

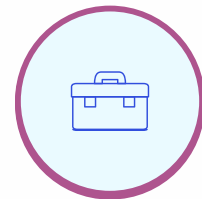


THE TOOLKIT

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women and non-binary undergraduate students.

Combatting Imposter Syndrome

We all get that feeling sometimes; it's a wave of self-doubt that makes us question how we got to where we are. Maybe you've felt that you faked it or maybe you've tried to talk someone out of giving you money for your work. Both are what we consider "Imposter Syndrome". The term was coined in 1978 to mean a nagging feeling that you're not good enough, that you don't belong, or that you don't deserve a seat at the table. In order to combat imposter syndrome, it's important to recognize that it's not just a feeling and that it can creep into our everyday language. In this issue of The Toolkit, you'll receive tips on how to combat imposter syndrome.



"WHEN I FIRST GOT ASKED TO TA A CS CLASS, THERE WERE 6 OF US, 5 GUYS... AND ME. I KNOW IT SOUNDS SO SIMPLE. I WAS JUST HELPING OUT WITH A CLASS! BUT I HAD NEVER TAUGHT ANYTHING BEFOR, I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE ROOM, AND I WAS SCARED THAT I WOULDN'T DO A GOOD JOB. I JUST WANTED TO SHOW MY PROFESSOR THAT HE HAD MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ASKING ME TO WORK FOR HIM, AND I WAS TERRIFIED THAT I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT."

- SOFTWARE ENGINEERING MAJOR

Tips & Tools

1

Give yourself a pep talk. Say your name out loud and then add some affirmation at the end. For example, try saying "Sam is amazing at her job." For more detailed and thought provoking self-affirmation, make a list of at least 10 reasons that make you qualified for the role you're seeking or the role that you're in. If you're having trouble, ask yourself what are the reasons that would make you less qualified than someone else. Is there anything that makes you more qualified than others for the job? Write it all down and focus on the positives. Think about the results from studies that demonstrate that men will apply for a job without meeting any of the qualifications. Always apply and if you receive the position, know you have earned it.

3

Visualize your success. Prior to the interview or the presentation, do a successful practice run in your head. Consider how you will navigate the situation and how you will present yourself. This allows you to build up confidence that you might not have from experience; there's always a first for everything! Imagining success will help you attain success.

2

Claim your accomplishments as yours. Studies have shown that men associate their success with their intelligence, while women associate it with hard work, luck, or help from others. Stop making excuses for your successes. Practice saying these words out loud: "I'm proud of my success and what I have accomplished." Be cautious of your language in front of others if you're not giving yourself the credit that you deserve; it will be more difficult to be recognized for your work by authorities that don't always see the hours that you contribute. Don't undermine yourself.

4

Make the active choice to be confident. This sounds crazy; how can one just decide to be confident? Choose to be confident with your actions. Raise your hand. Volunteer your knowledge or ideas. Speak up. Speak out. Send the email. After doing these things, reflect on how they made you feel and the positive outcomes that resulted from these leaps. What went wrong, but more importantly, what went right?

Further Reading

"Know your worth, then ask for it" by Casey Brown | TED

"Gender differences in causal attributions by college students of performance on course examinations"

by Sylvia Beyer | Current Psychology

"How students of color confront imposter syndrome" by Dena Simmons | TED

A note from the author

You are powerful and valuable. You are an asset. Remember that imposter syndrome is not just a feeling; it can easily creep into your actions. Don't let it. Know that you have gotten to where you are based on your skillset, your experiences, and the insight that you offer. Find confidence and support in your community. Don't undermine your own worth or potential. I believe in you and you have a whole community that believes in you. Apply for the job. Raise your hand.

You've got this and we're behind you 100 percent. -Kaitlin Gili, CEO