

Shame, Guilt and the Problem Gambler

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Learning Objectives



To learn the definitions of Shame and Guilt



To increase awareness and understanding of how Shame and Guilt impact the problem gambler and their environment.



To learn therapeutic techniques and coping skills to help clients work through and deal with feelings of Shame and Guilt.

- Painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. (<https://oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/shame>)
- Shame is a feeling of embarrassment or humiliation that arises from the perception of having done something dishonorable, immoral, or improper.
- The feeling that arises when clients feel like they are flawed as a person because of a behavior they exhibited.
- “I AM THE MISTAKE”

SHAME



Signs of Shame

Emotional:

Feeling inadequate

Feeling like an outsider

Feeling rejected

Feeling no control of your life

Behavioral:

Uncontrollable blushing

Overly apologetic

Perfectionism

Defensiveness

Social:

Avoidance

Inconspicuous

Withdrawn

Codependency

Mental:

Anxiety

Depression

Burnout

Catastrophizing

CAN YOU ADD TO THE LIST?

Types of Shame

Transient: What a person feels when they make a mistake

Chronic: Always present

Humiliation: Intense when embarrassed

Defeat: Experiencing failure

Performance: Feeling self-conscious

Unrequited Love: Not good enough for another person

Unwanted Exposure: Making a mistake in public

Exclusion: Feeling left out

?Think About It?

- What is your first memory of shame?
- At what age did you notice that you were struggling with feelings of shame?
- In your early experiences what may have caused shame?
- How is shame showing up and informing your relationships now?



- A feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong, etc., whether real or imagined.
(takingtheescalator.com)
- The feelings of remorse or unease that client's experience after they have done something wrong, especially towards another person.
- Guilt is feeling self-conscious and experiencing a sense of distress about your potential responsibility for a negative outcome.
- "I MADE A MISTAKE"

Signs of Guilt

Emotions:

Anxiety
Depressed Mood
Remorse
Emotional Outburst

Thinking:

Low Self-esteem
Relentless Inner Critic
Perfectionism

Physical:

Facial Flushing
Headaches
Trouble Sleeping
Energy Level Shifts
Appetite Changes

Behavior:

Avoiding Others
Over Apologizing
Avoid Eye Contact
People Pleasing

Can you add to the list?

Types of Guilt

Deontological: Violation of one's personal moral code and values

Altruistic: Feeling empathy for causing harm to others

Existential: Not living up to your own expectations or having a life-affirming purpose

Survivors: Over coming what others have not or could not

Inequality: Feeling some way about circumstances of imbalance as it relates to gender bias or racial discrimination

Non-related: Guilt that happens without clear relationship between actions and the outcome.

The Differences Between SHAME and GUILT

SHAME

- ✓ Focus on self
- ✓ Harder to resolve
- ✓ Felt over long term
- ✓ Caused by critical self judgment



GUILT

- ✓ Focus on the act
- ✓ Can be resolved in a healthy way
- ✓ Felt over shorter terms
- ✓ Caused by fear of harming others



?Think About It?

- What is your first memory of feeling guilt?
- At what age did you notice that you were struggling with feelings of guilt?
- In your early experiences what may have caused the guilt?
- How is guilt showing up and informing your relationships now?



“Gambling can be defined as a monetary transaction between two parties based on the outcome of an uncertain event.”

(Walker, Schellink, & Anjou, 2010)

“Gambling is a risk-taking activity that involves subjective excitement” (Boyd, 1976) and *physiological arousal* (Anderson & Brown, 1984).

“Any betting or wagering for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or ‘skill,’ constitutes gambling.”

(Gamblers Anonymous, 1994)

Case Study

Dan is a 45-year-old married cisgender male and the father of five (5) children ages 16-23. Dan was a successful real estate agent with an income of approximately 300Kplus per year. Dan began gambling approximately 14 years ago as his business gained momentum and became more lucrative.

About six (6) years ago Dan experienced heavy gambling losses and found himself in deep debt. He started chasing his losses and using funds from his company as a “quick way to fix” to his gambling problem. Unsuccessful, Dan borrowed money from in-laws, business partners and friends who trusted that Dan would be able to repay his debts based on his reputation as a successful entrepreneur.

Feeling like a failure, Dan used alcohol. Dan became increasingly withdrawn. He isolated from family, business connection and friends and was secretive about financial issues. Unable to repay debts Dan declared bankruptcy.

More About Dan

After the bankruptcy Dan's home was sold in foreclosure. He owed over a million dollars in back taxes. His business collapsed. He could no longer pay for his two children's college tuition. His wife was contemplating separation/divorce.

Dan became depressed and experienced insomnia. To relieve pain, Dan drank heavily and daily. Dan was arrested and charged with his first DUI. Dan's drinking affected his relationship with his wife and children.

Dan confessed that he might have a gambling issue to his wife. Dan apologetically confessed to his wife about his financial troubles. Dan and his wife agreed that he should seek professional help.

SHAME VS. Guilt

- **Guilt:** Guilt is generally about something that you have done. It refers to something you did wrong or a behavior that you feel bad about.
- **Shame:** Shame refers to something about your character or who you are as a person that you believe is unacceptable. Shame is not about doing something wrong. It is about a feeling that you have when you perceive that you are not good enough in some way.

Ways to Work Through Shame



Pay attention to Emotions, Feelings and Body Sensations



Identify Triggers



Make Connections



Practice Healthy Self-care



Reevaluate Values

Ways to Work through Guilt

- Understand your emotions
- Accept responsibility for what happened
- Treat yourself with kindness and compassion
- Express remorse for your mistakes
- Make amends and apologize (including apologizing to yourself)
- Look for ways to learn from the experience
- Focus on making better choices in the future





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