Imposter Syndrome

"I don't belong here."
"I don't actually deserve this job/accomplishment/title."
"Someone is going to find out I'm a fraud."

It's estimated that 70% of people (7 in every 10 people) will experience imposter syndrome in their life. Most of these people won't talk about it either, because of the fear of being found out. All that to say: if you feel this way, **you are far from alone**.

In our society, there's a huge pressure to achieve:
- We're shown highly tailored snapshots of life through the media—social media, entertainment media, advertisements, etc.—which can lead to feelings of unworthiness, being unlovable, and otherwise not belonging. Especially during the pandemic, when we aren't seeing people in reality or experiencing other's lives in real-time, it's increasingly easy to be caught up in the **false reality** the media seeks to create.
- We're graded and compared to our peers as young as six years old, and that never really stops. We're taught to put ourselves on a scale and that if we fall beneath an arbitrary margin (often a failing grade) that we aren't good enough to participate, that we don't measure up to the rest of our peers. Feeling like we have failed creates shame, which can quickly leech into other areas of our lives and colour our perception of ourselves on the whole, **changing our inner story from "I have failed" to "I am a failure".**
- Aspects of our life like nutrition, fitness, job field, social patterns, and parenting are spoken about with morality language. Examples: *I was bad and ate chips or skipped my workout. I need to get a better job like an office job instead of customer service. I'm a bad friend because I forgot her birthday. I'm a bad parent because I sent a white bread sandwich for lunch.* None of these examples make us any less good, any less worthy of existing. **We are, and will always be, enough just as we are.** Sure, we make mistakes, but they do not define us, and we always have the option to try again or make amends.

So, what can we do?
- Understand the reasons behind our feelings of "not enough" or "not belonging"
- Acknowledge imposter syndrome when it colours our thoughts
- Once we're aware of our imposter thoughts, get curious
    o What's causing me to feel this way right now?
    o Do these thoughts help me or hinder me?
    o What if I did the thing anyways?
- Share what you're feeling with a trusted friend, colleague, or mentor (shame fails when we dare to talk about it)
- Look at the facts, you're doing better than you think
- Practice self-compassion, remembering that it's impossible to be perfect
- Consider therapy if imposter syndrome is keeping you from doing what you want to do