



YOU'RE NOT A FRAUD: OVERCOME IMPOSTER SYNDROME, LEAD AUTHENTICALLY, AND BOOST PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

**A WEBINAR FOR SUPERVISORS FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

June 28, 2023

INTRODUCTION

“I have spent my years since Princeton, while at law school and in my various professional jobs, not feeling completely a part of the worlds I inhabit. I am always looking over my shoulder wondering if I measure up.”



Sonia Sotomayor
U.S. Supreme Court Justice

OBJECTIVES

- Define imposter syndrome and its origins
- Discuss the original study on the concept and what we've learned
- Explore how to manage symptoms and use imposter syndrome to our advantage
- Review the pros and cons of having imposter thoughts
- Know how to prevent impostor syndrome and coach our teams

SECTION 1

DEFINITION, ORIGIN, AND WHO IT AFFECTS

DEFINITION

A psychological condition characterized by persistent doubt concerning one's abilities or accomplishments accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of one's ongoing success.

Examples of imposter thoughts:

No one in this meeting believes I'm capable of leadership.

Soon they will realize how terrible at this I really am.

I was really excited for this opportunity, but now that I'm here, I'm not sure what to do.

I don't belong in this position, I just got lucky.

Everyone deserves to be here but me.

This is the evaluation where they are going to tell me I'm failing at this job.

ORIGIN



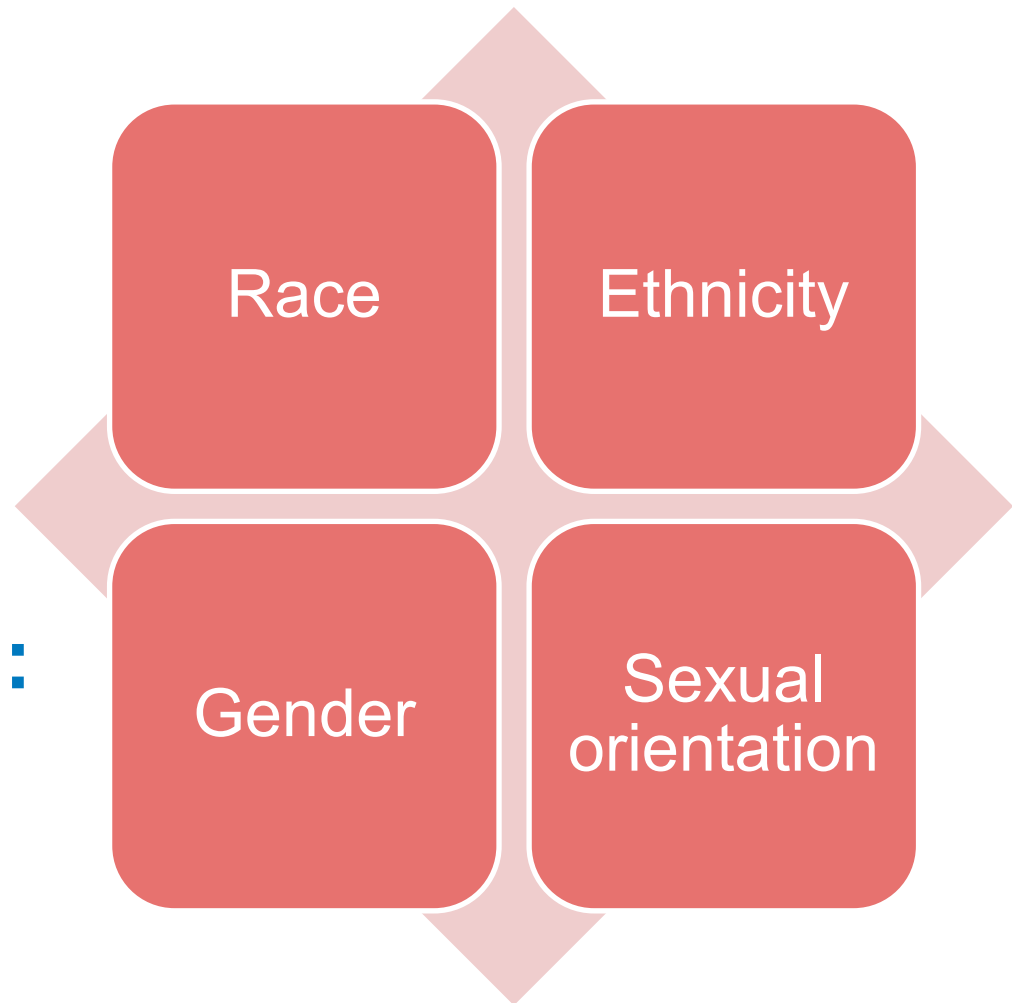
The early
1970s

Pauline Clance and Susan Imes studied successful working women for five years and published a book on their findings:

The Imposter Phenomenon

WHO IT AFFECTS

Likelihood of feeling like a “fraud” depends on factors such as:



SECTION 2

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES

“I’m a work in prog-mess.”

– Ted Lasso

Examples



Seen more favorably by others



Better eye contact, listening, and collaboration skills

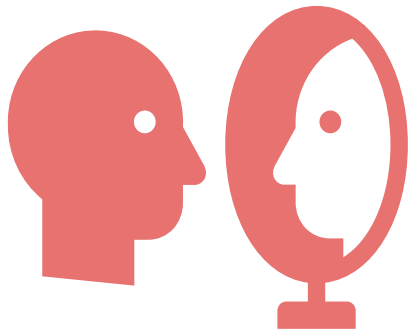


View challenges as opportunities to gain more confidence

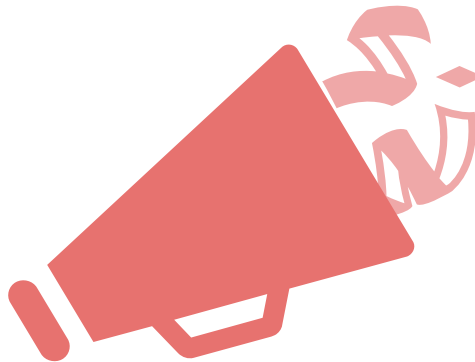


Willing to learn new skills

USING IMPOSTER THOUGHTS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE



Embrace your
insecurities

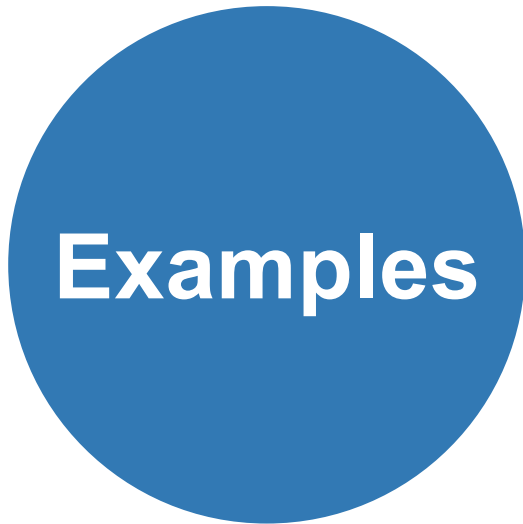


Be your own
cheerleader



Acknowledge
accomplishments

DISADVANTAGES



At home: A parent may struggle to make effective parenting choices



At school: Students may do poorly on tests, inadvertently stifle learning opportunities, be afraid to speak up or ask questions



In relationships: Feel less worthy in a relationship and may sabotage it for fear of being found out



At work: Less likely to pursue promotions due to feeling lesser than a colleague; may credit achievements to luck rather than skills

SECTION 3

TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE IMPOSTER THOUGHTS



TECHNIQUE 1

Empty Chair

– Theory:

The notion that our mind imprints the messages we tell ourselves

Introducing the critic imprint to a confident, proud, and successful imprint helps integrate the opposing sides and leads to creating a new pathway that feels less conflicted about success



TECHNIQUE 2

Challenge imposter thoughts with realistic ones

Instead of:

- When I lead staff meetings, my employees see how unqualified I really am.
- I'm going to get a bad score on my performance evaluation.

Try:

- It's okay to not know everything. It takes time to adjust to a new position and I will learn and grow as I go.
- I know I've had more successes than failures in the past year. The successful work I do will speak for itself.



TECHNIQUE 2

Challenge imposter thoughts with realistic ones

Instead of:

- My peers on social media look so stylish and put together. I bet they don't make mistakes at work.

Try:

- My social media profiles display only what I choose to show, which is just one or two of the best versions of me.

I bet the same is true of most people, so I shouldn't compare myself to only what others choose to show about themselves.



TECHNIQUE 3

Thought stopping

- Close your eyes and imagine a red stop sign or stop light
- Say the word “stop” firmly and with conviction in your mind or out loud
- Inhale, when you exhale, say the word “calm” to yourself
- Let your muscles relax and image a peaceful scene
- Repeat these steps 3 or 4 times until you no longer have the thoughts

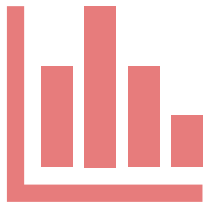


TECHNIQUE 4

5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Grounding

- Relax
- Look around and identify 5 things you can **see**
 - For this and the next four senses, describe each thing in detail in your mind
- Find 4 things you can **feel**
- Find 3 things you can **hear**
- Identify 2 things you can **smell**
- Observe 1 thing you can **taste**





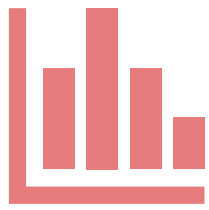
How grounded do you feel after this exercise?

TECHNIQUE 5

Celebrate accomplishments

- Keep a record of your successes
- Frame your awards and certificates
- Save emailed compliments or write them in a journal
- Relish memories of past successes





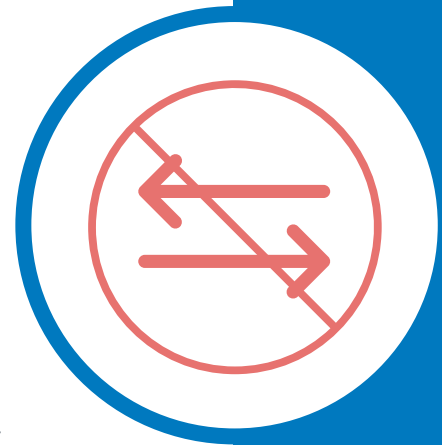
***In one or two words,
share what you are most
proud of or a success
that came to mind?***

TECHNIQUE 6

Stop comparing

Comparison is the death of joy.
– Mark Twain

-
- Remind yourself that intelligent and successful people are most likely to have imposter thoughts
 - Tell yourself that actual frauds don't question whether they measure up or deserve success
 - Use your ideal as inspiration to look inward for your natural talents and as motivation to continue working toward challenges



TECHNIQUE 7

Phone a friend

Ask trusted colleagues how they perceive you

- Tell them specifically about the feelings you have
- Ask how they think your workmates perceive your role in the agency and the services you provide



SECTION 4

PREVENTION AND COACHING

HELP EMPLOYEES CURB IMPOSTER THOUGHTS

Ask about earned successes

Provide education and training

Normalize imposter thoughts

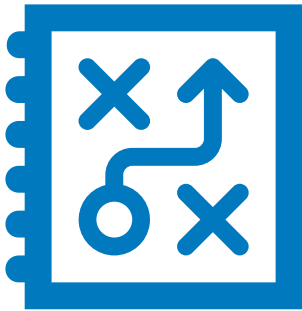
Remind employees that failure is part of the learning process

Investigate why employees doubts themselves

Foster diverse leadership and personality styles

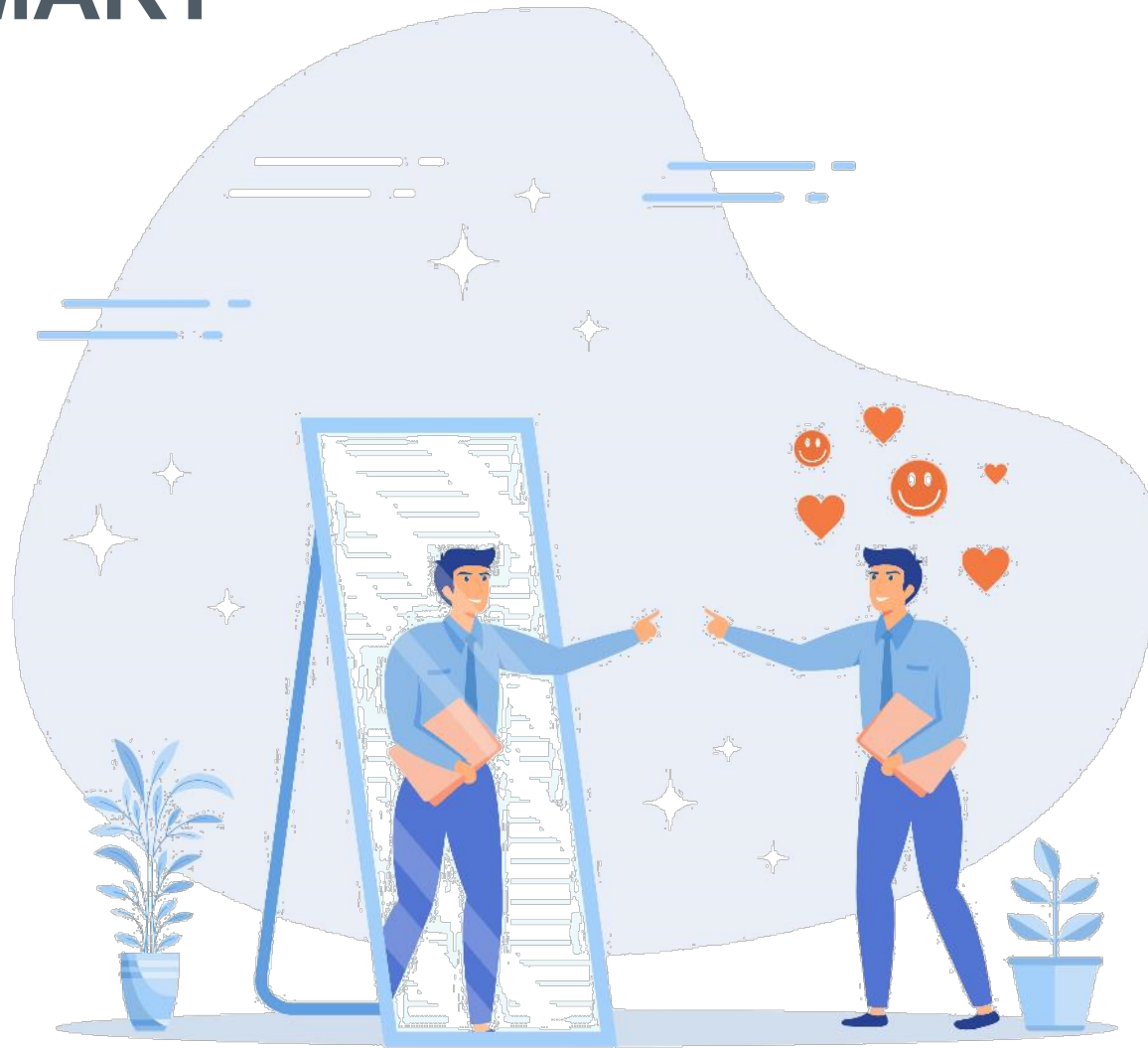
Point out the effects that bias can have on confidence

CREATE A COACHING PLAN TO HELP NEW EMPLOYEES



- What are the "new" things the employee needs to learn?
 - Which one will be harder than others?
- How will you phase coaching, support, and expected independence accordingly?
 - What needs to happen in the first two weeks, next three months, and beyond?
- Where will you provide targeted training, draw on other leaders or the employees' peers, or expect the employee to pursue self-directed learning?
- Does the employee know where they're accountable for their own development, while also feeling comfortable asking for help?
- What does success look like in 30, 90, 120 days?
 - How will goals be course-corrected as organizational needs and context evolve?

SUMMARY



RESOURCES

Web Articles

- End Imposter Syndrome in Your Workplace
 - hbr.org/2021/07/end-imposter-syndrome-in-your-workplace
- Feel Like a Fraud?
 - apa.org/gradpsych/2013/11/fraud
- How to Overcome Impostor Phenomenon
 - apa.org/monitor/2021/06/cover-impostor-phenomenon
- Unconscious Bias Training that Works
 - hbr.org/2021/09/unconscious-bias-training-that-works

Online Tools

- Implicit Association Test
 - implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
- Unconscious Bias Training from Microsoft
 - microsoft.com/en-us/inclusion-journey/learn

Podcast

- Your Insecurities Aren't What You Think They Are
 - podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/your-insecurities-arent-what-you-think-they-are/id1346314086?i=1000523780269

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