

# Cultural awareness may help students fight feelings of phoniness

August 11 2014, by John Bach

---

A study co-authored by a University of Cincinnati researcher may help African American college students fight feelings of phoniness when it comes to their academic achievements.

Bridgette Peteet, an assistant professor of psychology in UC's McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, has taken a close look at "imposter phenomenon" when it comes to African American [college students](#).

The imposter phenomenon, as described in the study, is a feeling of incompetence and inadequacy despite evidence to the contrary.

"Some students have feelings that they are not as smart as people think they are," explained Peteet. "They have this internal dialogue telling them, 'I'm not supposed to be here' or 'Maybe if they knew who I really was, they wouldn't have admitted me into this program.'"

Peteet and co-author Carrie Brown, a researcher from Agnes Scott College, found that the degree to which a student's parents stressed the importance of learning about their African American culture may predict lower feelings of imposterism later in life.

Peteet and Brown presented the data in their study, "Racial Socialization as Protective Factor for Imposterism in African American College Students" at the American Psychology Association's (APA) annual convention, held Aug. 7-10 in Washington, D.C.

In their study, they determined that certain types of socialization and messaging were more important than others depending if it came from a maternal or paternal influence. For example, their results revealed that a mother's ability to teach her children how to cope with racism has an impact on [feelings](#) of imposterism. And a father's ability to teach his children to take pride in their race proved significant.

"We talk a lot about black fathers and not being in the home," said Peteet. "But here we see the importance that paternal messages really play. We know this figure is really important in terms of acting as a protective factor for students."

Provided by University of Cincinnati

Citation: Cultural awareness may help students fight feelings of phoniness (2014, August 11) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-cultural-awareness-students-phoniness.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.