

texere[®]
publishing ltd ● ● ● ● ●

Imposter Syndrome

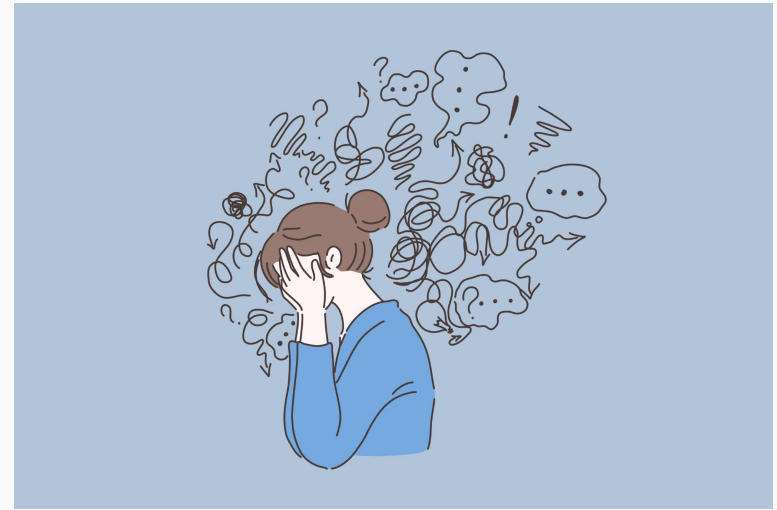
The Audacity to Succeed

By Oliver Norbury



What is imposter syndrome?

Imposter syndrome is a phenomenon where individuals experience persistent feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy, despite evidence to the contrary. Those who experience imposter syndrome often feel like they are "faking it" and are undeserving of their accomplishments or success. This can lead to a range of associated mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.



Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes



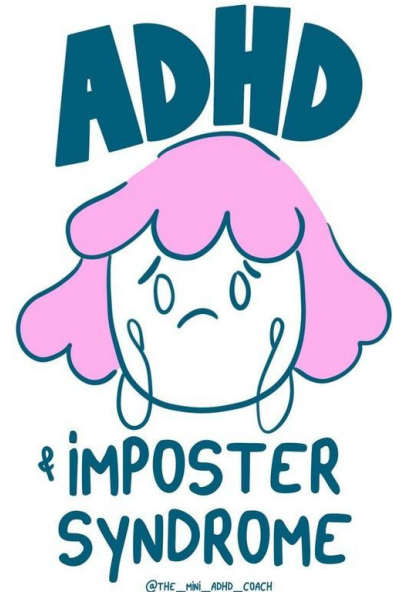
The term was coined by psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978, following their research with high-achieving women who expressed feelings of fraudulence despite their success. Clance and Imes observed that impostor syndrome was not exclusive to women or high-achievers but was prevalent across gender, age, and occupation. Since its discovery, impostor syndrome has become widely recognized, and efforts have been made to combat it through therapy, self-reflection, and support systems.



Links to ADHD

It can also stem from those who have ADHD and feel like their work is rushed and without revision. In actuality, those who are able to work to a standard-high level of competence whilst also combatting the difficulties associated with ADHD are actually demonstrating, in a lot of cases, to be highly competent.

Such debilitations are therefore actually testament to their ability. Studies suggest ADHD and anxiety etc are the barriers that restrict a person's progress or self worth rather than the individual's ability itself. This is not a presentation on ADHD however, so if you feel you are struggling with symptoms of this, check that out first!



Short Video

Here's a short video with a more concise definition and some cool graphics to make this presentation more fun.



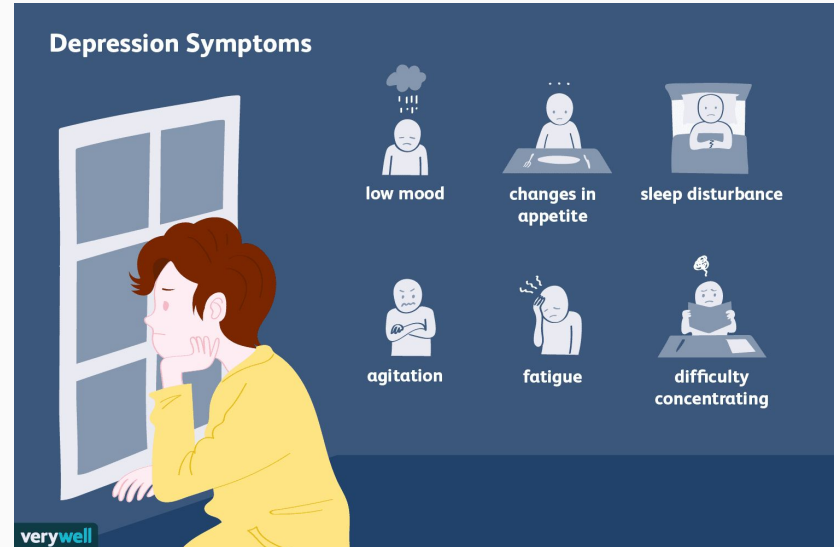
Common problems associated with imposter syndrome

Anxiety - People with imposter syndrome often worry that they will be exposed as a fraud and that their accomplishments are due to luck rather than their own skills or hard work. This can lead to a constant state of anxiety, as they try to maintain the appearance of competence and avoid being found out.

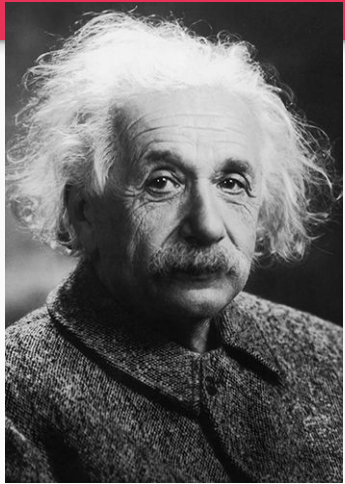
Depression - People with imposter syndrome may feel hopeless and helpless, as they believe that they are not capable of achieving success on their own. This can lead to feelings of sadness and apathy.

Low self-esteem - This is also a common issue among those with imposter syndrome. They may have a hard time accepting praise or recognition for their accomplishments, and may feel like they don't deserve it. This can lead to a negative self-image and a lack of confidence in their abilities.

Lack of motivation - This is the hardest one for me, it can be hard to stay motivated to achieve your goals if you don't believe in your ability to succeed, so why start at all? It's very easy to get into a position of comfort and just stagnate, which can lead to more depression or low self esteem. It's a vicious cycle.



Examples of celebrities with imposter syndrome



Albert Einstein



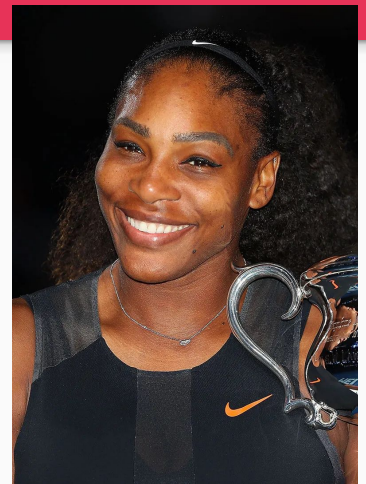
Tom Hanks



Howard Schultz



David Bowie



Serena Williams

What can we do to overcome it?

If you feel like imposter syndrome may be a symptom of having ADHD or Depression, address this first.

This isn't a medical presentation, but there are lots of sources you can refer to for more clarity on what symptoms you think may be ADHD or Depression (there are lots). Always start with the NHS. I'm not a medical professional so can't advise on this, but there is medication you can take that alleviates these feelings and with it the potential imposter syndrome within!



What can we do to overcome it?

The first step to solving a problem is recognising there is one and talking about it. There's nothing 'wrong' with you, and millions of people the world over experience the same issue as you. The easiest, cheapest and quickest thing to do is to reach out to those around to you. **You will probably find you know a lot of people who are going through the same thing.** Even if they aren't, the support of friends, family and work is invaluable- but they can't help you if you don't talk about it!

Talking may not alleviate imposter syndrome, but it may help to **ease anxiety** which is caused from bottling feelings up. If you have the conversation at work for example you may be given extra support to manage these feelings including regular feedback and one to ones.

What can we do to overcome it?

One way to seek help is to talk to a mental health professional, such as a therapist or counsellor. They can help you work through your feelings of imposter syndrome and develop strategies to manage any anxiety or depression. They can also help you develop a more positive self-image and build your confidence in your abilities.

You can go through the NHS without a GP referral, or you can go private. Vitality even offer avenues for this as well.

[Visit Vitality](#)



Generic counsellor lady

What can we do to overcome it?



Support groups - This doesn't have to take the appearance of an organised, formal group or counselling session. There are social groups aimed at removing the formality of discussing mental health. This may be a weekly coffee or beer group. Hiking groups for example often market themselves as being good for your mental health. Not only is it a good opportunity to talk about your mental health, but the outdoors and physical exercise can really help clear the mind as well.

My favourite example is this football team called [Blokes United](#) - they focus on accessibility of football towards men struggling with moderate to severe mental health issues.

Sometimes bad things happening is a good thing

This might sound ridiculous, but I've also found that learning bad news or starting from scratch can actually be a blessing in disguise rather than a step back.

Before I was made redundant from my last job I had been stagnating in the role for about 8 months. I didn't want to leave because the money was good and I was comfortable knowing what I knew, but I hadn't been pushing myself to learn anything new and it wasn't what I wanted to do (**IMPOSTER SYNDROME**). The redundancy forced my hand to look for something more in touch with what I wanted to do in the long run. Texere gave me an opportunity to learn something completely from scratch and out of my comfort zone. And I am far better for it, having more confidence in my ability to succeed and easing the imposter syndrome.

The point is, it was taking a step back that put me into gear to actually look for something with a bit more meaning. So much so that it was actually a step forward!

It's not a get out of jail free card

It's also important to remember that having imposter syndrome isn't a get out of jail free card. Whilst it can have an impact on our mental health and quality of work etc, to brandish it almost trivially is what breeds the culture of it. The more you use it as an excuse the more it will affect you over smaller things. Before you know it you don't think you're competent enough to butter bread! Sitting at home feeling sorry for yourself isn't going to work either.

Get out, try new things and make mistakes. **It's better to try something and muck it up rather than not do it at all worrying that you're going to!**

If you use the coping and support mechanisms mentioned above you should be able to reign in the feelings of incompetence and those around you will support you in this.

Some useful links

REMEMBER: **‘YOU ARE NOT ALONE’**

This isn't exclusive to you, we are all blagging it to some degree!

If you are having persistent feelings of inadequacy or as if you're an imposter, check out some of these links or come and have a chat with me. I don't bite.

Thanks everyone!

Useful sources:

[Action for Happiness](#)

[NHS England](#)

[Vitality](#)

[TED - video](#)