

Competence Challenges vs. Confidence Challenges: Exploring Tools for Combatting Imposter Syndrome

AALS Clinical Conference

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Resources for Combatting Imposter Syndrome

- “A Call to Deal with Imposter Syndrome, a Hidden Source of Attorney Distress,” Neha Sampat - http://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/a_call_to_deal_with_impostor_syndrome_a_hidden_source_of_attorney_distress/
- “Your Chronic Stress: It’s a Matter of Confidence, Not Competence,” Neha Sampat - <https://www.attorneyatwork.com/chronic-stress-a-matter-of-confidence-not-competence/>
- *Roadmap: The Law Student's Guide to Meaningful Employment*, Second Edition, Neil Hamilton (Competencies listed on pages 31-33)
- *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*, Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen
- *Developing Talent: A Practical Guide*, Ed. Gaye Mara and Nora Mara
- *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Daniel Goleman
- *The Etiquette Edge*, Beverly Langford
- *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Carol Dweck
- *Strengths Finder 2.0*, Tom Rath
- *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen
- *The Essential Associate*, Jay Harrington
- *Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks*, Grover Cleveland
- Marjorie M. Shultz and Sheldon Zedeck’s *26 Lawyering Effectiveness Factors*: www.aals.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Shultz-and-Zedeck%C2%B9s-26-factors.pdf
- *IAALS Foundations for Practice*: iaals.du.edu/publications/foundations-practice-whole-lawyer-and-character-quotient
- ABA for Law Students: Growth Mindset <https://abaforlawstudents.com/2017/09/12/growth-mindset-law-school-success/>

How Can Clinical and Externship Faculty Disrupt Imposter Syndrome (IS)?

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- **We have greater access to students, which means we can:**
 - *Identify IS:* Our access to students primes us to identify IS because we get to know the students well, often through individual counseling.
 - *Train/educate supervisors.* In the externship setting, supervisors are also in a position to identify IS. Institutional level trainings for supervisors can help.
 - *Facilitate mentoring arrangements.* We formally and informally pair students with mentors, such as former students. These mentorship relationships can combat IS.
 - For formal pairings, consider pairing students with both a junior and a senior attorney mentor. The differing perspectives from the mentors can really help the student.
 - Have the students in externships and clinics mentor other students via informal connections. Having a student with IS be the mentor can help disrupt the IS because it helps the student realize they know more and can add more value than they previously thought.
- **Build reflective habits around identifying competence.** If you give reflective assignments or have students do any assessments, consider these:
 - *To-Dos to Ta-Das.* Reflective prompt: What is one Ta-Da from this week, & what does that Ta-Da say about who you are and of what you are capable?
 - *Reframe gaps as opportunities to learn instead of as liabilities.* Reflective prompt: (1) What is something you learned in the field this week that you didn't know last week?
 - *StrengthsFinder* & similar assessments help students know their top skills.
 - *Reflective exercise* - ask junior attorney what was biggest challenge of first year of practice.
- **Use self-evaluation and harvesting proof/solid evidence as tools.** If you have students do any self-assessments, have them also write what their solid evidence is for why they self-assessed themselves at a particular level. Having them use their lawyerly skills to back up their claim helps them think in a more realistic way.
- **Build awareness around supervisor expectations of student performers.** Look to data like IAALS and ask students how they demonstrate behaviors.
- **Model vulnerability.** Showing your vulnerability deepens their learning.
- **Seminar topics.** Addressing in class or via reflections can help disrupt IS.
 - Growth mindset.
 - Navigational guidance for sector they're externing in to demystify it.