

# Caring for Integrated Care Teams & Trainees: Addressing Imposter Syndrome and Burnout in an Evolving Healthcare Paradigm

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## Background

**Impostor syndrome (IS) is characterized by a fear of one's intellectual incompetence being discovered and an inability to internalize accomplishment.**

In stressful work environments and in uncertain social conditions, impostor syndrome is likely to have an even greater impact.

Impostor syndrome is more prevalent than commonly recognized and is not limited to a particular medical specialty, or level of professional training.

Integrated care teams were amongst the first to recognize and anticipate the long-term behavioral health impacts of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic compounded by the fight for equality expressed in the social justice movement. These factors have impacted the well-being and health of not only patients, but also practicing integrated care team members and trainees. The literature supports a link between IS and burnout. The impact of burnout is not limited to the individual(s) experiencing burnout.



## Tendencies & Outcomes Associated with IS

### Impostor Tendencies:

- Perfectionistic work tendencies
- Emotional exhaustion
- Attribution errors around success and failure
- Self-depreciation

### Outcomes:

- Low job satisfaction
- Increased anxiety
- Increased depression
- Burnout
- Suboptimal performance
- Reduced engagement
- Diminished efforts toward promotion & leadership opportunities
- DECREASED HAPPINESS

Marginalized individuals & those from unempowered groups are at greater risk for IS

## Strategies to Address IS & Burnout

- Develop and promote a culture of Impostor Syndrome awareness
- Normalize that impostor concerns are real
- Train managers and others responsible for employee development to recognize IS tendencies & avoidant coping
- Provide support networks both formal & informal feedback (360 feedback, evaluations written or verbal feedback)
- Position IS as a disruptive yet formative career experience
- Offer Employees Resources to Address IS including cognitive reframing interventions
  - Career counseling
  - Mentoring
  - Attributional Error Training

## Key Points

- Although high-IS individuals are deemed by colleagues as competent and successful, impostor concerns harm not only personal development but also contributions to the integrated care team's capacity and outcomes.
- Integrated care teams broad expertise strategically positions them to encourage their employers to employ strategies to prevent and address Impostor Syndrome.
- Addressing Impostor Syndrome can contribute to achieving the Quadruple Aim.

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