FEAR OF FRAUD: 
Mentoring Faculty, Residents, and Students with Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome stems from strong feelings of self-doubt, including fear of being a failure or “fraud.” Members of the health sciences community are no exception.

In the long run, faculty, residents, and students impacted by imposter syndrome can experience stunted development and academic success.

To bring awareness to its prevalence and negate the consequences, mentoring a person with imposter syndrome should include the following:

- **MAKE IT PERSONAL**
  Share any personal feelings you may have about your own imposter syndrome. How have you dealt with your feelings? How have you overcome self-doubt?

- **ESTABLISH PREVALENCE**
  Let your mentee know that experiencing imposter syndrome and self-doubt are common—they are not alone in these feelings.

- **CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS**
  Assist mentees in recognizing their accomplishments and the value of each one. It is one’s feelings that lead to self-doubt—not their performance.

- **PROMOTE POSITIVITY**
  Utilize self-reflection and mindfulness training focused on bringing awareness to the positives of the mentee’s personal and professional activities.

- **ENCOURAGE ACCEPTANCE**
  Remind mentees that each of us will have an occasional failure, but that doesn’t make us a failure. Mistakes happen to everyone. Forgive yourself and try again.

Approximately 70% of people report experiencing imposter syndrome during their career.

Additional Resources