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Member  
Event

# 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

# 5 Imposters

## **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*

# 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





## 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

# 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

## **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.

# Strengths

## **Interpersonal Skills**

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

Strength: Better communication and relationship-building.

## **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

## Tame Your Inner Critic

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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