

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHAME + GUILT

SPAIN SHAME WORKSHOP HANDOUT

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SHAME: A global assessment of value

- Shaming is an action: you are defective, too much, too little, and so on.
- Shameful is a state of being: I am defective, too much, too little – I am worried about me.

GUILT: An assessment of behavior

- I transgressed, I feel guilty – I am concerned about you.
 - Some guilt is adaptive and appropriate (I did transgress).
 - Some guilt is maladaptive and inappropriate (I didn't transgress).

Maladaptive guilt

- Separation Guilt
 - I will harm someone I love or feel responsible for if I pursue normal developmental goals.
 - I sacrifice myself for the other person.
- Survival Guilt
 - I am harming someone I love or feel responsible for when I am successful or happy.
 - To atone, I sacrifice myself in some way.

How guilt shows up in behavior

- If adaptive, it shows up in concern for others and a willingness to own and repair transgressions.
- If maladaptive, it shows up in inappropriate self-sacrifice.