Imposter Syndrome: What are the signs and how to address it?

Amy Yeu, OTD Resident, OTR/L
Academic Coach
Outline

- What is Imposter Syndrome?
- Why do I have Imposter Syndrome?
- What may I experience?
- How can I overcome Imposter Syndrome?
What is Imposter Syndrome?

- Feelings of inauthenticity and fear of being found out as a fake.
  - Question success
  - Self-doubt abilities
  - Fear of making mistakes
  - Struggle to meet expectations

(Bravata et al., 2020; Clance & Imes, 1978; Sherman, 2013)
Why do I have Imposter Syndrome?

• Depression or anxiety
• Personal traits (e.g., perfectionism, self-criticism, high-achieving)
• External Pressure (e.g., family, school, society)
• Members of Minority groups
  o First-generation
  o BIPOC
  o Low-income communities
  o Systemically stigmatized groups

(Bravata et al., 2020; Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991; Sherman, 2013)
What may I experience?

Psychological
- Frustrated with missing goals
- Uneased of being imperfect
- Lack of self-confidence
- Afraid of failures or disappointing others

Cognitive
- Self-doubt and concentrate on mistakes
- Consider success due to external factors
- Believe bright people do not need support

Behavioral
- Deny compliments/ praise
- Overwork to stand out
- Rely on recognitions/ opinions
- Compare with peers
- Remain silent with different perspectives
- Shape oneself to win approval

(Bravata et al., 2020; Clance & Imes, 1978)
How can I overcome Imposter Syndrome?

• Make a list of your strengths
• Keep a record of positive feedback
• Be compassionate to yourself
• Pay attention to your self-talk
• Develop your competencies
How can I overcome Imposter Syndrome? (continued)

• Realizing it is okay to be fearful
• Accept that perfection is unrealistic and costly
• Change unhelpful automatic behaviors/thoughts
• Seek support
  o Share your experiences with a close friend
  o Discuss your feelings with a trusted mentor
  o Reach out to professionals
References


Thank you!