

SHAME

(not guilt)

Bodily sensation

(body ego)

- growing sensory awareness in childhood
- bodily maturation - ex. sphincter control concurrently with language development
- paired with greater expectations from parents/caretakers
- transitioning previously pleasurable/neutral events, such as defecation to something disgusting that must be managed

Visceral response

- Bodily sensations
- Often out of proportion distress about vomiting, defecating in public even when ill
- Loss of control of bodily function part of “shame” of aging

Seen Relational

in

- Real
- Imagined

Shame: double edged

- Positive motivator - David's "thrivers" who avoid shame by achievement--may have hit bump in the road but have not failed until they give up trying
- Sense of achievement and mastery
- Absence of Shame - sociopathic, poor group member

Negative aspects of Shame

- Pathological defenses to avoid humiliation extreme narcissism, shaming others . . .

Shame and Economic Loss

- Job loss
- Investment Income Loss

Shame may prevent access to help

- “Food Stamps” NYC better location and card, income not asset related.
- Actively networking to find job
- Even pretending to still go to work to avoid telling family, or having neighbors notice
- Accepting job less prestigious or lucrative

Shame may prevent protective actions

- Avoidance telling children about change in circumstance - often adding to child's stress since they may imagine finances worse than is true. do they have to move, no
Chuckie Cheese
- Feeling humiliated to have to reduce support to extended family---subsidizing parents, college tuition for nieces/nephews - no longer family "successful" one

- Shame over reducing charitable contributions
- Difficulty triaging required expenses-- gas, rent, etc.
- At its extreme, living as if money is plentiful and planning suicide if money runs out before income secured (MH)

Collusion to avoid discussion of shame

- Patients discomfort over shame may make therapist physically uncomfortable
- Guilt/anxiety over fascination with watching the car wreck in the other lane.
- Leonard Shengold, *Halo in the Sky*, Guilford Press, 1988.

Shame Scale

- My sense of shame, form, time
- Take a minute to think about something you feel personal shame about. Notice your physical response, if any, to this memory and any defensive efforts to minimize awareness of feeling, for ex by obsessing over which shameful memory to focus on.

- DO NOT SHARE CONTENT OF SHAMEFUL MEMORY OR THOUGHT
- Take a few minutes to discuss the physical sensations and psychic avoidances to shame