



Deep Release Online
Professional Training for Counsellors

ATTACHMENT AND SHAME







The Origins of Attachment and Shame



**Secure Attachment
in Childhood
CORE MESSAGE**



I come when you call

**I am
worthy of
love**

**HEALTHY
SHAME
Specific**

**Ambivalent Attachment
in Childhood
CORE MESSAGE**



I may come when
you call... I may not

**I have to get it
right in order to
be loved**

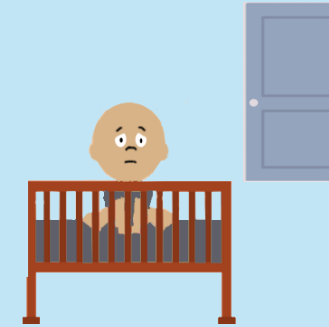
**TOXIC
SHAME
Generalised**

**Ambivalent Attachment
In Childhood
CORE MESSAGE**



I may come and be angry
or punish you

**Avoidant
Attachment
CORE MESSAGE**



Sort yourself out

**I am
basically
on my own**

**TOXIC
SHAME
Generalised**

**Disorganised
Attachment
Core Message**



I am not safe

**I am not
safe**

**TOXIC
SHAME
Invasive
Pervasive**

Feelings are OK



Emotions understood
& validated - allowed
to express them

SECURE / AUTONOMOUS



I value and can name
and express my
emotions

I'm
here!



I am
worthy of
love



Love is
freely given
to me

SECURE / AUTONOMOUS



Secure
Safe
Heard
Held

I am worthy
of that love

Acceptance



No matter what I do,
I always belong

Physically comforted



Safe & tender touch,
cuddles & soothing

SECURE / AUTONOMOUS



I carry home in
my heart

SECURE / AUTONOMOUS



Love is a safe
place of shelter

Can make mistakes



Not shamed or
punished for failure

INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- I am accepted as I am
- Ruptures can be repaired
- I can make mistakes and still be forgiven
- I can share my emotions
- I do feel shame, but it's not toxic



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



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

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...

PRIMARY EMOTIONS

Don't rely on self-consciousness or introspection



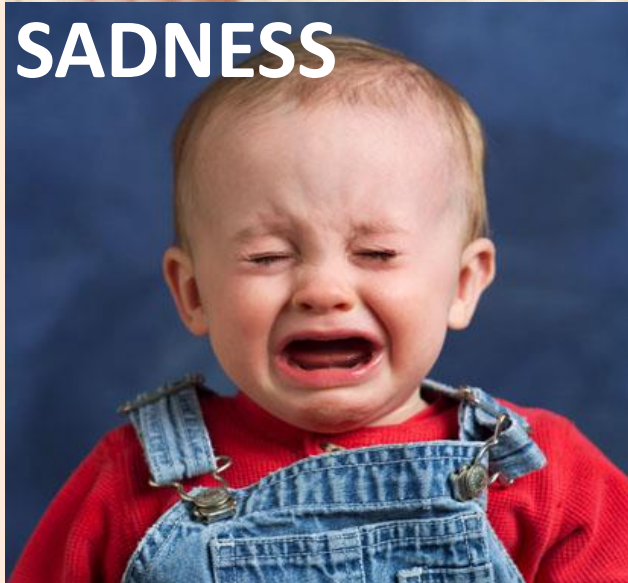
JOY



ANGER



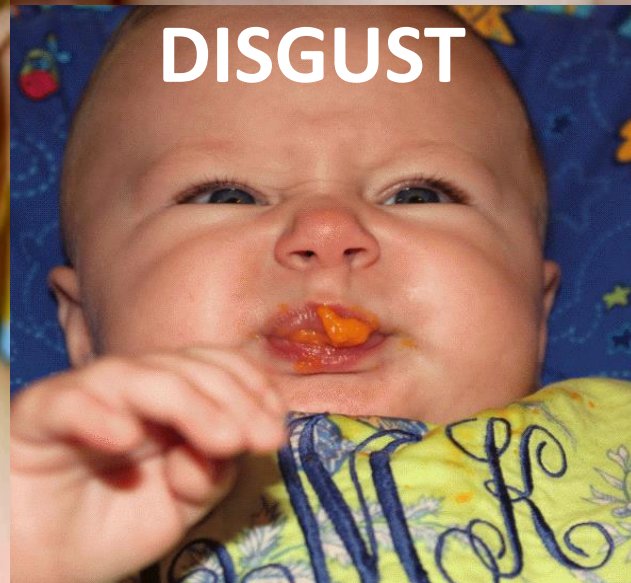
FEAR



SADNESS



SURPRISE



DISGUST

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.

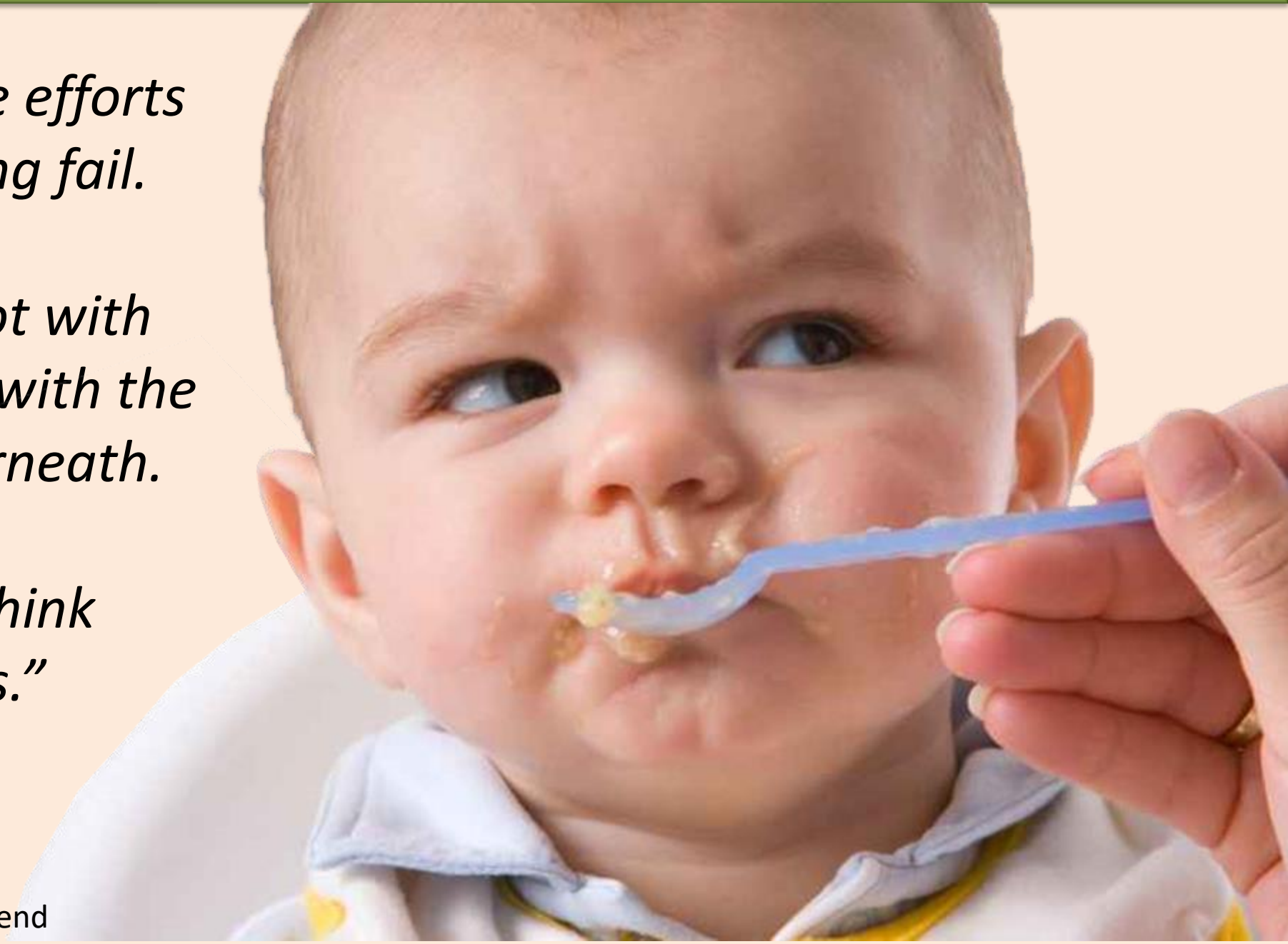
We are consumed by negative, distrustful and fearful thoughts about ourselves, about others and about the world at large...

THINKING PROBLEMS

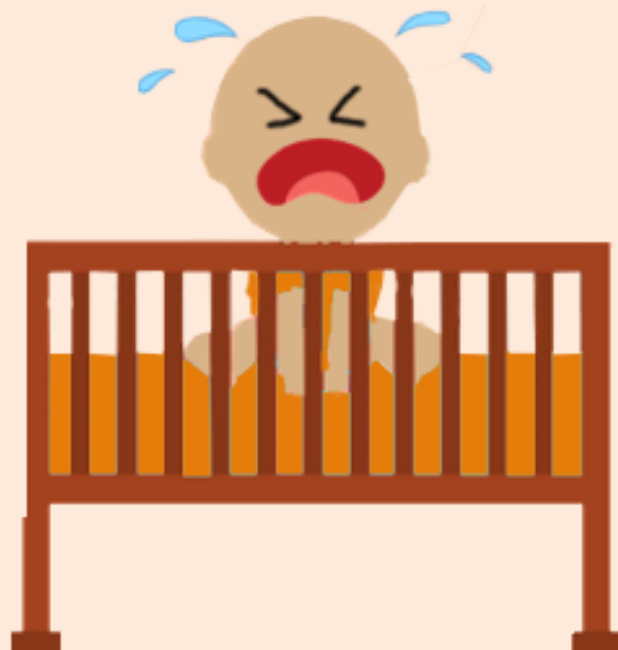
“This is why some efforts at positive thinking fail.

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

Insecure people think insecure thoughts.”



Insecure Ambivalent Attachment



INSECURE AMBIVALENT ATTACHMENT AND SHAME

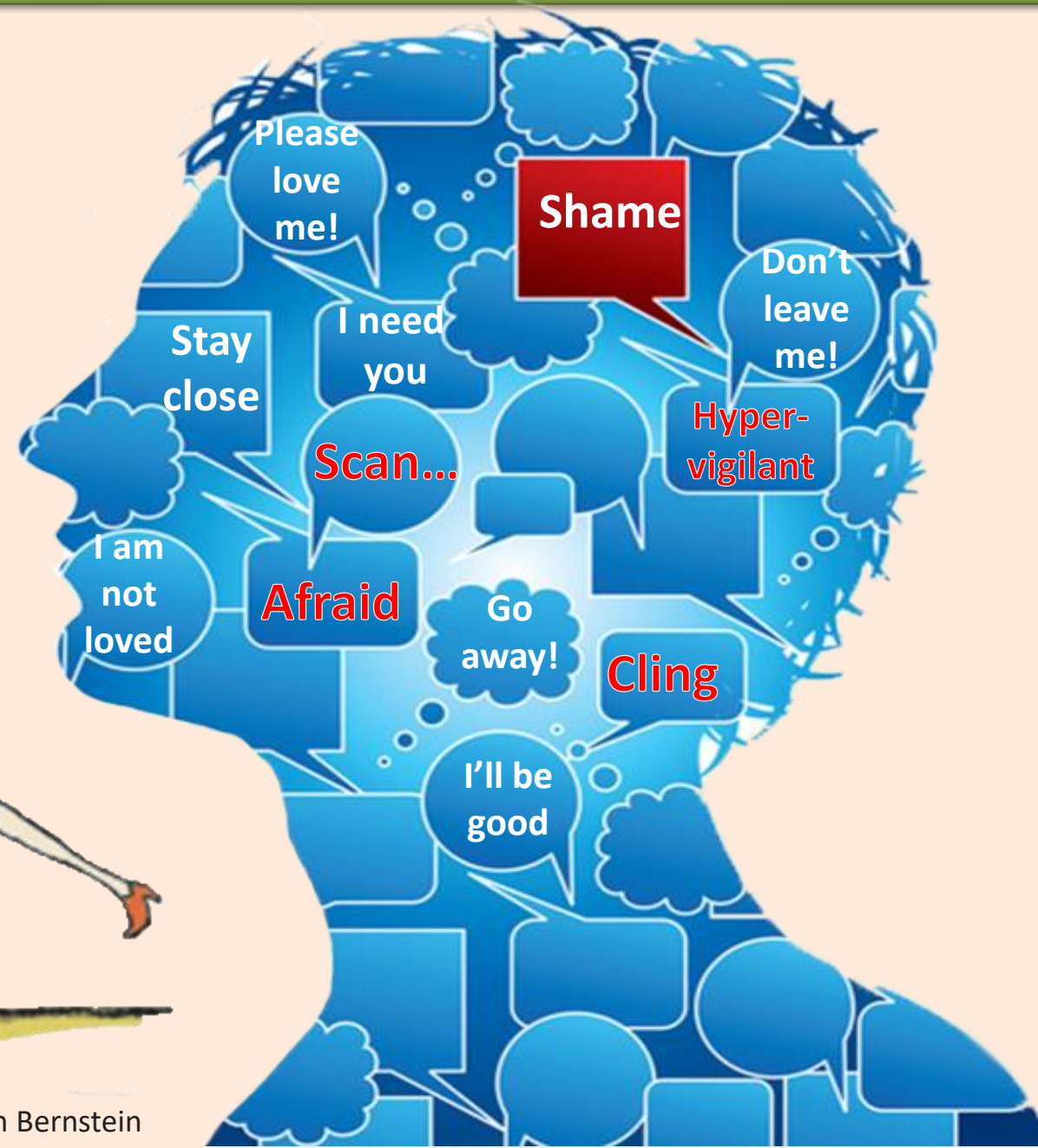
INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- Love is Unpredictable
- Needs met inconsistently
- Preoccupied/Fearful

Attachment
behaviour is
HYPERACTIVATED



Elizabeth Bernstein



Insecure Avoidant Attachment

AVOIDANT / DISMISSIVE

Don't be a nuisance

Get a grip!

Don't be so needy

Grow up!

Stop crying!

I'm on my own

AVOIDANT / DISMISSIVE

Stop making a fuss

It wasn't that bad

Don't be so needy

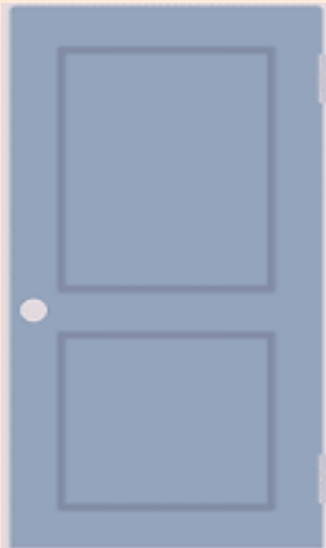
Get a grip

Minimising

AVOIDANT / DISMISSIVE

Well done for not needing me!

Earned approval and self-worth



AVOIDANT / DISMISSIVE

I'll work it out myself

AVOIDANT / DISMISSIVE

Bottled up

INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

- Needs were met practically - functional
- “Get a grip”
- “Don’t be needy”
- Attachment behaviour DEACTIVATED



Elizabeth Bernstein



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)*



A moment of reflection



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* ▲

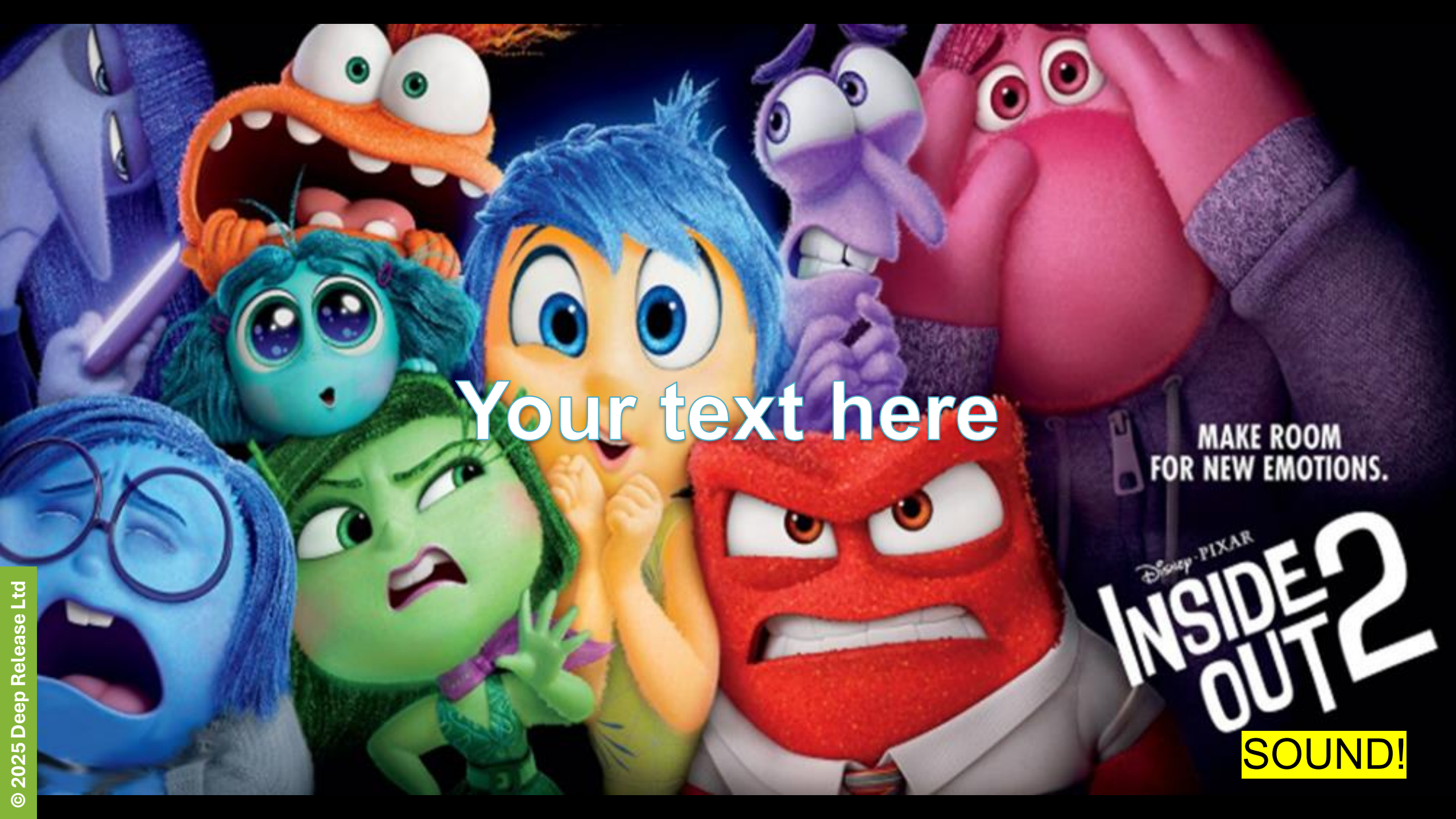
Envy
*I want what
you've got*



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

Guilt
*I have done a
bad thing*

Shame
I am bad



Your text here

MAKE ROOM
FOR NEW EMOTIONS.

Disney·PIXAR
**INSIDE
OUT 2**
SOUND!



Shame was perceived as a character that would attack Riley and make her feel bad about herself, which didn't align with the overall tone of the film.

“Too self-loathing and negative, like an emotion that attacks you and won’t let go.”





While Shame was ultimately removed as a character, the core ideas and traits associated with it were integrated into Anxiety's storyline, making it a more subtle and relatable expression of self-doubt and insecurity.



Share in Buddy Groups

How easy is it for you to talk about shame?

As much as feels safe, share your response to the teaching

15 minutes



Take a break! 10 minutes



5:00



GUILT and SHAME



“In the gaps and clumsy steps in human intercourse, in the misunderstandings and misjudgements, in the blank mocking eyes where empathy should be, in the look of disgust where a smile was anticipated, in the loneliness and disappointment of inarticulate desire that cannot be communicated because the words cannot be found, in the terrible hopeless absence when human connection fails, and in the empty yet rage-filled desolation of abuse—there in these holes and missing bits lies shame...”



HEALTHY GUILT VS TOXIC GUILT

Healthy Guilt (specific)

I have done a bad thing
I need to make amends, put it right



TOXIC GUILT

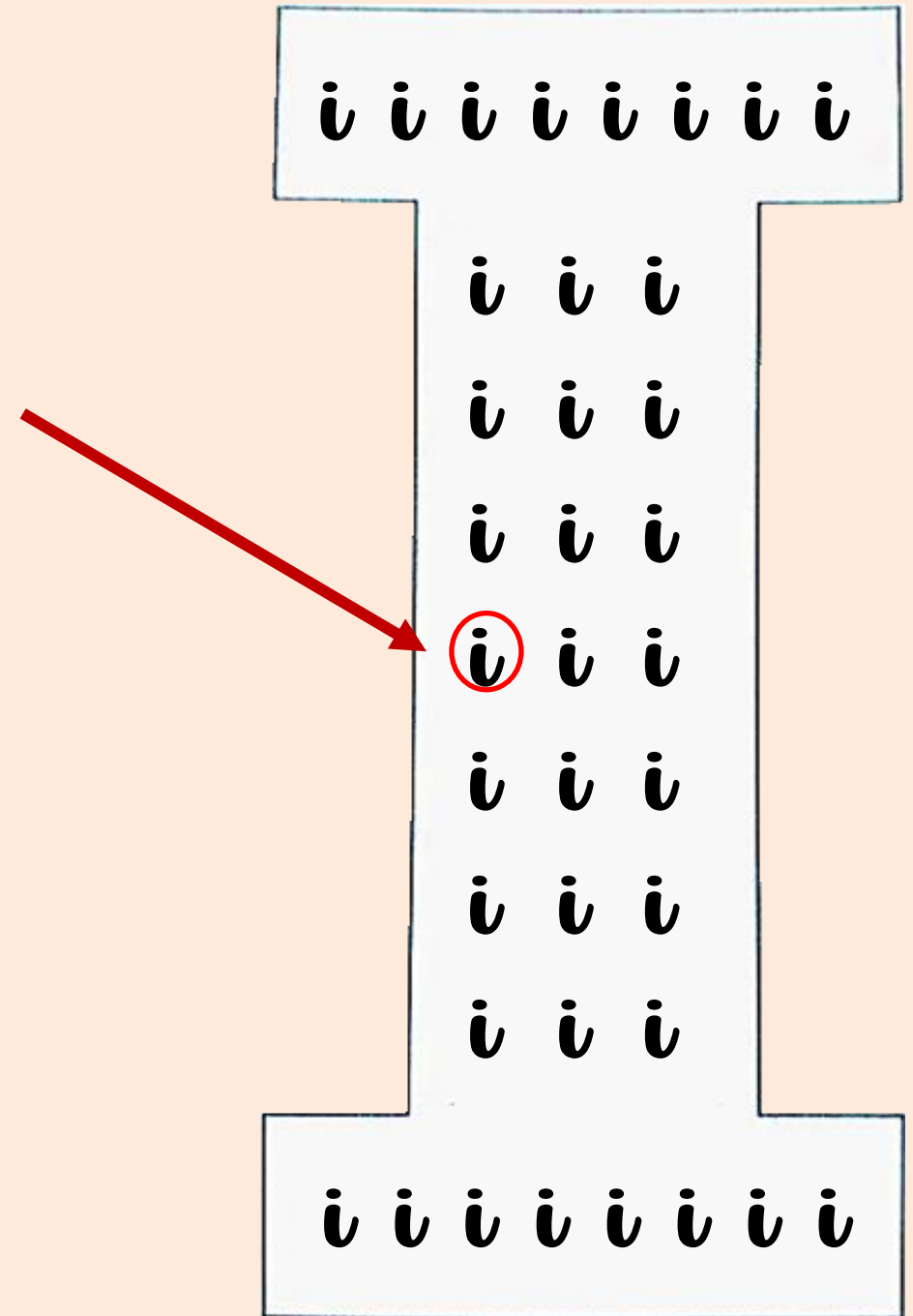
I might have done a bad thing

I might do a bad thing



Guilt, particularly self-punitive guilt, ***serves as a trauma trigger for a shame state:***

“I am all bad”...



HEALTHY SHAME (specific event)

I feel regret/remorse when I realise I have hurt someone or violated a personal value

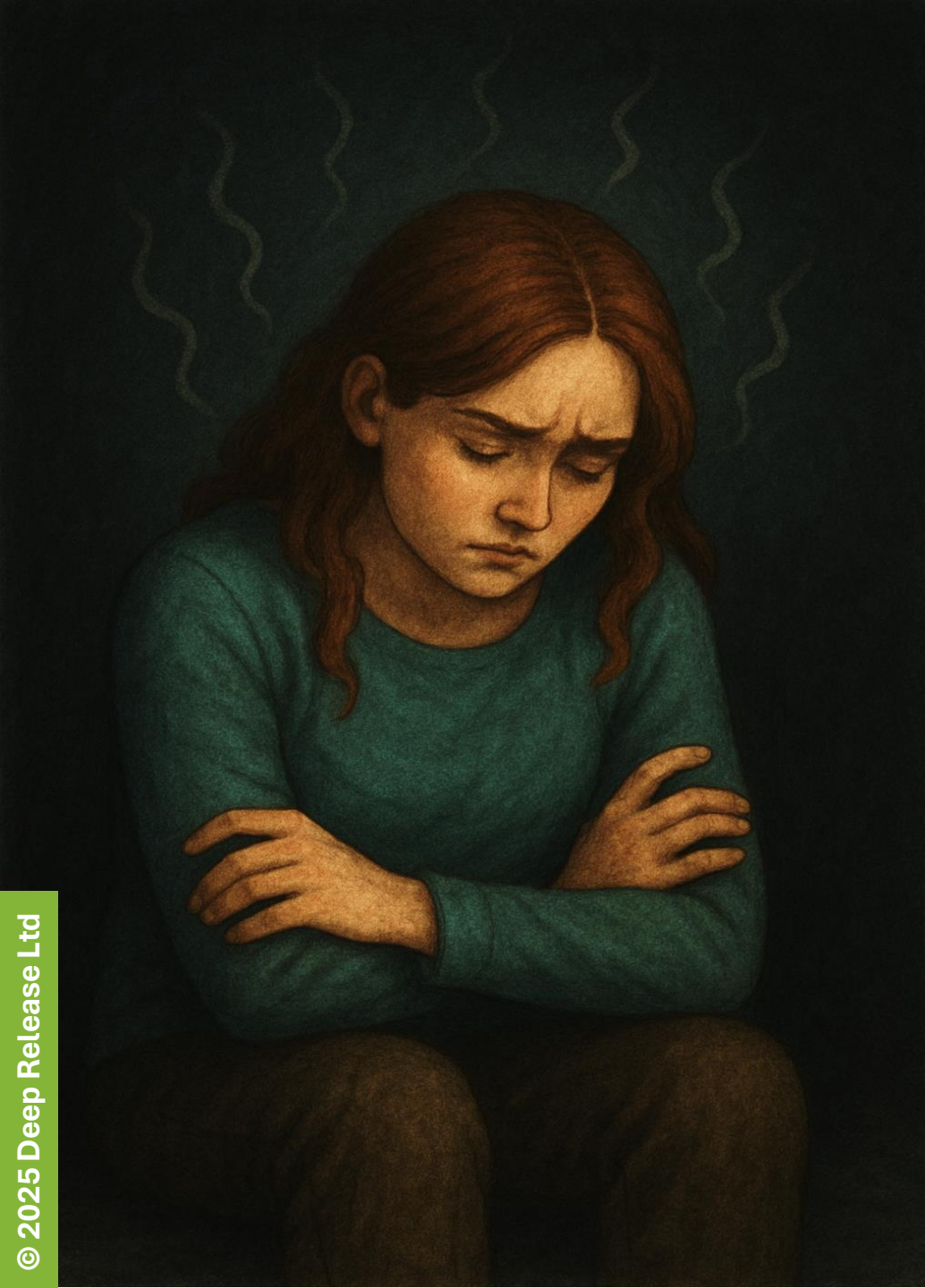
- Open accountability and desire for restoration
- I made a mistake, not *I am a mistake*
- I made a mistake, but I'm growing
- Acknowledge flaws but remain intact, whole and honest

HEALTHY SHAME motivates us into understanding that we can be forgiven. We can learn, and behave and think better next time.



TOXIC SHAME

- I am worthless and unlovable
- I am fundamentally defective
- I am irredeemably bad



TOXIC SHAME
paralyses us,
confirming our
belief that we are
deeply flawed
and cannot be –
shouldn't be –
forgiven



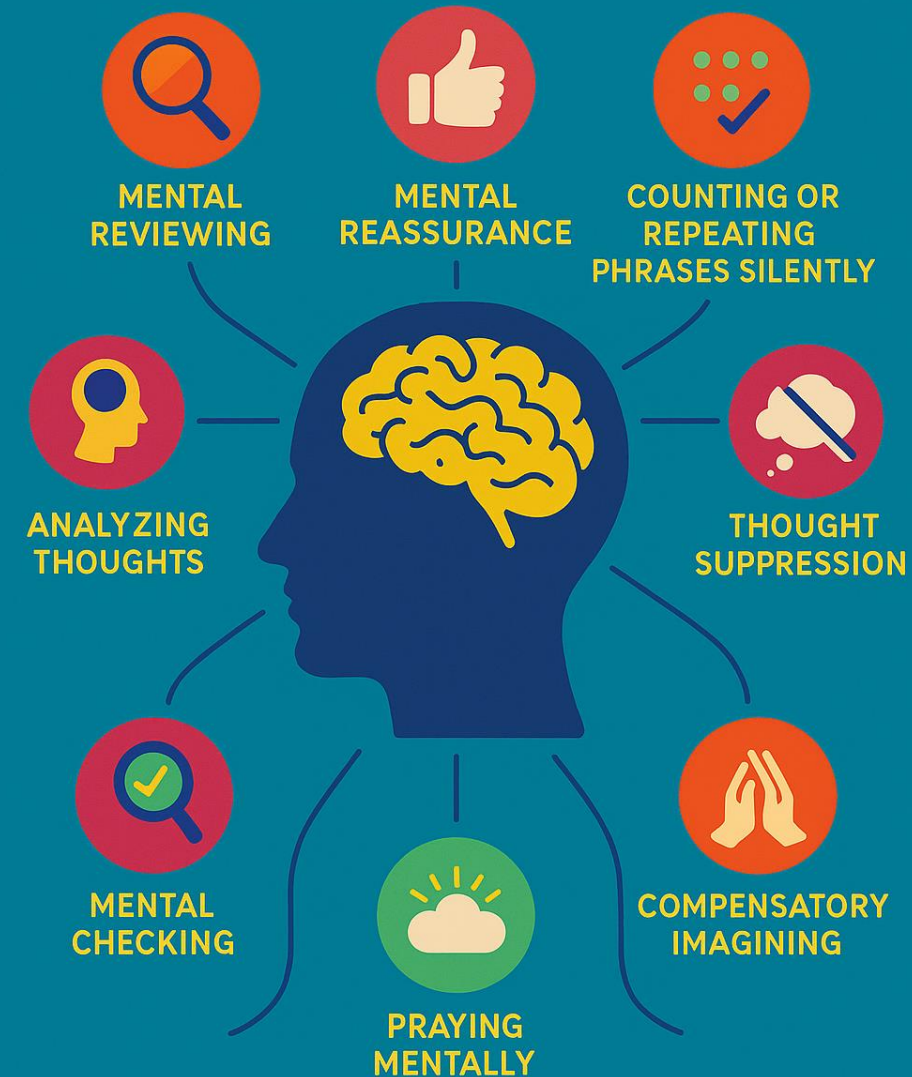
I'm sorry I'm not pretty
I'm sorry I'm not smart
I'm sorry I'm failing
I'm sorry I'm to blame
I'm sorry I'm worthless
I'm sorry I'm useless
I'm sorry I'm a mess
I'm sorry I can't be proud
I'm sorry I'm a person
I'm sorry I was born
I'm sorry that you have
to deal with me

| TheMindsJournal

Purely Obsessional (Pure-O) Internal Mental Compulsions

- intrusive, unwanted thoughts without visible compulsions
- internal mental compulsions like rumination, mental checking, or reassurance-seeking
- covert rituals with the aim to reduce anxiety caused by obsessions, creating a distressing cycle
- though hidden, these compulsions are central to Pure-O and its persistence

COVERT RITUALS IN PURELY OBSESSIONAL OCD

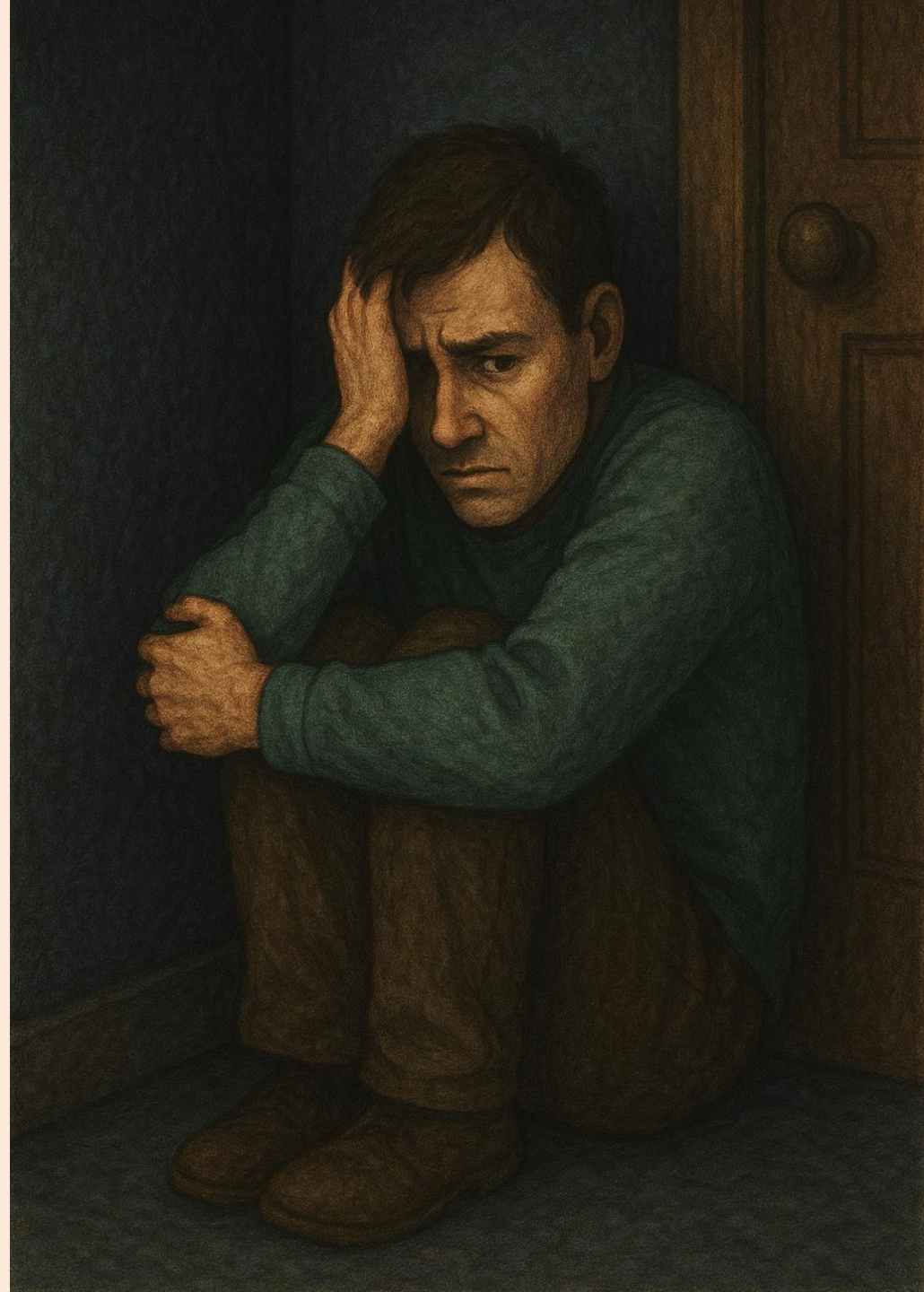


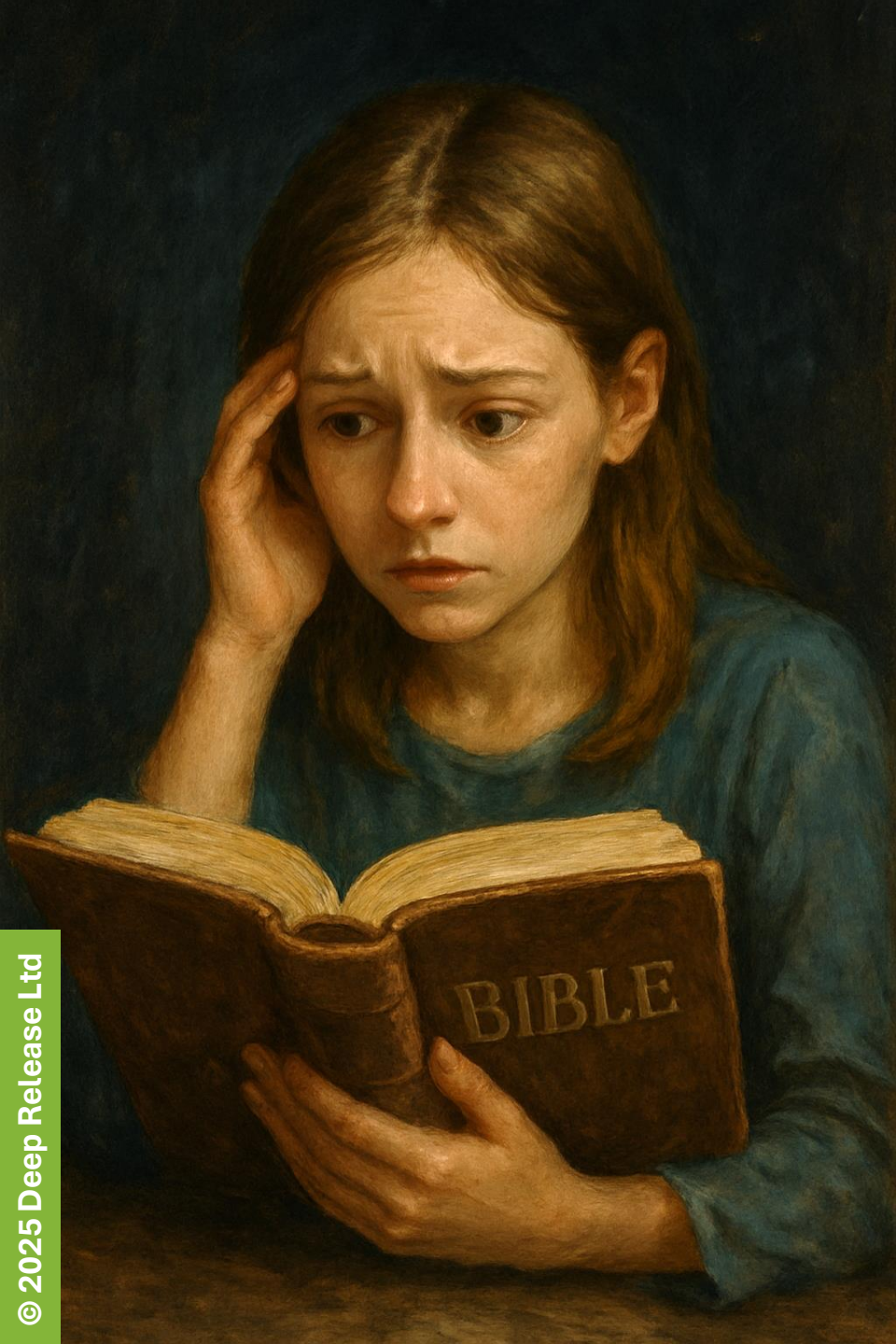
Ashamed-in-Advance Avoidance

Feelings of shame lead the person to avoid situations that might trigger it, for example:

- Social events
- New challenges
- Opportunities for pleasure or growth

Fear of judgment or failure reinforces low self-worth and limits growth, leading to a cycle of avoidance and internalised shame





Scrupulosity

- Excessive concern with moral or religious correctness
- Intrusive thoughts about sin, guilt or moral failure
- Compulsions like confession or reassurance-seeking

Severely impacts daily life, relationships and spiritual well-being, despite the intentions to be “good”.

DISORGANISED ATTACHMENT



TOXIC SHAME



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?

HOW SHAME AFFECTS OUR FEELINGS



USING THE INSIDE OUT NESTING DOLLS WITH A SAND TRAY



HOW SHAME AFFECTS OUR FEELINGS

with Angie Dulwich





Angie Dulwich

Working with Shame

Share in Buddy Groups

Share your responses to the differences between Guilt and Shame, and discuss Angie's sand tray work.

15 minutes



Take a break! 10 minutes



10:00



Questions Comments Discussion



Attachment, Shame and Groups



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

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



SHAME AND TRAUMA

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.”

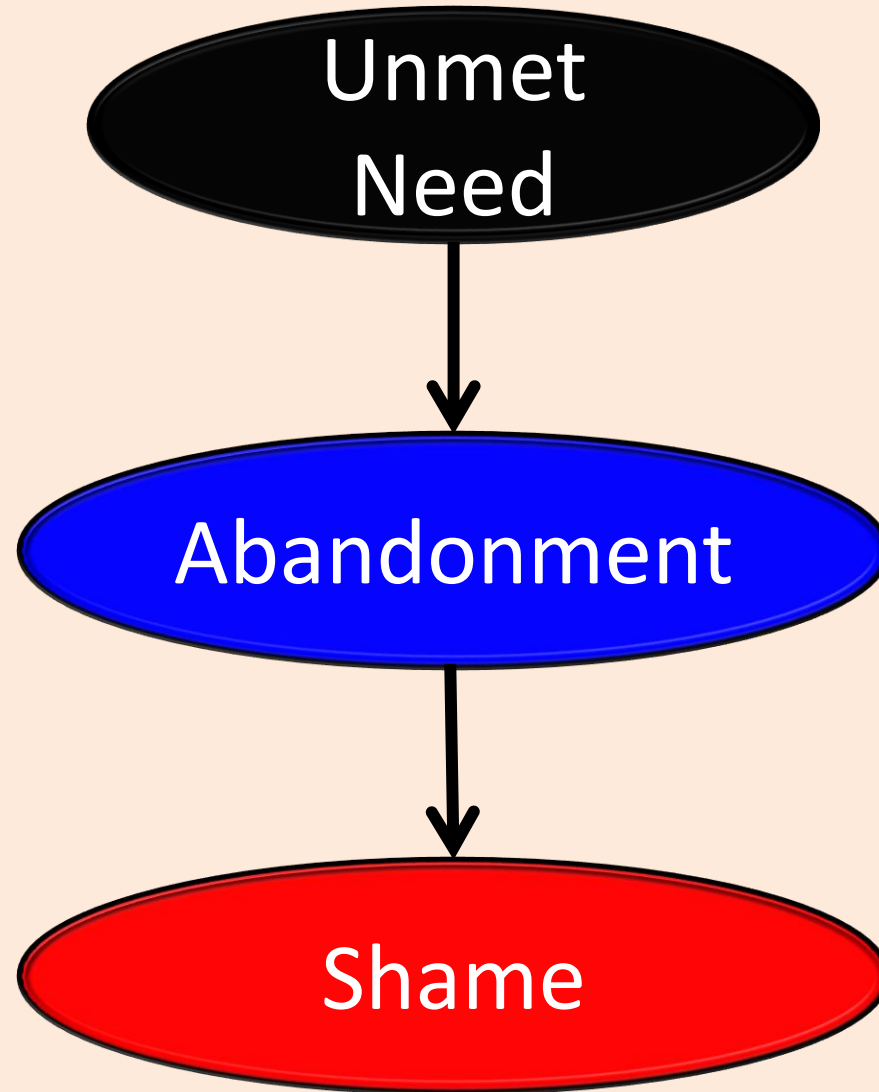
Judith Herman

*“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



THE BACKSTABBER



I smile to your face
but will betray you

THE BULLY BOSS



I use intimidation and
control to rule by fear

THE DESTROYER



I undermine, humiliate
and crush people who
don't like me

THE GASLIGHTER



It's all in your mind
I suggest you see a
doctor

THE DECEIVER



I am a user
and abuser

REWRITE HISTORY



I leave out key
details that put me
in a bad light

PLEASE DON'T SEE ME



I want to hide
because my
groups aren't safe

THE INNER CRITIC



Messages from
the past make me
doubt myself

LEFT OUT



I will never be part
of the 'in' group –
I don't fit in

FOOLISH



Why did I let
that happen?

TORN APART



I need to leave the
group but it feels
devastating

ISOLATE



I will never be hurt
by a group again

GHOST



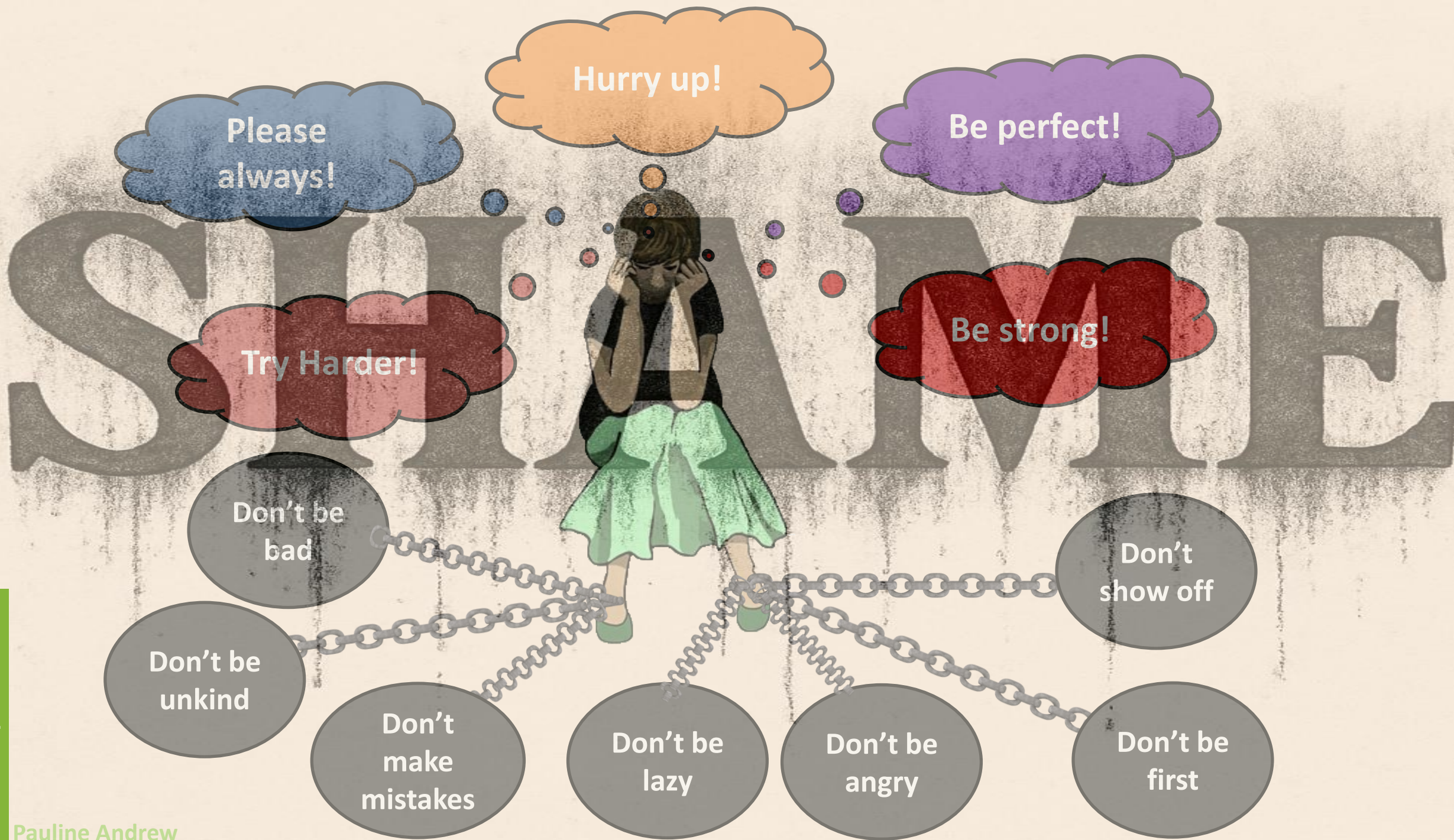
I leave the group and
cut myself off entirely



Attachment, Shame and Hiding







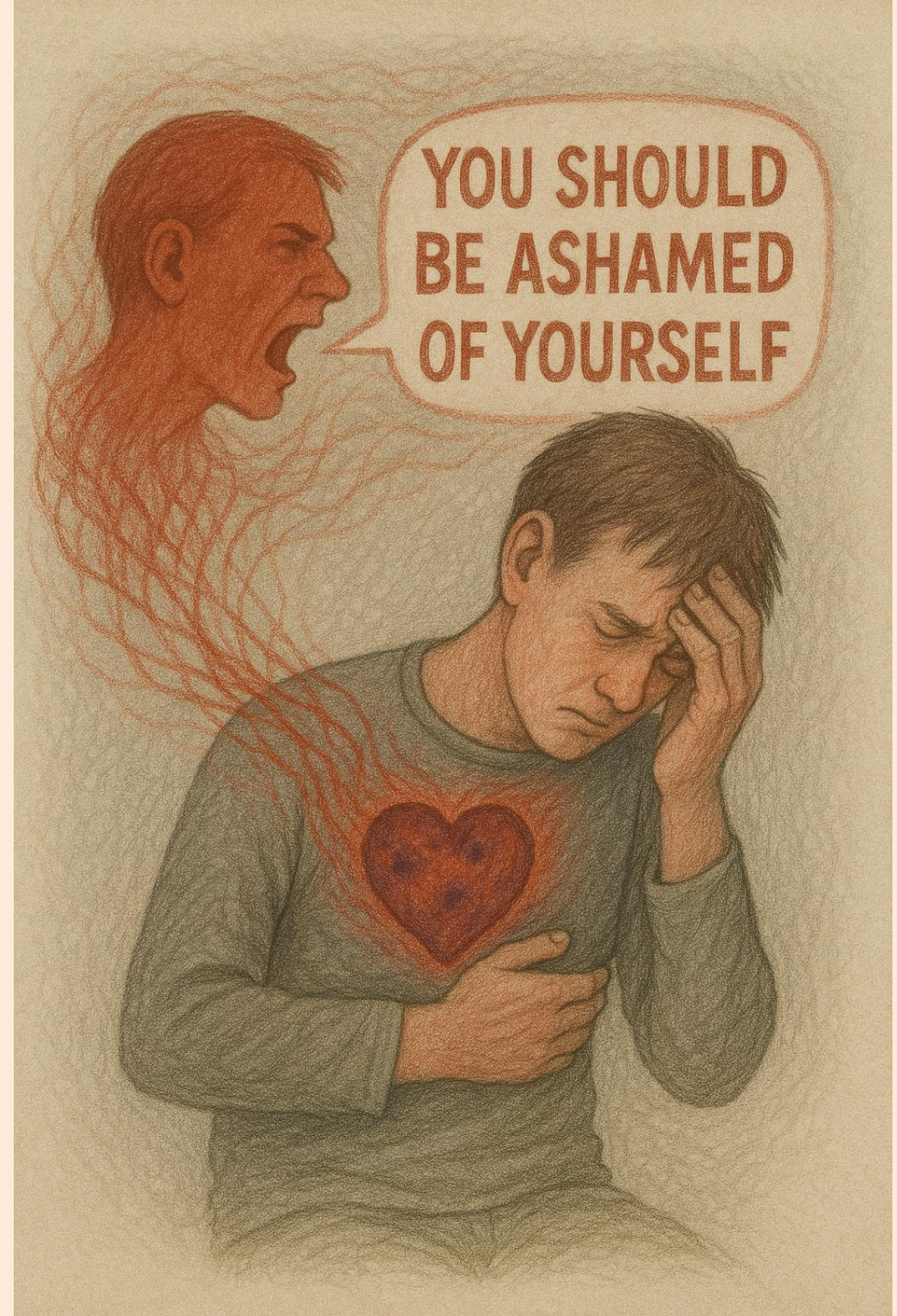
THE POLLUTING EFFECTS OF SHAME



When the words and actions of others cause us deep pain and distress, how interesting that we can find ourselves feeling that ...

- we are the one to blame
- it was our own fault
- we caused the problem
- we deserve to be punished
- we deserve to suffer

In the end,
shame can be
generated
entirely from
within





Gabor Maté

“The trauma is not only in what happened, it’s because you were so alone when it happened...”



A moment of reflection



Share in Buddy Groups

Share your experiences of group shaming (if safe) and in the counselling room.

15 minutes



Take a break! 5 minutes



5:00



In the Counselling Room



Questionnaire

1. What is the earliest experience of shame you can remember?

What happened and how did it make you feel? [Shame Script]

2. What is a typical example of when you experience shame?

Think of patterns – triggers, people or situations [Shame Script]

3. What was the most recent time you experienced shame?

Describe the situation and your emotional response [Shame Script]

4. What is the worst experience of shame you've ever had?

Reflect deeply. What made it so painful? [Shame Script]

What might you say to your younger self in each of these moments?

SHAME IS TRAUMA



Shame is a silent wound—unseen but deeply felt.

It coils around the heart, whispering lies of unworthiness, isolation, and guilt.

It's a corrosive echo from trauma, often planted in childhood, growing roots in silence and secrecy.

Shame can fracture a sense of self, making one feel broken beyond repair.

But the truth is: shame thrives in the dark, and healing begins with bringing it into the light. To name it is to begin to tame it. You are not your shame. You are not your trauma.



Shame drives 2 tapes:

Never good enough
Who do you think you are?

They work in tandem to keep us small

... and the less we talk about it, the
more we have it
(Brené Brown)

“[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...”



THE ANTIDOTE TO SHAME IS EMPATHY

“Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging and connection.”

“The antidote to shame is empathy. If we reach out and share our shame experience with someone who responds with empathy, shame dissipates.”

Brené Brown



- Empathy
 - Understanding
 - Acceptance
 - Genuineness
-
- Identification
 - Me too
 - All of us
 - Rueful laughter





Questions Comments Discussion

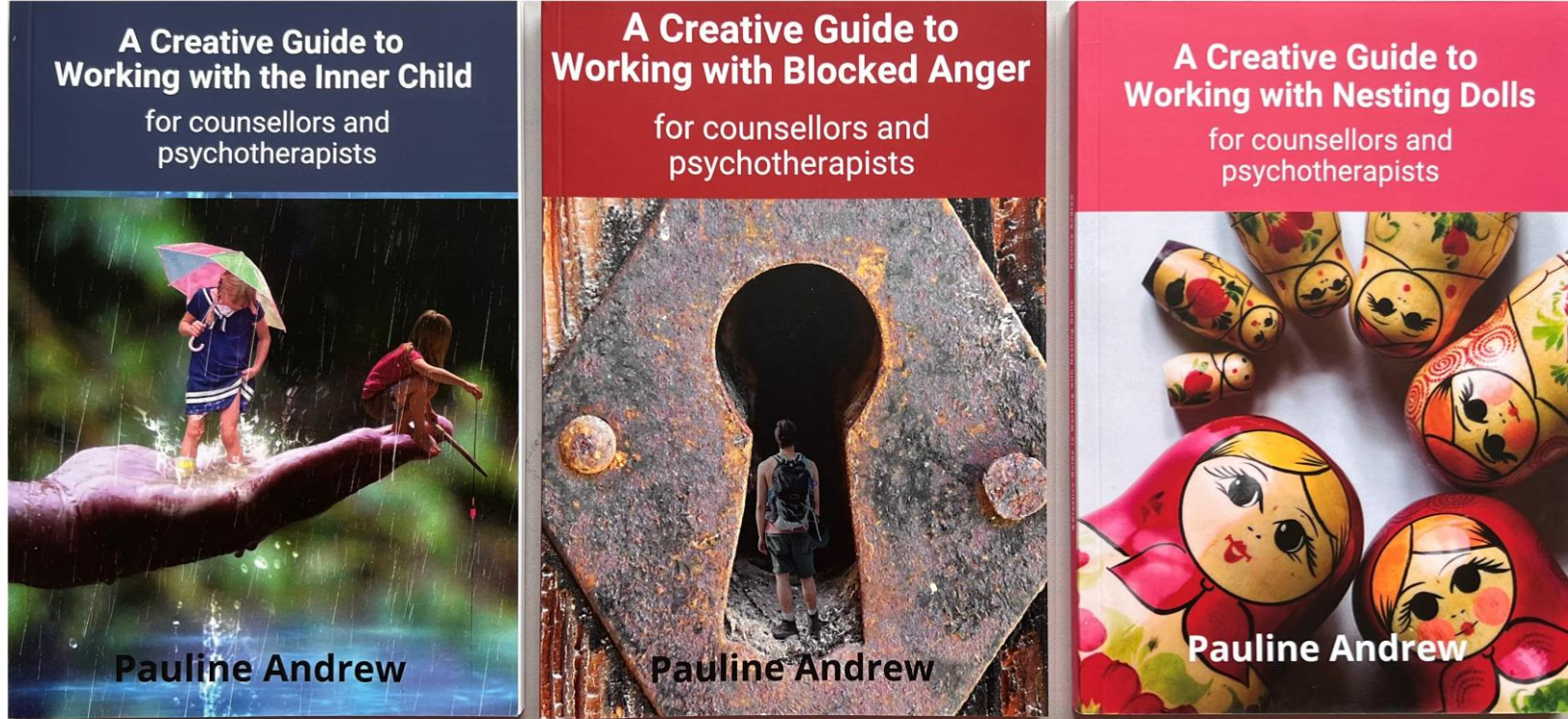


Resources

[PACT-RESOURCES.CO.UK](https://pact-resources.co.uk)

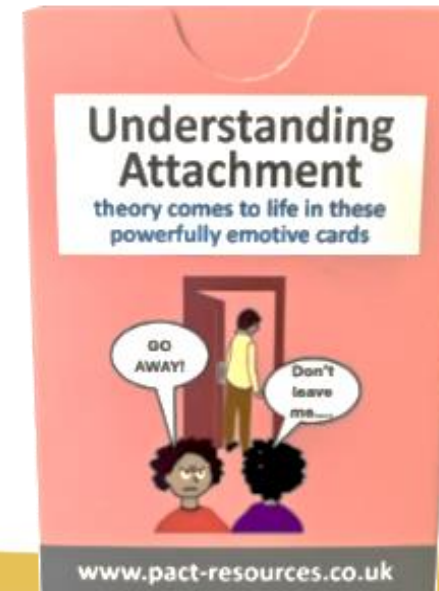
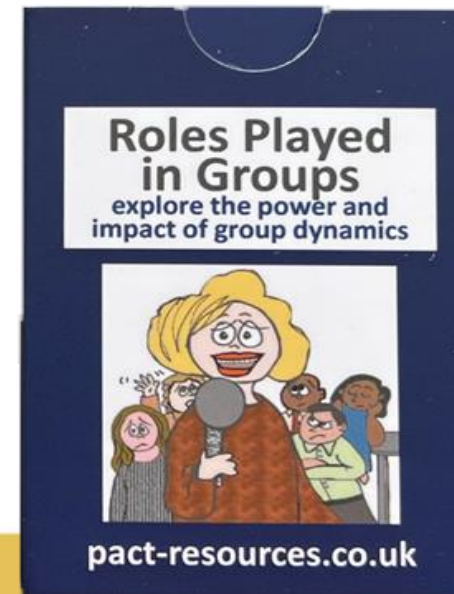
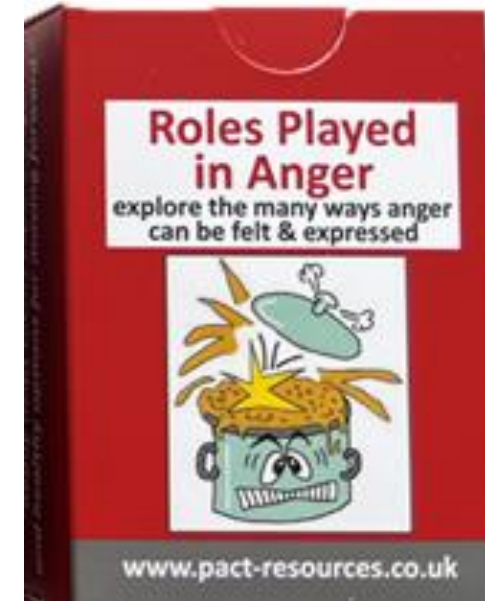
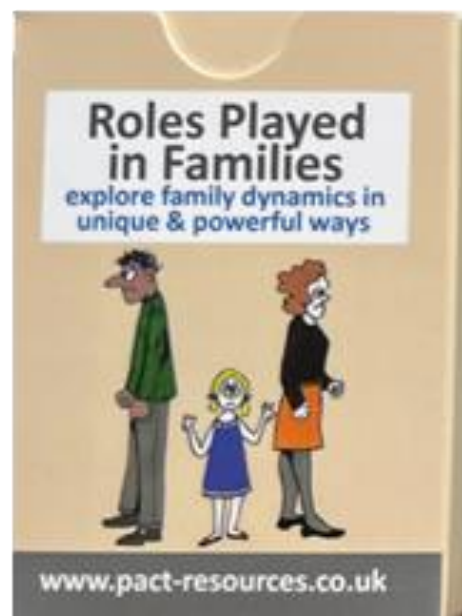
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Roles Played in Families
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**Erikson's Life
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**Erikson's for
Adolescents**



**Roles Played in
Families**



**Core Needs in
Families**



**Roles Played in
Anger**



**Roles Played in
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**The In-Out
Model**



**Nesting
Dolls**



**Understanding
Attachment**

e-Resources



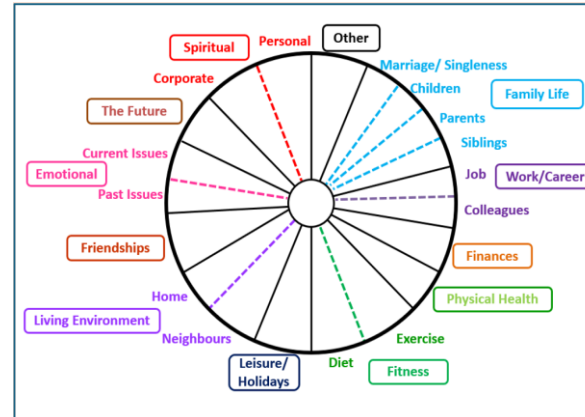
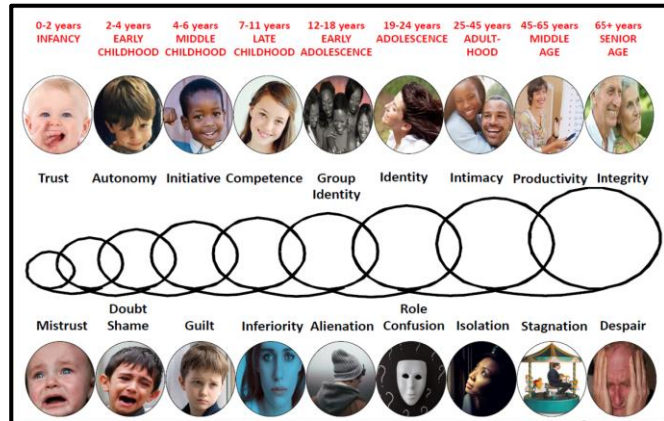
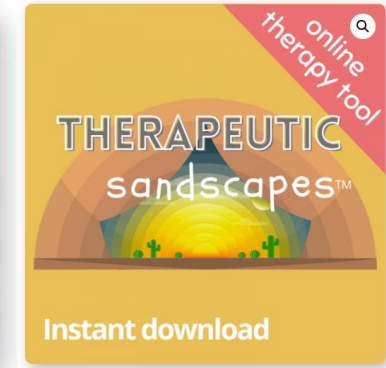
Erikson's Life Stages
£3.50



Wheel of Life
£3.50 – £5.00



Working with Animal
Figures Online Pack



Use PowerPoint for these e-resources – please also investigate our web apps!



HARD FEELINGS

empathy cards for counsellors

CARDS TO SHARE DIFFICULT EMOTIONS TOGETHER

hardfeelingscards.co.uk

When the feelings
are too hard...

And I can't
tell you...



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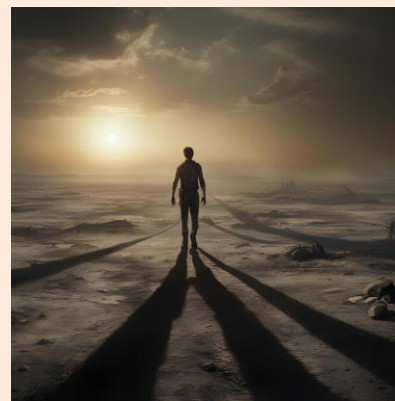


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Releasing Blocked Emotions with Dr Chris and Pauline Andrew
19th June



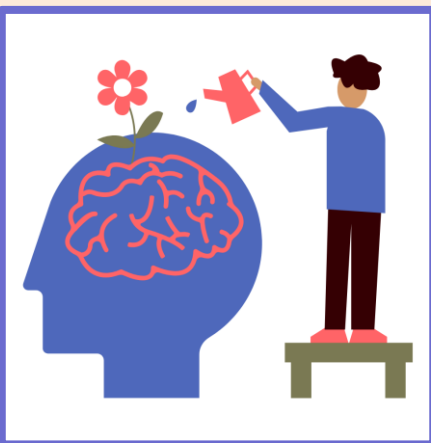
Losing the Will to Live: Working with Suicidal Clients with Pauline Andrew
15th July



The Scapegoat & the Golden Child: Healing the Wounds of Family Blame & Favouritism with Katy Bodman
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Working Creatively with the Inner Child in Counselling with Pauline Andrew
30th August



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9th July



Toxic, Tense or just Tough? A Fresh Look at Relationships with Dr Chris & Pauline Andrew
1st November

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Thank you

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