

Eliminating imposter syndrome



The fear of failing can cause a lot of mental suffering. Anxiety and depression are common side effects if left to fester. Act right away to lessen additional distress by following the steps below:



Watch the Imposter Syndrome video

Watch the video on Imposter Syndrome on the MD Community Site 2023 – MDCOM MD Student Aspirations and Support Medical Student Support Resources to better understand how common this is and what you are dealing with.



Use positive self-talk and acknowledge how you feel

Self-talk is extremely important. When you engage in negative self-talk you continue to escalate your sense of failure and fraud. Talk to yourself positively as you would talk to a dear friend who is feeling like you. It's only when you acknowledge your feelings that you can start to unravel the core beliefs that contribute to your imposter feelings.



Assess your thinking by writing your thoughts down

Write down your thoughts and take time to discover if your thoughts have any merit. Are you engaging in catastrophising thinking? Are you filtering out the positives and only focusing on the negatives? Are you using “should” statements or using distortive mind-reading? While you are at it, write down your accomplishments and what you are good at. Collect positive feedback and re-visit this from time to time, especially when you are experiencing imposter feelings.



Stop comparing yourself to others

Never compare yourself to others, especially if you are using distorted thinking. Every time you do so you'll find something wrong with yourself that feeds the sense that you're not good enough or don't belong. Instead, pay attention to what you do well and have a sincere desire to learn more about yourself and practice self-compassion.



Talk to someone about how you are feeling

Discussing your feelings with others helps to reduce anxiety and stops your unfounded thoughts from festering. Chances are, you'll find that they share similar sentiments and can offer insights into how they've mitigated their imposter feelings. The imposter syndrome phenomenon is prevalent among high-achieving individuals.



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