

## What Is Imposter Syndrome?

Imposter syndrome is a thought pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents, or accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a “fraud.” The imposter worries about the mere possibility of not being who they portray themselves to be. Those of us who have ever identified as “imposters” know that we are not intentionally deceiving others. We simply feel like we don’t know what we’re doing, and we subsequently assign guilt to those feelings of ineptitude. Many systems and institutions also do not uplift and empower the voices and experiences of marginalized groups, and this exclusion can then perpetuate feelings of being an “imposter.” Here we explore a creative way to work through those feelings when they arise.



Read more about imposter syndrome in Sharon's [blog](#).

## Materials

- Printed images, magazines, or other collage materials
- Scissors
- Glue
- Large sheets of paper
- Writing utensils (such as markers, crayons, oil pastels, etc.)

## Creation Steps

1. **Recognize & scribble it out** – Imposter syndrome is an unwanted thought pattern and the first step is to recognize when this pattern is happening. One way of quieting the mind and releasing unwanted thoughts is to scribble it out. Using colors that reflect heaviness, take a marker, crayon (or whatever you like to write with) and let your arm move in whatever way it wants to release that weight on a large piece of paper. See how far down you can let this movement stem from in your body - your core, your heart, your brain, your toes. Continue until you come to a natural stopping point.
2. **Let go of judgment** – It’s rare that the imposter pops up without any judgement towards ourselves or even towards the part of ourselves that feels like an imposter. Perhaps the imposter comes up when we are in a high-pressure situation. This is natural! See it as such. Take a step back from your scribbles and experiment with looking at the page

without any emotion. See the scribbles as simply marks on a page, nothing more, nothing less.

3. **Release identification with thoughts & emotions** – We often take our thoughts as truth. By shifting to observing our thoughts from a distance, we can begin to release our attachment to them. Using colors that reflect lightness and ease, incorporate intentional movements to illustrate the concept of observing these thoughts from a distance. Notice how your relationship to placing marks on paper changes.
4. **Connect to a sense of stability** – The farther we move away from unhelpful thought patterns, the closer we move towards our grounded and stable self. As you do, it can be helpful to keep the 8 C's of self in mind: compassion, curiosity, calm, courage, creativity, connectedness, clarity, and confidence. Choosing images that resonate with your most grounded core self, place them either on the same page as your scribbles or on a clean sheet of paper, in a way that visually communicates a sense of stability.
5. **Is it true?** – All humans are wired with a negativity bias that automatically draws our attention towards negative thoughts and emotions. Which in turn, helps create an environment where thinking and feeling like an imposter thrive. Rather than believing the imposter, we can stop to ask ourselves, Is it true? Add any words, phrases and images to your art that remind you of what is true, focusing on your goodness and strength. Consider how you can use your art to identify imposter syndrome when it arises and mindfully move away from an imposter mindset, and towards your truth.

