

Navigating Insecurities in Graduate School



8/15/22

Presenters: Maddie Armstrong (she|her|hers)

Session Scope & Facilitator Roles

Scope

60 minute meetings are an introduction, with resources to dig deeper!

Roles

We are peer facilitators, here to help guide participants' discovery.

Session Norms



Please have video on, if possible



Stay muted unless speaking



To ask questions: use “raise your hand” during “Questions” slides **OR** use chat, and we will answer during “Questions” slides



Be respectful, be curious

Preview Program Organizers & Presenters



Maddie
Armstrong



Danielle
De La Pascua



Jack
Buckner



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Fairbanks



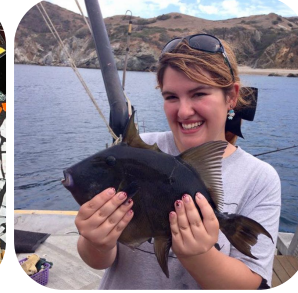
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Murphy



Jasen
Liu

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Week 1	1 Icebreakers, overview of program 	2	3	4	5 Workshop: Emailing possible advisors 
Week 2	8 Describing research interests 	9	10	11	12 Workshop: Writing research statements 
Week 3	15 Navigating insecurities in graduate school 	16 Watch Session 5: Is this Right for Me? Video	17	18 Graduate student panel 	19 Workshop: Writing personal statements

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Learning Objectives

1. Define imposter syndrome
2. Recognize their own imposter moments and feelings
3. Combat imposter moments and feelings with specific strategies

What is imposter syndrome?

The psychological pattern where an individual doubts their talents or accomplishments and has persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud



Which of the following is NOT a sign that someone may be struggling with imposter syndrome?

- A. Consistent thoughts of being “found out”
- B. The need to be perfect at all times
- C. Understanding that there is room for growth
- D. Belief that award/recognition was a mistake or just luck
- E. Refusing to ask for help out of fear of looking stupid



Am I struggling with imposter syndrome?

Automatic and persistent negative thoughts re work or school:

- Anxiety when facing new challenges or evaluation
- Comparing your success to that of others
- Feeling that you don't deserve your awards/accolades
- Doubtful of your passion/purpose/why



Attempting to prove to yourself and others that you are good enough



If I were really competent, I'd be able to do it all and do it well.



IF I WERE REALLY SMART, I WOULD ALREADY KNOW EVERYTHING.

I NEED TO KNOW HOW TO DO THIS.

True competence is equal to my own, unassisted success.

I must do everything myself!



If I were really competent, it would all come quickly and easily.



Marginalization & Imposter Syndrome

Individuals from marginalized backgrounds often experience systemic bias and oppression, escalating feelings of imposter syndrome. Some examples of this:

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Individuals from marginalized backgrounds often experience systemic bias and oppression, escalating feelings of imposter syndrome. Some examples of this:

- Unfairness & mistreatment leading to higher turnover
- Biases & microaggressions escalating feelings of self doubt and damaging feelings of self worth
- Lack of representation, leading to lack of role models and feelings of isolation

Imposter Syndrome as a Systemic Issue

Imposter Syndrome as a Systemic Issue

<https://hbr.org/2021/02/stop-telling-women-they-have-imposter-syndrome>

Diversity And Inclusion

Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome

For many women, feeling like an outsider isn't an illusion — it's the result of systemic bias and exclusion. by Ruchika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey

February 11, 2021



Marysia Machulska

Imposter Syndrome as a Systemic Issue

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Why Imposter Syndrome Hits Underrepresented Identities Harder, And How Employers Can Help

Rebekah Bastian Contributor 

I write about culture, equity and belonging in the workplace.

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Nov 26, 2019, 01:02pm EST

Microaggressions

There is a direct correlation between the identities that feel imposter syndrome the most acutely and those that experience the most [microaggressions](#)—brief queries, comments or actions in day-to-day life that target marginalized groups. This makes sense, since a lot of microaggressions hit at the same doubts and feelings of self worth that drive imposter syndrome. For example, an employee from an underrepresented population might get mistaken for being in a lower job level than they really are, have their competence questioned in their area of expertise, or be told that they are “articulate” or “well-spoken”. These microaggressions don’t only target women—men from marginalized identities experience them as well. When others are subtly surfacing doubts about someone’s skills or status, it is not surprising that those small acts can add up to an escalated sense of imposter syndrome in employees from underrepresented communities. ***How can employers help? They should educate employees on what microaggressions are and offer strategies on how to avoid them, as well as fostering a culture where people feel safe speaking up about their experiences.***

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2019/11/26/why-imposter-syndrome-hits-underrepresented-identities-harder-and-how-employers-can-help/?sh=31ab0f2733c1>

Imposter Syndrome as a Systemic Issue



DEFINITION:

Indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Hidden messages may "communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment."

source: Derald Wing Sue

7 MICROAGGRESSION STATEMENTS

- "You don't sound like a black person."
- "So, like, what are you?"
- "You're really cute for a brown-skinned girl."
- "Why do you sound white?"
- "You're smart for a girl."

source: BuzzFeed

Adapted From an Infographic by Todd Finley

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<https://www.buzzfeed.com/nigatu/racial-microaggression-s-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions>

Imposter Syndrome as a Systemic Issue

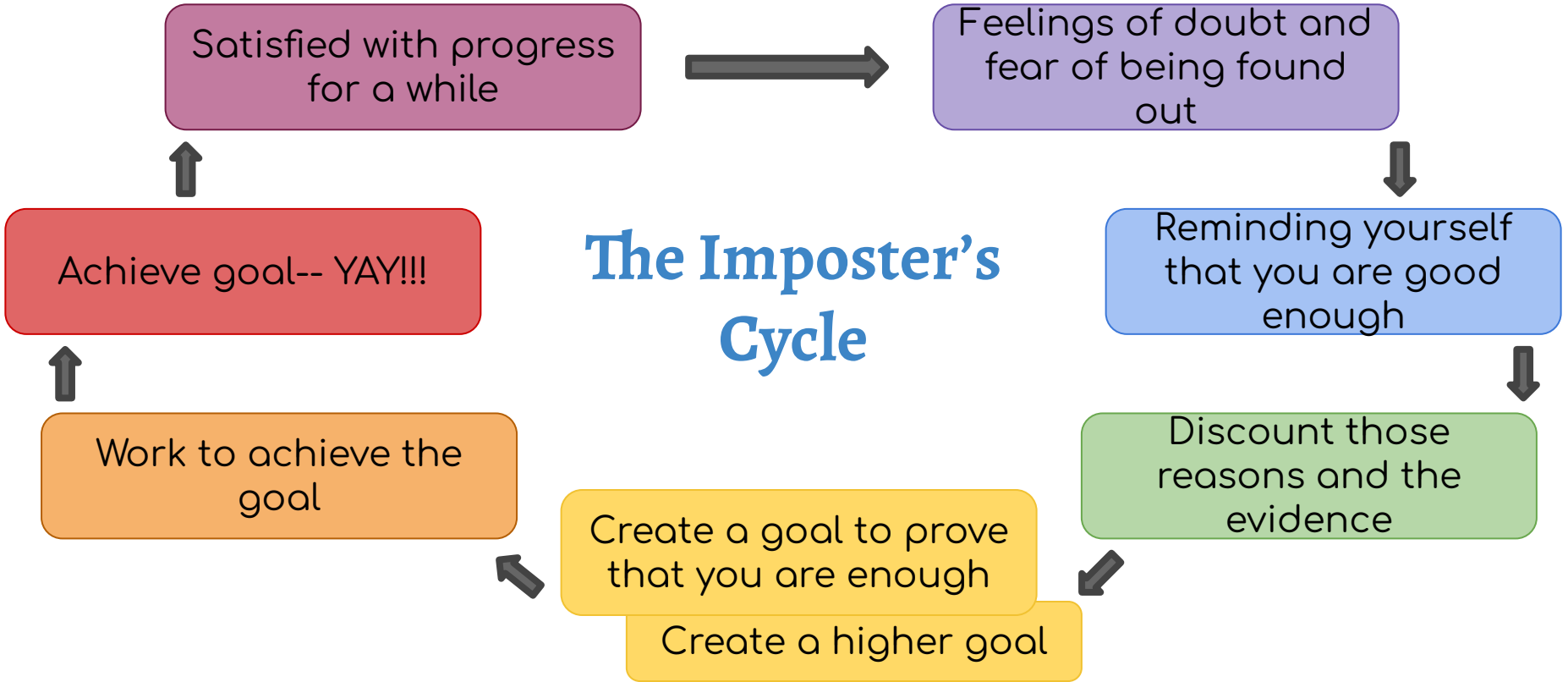


Contextualizing the Impostor “Syndrome”

Sanne Feenstra^{1*}, Christopher T. Begeny², Michelle K. Ryan^{1,2}, Floor A. Rink¹,
Janka I. Stoker¹ and Jennifer Jordan³

¹ Department of Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands, ² Psychology, University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom, ³ International Institute for Management Development, Business School, Lausanne, Switzerland

“ Instead of framing the insecurities of individuals belonging to marginalized groups solely as a problem that arises within these individuals, we argue that it is critical for future research to consider the important role of the environment in eliciting their impostor feelings as well. By doing so, we can address the contextual roots of individuals’ impostor feelings, and offer more structural and effective solutions.”



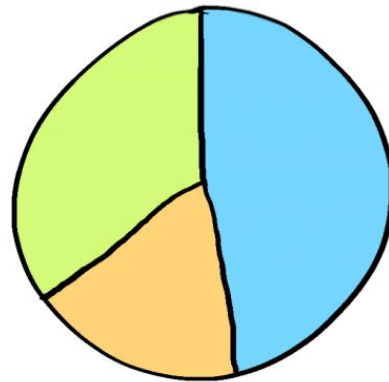
Don't sweep your feelings under the rug

- Lean into the conflict and learn who you are in the moment
- Don't be paralyzed, think through the feelings
- Be vulnerable and embrace the feelings
- Self-awareness is part of the process

More at techtello.com or [@techtello](https://twitter.com/techtello)



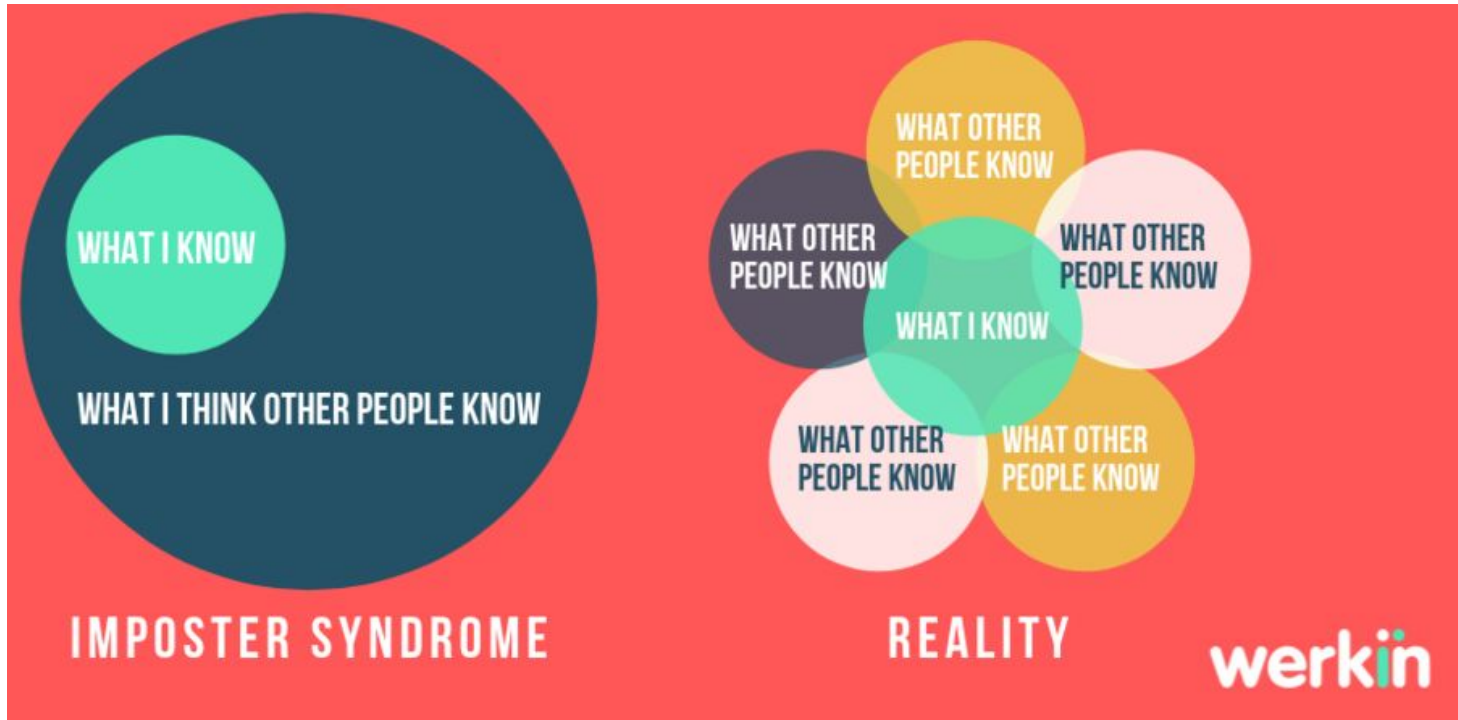
Remember that you are not alone...



- PEOPLE WHO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME
- OTHER PEOPLE WHO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME
- LITERALLY EVERYONE ELSE (THEY ALSO GET IMPOSTER SYNDROME)

EVERYONE FEELS LIKE AN IMPOSTER
SOMETIMES, AND THAT'S OKAY

Remember that you are not alone...



Cultivate confidence by leveraging your strengths

- Accept that you don't and can't know everything
- Be comfortable with others knowing things too
- How can you use/apply your skills and knowledge best?
- Recognize your limits and stop requiring yourself to be perfect



Be humble and curious

- Ask for advice, opinions, and feedback
- Embrace and encourage dialogue
- Gaps in knowledge are opportunities to learn
- You're not an imposter, **you are a lifelong learner!**



- Learn more and remain patient
- Build a supportive community
- Be kind to yourself!



9 Ways to Cope With Imposter Syndrome

Know the signs.

Know you're not alone.

Distinguish humility & fear.

Let go of perfectionism.

Be kind to yourself.

Track your success.

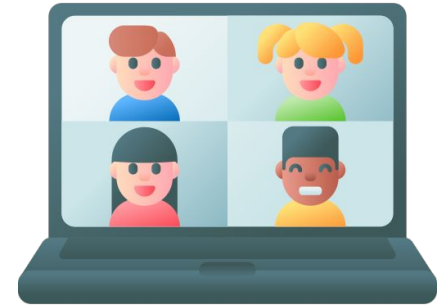
Talk with your mentor and a manager.

Say "yes" to opportunities.

Embrace the feeling.



**Smaller Groups: Share
about your own imposter
syndrome feelings if you
are comfortable doing so**









<https://gal-dem.com/the-permanent-inadequacy-of-being-a-woman-of-colour/>

<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/effects-tokenism-women-color>

https://www.ted.com/talks/dena_simmons_how_students_of_color_confront_impostor_syndrome/discussion?referrer=playlist-503

<https://interactioninstitute.org/racial-imposter-syndrome/>

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