



# Imposter syndrome

Imposter syndrome is a psychological pattern where a person doubts their skills, accomplishments, or worth, and fears being exposed as a “fraud” — even when there’s clear evidence they’re competent or successful.

## How it feels

- Persistent self-doubt - feeling like your achievements are due to luck, timing, or others’ overestimating you.
- Fear of being “found out” - worrying that people will realise you’re not as capable as they think.
- Discounting success – minimising or dismissing positive feedback or achievements.

## Common Triggers

- Starting a new role, school, or project.
- Being in a high-achieving environment.
- Social comparison, especially in competitive or unfamiliar settings.

## Why It Happens

Imposter syndrome is a common cognitive and emotional experience. It often stems from:

- Early family or cultural messages about achievement.
- Being part of a minority or underrepresented group in a field.
- Personality traits like high conscientiousness or sensitivity to criticism.

## The Impact

- Increased anxiety, stress, and burnout.
- Avoidance of new opportunities for fear of failure.
- Difficulty enjoying achievements.

## How to Work With It

- Name it – recognise imposter thoughts when they arise.
- Collect evidence – keep track of your accomplishments and positive feedback.
- Talk about it – sharing with trusted peers often reveals that many people feel the same way.
- Reframe mistakes – see them as part of growth, not proof you don’t belong.