

Shame



Shame can be a particularly toxic emotion, resulting in a deep internal division, compromising self worth and eroding self esteem. Shame is often associated with fear as it triggers a flood of adrenaline to mobilize self defense - either from anticipated attack or rejection by others, or from self attack.

The function of a Shame is associated with ensuring belonging; it encourages action intended to prevent rejection and shape behaviours associated with cultural norms. It occurs when we don't feel we align with the values and ideals of the group or others. Shame is about seeming or appearing different.

Defenses against Shame include:

Perfectionism - trying to prevent appearing or behaving in an imperfect or flawed manner

Denial - ignoring or denying aspects of oneself that are unacceptable

Rage - lashing out or driving others away to break connection and prevent painful awareness

Arrogance - diminishing others to inflate one's own feelings self esteem or perception of worth

Avoidance - withdrawing from group interactions to prevent judgement or humiliation

Shame is very much associated to our **relationship** with our self.

The anti-dote to Shame is self compassion.

Over the next few days, when the feeling of shame arises, take a moment to notice:

- How do you feel towards yourself? positive or negative
- What quality is it about your self that you don't like?
- How does your self attack make you feel?
- What defenses did you employ?
- What do you want at this moment or need?

If you are in the company of others and you feel ashamed, ask your self:

- Is this a group I choose to belong to?
- Does/will this group allow 'me' to be 'me'?
- If the answer is "no", how much of 'me' am I willing to sacrifice to belong?

This next week work hard to challenge your self to embrace your "defects", loving your self "warts and all".