



# Deep Release Online

*Professional Training for Counsellors*

## ATTACHMENT AND SHAME



# PRIMARY EMOTIONS

**Don't rely on self-consciousness or introspection**



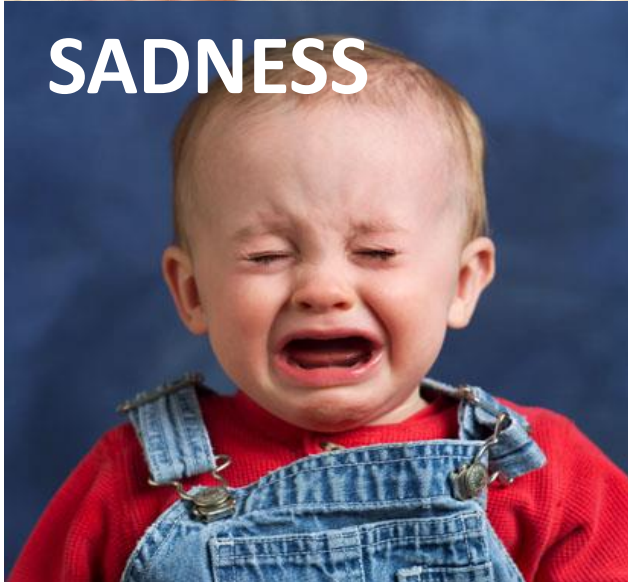
**JOY**



**ANGER**



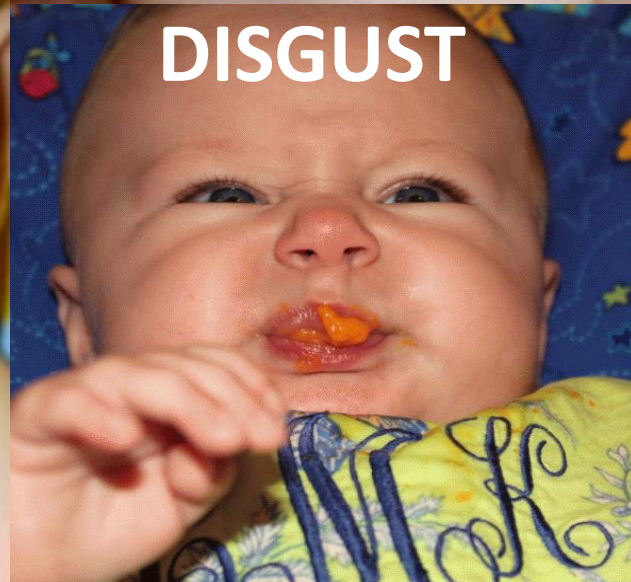
**FEAR**



**SADNESS**



**SURPRISE**



**DISGUST**



# EMOTIONAL SECURITY



*“...It is our response to love that ‘fills us up’. It is our own loving feelings inside that provide a feeling of ‘being full’. As we are loved, we love back...”*

The Mom Factor  
Cloud & Townsend

# EMOTIONAL SECURITY – SECURE ATTACHMENT



**Love is available**

**Love is given**

**I am worthy to  
receive that love**



# WHEN EMOTIONAL SECURITY IS PRESENT



*Emotional attachment is a primary process, thinking is a secondary process.*

*We must be nurtured before we can begin to think and use language...*

*When emotional security is present, our thinking rests on a bedrock of safety and security...*

# WHEN EMOTIONAL SECURITY IS NOT PRESENT



*When emotional security is not present, our thinking doesn't rest on solid rock, but on sand... on feelings of being unloved, and feelings of suspicion and lack of trust.*

*We are consumed by negative, distrustful and fearful thoughts about ourselves, about others and about the world at large...*



# THINKING PROBLEMS

*“This is why some efforts  
at positive thinking fail.*

*The problem is not with  
the thinking, but with the  
lack of love underneath.*

*Insecure people think  
insecure thoughts.”*



## SECONDARY EMOTIONS

### Self-conscious

**We compare our actions against our standards and beliefs**

**Embarrassment**  
*I feel a fool...*

**Jealousy**  
*You've got what  
I should have*

**Envy**  
*I want what  
you've got*



**Comparisons**  
*I'm not as good  
as you are*

**Guilt/Toxic Guilt**  
*I have done a bad  
thing*

**Shame/Toxic Shame**  
*I am bad,  
irredeemably flawed*



## SECONDARY EMOTIONS

### **Guilt**

*I have done a bad thing*

### **Toxic Guilt**

*I might have done a bad thing (Pure O)*

### **Toxic Guilt**

*I might do a bad thing*

### **Toxic Guilt**

*It's my fault*

### **Shame**

*I am bad*

### **Toxic Shame**

*I am irredeemably bad*

### **Toxic Shame**

*I am fundamentally flawed*

### **Toxic Shame**

*I am worthless & unloveable*

# TOXIC SHAME

A person is sitting on a small, red and white striped stool in the center of a stage. A large, dark spotlight beam shines down on them from above. Three red, cloud-like thought bubbles are floating above the person, each containing a statement of shame. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

I am  
flawed

I can't be  
loved

I can't be  
mended

*Shame mercilessly  
calls us back and  
demands our loyalty*

"Letting go of Shame",  
Ronald & Patricia Potter-Efron

**What stage of our life is shame calling us back to?**



# ERIKSON'S LIFE STAGES/STATES

0-2 years  
**INFANCY**

2-4 years  
**EARLY  
CHILDHOOD**

4-6 years  
**MIDDLE  
CHILDHOOD**

7-11 years  
**LATE  
CHILDHOOD**

12-18 years  
**EARLY  
ADOLESCENCE**

19-24 years  
**ADOLESCENCE**

25-45 years  
**ADULT-  
HOOD**

45-65 years  
**MIDDLE  
AGE**

65+ years  
**SENIOR  
AGE**



**Trust**

**Autonomy**

**Initiative**

**Competence**

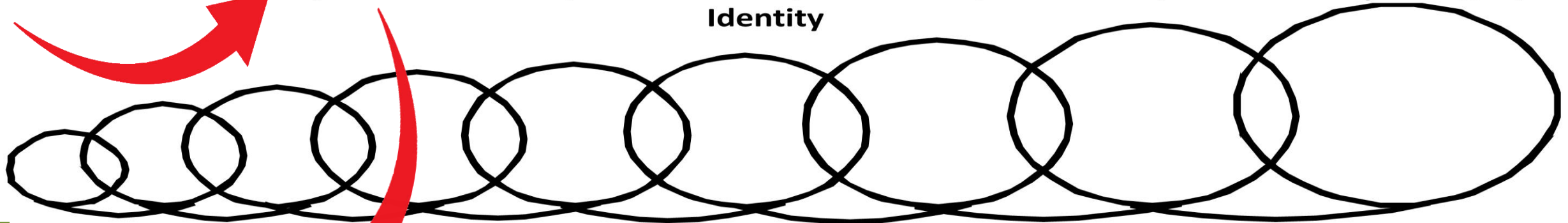
**Group  
Identity**

**Identity**

**Intimacy**

**Productivity**

**Integrity**



**Mistrust**

**Doubt  
Shame**

**Guilt**

**Inferiority**

**Alienation**

**Role  
Confusion**

**Isolation**

**Stagnation**

**Despair**



# SHAME – A DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER

STAGE	AGE	PSYCHOSOCIAL CRISIS	BASIC VIRTUE
1 Infancy	0-1½ years	Trust vs Mistrust	Hope
2 Early childhood	1½-3 years	Autonomy vs Shame	Will
3 Play Age	3-6 years	Initiative vs Guilt	Purpose
4 School Age	6-12 yrs	Industry vs Inferiority	Competence
5 Adolescence	12-19 years	Identity vs Confusion	Fidelity
6 Early Adulthood	20-25 years	Intimacy vs Isolation	Love
7 Adulthood	26-65 years	Generativity vs Stagnation	Care
8 Old Age	65-death	Integrity vs Despair	Wisdom



# THE ORIGINS OF SHAME

In primitive societies the group was highly important. You could find a partner, share child care, pool resources and defend against dinosaurs!

Rejection by the group could mean death!



"He followed me home mum... can I keep him, please, can I!"

## THE SUBMIT RESPONSE

*“Shame helps to drive the animal defence of submission: shame causes us to avert our gaze, bow our heads, and collapse the spine. Submission, or ‘feigned death’, is the defence of last resort when we are trapped and powerless. In an environment in which fight and flight are unsafe, shame enables the child to become compliant, ‘seen and not heard’, and preoccupied with avoiding ‘being bad’.”*

Janina Fisher





# THE SUBMIT RESPONSE

FIGHT



FLIGHT



FREEZE



**The body takes on a submissive posture.**

**It is a signal of apology,  
I have made a mistake,  
I have broken the rules...  
I want to show you I am sorry,  
I am ashamed of myself.**



# SHAME AND ABANDONMENT

“Shame, like anxiety, functions as a signal of danger,  
in this case interpersonal or social danger.”

Judith Herman

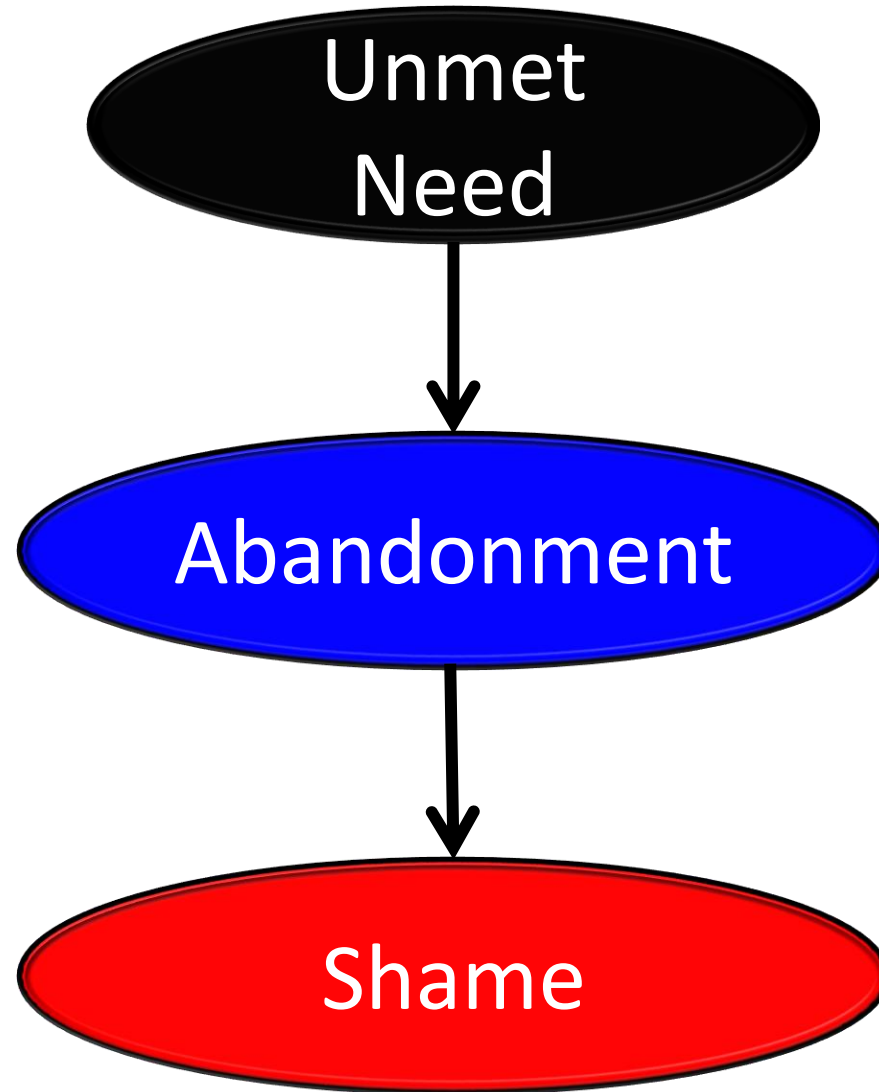
*“Intense physical feelings  
warn you that you might  
get abandoned.  
This feels like annihilation,  
and is a greater fear than  
being killed...”*

Janina Fisher, lecture 2014





# SHAME – A DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER



***Shame is the great enforcer of  
negative legacy emotions, an  
emotional slap in the face to  
keep us in line...***

**“Guilt, Shame and Anxiety”, Peter Breggin**

# SHAME AND RESTORATION

*In the animal world, submissive behaviour elicits approach behaviour from fellow members of the group.*





## INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- I am accepted as I am
- Ruptures can be repaired
- I can be forgiven
- I can share my emotions
- I do feel shame, but it's not toxic
- Autonomous in adult behaviour



**Love is available  
Love is given  
I am worthy to  
receive that love**

## INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- Functional needs were met practically
- “Get a grip”
- “Don’t be needy”
- Attachment behaviour DEACTIVATED
- Dismissive in adult behaviour



Elizabeth Bernstein



## THE AVOIDANT CLIENT IN THE COUNSELLING ROOM

- **Presenting Issue: Why here, why now?**
- ***CORE CONDITIONS***
- ***SHOW YOUR WORKINGS***
- ***TALK ABOUT 'WE'***
- An avoidant client is unlikely to want a close therapeutic relationship
  - Suspicion
  - Distrust
  - D.I.Y.
- Need to allow space and time
- Dismissive of own needs (and often of the needs of others)
- Lonely
- Psychoeducation can be helpful





## INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- Love is Unpredictable
- Needs met inconsistently
- Attachment behaviour is HYPERACTIVATED
- Preoccupied/Fearful in adult behaviour



Elizabeth Bernstein



# THE AMBIVALENT CLIENT IN THE COUNSELLING ROOM

- **Presenting Issue: Why here, why now?**
- **CORE CONDITIONS**
- **SHOW YOUR WORKINGS**
- **TALK ABOUT 'WE'**
- An ambivalent client is very likely to want a close therapeutic relationship
  - Wants to know about you, the counsellor
  - May start 'twinning'
  - Wants approval – 'don't leave me' (but watch for the 'go away'...)
- Need to allow space and time (don't take the bait!)
- Anxious that their needs may be too much for you
- Fearful of rejection
- Psychoeducation can be helpful

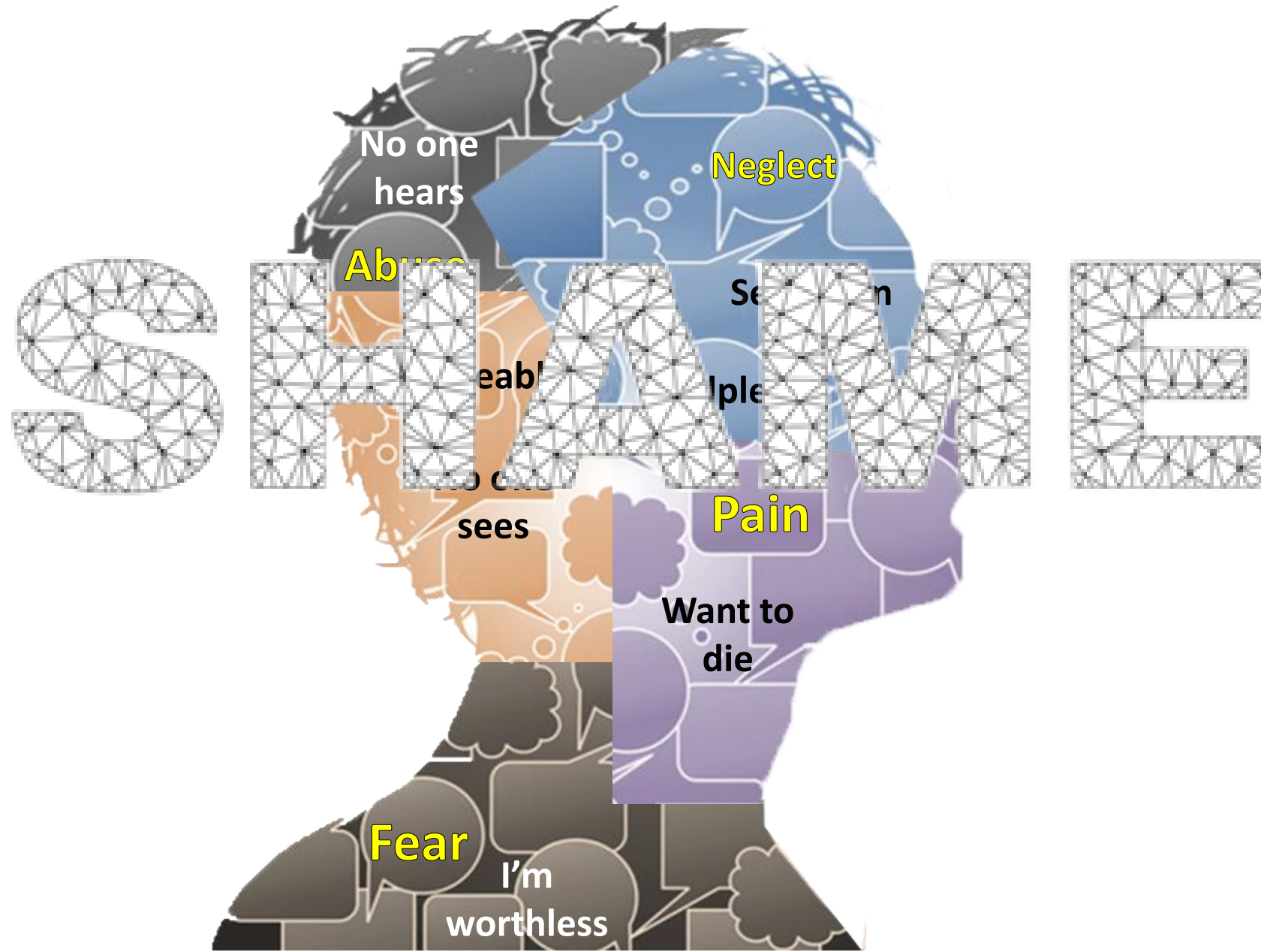
Secure, Avoidant and Ambivalent attachment styles are all **organised**. Infants are able to reach their Attachment Figure, either in a healthy, secure way, or in a roundabout, painful way.

*Attachment is  
organised and stable,  
but not happy.  
(Adah Sachs)*





# DISORGANISED ATTACHMENT



# THE SHAME OF NEEDING THERAPY

*“[Therapy] is a reminder of our traumatic powerlessness and evokes continual ripples of shame, as we struggle to answer the questions, and struggle to contain our neediness.*

*We struggle – shamefully, oh so shamefully – to come to terms with the past that we deny and all those shameful, rejected, disowned parts of our self with their attachment needs grinding mercilessly away at our adult avoidance...”*

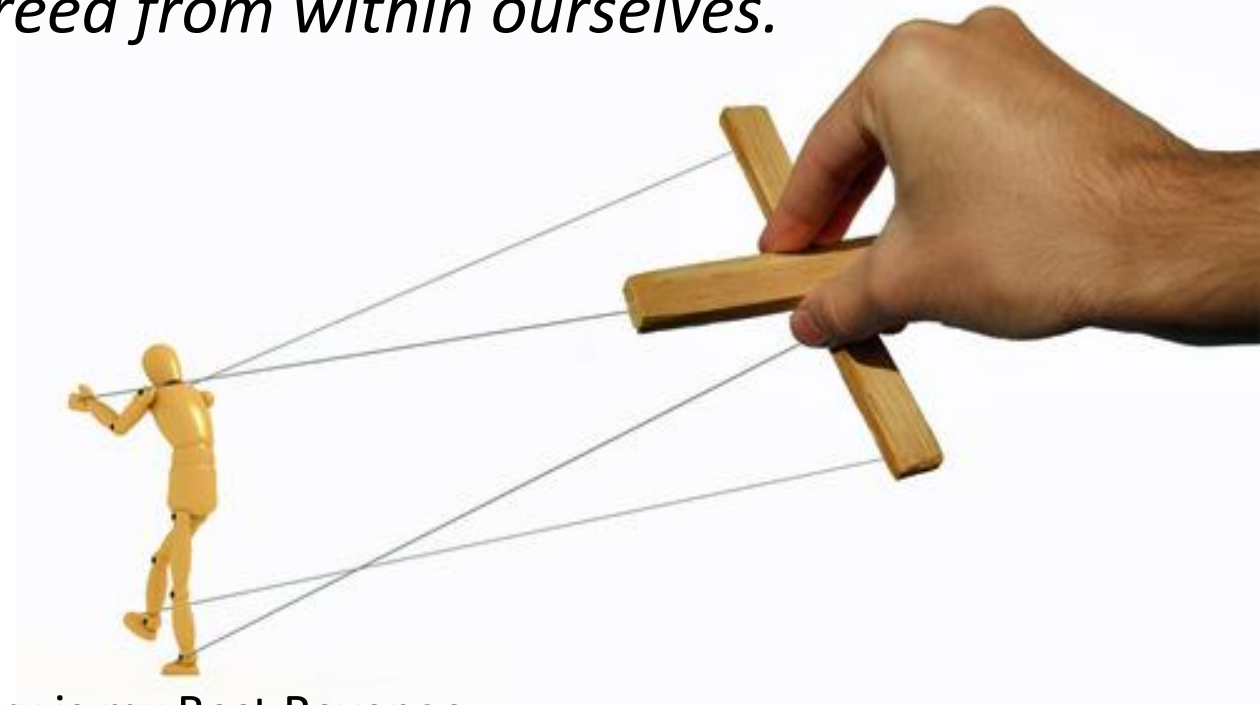


# SHAME IN THE COUNSELLING ROOM

*“Shame is the puppet-master behind us, limiting our moves, directing our flight into the avoidance of downcast eyes and cowering withdrawal, the silent contortions of not having words to express it, not having feelings to feel it...*

*We need to keep the therapist at a distance and not contaminate them with this thick, black, tar-like yuck of shame that we seem to breed from within ourselves.*

***In remembering and processing and moving beyond the shame, it's a constant struggle with shame to be able to go there at all...”***



Carolyn Spring: Recovery is my Best Revenge



# HOW SHAME AFFECTS OUR FEELINGS



# THE SHAME BOOMERANG

## HAVE YOU FELT THE SHAME BOOMERANG?

- You declare your need and it whizzes back on you and hits you with shame
- Then you lose any sense of being justified, and come to believe it's better to keep your mouth shut



# SHAME: THE MASTER EMOTION

Has it ever occurred to you....

- *There were no witnesses who defended you*
- *There was no one who told you that you weren't the one in the wrong*
- *There was no one who told you that you were ok*

*Shame is the 'Master Emotion', the lens through which so much of our experience is filtered. It warps and confounds our understanding of ourselves and others."*

"Talking Back to Dr Phil", David Bedrick





# THE LENS OF TOXIC SHAME

## A TOXIC SHAME LENS...

- Magnifies our 'crime'
- Distorts our perspective
- Blurs our focus
- Turns things upside down
- Twists the truth



pkcook

# ATTACKMENTS

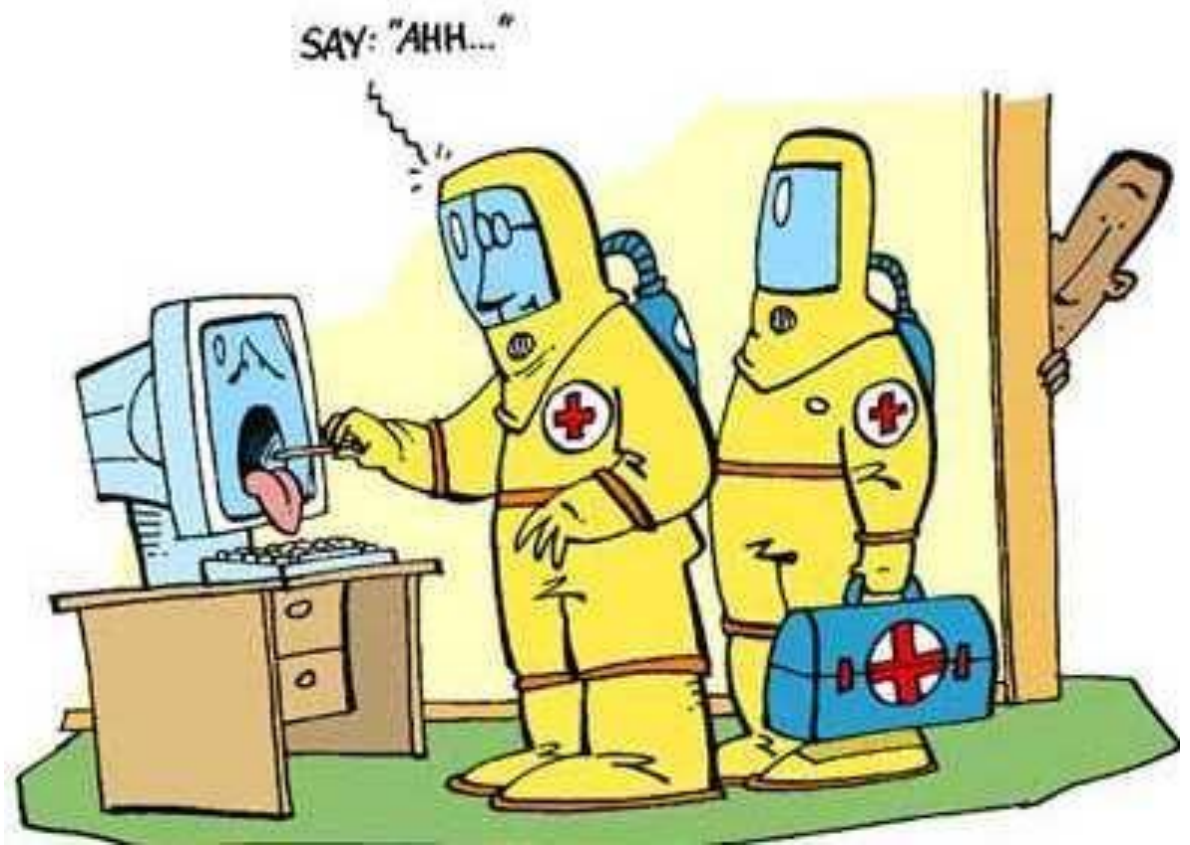




# MALICIOUS SCRIPTS

- "Heart Support" hosted our website
- It was all to do with *malicious scripts taking advantage of a weakness in our code*
- To get rid of this malice, we had to *remove the original vulnerability*

**Our whole system  
needed a radical  
clean-up to make it  
"re-enabled"!**





# MALICIOUS SCRIPTS



“Your computer is halted and needs to do something about this script”

- **Get the File:** *what is the message about myself that is damaging my life?*
- **Take Action**
  - **Stop the script** (recommended)
  - **Allow this activity once** (visit, but don't live out of the shame-based place)
  - **Authorise the script** – carry on believing the lie

# MALICIOUS SCRIPTS

“Weaknesses in our code” leave us particularly vulnerable to “malicious scripts”. They find a landing place deep inside and really hurt us.

We need some 'heart support', not just to heal the wounds of the unkind words, but also to identify those original vulnerabilities...



# A DAMAGE LIMITATION POLICY

*Shame can provide a 'braking system' that can be protective – but only if the parent soothes and transforms shame states.*



*When there is good repair, this can increase the child's capacity to self-regulate.*

***“But that requires that limits are set in ways that do not frighten or shame the child...”***

Janina Fisher



# SHAME AND RESILIENCE

*If the parent can repair the rupture of a shaming experience by soothing, hugs and kisses, explaining and reassuring, the child can develop resilience.*

When there is neglect, trauma and abuse, shame states are not repaired and this decreases resilience.

**We form an internal working model of relationship in which our basic needs are inherently shameful.**

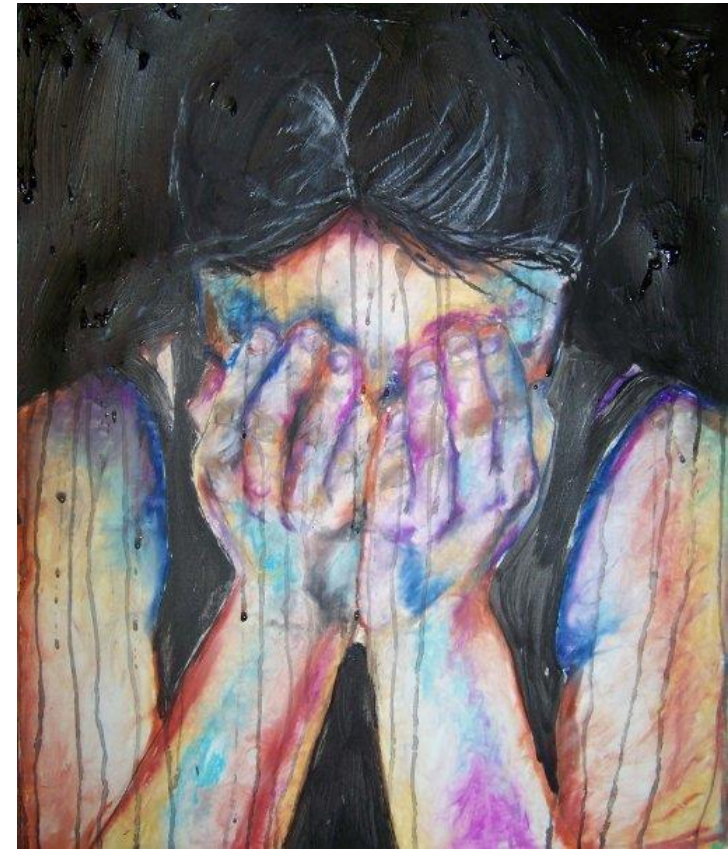


Janina Fisher

## ATTACHMENT OR ATTACKMENT?

Chronic shame occurs when the opportunity for repair has passed and redemption feels impossible. The shame-laden person is anchored in unworthiness and can't hear kind or positive words from us.

**Shame then becomes  
internalised – it can be  
generated wholly from within**



# **“THE ANSWER TO SHAME IS PERFECTION”**

- Never make a mistake again
- Never speak unwise words again
- Never hurt anyone again
- Never upset anyone again
- Stay hidden, keep quiet, don't be seen
- Never make anyone angry again



# BOTH SINNER AND SAINT

## I am both sinner and saint

I am capable of total selfishness... and also of loving deeply

I am capable of being utterly foolish... and also of having profound wisdom

I sometimes suffer from crass foot-in-mouth disease... and I also can have real sensitivity and tact

There are times when I feel compassion fatigue... and I am also capable of genuinely deep, unconditional acceptance

## BOTH SINNER AND SAINT

I am capable of restraint, dignity and decorum... and sometimes blubbing like a child when things go wrong  
I am capable of being humbly open to feedback... and I can also be defensive, even aggressive when challenged  
I know I can be intolerant... and I also know I am capable of endless patient endurance  
I sometimes despise my faults and failings... and I am also learning to love myself with grace

***You see, I don't always get it right - but nor do I always get it wrong. And that's ok.***

“Therapists are never ‘done’ with growth;  
they are simply people who should be  
dedicated to learning as much about  
themselves and others as they possibly can.

The best therapists are fully human  
and engage in the struggles of life.

Our own failures help us to remain open to the  
struggles of others; our personal victories give us  
the optimism and courage to inspire  
those struggling with their lives.

~ Louis Cozolino

[www.littlewindow.com.au](http://www.littlewindow.com.au)





# Resources



# PACT LTD

## Original & Creative Counselling Resources



[www.pact-resources.co.uk](http://www.pact-resources.co.uk)



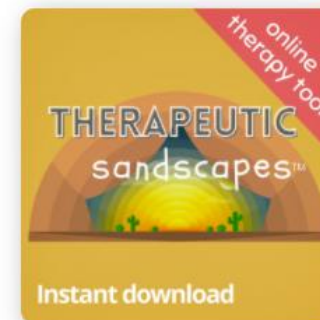
Erikson's Life Stages



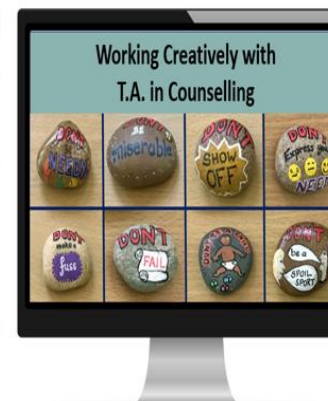
Wheel of Life

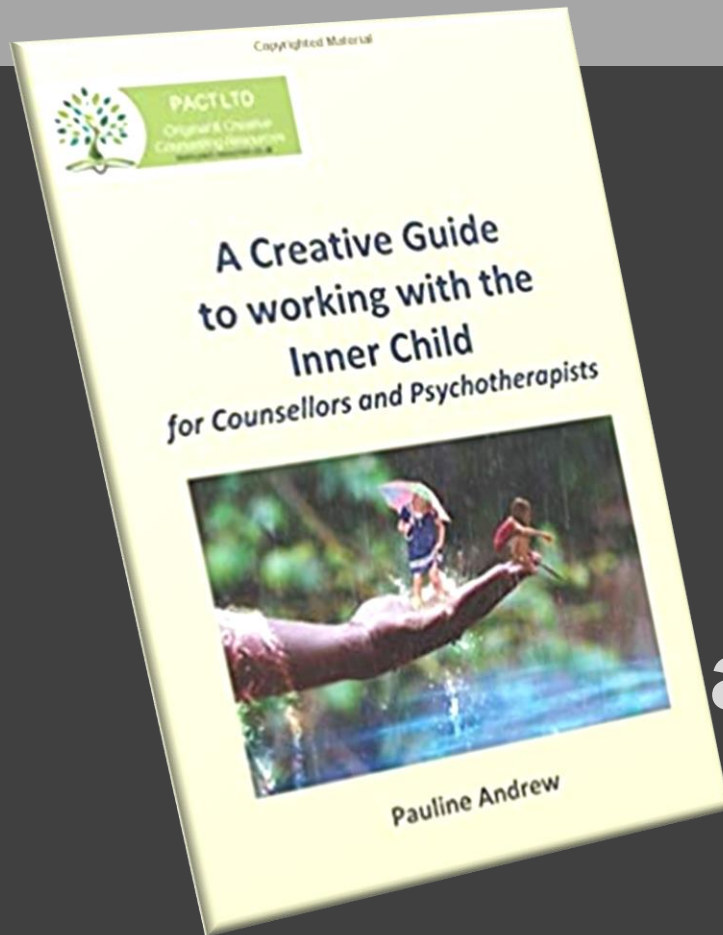


Working with Animal  
Figures Online Pack



Therapeutic Sandscapes™  
Online Pack

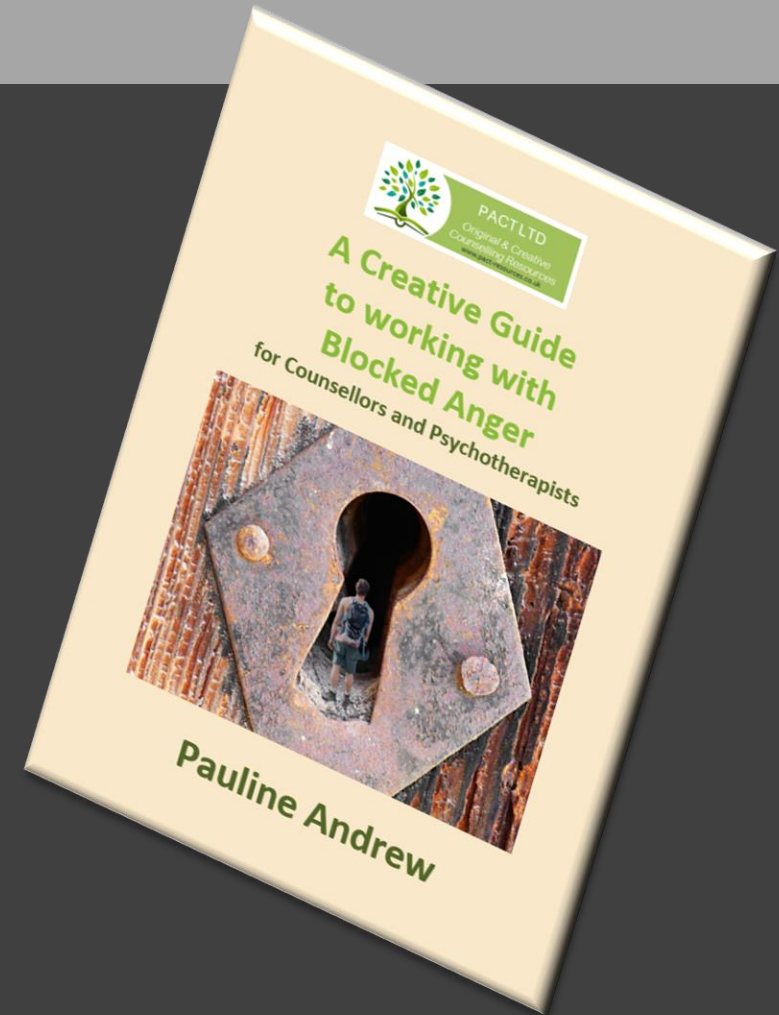




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Coming up...

# Narcissism and Echoism

Sat Feb 12    10.30am -3.15pm

[deeprelease.org.uk](http://deeprelease.org.uk)



Please send us  
your feedback!



*Thank you*

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