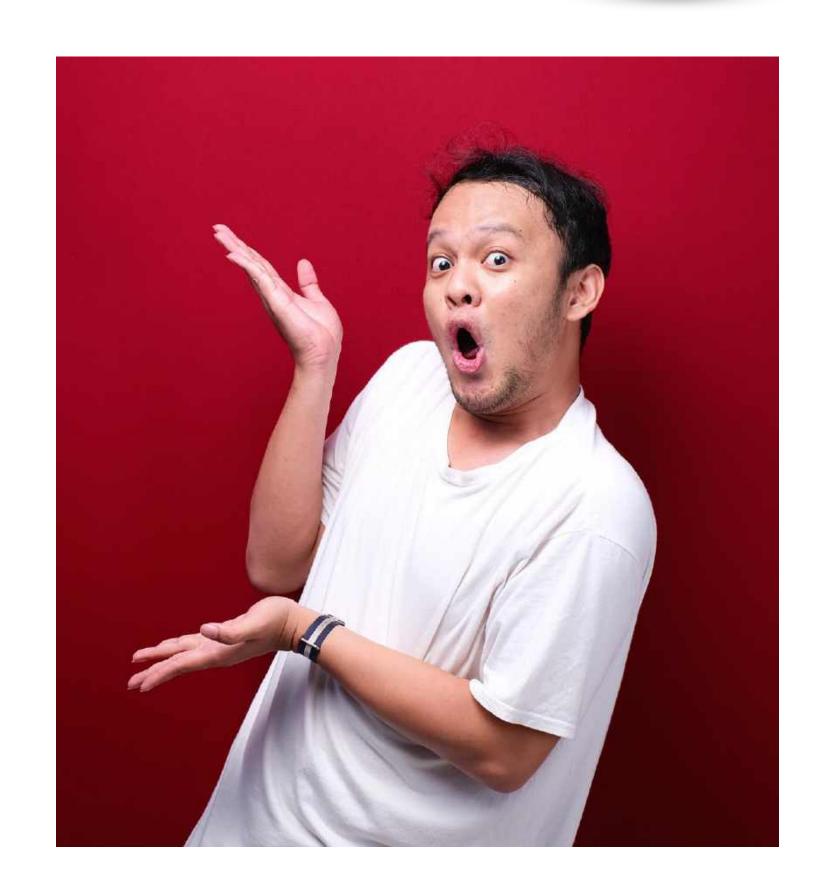
Prevalence

An estimated 70% of professionals experience imposter syndrome at some point in their careers.

While it affects individuals across all industries, leaders and high achievers are particularly vulnerable.

More common during life transitions: promotions, career changes, academic environments, or underrepresented roles.

Ref. International Journal of Behavioural Science.





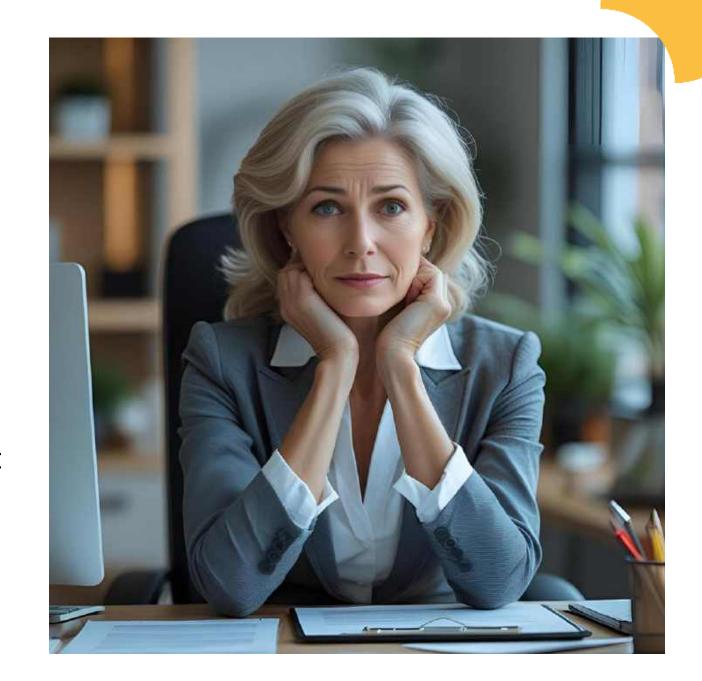
Contributing Factors

Leaders

Often operate under intense scrutiny.

The pressure to appear infallible, coupled with the expectation to consistently deliver results, creates the perfect breeding ground for imposter syndrome.

Research indicates that this phenomenon is particularly prevalent among high-achieving female executives, affecting their career progression and overall well-being.





Contributing Factors

Rapid Career Progression

Moving up the ranks quickly can create feelings of inadequacy.

Workplace Culture

Environments that equate success with constant high performance leave little room for vulnerability.

Comparison Trap

Social media and professional networks amplify comparisons, making even the most accomplished leaders feel like they don't measure up.





5 Imposter Types

The Perfectionist



Holds themselves to impossibly high standards and feels like a failure if they don't meet them.

The Superhuman

Pushes themselves to work harder and longer than others to prove they're not a fraud.

The Natural Genius

Believes they should excel effortlessly and feels inadequate if they struggle to master something.

The Soloist

Prefers to work alone, fearing that asking for help will expose their perceived incompetence.

The Expert

Constantly seeks new certifications and knowledge, feeling like they never know enough to be truly qualified.

Research by Dr. Valerie Young

5 Imposters



Poll

Which of these Imposters resonates most with you?



How To Identify It



Signs

Negative self talk

Avoidant of situations

Procrastination/self sabotage

Rumination of mistakes

Prone to burnout



I'm not smart enough

I'm not good enough

I don't have what it takes

I don't belong there

I can't do that

Men/Women don't take me seriously

My identity holds me back

I need to know everything before I start

I have to prove myself

I'll let myself down

Everyone here knows more than me

I'm just good at pretending





Where Does It Show Up



In work

In sport

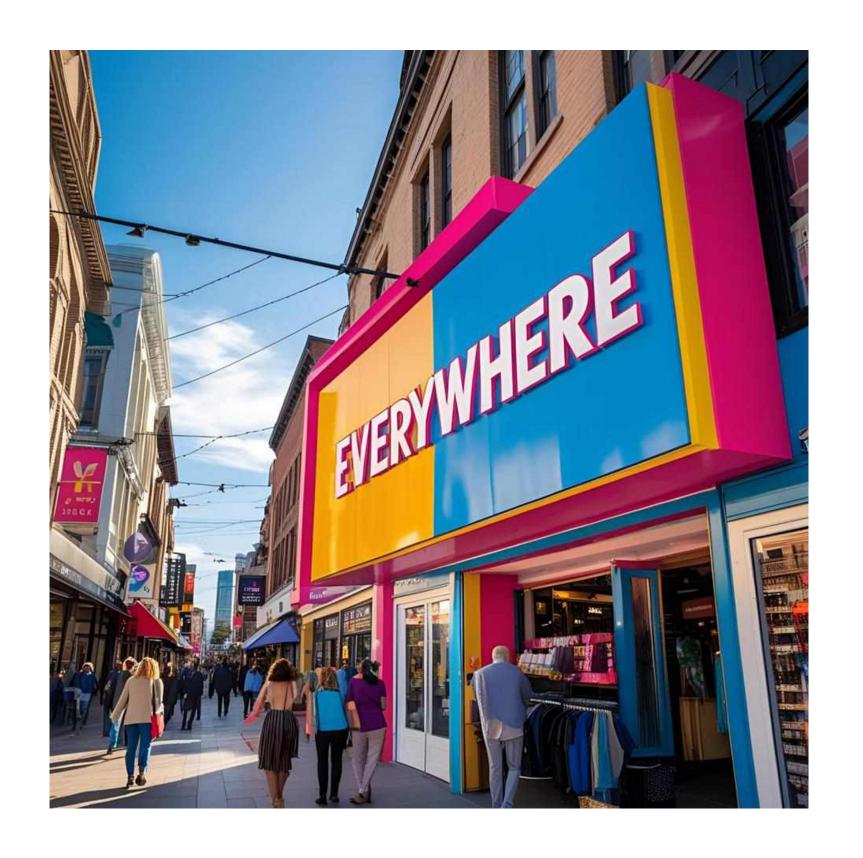
In relationships

In parenting

New beginnings

Transitions

Widespread across gender, culture and profession





New job

I'm not who they think I am, I don't belong here
If I ask questions they will think I'm incompetent.

Promotion

They'll find out I'm not good enough

Achievement

I got lucky. I had lots of help

Male/Female dominant workplace

I don't belong here. Nobody will take me seriously



dem | Member Event

Minority

younger employee in team//disabled/gender identity/race etc.

I don't fit in or deserve to be here

Sport

Just because I play well at the club doesn't mean I can in a big game. I just got lucky. The team carried me.

Relationships

He/She/They will soon see the real me.

Transition

University – first in family to go to university, I don't deserve this, I don't fit in here. I only got here because of my minority status.

I'm a professional why am I finding retirement/being a new parent so hard. I'm a failure





Many highly accomplished and recognisable

public figures have openly admitted

to experiencing Imposter Syndrome,

despite their success.



Maya Angelou – Writer & Poet

"I have written eleven books, but each time I think, 'Uh-oh, they're going to find out now.'.

Michelle Obama – Former First Lady of the United States

"It doesn't go away, that feeling that you shouldn't take me that seriously. What do I know?

Sheryl Sandberg – COO of Meta (Facebook) & Author

"There are still days when I wake up feeling like a fraud, not sure I should be where I am."

Emma Watson – Actor & UN Ambassador

"It's almost like the better I do, the more my feeling of inadequacy actually increases."





A reminder that

Imposter Syndrome is not a sign of incompetence,

but often a sign of growth.



Imposter Syndrome Strengths



Drive for Excellence

Go the extra mile in preparation and detail

Hold themselves to high standards

This can lead to strong performance—but needs to be balanced to avoid burnout.

Strength: High work ethic and strong motivation to improve

Strengths

Self-Awareness

Regularly self-reflect. Stay aware of their learning gaps.

Avoid overconfidence or arrogance

Strength: Humility and openness to feedback

Empathy for Others

Make you more compassionate toward others who struggle. Lead to supportive team behaviour and inclusiveness

Strength: Greater emotional intelligence and team cohesion.



Interpersonal Skills

Often excel in interpersonal relationships—because they compensate by connecting better with others.

Strength: Better communication and relationship-building.

Strengths

Growth-Oriented Thinking

Constantly learn and improve, Avoid complacency, Seek mentorship and collaboration

Strength: Lifelong learning mindset and strong development habits

Resilience and Grit

Build confidence through action. Strengthen resilience over time.

Strength: Courage and perseverance in uncertainty.



Strategies To Overcome Imposter Syndrome



Reframe Success

Instead of attributing achievements to luck or external factors, focus on effort, skill and experience.

Keep a "success log" to remind yourself of past wins.

Evidence of what you have achieved – qualifications, awards, feedback

Shown to reinforce self-belief and help in performance reviews. *Bennett, 2014; Goleman, 1995*





Confidence Builder Prompts

What small wins did I have today?

What have I learned or improved in the last month?

What feedback or compliment have I recently received?

What evidence do I have that I belong in my role?





Tame Your Inner Critic

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Investigate, label and challenge your thoughts.

Ask - Is it true?

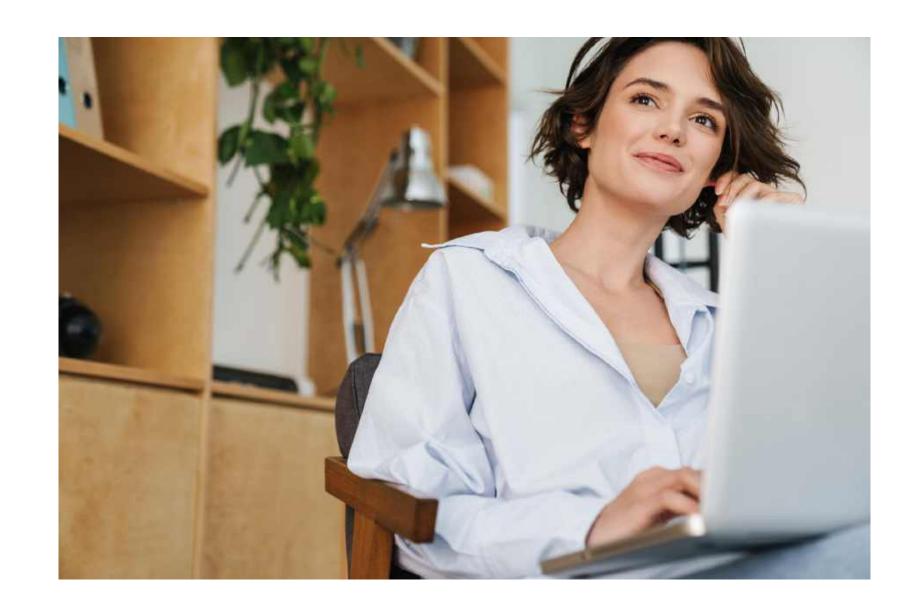
Where does that belief come from?

Is it helpful?

Reframe it – what's a more balanced and realistic version?

Ask what would I say to a friend in this situation.

Use positive language (present tense I am...)





Body Before Brain

Standing in a posture of confidence changes how you feel

Amy Cuddy's Power Posing (2012)





Imposter syndrome doesn't go away by ignoring it.

It diminishes as you name it, normalise it, and replace it with intentional, repeated evidence-based practices.







QUESTIONS & ANSWERS?

Ask Away.

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