

Shame Prevention Plan

The “Shame Prevention Plan” is one in which you will be able to identify how shame may show up in your life. Your ability to identify your shame will directly impact your work in healing the negative and faulty core beliefs that you learned about in the education group. These beliefs keep you from taking the very important steps of getting the help and support you may need as well as lowering your motivation to keep progressing and moving forward. Shame can also sabotage your efforts to love effectively and exercise self care and compassion. Developing resilience to shame messages and being able to stabilize emotional distress will require your ability to challenge shame and turn self defeating messages and behaviors into healthier and productive coping strategies. The Shame Prevention Plan can be utilized to:

- Pull yourself out of the drama triangle and fear cycle
- Help you learn from the past and move into healthier patterns more quickly in the future
- Stay aware and in charge of healthier living and personal goals

Shame Prevention Plan Terminology

Activator

Emotional, environmental, sensory, or situational stimuli that can elicit a trauma response related to your feelings of betrayal by your partner. This can set in motion obsessive thoughts and fears, and cause limbic brain activation. Exposure to these activators are not your fault as they usually happen unsolicited, but they can cause a lot of distress.

Examples:

- ❖ While driving, you see a billboard ad for a gentlemen’s club in town.
- ❖ Watching a movie and a strip club scene is displayed.
- ❖ Walking through the mall and smelling the cologne my partner was wearing when he disclosed his affair.
- ❖ Looking through family albums and seeing our wedding pictures.
- ❖ Having a dream about my partners acting out behaviors.

Feeling

The emotional state that is set into motion when activators occur.

Examples:

- ❖ Sadness
- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Loneliness
- ❖ Despair
- ❖ Grief

Shame-Based Belief

The faulty and negative beliefs about self that are present when activators and the accompanying feelings occur.

Examples:

- ❖ *"I don't know why I keep trying, my feelings don't matter anyway."*
- ❖ *"Maybe something is just wrong with me."*
- ❖ *"Everyone else seems to be loveable, maybe I'm just not."*
- ❖ *"No one is there for me, I can't trust anyone in my life."*

Critical Thought

The immediate and seemingly involuntary thoughts that happen when your negative and shame-based beliefs are activated.

Examples:

- ❖ *"I'm such an idiot for marrying this guy, I guess I'm getting what I deserve."*
- ❖ *"My relationship is going to end up in a divorce anyway, I should just get out now."*
- ❖ *"No one will ever be there for me, I'd rather just live alone than be here right now."*
- ❖ *"I must be the dumbest person in the world to put up with an addict!"*
- ❖ *"If I hadn't been such a jerk to her yesterday, maybe she would still be sober. It's all my fault!"*

Compassionate Thought

The reframing of the critical thoughts into healthier more compassionate ones.

Examples:

- ❖ *"I married him because I felt like I should and because I believed in him. His choices after that do not reflect a problem with me."*
- ❖ *"Even if my marriage ends in divorce, I know I am doing all I can to make things work on my end. I can live with that, even though I'd be very sad."*
- ❖ *"I do have friends and loved ones that show up for me. I enjoy feeling connected and loved even though it's hard sometimes to accept their help."*
- ❖ *"A good person tries to help and love an addict. I am a person who loves deeply and I'm not dumb for wanting my relationship and family to last."*
- ❖ *"Even though I wish my interactions yesterday with my partner were healthier, her choice to act out is not about me and is not my fault. I can only own what is mine."*

Shame Prevention Plan

Situation:

Activators:

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Feelings:

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Shame Based Beliefs:

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Critical Thought:

Compassionate Thought:

Critical Thought:

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Critical Thought:

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