

MENTAL HEALTH

Resource List

EMERGING YOUTH CONSULTANCY (EYC)

Amplifying youth voice, one board at a time.

IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

what is impostor syndrome?

Kaitland Cooper-Parent, EYC Manager of Mental Health & Wellness

Impostor syndrome is a very common phenomenon characterized by feelings of inadequacy and/or self-doubt, even in the face of success. If you have ever thought to yourself, "I shouldn't be here" or "I don't think this is good enough," you have likely experienced impostor syndrome. Essentially, you believe you are an impostor (as the name implies), or a fake—believing that someone else could easily do the job you're doing. However, this is simply a phenomenon. "Hustle culture," which has exploded over the last year or so, has played a big part in the increasing prevalence of impostor syndrome among young people. The beliefs that underlie impostor syndrome ultimately pave an unachievable road to the belief holder's idea of success. With that being said, the syndrome typically affects productive individuals who hold high standards for themselves.

let's learn more!

Impostor syndrome can be described as the idea that you've only succeeded due to luck, not because of your talent or qualifications. It was first identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. An estimated 70% of people experience these impostor feelings at some point in their lives, according to a review article published in the International Journal of Behavioral Science.

Read about graduate students' experience with impostor syndrome [here](#). (American Psychological Association)



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emergingyouthconsult@gmail.com



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Hustle culture (aka “Burnout Culture,” “Workaholism,” or “Toxic Productivity”) is all about constantly working. Those who hustle attempt to devote as many hours as possible to work. And although it promotes accomplishing as many tasks as possible, the truth is that working long hours leads to poor mental health and eventually decreased productivity.

Read more about hustle culture [here](#). (Medium)

There are many different types of impostor syndrome. Dr. Valerie Young, an expert on impostor syndrome, categorizes this syndrome by subtype. Each subtype is defined by a unique type of individual that falls under the umbrella of impostor syndrome. Most people who struggle with this syndrome fall into one or a mix of these subtypes.

Learn about the 5 subtypes [here](#). (The Recovery Village)



Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale

The Impostor Test was developed by Pauline Rose Clance (1985) to help individuals determine whether or not they have impostor phenomenon characteristics and, if so, to what extent they are suffering.

Take [this](#) questionnaire to determine how much impostor syndrome is affecting you. (Concordia)

Acknowledge Your Feelings

Suppressing your feelings often leads to thinking more about that particular feeling or thought. Keeping a thought record to help you reframe your thoughts full of self-doubt into thoughts of full of confidence is a great start.

Use [this](#) positive reframing worksheet to get you started. (The Wellness Sandbox)

20 Questions to Challenge Negative Thoughts

Using a thought record is a great way to bring awareness to certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. The next step would be to begin challenging those negative thoughts and replacing them with something more reasonable and evidence-based.

[Here](#) are 20 questions to get you thinking. (McGill)

Understanding Your Strengths

Knowing what you do well and where you can improve is a key factor in building confidence. The SWOT (or TOWS) method helps you pinpoint your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Start brainstorming your strengths using [this](#) worksheet. (Template Lab)



feature of the month



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Zarin Bari is a recent Master of Aerospace Engineering graduate from Ryerson University. She is an educator and advocate for youth education, especially STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) disciplines. She believes everyone should have the access to education regardless of their age or situation.

Get Rid of Impostor Syndrome Once and For All

Zarin Bari, EYC Youth Hub Member

"I shouldn't take this class, it's too hard."

"I'm a fraud, I'm just faking it. I don't deserve to be here. I'm not good enough."

"Do I even deserve my paycheck? I feel unqualified for my job."

Do any of these thoughts strike a chord?

If the answer is yes, then chances are you have experienced impostor syndrome before. Impostor syndrome is a feeling of decreased self-worth or inadequacy without any factual evidence. For many, despite being successful in their field, it is common to face this unnerving feeling. The continued feeling of impostor syndrome can cause depression, anxiety, and other psychologically degrading conditions, especially in youth.

This post will explore impostor syndrome with a licensed therapist who often works with youth and their families, as well as proactive tips that can be used to combat these feelings.

Q: Do you see impostor syndrome come up in your clients? If so, what kind of feelings come up when someone is dealing with this?

A: Yes, because I work with youth ranging 12-26, I see it happen especially regarding school. Being under pressure to do good for themselves but also meeting their parents' expectations. Many of my clients often experience anxiety and depression that stem from their school performance, how well they get along with friends, how they are thinking about themselves as a person. They often say things like, "I'm not likeable," "I'm not good enough to be here," "I don't deserve these good things." I also see impostor syndrome coming up when people are in a transitional period: making new and big decisions and changes.



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Q: Why do you think impostor syndrome creeps up on young people, especially in today's age where social media is such a huge factor in our lives?

A: It's important to remember that people generally post only happy things on social media. Nobody really posts, "oh, look at me, I'm so depressed in bed today." Many of my clients talk about using Instagram or Discord as their primary media sources, both of which are places where people can be very mean. It can seriously affect someone's health because it can change the way you perceive yourself. The most important thing anyone can do in these situations is to set boundaries: turning off your cell phone for a few hours, protecting your privacy and data sharing, and talking to someone you trust that's outside your social media platform.

Q: What kind of things do you think trigger impostor syndrome? What kind of language or things can we say to ourselves when thoughts of negativity approaches someone like this?

A: Focus on understanding and repairing your self-advocacy. It is about defining your own perception and capability of doing something. Certain events or results can trigger the feeling of impostor syndrome, like not doing well on an exam or making a mistake at a part time job. For some, this could affect their self-advocacy because they think, "oh I can't even do this easy job, I must be stupid." And when you create that negative self-belief, the next time you make a mistake, you will continue this negative cognitive pattern. Repairing your self-advocacy requires you to be honest with yourself and setting up realistic standards that are not fuelled by anxieties.

Q: When someone is feeling this, how can they get out of that mindset in the moment so they can get back to what they were doing?

A: A quick mindset I like to use is the "So What" method. When you're knee deep in negative thoughts but you're in a situation where you must act or make a decision, just say "so what" and continue. "So what if I won't do well in this interview. If I fail, it's not the end of the world; it's the end of this interview maybe, but not my world." It's about reminding yourself about what you have control over at that moment and appreciating your work that got you this far. Another way to sort of, subside these thoughts in the moment is to do the superman pose for a couple minutes before starting the task. It has been scientifically proven¹ that when people have lower self-esteem, they shrink posture wise. When you have impostor syndrome, your brain is clouded by the negative thinking which ends up being expressed in your physical stance. Try the superman pose in the mirror and tell yourself that you're capable in that moment.

Let's just put it right on the table: impostor syndrome is not your fault.

You can start combating your impostor syndrome right now by being selective of your social media intake, understanding and writing down your strengths, talking to someone to help you process what you're experiencing, and repairing your self-advocacy. It is a feeling many people, regardless of where they are in their lives, feel. Next time you are about to step into an interview and that unnerving feeling creeps up on you, just breathe and remind yourself to have courage. You don't have to be confident all the time, no one is. You just need 20 seconds of insane courage to start. That's all it takes. Everything else is just diligence.

Zarin Bari



recommendations

For the Watchers

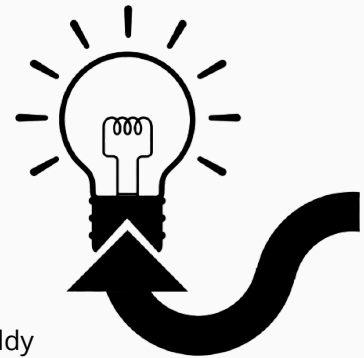
Michelle Obama Explains Impostor Syndrome
[Youtube video](#)

For the Listeners

5 Ways to Deal With Impostor Syndrome | Small Talk! With Alex Cuenca
[Spotify episode](#)

For the Readers

Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges | Amy Cuddy
[Indigo | Chapters](#)



help & support

Kids Help Phone

Canada's only 24/7, national support service offering professional counselling, information and referrals and volunteer-led, text-based support to young people in both English and French.

Toll-free crisis line: 1-800-668-6868
 Text CONNECT to 686868

Good2Talk

A free, confidential support service for post-secondary students in Ontario. Students can receive information and referrals about services and supports for mental health, addictions and well-being on and off campus and speak anonymously with a professional counsellor.

Toll-free help line: 1-866-925-5454
 Text GOOD2TALKON to 686868

Kids Help Phone Resource Galaxy

Your well-being is like a connected cosmic system, a galaxy of thoughts, feelings and experiences that make you who you are. Explore resources to support you no matter how you're feeling in this moment.

Hope for Wellness

Offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada through phone or chat counselling. On request, phone counselling is also available in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

Toll-free help line: 1-855-242-3310

Talk4Healing

A culturally grounded, fully confidential helpline for Indigenous women available in 14 languages all across Ontario.

Toll-free crisis line: 1-888-200-9997

LGBT Youthline

A Queer, Trans, Two-Spirit youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario. Youth of all sexual and gender identities are celebrated and supported.

Toll-free help line (6 PM – 9 PM): 1-800-268-9688
 Text (4 PM – 9:30PM): 647-694-4275
 Chat: 4 PM-9:30 PM

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Greenspace

If you are looking for a therapist, Greenspace will help to intelligently match you with a therapist that is best suited to your specific needs. The therapist you are matched with will charge a fee for their services, as psychotherapy is not publicly funded by Provincial health plans.

Stella's Place

THE place for young adults in Toronto, aged 16 to 29, who are experiencing mental health challenges to get the support they need. Stella's Place works to help young adults learn skills, build community and be empowered to manage their own mental health.

BounceBack

A free, guided self-help program that's effective in helping people aged 15 and up who are experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression, or may be feeling low, stressed, worried, irritable or angry.

MindBeacon

Through secure direct messages, readings and activities, your therapist will help you develop the skills you need to thrive. MindBeacon's Therapist Guided Program is based in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and consists of readings, exercises and activities that will help you learn and practice new skills.

mindyourmind

Where mental health, wellness, engagement and technology meet. mindyourmind works with young people aged 14 to 29 to co-create interactive tools and innovative resources to build capacity and resilience.

Black Youth Helpline

Black Youth Helpline serves all youth and specifically responds to the need for a Black youth specific service, positioned and resourced to promote access to professional, culturally appropriate support for youth, families and schools.

Want curated, youth-centric job opportunities and resources (plus even more ways to get engaged with EYC) delivered straight to your inbox?

Join EYC's Youth Hub today!

Visit <https://www.emergingyouth.info/youthhub>

