

How Psychological Safety Cures Imposter Syndrome.

Imposter syndrome. The all-too-common feeling of inadequacy that makes you doubt yourself, question your ability, and shrink with fear. It occurs outside of the comfort zone and triggers a fear of exclusion that motivates you to work harder than necessary to prove your worth.

Many experts recommend therapy and thought management to resolve individual instances of imposter syndrome. But the underlying issue may not be a personal one. While personal experiences with imposter syndrome are unique, your organizational culture can either enhance these feelings of inadequacy or cure them.

In a psychologically safe culture, acts of vulnerability are rewarded and people feel safe to bring their full selves to work. You won't feel like an imposter in a workspace that offers psychological safety because you'll feel deeply seen, known, and included before those feelings of fraud can set in.

Your identity will be separated from your title and your authority.

You won't be scrambling to overprepare for a meeting, because perfection is never the expectation.

You won't discount your successes, you'll feel comfortable celebrating them.

A mistake won't prove that you're undeserving of a role, it'll confirm that you're human.

Psychological safety lets humans be humans at work without fear of failure or fraud. This won't mean that your team won't experience moments of imposter syndrome, but it will keep your team from believing that "imposter" is their core identity in your organization.

Note #29