



We're people like you.

Peer Group Chat

Date: 24/08/23

Title: I Feel Like I'm Pretending: Imposter Syndrome

Description: It can be a common experience to feel pressure to fit in or be someone you're not. Often, we can doubt ourselves and our abilities leaving us feeling like a fraud, but this might be the imposter syndrome talking. Let's come together to discuss our experiences with imposter syndrome, and how we can combat this feeling.

User's login	Message
Jupiter	Hi everyone. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. I am joining from Wurundjeri land tonight. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Feeling Like I'm Pretending: Imposter Syndrome.

SANE

We're people like you.

Jupiter	<p>Tonight, Peer Support Workers @amber22 and @Jupiter will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Feeling Like I'm Pretending: Imposter Syndrome. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, this topic is important to discuss because we might not be aware that we are experiencing imposter syndrome and may not realise that we can counteract this feeling. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about Imposter Syndrome and our experiences with this. @tyme, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs) or message @tyme. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about Feeling Like I'm Pretending: Imposter Syndrome.</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @Captain24 :)
Jupiter	Hey Captain24!
Captain24	Hi!
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Welcome Captain!
Jupiter	<p>Within this group tonight we'll be talking about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How Imposter Syndrome might impact us and others around us- The relationship between comparison and Imposter Syndrome

SANE

We're people like you.

	- How to create spaces where we might experience Imposter Syndrome less
Jupiter	We will be starting the discussion shortly but will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join.
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @Snowie :)
Jupiter	Hi Snowie!
Snowie	Hi everyone
Jupiter	Okay, let's get into it! Thanks everyone for being here this evening.
Jupiter	Q1: What is your understanding of Imposter Syndrome?
Amber22 (PSW)	My understanding of imposter syndrome is that you feel as if you are pretending to be someone that you are not. You might feel out of place, or like you are playing a role that you don't feel worthy enough to.
Captain24	Not being your true self and masking who you are.
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I haven't thought much of the term, but I'm thinking masking is a type of Imposter Syndrome - where you can't really be your true authentic self.
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @Shaz51

SANE

We're people like you.

Snowie	My understanding is doubting myself and feeling like a fraud
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Just what I was thinking @captain! - Masking... 100%
Amber22 (PSW)	Masking is a good one!
Shaz51	Hello @Amber22 (PSW)
Jupiter	I think it can feel like you are faking it and pretending, but not feeling like you are good enough
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @Catz28
Catz28	Hi, had issues with my password
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Hi Catz, Shaz, Snowie!
Amber22 (PSW)	Glad you're here with us now :) @Catz28
Shaz51	Hello @tyme (PSW/ Moderator)
Catz28	Feeling you are failure, even if good at something
Jupiter	It sounds like we've all had experiences with imposter syndrome before

SANE

We're people like you.

Jupiter	Q2: How might Imposter Syndrome impact you or someone that you know?
Amber22 (PSW)	Imposter Syndrome might make you or someone you know feel like they don't fit in somewhere, or feel as if they are pretending, so it could really impact your sense of self and your ability to show up
Catz28	Feelings of doubt, low self esteem
Snowie	I think it impacts me by doubting myself all the time and thinking I am not worthy of anything.
Amber22 (PSW)	Definitely low self esteem, it's especially hard to see that in others that we love around us@Catz28
Captain24	Not being able to know who you really are and feeling like you are not good enough as you are. Losing your sense of self worth and self-esteem
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	It takes a lot of energy to pretend to be something you are not... it's so draining
Amber22 (PSW)	I get that, do you think that might potentially stop you from doing things you want to do because of the doubt? @Snowie
Catz28	I'm thinking back to when I was working and how I felt at times
Jupiter	I think work is a common area for people to experience imposter syndrome!

SANE

We're people like you.

Amber22 (PSW)	Yes, as Jupiter said, I think it is really common to experience this at work, as you might feel like you aren't qualified to be there, despite being hired and having all qualifications that you need! It's very exhausting @Catz28
Captain24	Work.. yes. I'm waiting for my work to tell me I'm not good enough and don't deserve my job.
Snowie	@Amber22 (PSW)I think it does stop me. It makes that negative self talk really loud. I think it has a direct link to our depression and anxiety too
Shaz51	It really impacts with your love ones as you are not sure what to support or to encourage
Amber22 (PSW)	That's very valid, Imposter syndrome can really affect how we see ourselves sometimes @Snowie
Jupiter	It's interesting how our friends and family and colleagues can see us as very competent and skills, but we may not be able to see that in ourselves...
Shaz51	Very true @Jupiter
Catz28	It took until I was placed into position to train new staff that I was forced to realise my knowledge and skills
Captain24	I find it really hard to believe it when people have something good to say. @Jupiter
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @ch45

SANE

We're people like you.

Jupiter	How did that realisation change how you viewed yourself Captain?
Amber22 (PSW)	Training or teaching people can definitely make us realise that we know more than we think! @Catz28
Captain24	It does sometimes make me question my own opinions @Jupiter. Even though I don't believe it it still does feel nice
Jupiter	Q3: What are some of the challenges you experience as a result of feeling like you have to pretend?
Jupiter	Sometimes I'm not my authentic self because I feel like I must present a certain way to keep up with expectations
Amber22 (PSW)	Sometimes I might feel like I am not good enough or worthy enough to be in the space where I am. And this could impact on how I participate within this space/ environment, for example; I may be quieter than usual because I don't want to say the wrong thing, or I may doubt myself when I am wanting to say something or share an idea or opinion.
Snowie	A challenge I have is that it takes so much energy to try and pretend all the time, to put that mask on. I also think that when I keep doubting myself, I eventually believe it, and then dismiss others if they tell me good thing about me.
Captain24	Not being able to do things that I want to do. Not being confident. Not being able to express myself as I want or need to. Feeling exhausted trying to keep it up. Worried that people will discover that I'm faking it

SANE

We're people like you.

Amber22 (PSW)	It is very draining and exhausting! That's why sometimes when we get home we might feel this sense of relief, like we don't have to pretend anymore @Snowie
Catz28	Feeling under pressure to keep to expectations which becomes physically and mentally exhausting
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I agree Catz that the pressure is exhausting.. it's also not sustainable!
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I think we've all done it.
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @creative_writer:)
creative_writer	Hey everyone :)
Snowie	@Amber22 (PSW)I think that is one of the reasons I avoid social settings and other people. I would rather just be by myself so I don't have to "pretend", but then that makes other problems within itself.
Amber22 (PSW)	Ah yes, I have felt worried that others might call me out on it before, it can be very exhausting and anxiety provoking @Captain24
creative_writer	I feel like when I am not doing well I tend to avoid others too
Amber22 (PSW)	I completely understand that, perhaps finding environments or certain people that you can feel like you don't have to pretend as much with could help @Snowie

SANE

We're people like you.

Jupiter	Fatigue and withdrawing seem to be some common themes here...
Catz28	I found I doubted myself which led to negative ability to learn new things and left me feeling overwhelmed and sad
creative_writer	I feel like it can be mood dependent, if I am low, then I find pretending too taxing, when I am in a good mood, I just don't care what others think as much
Captain24	I find it safer to withdraw too @Snowie. That's why I'm always alone and prefer to be alone
Amber22 (PSW)	I agree! @creative_writer
Snowie	me to @Captain24
Shaz51	I agree
creative_writer	It's like I'm supposed to be happy, only time I don't have to pretend is when I am happy
Amber22 (PSW)	Are there specific moments you feel the happiest/ like you don't have to pretend as much? @creative_writer
creative_writer	There are people I don't have to pretend as much with, even when I am low. I think part of having bipolar is, moods don't always make sense.

SANE

We're people like you.

tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	One challenge is that I have feared that the REAL me is 'found' out. It means I have to try harder to mask.
Amber22 (PSW)	That's understandable, but I'm glad you have some people that you don't have to pretend as much with @creative_writer
creative_writer	@tyme (PSW/ Moderator), completely feel that when I am in a dark place
Captain24	When I'm in a manic mood I don't have to pretend. I feel like I'm the best person there is and totally full of confidence!
creative_writer	@Captain24, I am feeling that right now, I guess spring is on it's way
Catz28	I find I have to pretend to be happy around relatives regardless how I am actually feeling
creative_writer	@Catz28, that would be hard
Snowie	@Catz28totally agree. I have that mask on around my family too
Captain24	I'm the same @Catz28
creative_writer	Pretending is a very exhausting thing to have to do
Amber22 (PSW)	That would be tough @Catz28, I'm sorry that you feel that way around them

SANE

We're people like you.

ch45	@Catz28Same, family, friends, even the psych when I was seeing one
Catz28	I usually only see them at Christmas which can be an emotionally upsetting time for me, depending if I'm feeling low or not
creative_writer	@ch45 even though I usually feel safer with psych, I have had moments where I held back, it's hard, particularly for those of us who have trust issues
Jupiter	Q4: What might the relationship between comparison and Imposter Syndrome be?
Amber22 (PSW)	Ah yes, trust issues can be amplified with Imposter Syndrome, especially in new environments potentially @creative_writer, which can make things really tough
Amber22 (PSW)	I think that Imposter Syndrome may make us compare ourselves and our experiences to others in a way where we feel like we are inadequate to those around us. They are very similar and therefore might impact each other quite a bit.
creative_writer	I guess instinctually people compare themselves to their peers, they often feel like they are not doing as well as their peers
Captain24	Trying to to be someone I'm not to fit in. I compare myself to others and try to harder to fake it better. In general I always compare myself and realise that I'm really not good enough or a good person.

SANE

We're people like you.

creative_writer	I know they say not to compare, but it can be hard. I know they say you can't compare apples and oranges, but our minds don't listen, a lot of self-doubt can come in. You might be like, if they can do it, why can't I?
Snowie	I compare myself to others a lot. I always put myself down and build others up in my mind.
Jupiter	This question makes me think of the phrase "comparison is the thief of joy"
Catz28	To me comparison = compare myself to others. Imposter syndrome = doubting myself and feeling inadequate
Amber22 (PSW)	That's really interesting, I really relate to that @Catz28
Amber22 (PSW)	You might even compare yourself to others in similar environments, such as the workplace, without even noticing
Captain24	I do that all the time @Amber22 (PSW)
creative_writer	I actually wonder if society feeds in the idea of comparisons
Snowie	Going to have to go. Not in a good headspace tonight. Take care all. I hope the rest of the chat goes well.
Captain24	Thinking of you @Snowie
creative_writer	Goodnight Snowie, I hope you sleep well

SANE

We're people like you.

Amber22 (PSW)	I hope you're okay @Snowie, here if you need
Jupiter	Goodnight Snowie
Jupiter	Q5: Are there some spaces or environments where you might experience Imposter Syndrome more, and some spaces where you might experience Imposter Syndrome less? What are the differences?
ch45	Anywhere there are people (physically)
ch45	(more)
creative_writer	I feel like you experience it often at work/study.
Amber22 (PSW)	Creating spaces where others are not intimidating us, but rather supporting us is really important to reduce feeling like an imposter. Being in spaces where we feel comfortable to truly be ourselves, rather than put on a bit of a facade when we feel uncomfortable, will enable us to feel more like ourselves and less like we are playing a role of someone we are not.
creative_writer	I think feelings of imposter syndrome go down around safer people
Captain24	At work, in public and any sort of gathering is worse. Sometimes I let my guard down a little if it's one on one.
Catz28	More at work, uni, sports. Less when at home when can relax and be me

SANE

We're people like you.

creative_writer	@Catz28 that is so relatable
creative_writer	Maybe it's life as a uni student, I have gotten imposter syndrome a lot when I compare myself to peers
creative_writer	Particularly with competition culture
creative_writer	Always the pressure, you have to somehow stand out and be better
Catz28	Imposter syndrome anywhere where there is pressure or expectation to succeed and maintain high standards
Jupiter	Q6: How might we be able to help create spaces where we and others don't feel like an imposter and able to be ourselves?
ch45	Q6: SANE chat forums?
Catz28	Safe relaxed environment
Captain24	If you feel safe being open with each other. If you can find a supportive environment
Amber22 (PSW)	Love that! @ch45

SANE

We're people like you.

creative_writer	I think it's about being in an accepting and non-judgemental environment, recognising that we all have our strengths
Amber22 (PSW)	What kind of specific environment would that be? @Catz28
Amber22 (PSW)	Having a non-judgemental environment is extremely important for me too @creative_writer
Catz28	Head not clearer enough to answer that one
Amber22 (PSW)	That's okay! :) @Catz28
ch45	I reckon joining a group focussed really strongly on some topic/hobby, means you can be 'yourself' within the narrow confines of that interest group without having to risk exposing the rest of Self?
Jupiter	I think we can help others who might not be feeling super confident by complimenting them or noticing when they have done something well and letting them know
Jupiter	Q7: What elements of truth about ourselves might help challenge our sense of imposter syndrome?
Captain24	I really don't see anything within myself that could challenge it.
Catz28	I find I don't have to pretend when out in nature or around animals

SANE

We're people like you.

Amber22 (PSW)	I think that reflecting on our experiences and being able to understand our accomplishments is really helpful in challenging our sense of imposter syndrome. Realising that we do have the experience, and any other accomplishments, is the first step to being able to break away from feeling like we are pretending.
Jupiter	It can be hard hey @Captain24
Amber22 (PSW)	Aw that's lovely @Catz28
Captain24	Yep @Jupiter maybe one day.
creative_writer	@Amber22 (PSW), agree 100%
Catz28	Taking a step away from the situation and reflecting on what has been achieved in the past
creative_writer	Maybe making a list of things we've achieved may help
Jupiter	Thats a good one @Catz28, maybe that helps us to be more objective
Jupiter	I've really enjoyed this discussion. Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?
Catz28	Making list of all things achieved to refer back to
Amber22 (PSW)	I've learnt that Imposter Syndrome is a lot more common than what I thought before

SANE

We're people like you.

Captain24	I've discovered that I'm not the only one that feels like they need to mask a lot. That I need to look back to what I have achieved to try and show myself that I am a little bit better than I think I am.
creative_writer	Despite imposter syndrome being common, we can reflect on our achievements and improve our sense of worth
Catz28	Words I heard many years ago. It's easy to see the things everyone else is good at, the magic is seeing, knowing and feeling the things you are good.
Jupiter	If we're struggling to think of our own achievements or strengths, I wonder about asking the people around us, or even other forum members?
creative_writer	I'm going to head off, it was nice talking to you all :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Thanks for coming along @creative_writer, have a lovely night!
Amber22 (PSW)	Aw I love that @Catz28
Captain24	That is worth a try @JupiterHowever I do struggle to accept it. My sense of self worth is too low.
Catz28	Words of a manager I had decades ago who also challenged all staff to record our strengths, no matter how small

SANE

We're people like you.

tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	That's a good practice @catz
Jupiter	Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about our experiences with Imposter Syndrome or our experiences knowing someone with Imposter Syndrome. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do?
Jupiter	I'm going to play with my cat, she's got the zoomies!
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Chilling out on the forums, for me :)
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm gonna have a big cup of tea :)
Catz28	Drink whilst cuddles with my cats then early bed
Jupiter	What kind of cats do you have @Catz28? I'm a cat person too :D
Catz28	I've got 2 cats, both short hair moggies. Male is white with ginger tabby markings, female is black tortie and white.
Jupiter	I love torties!
Catz28	Same. Pic I first saw of her was tiny kitten with gold stripe down her face. Feel in love straight away

SANE

We're people like you.

Jupiter	<p>Aww! I could talk about cats all night:1f60a: Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:</p> <p>1 Worksheet on identity (sometimes rediscovering our identity might help us with our Imposter Syndrome): https://socialself.com/Identity-worksheet.pdf</p> <p>2 What is Imposter Syndrome: https://www.bialikbreakdown.com/articles/among-us-what-is-imposter-syndrome</p> <p>3 Dealing with Imposter Syndrome: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6wbCf0gNSw The Anonymous Ones (song) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_2tXe_bswQ Lewis Capaldi, The Pretender- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNXbfORcZkU</p>
Jupiter	<p>Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. You are more than welcome to continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums if you would like here. Keep an eye out for the next Peer Group Chat discussion about Vulnerability & Vulnerability Hangovers. If you'd like to be informed about future Peer Group Chats, you can sign up to our mailing list here:</p> <p>https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat</p> <p>You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!</p>
Captain24	<p>Thanks everyone</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Here is the link for above: https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Feeling-Like-I-m-Pretending-Imposter-Syndrome/m-p/1328935#M343464</p>

SANE

We're people like you.

tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Have a good evening :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Have a lovely evening everyone! Thanks for coming along :)
Jupiter	Thanks everyone, have a good night:1f60a:
Catz28	I've been living in struggle town last few days, body fading fast. Night everyone, I'm going to try to get some sleep
Jupiter	Rest up @Catz28
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm sorry to hear that! Thanks for coming along tonight, sending lots of hugs