Imposter syndrome: Women, psychology and society

APWiL mentoring program

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“Imposter syndrome is but a symptom; INEQUITY is the disease”

Mullangi & Jagsi, 2019
Overview

• “Clance and Imes observed that many high-achieving women tended to believe they were inadequate or not competent despite academic and professional accomplishments.” – Robinson, 2017 – currently we know it affects both genders

• A google search of “imposter syndrome” yields over a million hits (...) approximately 70 percent of people will experience it at some point in their lives (Sakulku & Alexander, 2011, in Craig, 2018)
Overview

• “...there is no published review of the evidence to guide the diagnosis or treatment of patients presenting with impostor syndrome” – Bravata et al., 2020

• “No published studies evaluated treatments for this condition” - Bravata et al., 2020
Let's talk about the syndrome

• “... a pattern of behavior wherein people (even those with adequate external evidence of success) doubt their abilities and have a persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud” Mullangi & Jagsi, 2019

• More prevalent in minorities – racial ethnic and religious, WOMEN, and high achievers – Chrousos & Mentis, 2020
How it feels...

• “... constantly comparing myself to others and worrying that I did not measure up” Kimyon, 2020

• Some specifics you should look for (Leonard, 2020 - reviewed by Litner)
  - a sense of being a fraud
  - fear of being discovered
  - difficulty internalizing their success
How it feels...

• Some changes you might be implementing because you think you are the impostor (Leonard, 2020 - reviewed by Litner)
  • Holding yourself back
  • Avoid taking on responsibilities
  • Doubting yourself
  • Attributing your success to outside factors
  • Job dissatisfaction and burnout
  • Avoid seeking promotions
  • Fear of failure = overachieving
Kimyon, 2020
Imposter syndrome and academia

• According to Bothelo and Roulet (2018), the syndrome is very much present, especially in younger scholars.
  • It seems that, as a high achieving academic at a young age, the characteristic feelings of IS start to appear. These scholars “ascribe their accomplishments to luck and contingency rather than individual skill and merit…”
  • Fear of “being exposed as charlatans”
The onset of imposter syndrome often becomes manifest in **graduate school**.

It is then intensified when academics take on **management responsibilities**.
Society

- “imposter syndrome might be viewed less as a personal challenge affecting a few than a systemic problem of considerable scale with real, detrimental consequences to those affected” Mullangi & Jagsi, 2019
Psychology

• “Impostor syndrome is often comorbid with depression and anxiety and is associated with impaired job performance, job satisfaction, and burnout among various employee populations including clinicians” – Bravata et al., 2020
Women

- Article in Harvard Business Review: *Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome* – Tulshyan & Burey, 2021
  - Burnout syndrome
  - Interrogation from colleagues and censoring
  - Overt and covert bullying
  - Self doubt and lack of confidence
  - Systemic racism and bias
Women

• Article in Harvard Business Review: *Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome* – Tulshyan & Burey, 2021
  • Factors related to imposter syndrome:
    • Historical and cultural contexts
    • Workplaces and environment
Women

• Article in Harvard Business Review: *Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome* – Tulshyan & Burey, 2021
  • Feeling unsure shouldn’t make you an imposter
  • Bias and exclusion exacerbate feelings of doubt
  • Confidence doesn’t equal competence

**FIX BIAS, NOT WOMEN**
Some tips for yourself...

- Robinson, 2017:
  - Look at the evidence
  - Celebrate your successes
  - Remember, lots of people feel this way
  - Fake it ‘til you make it
  - Stay humble

- Craig, 2018
  - Reframe the task.
  - Work smart.
  - Feel the relief and take ownership.
  - Seek out tasks that you are good at.
  - Seek support.
Some tips for yourself...

- Leonard, 2020 - reviewed by Litner
  - Talk about it
  - Awareness
  - Forget about being perfect
  - Challenge those negative thoughts
Some examples at Tecnológico de Monterrey

Premio “Mujer Tec”
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- Its purpose is to recognize and visibilize our community’s women and their skills, career and contributions.
- It is meant to be an “open space” to share women’s accomplishments in politics, society and economy.
Premio “Mujer Tec”

• This year (2022) our Institution announced winners in the following categories:
  • #SheforShe
  • Sports
  • Gender-focused work on citizenship
  • Health and wellbeing
  • Sustainable development
  • Arts and culture
  • Science
  • Business
  • Global leadership
Institutional organization chart

- Medicine and Health Sciences School at Tecnológico de Monterrey:
  - 60% of management positions are occupied by women.
  - 65% of the students at EMCS are women
Thank you!