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# Navigating Imposter Syndrome

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# Goals

- Define Imposter Syndrome
- Identify Characteristics of Imposter Syndrome
- Explore Implications
- Share Resources to support and empower students

*“The other students in my class are smarter than me.”*

*“I haven’t scheduled an appointment with my concentration advisor, because I don’t want to ask stupid questions.”*

*“I’m not a good public speaker and I generally don’t like speaking in large settings.”*

*“My advisor has no idea who I really am; any day now, he is going to figure out I don’t belong here!*

*“I’m not sure I have the necessary skills for this internship opportunity.”*

*“I feel like a fraud”*

*“If I’m successful, why do I feel like a fake?”*

*“I am not as good as other people think I am; I have them fooled now but I may be ‘found out’ later.”*

*“Obviously I’m in this position because my abilities have been overestimated.”*

*“I did not want people to think I thought I was something I was not.”*

*“My family expects me to make some massive impact upon this world and I live in constant fear of disappointing them.”*

# What is Stereotype Threat?

Stereotype threat is where people feel themselves to be at risk of conforming to stereotypes about groups that they identify as belonging to.

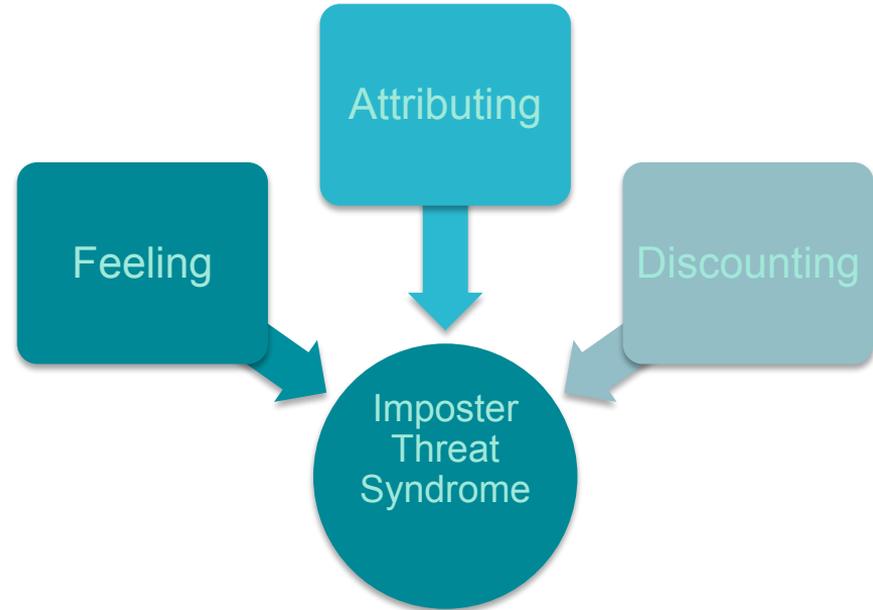
The phenomenon of stereotype threat as “being in a situation or doing something to which a negative stereotype about (an) identity is relevant.”

# What is Imposter Threat Syndrome (IP)?

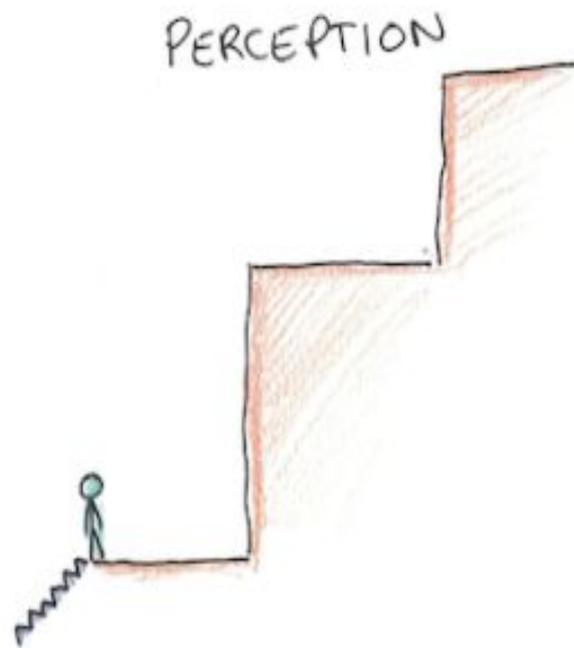
- An intense feeling of intellectual inauthenticity that is frequently experienced by high-achieving individuals
- The overwhelming feeling that you don't deserve your success or fear of failure.
- It convinces an individual that that they're as intelligent, creative or talented as they may seem.
- Doubting own excellence, even as you are getting generally positive feedback.

# Imposter Syndrome Categories

- **Attributing:** the tendency to attribute success to luck or to other external reasons and not to your own internal abilities.
- **Feeling:** the belief that one does not deserve success (academic or professional) and that somehow others have been deceived into thinking otherwise. This goes together with a fear of being "found out", "discovered" or "unmasked".
- **Discounting:** a tendency to downplay or discount ability, achievement and/or success.



***Doubting one's own excellence***



## Feeling of Otherness

“Whether they feel as though they do not belong (imposter syndrome) or they feel as though they must prove they belong (stereotype threat) it’s still a feeling of being othered, and it influences how one navigate spaces.”



# How Imposter Syndrome Impact Student Success

- **Academic and social struggles:** Students suffering from imposter syndrome not only struggle in class but can also become socially isolated.
- **Potential long-term impact beyond graduation :** Students with imposter syndrome are more likely to make ill-fitting career choices—and experience burnout both in college and career.
- **Prone to procrastination**
- **Interpret constructive criticism as proof of your ineptitude,** rather than using it to improve skills and knowledge

# In What Ways Can Imposter Syndrome Show up?

- Self-doubt
- Sense of incompetence
- Frequently comparing yourself to others
- Low self-esteem, self-worth
- Fear, anxiety
- Immobility
- Stress, burnout
- Underperformance
- Hard to accept praise and/or compliments
- Inability to enjoy accomplishments

Recognize  
the Signs.

You're Not  
Alone.

Distinguish  
Humility &  
Fear.

Perfectionism  
is Not The  
Answer

Be Kind to  
Self

Track  
Success

Identify  
Support

Encourage  
Seeking  
Opportunities

Embrace the  
Feeling

I have written eleven books,  
but each time I think, *'Uh oh,  
they're going to find out now.  
I've run a game on everybody,  
and they're going to find me out.'*”

– Maya Angelou



- Be aware of language choice:
  - It was luck
  - If I want to be competitive.....
- Focus on strengths and Accomplishments
- Good Enough

## Questions??

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