

# SELF-ESTEEM 101



## *Self-esteem is not ...*

- Self-esteem is not something we are born with or have to earn.
- Self-esteem is not something that is given to us by others. When we look to others for a sense of worth, we need constant approval or praise and can never get enough.
- Self-esteem is not comparative and competitive. We don't build self-esteem by outshining others.
- Having a healthy level of self-esteem is not the same as being self-centred, selfish or over-confident.
- The goal is not to love everything about ourselves and our lives all of the time.

## *So what is self-esteem?*

- Self-esteem is a process, a journey, a practice, a constant work in progress.
- Therefore, it takes time and effort to build up our level of self-esteem and we can expect that level to fluctuate.
- Having a healthy level of self-esteem means having a **realistic** and **appreciative** opinion of ourselves.
  - **Realistic** suggests that we are aware of and honest about our strengths, weaknesses and everything in-between.
  - **Appreciative** suggests that we generally feel good about ourselves. Think of a friend who knows you well and really cares about you, recognizing that there is more to you than your faults, and you'll get a sense of what appreciative means.
- The goal is to focus on the positive things about ourselves and our lives and to look at the not-so-positive things as opportunities for growth.

## *Why work on self-esteem?*

- Because you're worth it!
- There are so many benefits! For example, people who work on self-esteem:
  - believe that they deserve to be happy
  - feel they can succeed
  - experience increased self-confidence
  - are better able to let go of undesirable attitudes and beliefs
  - don't need constant approval or praise
  - learn from their mistakes
  - make effective decisions
  - accept healthy supports
  - are more comfortable accepting feedback
  - express their wants and needs directly
  - trust that they are able to cope
  - have healthier relationships
  - are more self-accepting
  - are better able to come to terms with the past
  - are open to trying new things
  - don't feel sorry for themselves
  - are better able to realize their full potential
  - respect their own and other's values
  - are responsible for their own behaviour
  - care for themselves in healthy ways
  - are better able to set boundaries