

Hello, my name is Gemma Fieldsend, and I'm a mental health trainer for the Charlie Waller Trust. I can still remember, although it is many years ago now, writing my CV for my first mental health nursing job and thinking, what have I got to offer and what skills do I have? I fell immediately into the pit of compare and despair, and thinking, everyone else applying would put together a better CV and have so much more to offer. Fast forward 30 years, and I now wish I could have told my younger self that I did have something to offer and that my best would be good enough.

Applying for jobs can be a bit of a thankless task, even when it's just for a part-time job whilst you're at school or college. Being rejected can still be difficult, and so when you find a job that you really want, it's totally understandable that you can feel worried or anxious that you might not get it. This is completely normal, and managing setbacks and rejection is something we all have to learn to manage as we continue our journey into the world of work. This video is to help normalize some of the emotions you may feel when applying for jobs and provide you with some strategies and tips on how to maintain good wellbeing during this process.

Let's start by thinking about a very common feature of this process: imposter syndrome. So what is imposter syndrome? Most people experience feelings of self-doubt and worthlessness at some point in their lives, and this can be particularly triggered when we feel let down or rejected at this time. Have you ever found yourself thinking, "I'm not good enough," "I don't belong here," "I'm going to get caught out," "I'm a fraud," "Everyone has got this sorted"? These thoughts can lead to reduced self-confidence and low self-esteem. This is known as imposter syndrome, and it is estimated that around 80% of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives.

But the fact that it's common doesn't make it any less damaging to a person's confidence and career growth. In fact, many people who suffer from imposter syndrome are high achievers who set extremely high standards for themselves and are committed to doing their best and being the best. To combat feelings of imposter syndrome, try to change the way you talk to yourself: "I'm not the only one who feels like this," "I can ask for help if I need to," practice positive self-talk: "I am good enough," "I do belong here." Think about what you would say to a friend who felt like this, and how will you feel about this in six months? These techniques not only can help you become less stressed and anxious but can also help you build the courage to do things that will bring you greater rewards. We can miss some incredible opportunities when we are potentially crippled with fear and an abundance of self-doubt. And also hold in mind that part of life is experiencing knockbacks—it's a journey.

So, what have others said? "I felt imposter syndrome a lot, and felt like I shouldn't even bother to apply because I didn't have the experience or skills. On reflection, there's quite a few grad schemes and jobs I should have applied to, but I just felt intimidated by them, or I thought that others would have a better shot than me, especially when places are mass hiring graduates. They often reject you in such a robotic way as well, which didn't help me feeling confident when I wanted to apply to jobs afterwards."

"When writing CVs or applying to jobs, I often experience feelings of anxiety. I worry that I might not be selling myself enough or including all the relevant experiences, qualifications and skills. It's challenging to strike that balance between being professional and being personable. I wonder if I'm being too chatty or coming off as too serious." Rejection stings and not knowing why you were rejected can cause you to engage in negative self-talk about your skills and capabilities. Rejection doesn't mean you did anything wrong. Rejection happens to everyone. It's very easy to fall into a spiral of negativity and self-doubt with rejections. It's important to keep perspective on them.

Choose to embrace your imperfections and accept yourself just as you are. Perfection makes it harder for us to show up authentically, because we're so focused on pleasing, perfecting and proving ourselves. And remember embracing your imperfections and letting others see the less-than-perfect parts of you allows you to connect with others.

It can also be a bit of a roller coaster. We are all different. You may find the process okay and be successful. Nonetheless, the journey itself can evoke an array of emotions—both positive and negative. A little anxiety can be a good thing. It can give you the energy and the motivation needed to move forward in the process. However, if you're feeling overwhelmed, it's important to recognize these emotions and have strategies in place.

Some signs of overwhelm may include difficulty focusing and concentrating, racing thoughts, negative emotions and worry, negative thinking patterns, difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, headaches and stomach aches. So what are some of the ways you can manage these feelings and feel like you're in control? Here are some tips from young people on what they have found helpful.

Firstly, thinking about seeking support with writing your CV. Could you ask a friend or family member what they believe you have to offer? It's sometimes hard to sell ourselves or think objectively about what we can offer. We probably will give great advice and feedback to a friend but applying it to ourselves is so much harder. It can be useful to talk to friends and family about the application process, because they've been there too, and although their circumstances might not exactly be the same, they can help to remind you of your strengths when things feel difficult.

The second is coping with setbacks. Just because this time it may not have worked out, don't let it put you off applying again. Somebody says, "I'm so glad I didn't give up. I have a job that I love, and I already, after six months, got promoted." If you aren't successful on this occasion, it's not because it's all bad. I don't think there's one best way to deal with rejection. It sounds cliché, but I think it's kind of like grief, where everyone processes it differently. "Sometimes I find it easier not to tell friends or family that I'm applying for something, because then it's fewer people to tell if I'm unsuccessful or like less unwanted advice to fend off."

On the other hand, it can also be useful to talk to friends and family about the application process, because they've been there too, and although their

circumstances might not be the same, they can help to remind you of your strengths when things feel difficult.

Top tip three is to think about some of those things that we can do to manage that overwhelm. "I take a break, and I just gather myself. I break the task into smaller pieces, write it down on a clear list, on pieces of paper. This helps me gain a new perspective and complete the task at hand. I remind myself that everything is a learning experience, and I'm building my skills up for the future. This boosts my determination to finish whatever it is I'm doing. Something that really helps me, generally when overwhelmed, is meditation. I would probably go for a walk or get away for a couple of hours, however long is needed to process things and to have an outlet. Don't let those negative feelings fester. Voice them with someone, be it a friend, family member, therapist, etc."

Top tip number four: your best is good enough. The disappointment of not feeling good enough is something we will all experience at some point in our lives. There will be times when we're doing the best we can, but it's not enough to get us to where we want to be or think we should. Hold in mind that your best is good enough. To counter any negative thoughts you still have, maybe create an inventory of the things you are good at and areas in which you excel, do well, or at least are good enough, and areas you want to learn more about. "Whenever I hear that negative voice in my head, I pause for a minute. I take a deep breath and say to myself, 'But my best is always good enough.'"

And then finally, top tip number five. The danger is that it can become all-consuming—checking emails, waiting for a potential phone call, being on edge during the process of applying for a job and not being able to switch off. The constant checking and waiting can fuel our emotions and increase those unwanted negative thoughts. So stop, pause and reflect. Make sure you keep a routine and structure, which includes meeting your dietary needs, sleep, and continuing to do the fun things in life. Could you create some mindful moments? What are your self-care butterflies—things that are simple to do but have a high impact? You could test this out in the next 15 minutes.

I would just like to take this opportunity at the end to thank you for listening and wishing you all the very best.