



IMPOSTER SYNDROME

In response to the need to address mental health needs in the legal profession, the State Bar's [Council on Access and Fairness \(COAF\)](#) has developed a toolbox of resources on imposter syndrome. The toolbox includes articles, a worksheet, and testimonials videos, which are meant to facilitate conversations to aid in identifying and addressing imposter syndrome. Below are the articles and worksheet that can be found in the toolbox.

To access the complete toolbox, visit the State Bar's website at [Link to toolbox webpage](#).

WORKSHEET – MAKING THE CASE FOR YOURSELF

Imposter syndrome can bring on a range of thoughts, feelings, and emotions - all of which can present themselves as a challenge to address. The goal of this resource is to help guide individuals through the limiting thoughts manifested by imposter syndrome by creating a new framework of thought. Confronting imposter syndrome can be a taxing endeavor. When completing this worksheet or other resources like it, law students and attorneys are encouraged to carefully evaluate and acknowledge their own capacity to begin the effort. If, upon reflecting, you find that you do not have the capacity to address your imposter syndrome, do seek to prioritize your well-being before starting the worksheet.

This worksheet is adapted from the [Imposter Syndrome: Tools and Resources](#), created by [Oregon Women Lawyers \(OWLS\)](#), a bar association.

STEP 1: Recognize our thoughts	What is the thought you are dealing with?	
	What feelings does that thought generate?	
	What triggered that thought? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were you? • Who were you with? • What was the situation? 	
STEP 2: Examine our thoughts	Examining the thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it kind? • Is it helpful? • Is it true? • Whose thought is it? 	
	Evidence that supports that thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the evidence reliable? • Could you be jumping to conclusions? 	
STEP 3: Reframe our thoughts and choose our response	Can you imagine a different explanation that could be true?	
	What evidence supports the new explanation?	
	With this awareness, what can you do to choose how you respond to these triggers in a way that is true, helpful and rooted in reality?	

MAKING THE CASE FOR YOURSELF - SAMPLE

STEP 1: Recognize our thoughts	What is the thought you are dealing with?	I am not capable of teaching a room of career services professionals how to teach law students how to negotiate salaries with small law firms.
	What feelings does that thought generate?	Anxiety that I can't deliver on others' expectations; Fear that people will think I'm not good at my job.
	What triggered that thought? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were you? • Who were you with? • What was the situation? 	Planning for a presentation at a conference early in my career. I held these thoughts privately and did not share them.
STEP 2: Examine our thoughts	Examining the thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it kind? • Is it helpful? • Is it true? • Whose thought is it? 	I don't think I gave myself enough credit. Telling myself that I was not capable was neither true nor helpful. I've coached many lawyers on how to negotiate their salaries.
	Evidence that supports that thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the evidence reliable? • Could you be jumping to conclusions? 	I never thought of myself as an expert negotiator. I see now that just because I'm not an expert negotiator, I may have jumped to a conclusion that I couldn't help others prepare for salary negotiations.
STEP 3: Reframe our thoughts and choose our response	Can you imagine a different explanation that could be true?	It's possible that I might have been able to conduct this session on my own.
	What evidence supports the new explanation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've coached many students/graduates on negotiating with their employers. • I always prepare for speaking engagements and am good at seeking out helpful resources. • I had been invited to deliver this workshop—SOMEONE thought I could do it.
	With this awareness, what can you do to choose how you respond to these triggers in a way that is true, helpful and rooted in reality?	This is a good reminder that when a new opportunity seems daunting, I should still consider doing it. I always prepare in advance and know how to access resources to fill in my knowledge gaps. And speaking on a topic that seems intimidating is a great way to enhance my knowledge and add to my value.

ACTION ITEMS AND COMMITMENTS

Please list three action items that you will take to combat imposter syndrome.

Action Item 1:

I can engage the following resources and support to make this effort:

I intend to complete this action by (write date): _____

Action Item 2:

I can engage the following resources and support to make this effort:

I intend to complete this action by (write date): _____

Action Item 3:

I can engage the following resources and support to make this effort:

I intend to complete this action by (write date): _____