

# 14-Day Mental Health Series

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Finding meaning and purpose in loss and recovery

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Summary of day 11 session:  
**Self-Gratitude**



### Big questions to ponder

- What are you grateful for?
- Can you be grateful for yourself?
- Why is it so challenging for you to celebrate yourself?

### Be “obsessively grateful”

- In some religious traditions, it is common practice to confess your sins in small rooms called confessionals. This is a good practice to take stock of our shortcomings and where we may have hurt others, as we ask for forgiveness. But what about creating a space where we are able to rejoice in the things that we have done right and the many good deeds we have done? Can we create ‘rejoicencals’, if you will- a place where we unashamedly celebrate ourselves and focus on our good qualities?
- Yes, we can! And it starts by focusing on the good things, our positive attributes and by feeling gratitude for the goodness we bring to the world.
- Think about the way you speak to yourself. Would you say the negative things that you speak to yourself, to someone else? Probably not! In your efforts to be kind, do not forget to be kind to yourself.
- “You’ll never be happy if you’re not happy” Let’s resolve to rejoice and feel gratitude so that we can grow our inner happiness quotient.
- Kindness to others starts with self-compassion. Much like you are instructed to place the oxygen mask on your own face before helping your children or others, in an emergency situation- so we need to first fill our own cups, before pouring out to others. Low self-esteem and low self-worth have us pouring from an empty cup constantly -this eventually leads to burnout.
- Imagine a big balloon, this is you- your whole life. When something “bad” happens, we color a black dot onto our balloon and focus all our attention on that negative emotion or event. We zoom in to that black dot and it becomes all we see and we begin to erroneously think that this is what or who we are. If we zoom out and take a step back we will see that the little black dot is not who we are- we are in fact, the whole balloon in its entirety, there is so much more to us!

### A visual self-gratitude practice



- **Gratitude -The sun:** Contemplate what you are grateful for about yourself and rejoice in yourself. Let the light of the sun, the light of gratitude, shine on everything.
- **Breathe-The wind:** Start by breathing deeply and allow the breath to bring you into the present moment. Feel deep gratitude for the breath.
- **Emotion- The clouds:** Recognize that emotions are like clouds that pass through the sky. They come and go, they are not who you are and they are temporary. Breathe as you observe the emotions passing over.
- **Tree- The physical body:** The tree is the physical body and consists of all our systems working together to support our life. Feel gratitude for your physical body and your health.
- **The tree branches -The senses:** The branches of the tree are like the five senses that help us to interpret the world around us. Bring your awareness to your sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch as you feel gratitude for these senses.
- **Heart of the tree-self compassion:** At the heart of the tree lies self-compassion and our ability to turn inward and love ourselves, just as we are.
- **The dog- a reminder:** Like the dog is sitting patiently observing the tree, so we are reminded to come back to the present moment. Let’s feel gratitude for this very generous present moment
- **The cat- curiosity:** Like the cat, we are encouraged to be curious and explore our world without judgement, seeing things from others points of view and be non-reactive.
- **Fence- boundaries:** The fence represents healthy boundaries that we lovingly put in place around ourselves to protect our inner resources. Feel gratitude to yourself for putting these boundaries in place.
- **Sunflower- Values:** The sunflower represents our values that we hold dear to us and the things we want to nurture and grow.
- **The whole picture:** When all these elements come together, through self-gratitude, we are able to cultivate a state of calm, mindfulness and joy.