



Impostor Syndrome Institute is built on a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity that began in 1975 — long before this language even existed

Valerie's content left our employees feeling energized and hopeful for confronting the symptoms of imposter syndrome in real time. Furthermore, she helped our employees explore the root causes of impostor syndrome so that they can develop organizational solutions to environmental conditions that produce it.

— **Tarikh Campbell**
Workplace Inclusion Manager
MICROSOFT

Thank you for your excellent talk at the STEM Men of Color Symposium. Feedback has been unanimously positive and the symposium would not have been as strong without your contribution.

— **Jami P. Joyner**
Director of Inclusive Student Excellence, Diversity Programs in Engineering
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Over 600 people registered for the Webinar and based on attendee evaluations ranks as one of our most highly rated presentations.

— **Peter M. Finn**
Director of Learning & Development
SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS

Our History in DE&I

From its inception in the early 1980s Rethinking Impostor Syndrome™ has widened the lens to address the larger intersection between impostor syndrome and what is today known as DE&I.

The impetus to work in the newly emerging field of social issues education began in 1975 when Impostor Syndrome Institute co-founder Valerie Young took an undergraduate course on racism led by Judith Katz, author of *White Awareness: A Handbook for Anti-Racism Training*.

Eager to follow in Judith's footsteps, Valerie applied to the masters/doctoral program in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In addition to her studies, she served as a workshop designer, facilitator, and Founding Coordinator of what would later become the Social Justice Education (SJE)* program.

A forerunner of today's diversity and inclusion training, SJE's mission was to create educational methodology to raise awareness of the individual, cultural and institutional dynamics of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism, heterosexism/homophobia. It was established by Valerie's faculty advisor and mentor, Dr. Bailey Jackson who is known for his groundbreaking work on the dynamics of oppression and black identity development theory.

Valerie's interest in impostor syndrome was sparked by a 1978 paper by psychology professor Pauline Clance and clinical psychologist Suzanne Imes. In it they described their shared experience counseling women who expressed a persistent pattern of dismissing evidence of accomplishments and abilities and fear of being discovered to be an "impostor."

*Originally known as the Oppression and Social Issues Training Project



Everyone loses when bright people play small.

I strongly recommend the workshop for any leader at any level. I found the workshop to be extremely useful in my position as Dean and Valerie's coverage of the topic to be very accessible, bolstered with data and excellent examples, and very practical. I left with a number of actions I will take immediately to begin to help those with this syndrome, and with a commitment to make long-lasting changes that will lessen the effects of this syndrome on students, faculty and staff in the College of Engineering.

— **Jim Garrett Jr.**
Dean, College of Engineering
CARNEGIE MELLON

Your European Women's Leadership conference evaluations were overwhelmingly positive with most attendees rating it and you as "excellent." The over 20 countries and virtually as many languages represented confirms that impostor feelings are truly universal. Thanks again for a great job.

— **Jane Gibbon**
Senior Director, HR
McDONALD'S EUROPE

Your absorbing presentation not only enriched but also helped to renew the commitment of faculty leaders - from deans, chairs, senate members, equity advisors, to graduate mentors - to build and sustain a culture of inclusive excellence at UCI.

— **Douglas M. Haynes, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Associate Vice Provost for Equity and Diversity**
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

As a first generation college student herself, Valerie instantly identified and began to investigate why clearly intelligent, capable women would feel anything but. Whereas the majority of Clance and Imes work was observational and based on the experiences of white, primarily undergraduate students, Valerie's subjects were professional women, a majority women of color.

Notably, many of the core solutions that came out of that early research have since proved applicable to anyone experiencing impostor syndrome.

Today Rethinking Impostor Syndrome™ includes, but goes beyond, gender to address the systemic reasons that can lead people of color, first-generation students and professionals, early career or older employees, individuals who study or work in a different country/culture, and people with disabilities to be especially prone to impostor feelings.

Furthermore, this intersection between impostor syndrome and DE&I is presented in a way that ensures everyone feels seen regardless of social group membership.

This in depth understanding of situational, occupational, societal, and organizational sources of impostor syndrome coupled with a commitment to DE&I that began over four decades ago has made Rethinking Impostor Syndrome™ the clear choice of scores of DE&I professionals and corporate ERGs as well as the US Department of Commerce's First Generation Professionals conference, MIT's First Generation Student program, Cornell University's Men of Color in STEM Symposium, and dozens of university and association initiatives aimed at attracting, retaining, and advancing women and people of color in STEM.