

Rydberg MG, Appleton LK, Fried AJ, Cable DM, Bynum DL. Implementation of a “best self” exercise to decrease imposter phenomenon in residents. *J Grad Med Educ.* 2024;16(3):308-311. DOI:<http://dx.doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-23-00873.1>

### Supplementary Data

#### Additional survey questions from the Dan Cable research group:

- 1) I don't trust coworkers to accept my self-doubts if I disclosed them
  - 2) I believe that it will hurt my reputation if I voice my self-doubts
  - 3) Disclosing my shortcomings will hurt me in the work environment
  - 4) I feel like I am an imposter in my current work position
  - 5) I am not as qualified for my current role as others think I am
  - 6) I wonder if I really deserve my current work role
  - 7) Time will eventually reveal that I am not as competent as others think I am
  - 8) I will probably be found out for being an imposter in my work role
  - 9) I try to hide my weaknesses at work
  - 10) I work very hard so my colleagues don't find out my shortcomings
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#### Additional information on implementing the Reflected Best Self Exercise

All incoming residents were informed of the project and invited to participate in March 2022, shortly after Match Day. Incoming residents received a standard letter explaining the exercise and the project to send to contacts, and were encouraged to reach out to many contacts (>10) who were important in their lives and who would be willing to share stories of the individual at their best. One study author (MGR) created accounts for RBSE™ creation with the University of Michigan's Center for Positive Organizations for the participants. Residents were given their account information to log in and request stories via the RBSE™ online portal. Residents did not have access to their stories prior to intern orientation. Each participant received a packet of their stories in hard copy during the dedicated session as a part of intern orientation.

See below for the standardized letter that we created for participants to share with their contacts to improve the process of eliciting their personal stories.

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**Standard Letter Explaining Project to Participants:**

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To whom it may concern:

Greetings from the University of North Carolina Internal Medicine Residency Program! Match Day has come and gone, and we are delighted to have an outstanding group of new residents who will be pursuing their training with us. We are currently pursuing a project aiming to improve self-confidence and decrease sense of imposter syndrome amongst our trainees through a “best self” or “highlight reel” intervention. This intervention is simple: individuals reach out to close friends, family members, colleagues, and mentors and request personal stories that highlight their unique strengths as individuals. Stories are collected through a portal at the University of Michigan, and will be delivered to our residents during their residency orientation. This intervention has been studied in the business world and found to markedly improve team functioning and improve individuals’ sense of self-worth. We believe this intervention may improve residents’ sense of self-confidence and reduce feelings of imposter syndrome – an incredibly common experience amongst physicians.

We know it can be awkward for individuals to reach out to the people that matter to them to ask for positive stories – it runs counter to the idea of constantly working on our flaws. We hope that you will take the time to think of a story or experience that exemplifies what is exceptional about the person reaching out to you. We are deeply appreciative of your time and effort in this endeavor.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael Rydberg, MD  
Chief Resident, Internal Medicine Residency Program

Debra L. Bynum, MD, MMEL, FACP  
Mary and Thomas Hudson Distinguished Professor  
Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program  
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