**CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM WORKSHOP**

This worksheet is all about building our confidence and self-esteem.

There is a brief explanation of what each of these are, below:

* **Confidence** is the term we use to describe how we feel about our ability to perform roles, functions, and tasks.
* **Self-esteem** is how we feel about ourselves, the way we look, the way we think - whether or not we feel worthy or valued.
* **Resilience** is the process of adapting well or bouncing back from difficult experiences and setbacks, such as stress within the family and personal relationships, serious health problems or workplace and financial stress.

Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, acceptance of your body and mind (self-esteem) and belief in your own ability, skills, and experience. With support, learning and experience, as well as improved confidence and self-esteem, our resilience will grow too.

We are going to focus on building and maintaining our self-esteem as high self-esteem enables us to cope with and manage our mental health and wellbeing better. When self-esteem lowers so does our wellbeing and our ability to manage anxiety and depression. This can then become a cycle that is hard to break with depression, low mood and anxiety leading to negative thoughts chipping away at our self-esteem.

One way to start to build on our self-esteem is with **Gratitude exercises**.

Your mood can hold you back or allow you to see the world for all the good that it can offer. Improving your self-esteem is the key to feeling positive feelings instead of negative ones, and gratitude is a powerful tool to use.

We tend to focus on negative feelings, which can bring on anxiety, depression and even compromise your physical health. Focusing on positive feelings, and the positive things that happen in your life from day to day, can help you reverse those tendencies. Consciously expressing thanks daily can help you focus on the positive in your life and deflect the negative feelings that come your way.

Gratitude exercises help to appreciate your positive life experiences, improving your sense of self-worth, give you an effective way of coping with stress and trauma and keeps you in the present, helping you learn not to take things for granted, and not to dwell on past negative experiences.

Attached is a **gratitude journal** that you can use to note three positive things each day and allows you a moment to be grateful for those whether they be large or small.

The next exercise is a **Gratitude walk**. This does not have to be a walk for those of us that can’t go out at the moment or are finding it hard to leave the house – you can do this exercise sitting on your front step, in your garden or even sitting indoors by the window with it open so you are focussing on the outside.

On your walk you can go somewhere familiar or somewhere new, on the city streets or to a local park and then pick a spot to stop, sit down if you can, and just take some time to notice everything around you. Engage all your senses and be aware of all you can not only see, but hear, smell, touch and even taste. Take in the beauty and detail of a tree or flower or a buildings colour, architecture that you walk past every day and never noticed. Look at the graffiti and admire the art.

Do the same if you are at home, in the garden, on the step or in your window. Then take 5 minutes to write down all of what you saw, sensed and noticed and how much more you realized is around you every day – and be grateful for all those things and a moment of peace, calm and beauty in your day.

Practicing gratitude also includes appreciating all of your qualities, attributes, and abilities. It includes recognizing all that’s great and good in you. And valuing the incredible contributions you make each and every day. We have three worksheets available – **‘I am unique’,** **‘my strengths and qualities’** and a ‘**self-esteem journal’** to help you start to focus on these and note them down.

Another way to raise our self-esteem and combat negative thoughts is with affirmations and seeing our qualities, strengths, and value.

Over the years, we tend to get into unhelpful thinking habits, and think negatively about ourselves and situations. These negative thought cycles lower our self-esteem, but using positive statements can help us develop a new attitude to ourselves, break negative though cycles and raise our self-esteem. These positive statements are called **affirmations.**

We have available a worksheet which will take you through the steps to create your own positive affirmations and how to use them. They are a powerful tool so do give them a try.

Finally, **grounding exercises** are helpful for many situations where you find yourself becoming overwhelmed or distracted by distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings. If you find yourself getting caught up in strong emotions like anxiety or anger, or if you catch yourself engaging in stressful circling thoughts, or if you experience a strong painful memory or a flashback, or if you wake up from a nightmare with a pounding heart, grounding exercises can help bring you back down to earth.

It can be helpful to have a selection of grounding exercises that you can draw upon at different times. Just like no one technique works for all people, we often find that not all techniques work at all times. One thing you can do is look over some lists of grounding exercises and write down all the ones you think might work for you. Carry your personal list with you. Then, when you find yourself needing relief, you can run your eyes down your list and pick out the strategy that will be most helpful in that situation.

In working through the grounding exercises suggested in the worksheet available, you might find one or two that work for you. Keep in mind to only to use the exercises that you feel comfortable with.