

SHAME vs. GUILT

Understanding the difference

SHAME

Shame is feeling bad about yourself as a person.



I AM BAD.

GUILT

Guilt is feeling bad about what you did.



I DID SOMETHING BAD.

WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE SHAME?

Shame is a defense mechanism. It is a way we learned to keep ourselves safe from harm in the past.

It served an important purpose in the past – it kept us safe. But now it may cause problems in our lives and relationships when we no longer need that shame to keep us safe.

Shame can be a way we blame ourselves for something that happened to us that wasn't our fault.

When we feel ashamed, we may feel we can control our safety by controlling our actions and beliefs.



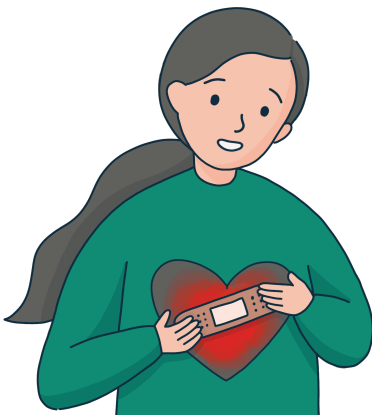
WHY IT MATTERS

When we understand the differences between these powerful feelings, we begin to understand and eliminate negative self-judgments and self-talk.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE ...

SHAME

- Exercise self-compassion.
- Recognize shame as a survival tactic.
- Seek healthy connections with others.
- Talk to your therapist.



GUILT

- Admit you are wrong.
- Take responsibility.
- Seek forgiveness.
- Change your behavior.

