

Shame Workshop

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National Capital Intergroup



Overview

- Why talk about shame?
- What is shame?
- Where does shame come from?
- What triggers shame?
- What are common reactions to shame?
- How to break the shame cycle?
- 7th tradition
- Q & A



Why talk about shame?

Shame is destructive.

“In ACA, we believe shame claims the Number One spot” (number one offender that destroys more ACAers than anything else). We believe that shame is so potent that few drops can create a lifetime of lost self.” (*BRB 168*)

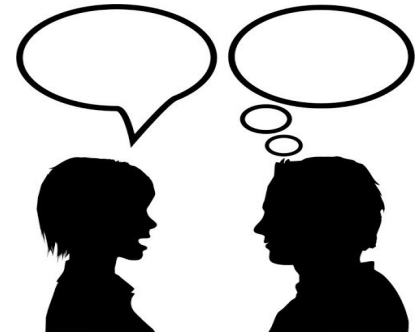
Shame came first.

“Shame often was on the scene before abandonment, which is perhaps the second most troublesome abuse we have faced as children of unhealthy parenting.” (*BRB 168*)

Shame is part of my/our ACA/Dysfunctional family story.

Shame isolates us.

Shame loses its power when we talk about it.



What is shame?

“Shame is the lie that tells me I am bad.” (*BRB* 152)



“Shame is a deep sense that our souls are inherently flawed.” (*BRB* 10)

“Shame or ashamed -- An intense sense of being faulty, wrong, or inferior at the core of our being.” (*BRB* 162)

“Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.” (Brown, *I Thought it was Just Me*, 5)



“Shame involves a belief that we are inferior, defective, or unwanted. Unlike guilt, which is usually associated with an action, we can have a general feeling of shame without having to do anything to cause the feeling.” (*BRB* 344)

Word Associated with shame

- Guilt -- action involved with the feeling (I did something bad)
- Humiliation -- don't think we deserve it
- Embarrassment -- short and fleeting, often funny, an audience is there



“Shame blinds us to the fact that love is inside each of us waiting to be discovered.” (*BRB* 168)



Where does shame come from?



“Our parents passed on the seeds of shame and fear given to them.” (*BRB* 157)

“Being shamed by our parents or a relative represents the loss of being able to feel whole as a person.” Shame tramples a child’s natural love and trust and replaces it with malignant self-doubt. With shame, we lose our ability to trust ourselves or others. We feel inherently faulty as a child.” (*BRB* 200)



What triggers shame?

- Appearance and body image
- Family and parenting
- Money and employment
- Mental and physical health
- Sex
- Gender
- Aging
- Religion
- Stereotypes and labels
- Speaking out
- Surviving trauma and abuse
- Making mistakes
- Having successes

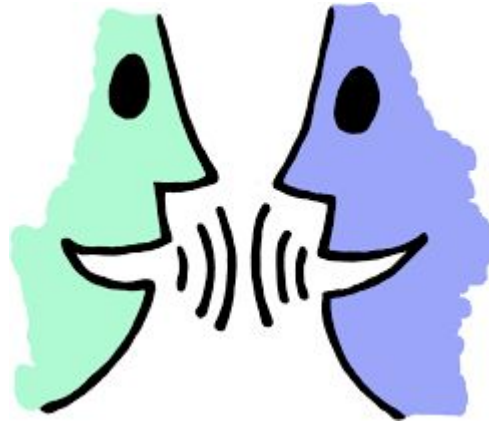


https://www.petoskeynews.com/des_life/10-shame-triggers-for-women-and-5-ways-to-overcome-them/article_5f2627f2-26ba-5bec-8df2-5507a28a9bbc.html

Share Time

What triggers your shame?

- Take a minute to think about times you have felt shame.
 - What were your triggers?



What are common reactions to shame?

How does my body react to shame?

“Shame or ashamed -- An intense sense of being faulty, wrong, or inferior at the core of our being. A feeling of being ruptured. A burning feeling in the stomach. A sensation of the body shrinking. Spiraling inward in the stomach or chest or both. Constricted throat. Difficulty in speaking. Heaviness on the chest and difficulty breathing. Feeling glared at by others.” (*BRB* 162)



What are common reactions to shame?

Withdrawing

Attacking yourself

Lack of Balance (avoidance, doing more of, overdoing it)

Attacking others

FIGHT



FLIGHT



FREEZE



<https://www.counseling.org/news/aca-blogs/aca-counseling-corner/aca-member-blogs/2019/05/23/how-to-name-shame-and-then-let-it-go>

What are common reactions to shame?

Power Over Pain

Rage

Control

Perfectionism

Succumb To Pain

Procrastination

Victim

Depression

Suicide

Shame Screens

Erase The Pain

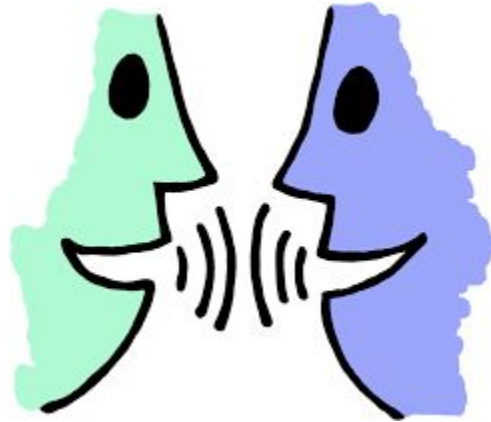
Addiction

http://www.acaconvention.org/pdf/Claudia_B_handouts.pdf

Share Time

How do I react when I am feeling shame?

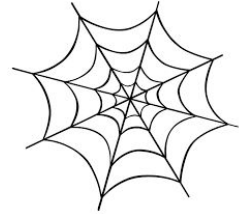
- Take a moment to think about how your body reacts to shame.
- Take a moment to think about what are your reactions and shame screens.
Do you isolate, become defensive, procrastinate, etc...?



What are common reactions to shame?

Shame web

“A web of layered, conflicting, and competing social-expectations. These expectation dictate: who we should be, what we should be, and how we should be.” (Brown, *I Thought it was Just Me*, 17)



Shame Spiral

“When shamed, we can spiral inward to an unreachable spot. In some cases a shame spiral is so intense that the adult child’s vision is distorted and perceptions change. Room lighting can seem more intense or dense and the expressions on people’s faces seem over exaggerated. Shame of this nature has accumulated over many years, but it can be lessened and made more bearable in ACA with God’s help.” (BRB 168)

Shame Storm

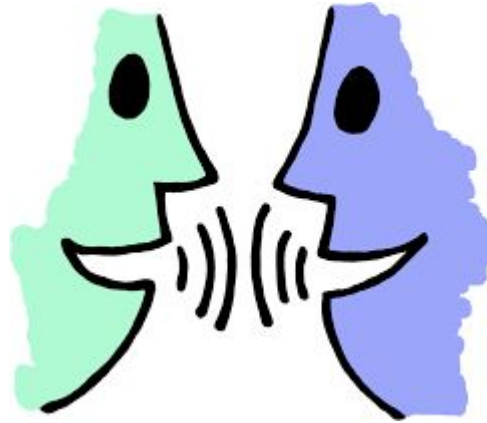
“The internal whirlwind of feeling that you have really messed up, coupled with a sense that you are all wrong. It is motivated by a fear that you might be seen for who you really are – a mess, not so worthy, a screw-up; simply not good enough for anyone or anything”

<https://benourished.org/what-you-can-do-in-a-shame-storm/>



Share Time

What is your shame story?



How to break the shame cycle?

- Name it
- Set realistic expectations
- Tell the world
- Change your inner voice



<https://www.counseling.org/news/aca-blogs/aca-counseling-corner/aca-member-blogs/2019/05/23/how-to-name-shame-and-then-let-it-go>

Name it

Step 4 (the shame buster)

Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves



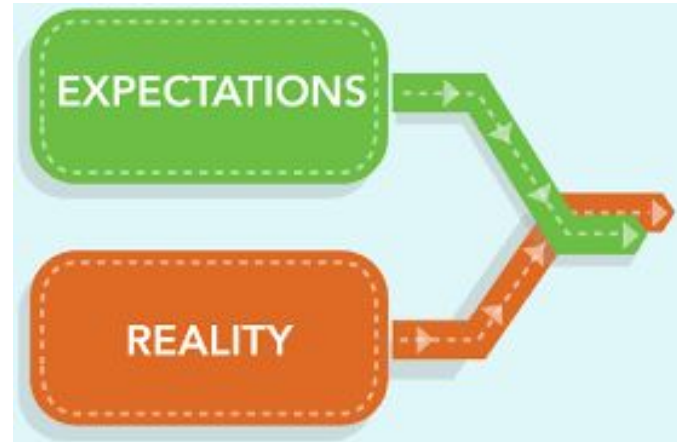
Make a shame list (*BRB*, 168)

1. List times you felt shamed by your parent.
2. List times you felt shamed by your relatives, spouse, children, friends, and bosses.
3. When listing times you felt shame include details like: “your age, where you were, what was said, and how your body reacted to the shame.” (*BRB* 169)

Set realistic expectations

Tools to help with setting realistic expectations:

- Laundry List Traits workbook
- Ongoing dialogue with a sponsor, trusted fellow traveler, or therapist
- Let Go, Let God (Steps 1-3)



Tell the World

Step 5:

We admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.



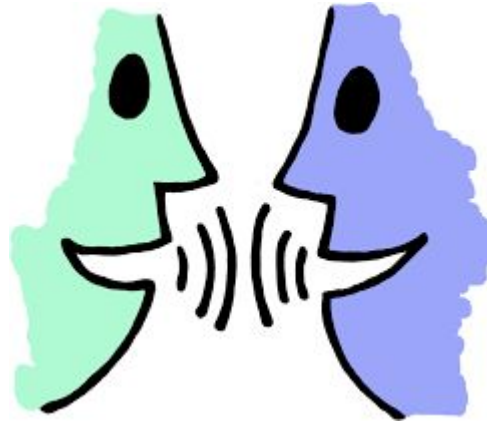
Change your inner voice

- “Learn to validate yourself by coming your own loving parent” (*BRB* xxiv)
- Positive affirmations (*BRB* 329-30)
- Mirror work (*BRB* 440-442, 444)
- Work the ACA program
 (“It works, if you work it”)



Share Time

- Share about mirror work
- What you do to break the shame cycle?



7th Tradition

dc-aca.org/7th-tradition

Q & A

Shame Resources

Websites:

<https://www.counseling.org/news/aca-blogs/aca-counseling-corner/aca-member-blogs/2019/05/23/how-to-name-shame-and-then-let-it-go>

https://www.petoskeynews.com/des_life/10-shame-triggers-for-women-and-5-ways-to-overcome-them/article_5f2627f2-26ba-5bec-8df2-5507a28a9bbc.html

<https://benourished.org/what-you-can-do-in-a-shame-storm/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-shame-425328>

http://www.acaconvention.org/pdf/Claudia_B_handouts.pdf

Books:

Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families (Big Red Book, BRB) World Service Organization, 2006.

Brown, Brene. *I Thought It Was Just Me (but it isn't)*. Gotham, 2007

Brown, Brene. *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*. Halzelden, 2010.

Shame Clip Art

Slide 1: https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/bullying-humiliation-work-young-upset-woman-victim-harassment-illustration-flat-style_7228776.htm

Slide 2: <https://www.qograph.com/vector-clip-art/shame.html>

Slide 3: <http://clipart-library.com/person-speaking-cliparts.html>

Slide 4: <https://clegguart.com/2014/09/>

Slide 5: https://www.123rf.com/photo_128175828_stock-vector-shame-modern-colorful-flat-design-style-illustration-on-white-background-a-composition-with-a-sad-gi.html

Slide 6: <https://cliparts.zone/shame-cliparts>

Slide 7: <https://ya-webdesign.com/image/shy-clipart-disgrace/220621.html>

Slide 8: <http://clipart-library.com/sowing-seeds-cliparts.html>

Slide 9: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201708/how-bounce-back-epic-parenting-fails>

Slide 10: <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2019/01/31/blame-and-shame-in-social-work-is-not-just-about-media-headlines/>

Slide 10: <https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2018/019174/universality-shame>

Slide 11: <http://clipart-library.com/talking-cliparts.html>

Slide 12: https://www.123rf.com/clipart-vector/shame_beautiful.html?sti=n72361g2cdjhgeet0n

Shame Clipart

Slide 13: <https://highheelsandhighnotes.wordpress.com/2019/06/15/anxiety-worries-fears-and-phobias-spotting-the-signs-symptoms-and-triggers/>

Slide 15: <http://clipart-library.com/talking-cliparts.html>

Slide 16: <https://clipartix.com/spider-web-clipart-3-image-13207/>

Slide 16: <http://clipart-library.com/storm-cliparts.html>

Slide 17: <http://clipart-library.com/talking-cliparts.html>

Slide 16: <https://www.123rf.com/clipart-vector/shame.html?sti=lt6usfzxydu09r4u7l>

Slide 18: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/breaking-the-chains-of-clip-art-for-free>

Slide 19: <https://www.zappos.com/about/stories/5-friday-work-habits>

Slide 20: <https://lilpickmeup.com/2014/10/04/you-cant-get-the-results-youre-looking-if-expectations-are-absent/>

Slide 21: <https://www.goodfreephotos.com/vector-images/talking-head-silhouette-vector-clipart.png.php>

Slide 21: <https://easydrawingguides.com/draw-earth-really-easy-drawing-tutorial/>

Slide 22: <https://www.vecteezy.com/vector-art/377053-little-girl-looking-at-herself-in-mirror>

Slide 23: <http://clipart-library.com/talking-cliparts.html>