

SHAME & GUILT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability.
Turn the paper over if you need more space.

Shame and guilt are the two most powerful complex feeling that we as human being experience. These emotions are inhibitory; that is, they force the individual to stop doing what brings shame and/or guilt. They also prevent the person to get into situations that bring those feelings. For example, if an addict is ashamed of his use, then any time he even thinks of using he may feel ashamed and/or guilty.

Guilt and shame are not good or bad, the events or things that bring shame and guilt will determine whether the shame and guilt were constructive or healthy.

Let me give you an example of unhealthy shame and guilt. An anorexic patient may feel guilty or even ashamed after she eats her meal. The reason she has these feelings is that she believes that she is not supposed to eat.

An example of healthy shame and guilt is seen in chemically dependent people. These individuals have lot of shame and guilt when they use chemicals. In this case these feelings are making the individual to think of the painful consequence of use, i.e. shame and guilt.

Shame and guilt are felt whenever we break or violate some rules, fundamentals, beliefs etc. In case of shame we break the rules of other people who are dear to us and we have concern about what they feel and think about us.

In case of guilt we break our own rules, or violate our own principles. As you see in case of shame the judges are relatives, friends, or people in the community etc.

However in case of guilt the judge is the individual himself.

I want to stress that these feeling are very inhibitory- they will not let you move forward in positive direction unless you have dealt with them.

In our life we continuously should try to reduce shame and guilt by trying to follow the rules that are constructive and life enhancing thus facilitating improving our life.

In dealing with addiction and mental illness, shame and guilt could hinder your recovery; thus it is so crucial to work on reducing shame and guilt as much as possible on daily basis.

This assignment will help you understand and appreciate the role and the extent of shame and guilt in your life and in your mental and addictive disorders.

1. What makes you feel ashamed? Give some examples, and try to identify the feeling you have when you have shame and/.

Example: when my mother found out that I was stealing her money to buy cocaine. I felt ashamed. I was at times angry with myself for stealing. I also was frustrated at myself why I can not keep my promise to stay sober.

1.

2.

3.

2. What makes you feel guilty? Give 3 examples, and try to identify the feelings you have/had when you have/has guilt. You should try to write at feeling level.

Example: last Christmas I was so wrapped up with use of heroin. In Christmas morning I was craving heroin. Suddenly I saw my son playing with the nintendo his uncle had given to him. I thought that by selling the nintendo I could get enough money to buy heroin. I went to my son and he began crying as though he was reading my mind. While he was begging me to let him have the nintendo, I unplugged it and without looking at his eyes I rushed out and eventually sold the nintendo.

Now that I am sober any time I think about that moment I feel so sad and remorseful. I ask myself how could a father do such a horrible thing to his child during Christmas holidays.

1.

2.

3.

3. Who makes you feel ashamed and /or guilty and how do they do that. In our life there are people who are very influential in our life, i.e. they are role models, can make us do things, and their words and attitude towards us are so important our life. Give us some examples of the people who fall in that category.

1.

2.

3.

4. Define Shame

If you have difficulty defining it go back and read the introduction

5. Define Guilt.

If you have difficulty defining it go back and read the introduction.

7.healthy shame

Healthy shame is the feeling you have when you violate the rules, laws, fundamentals, etc. That are respected by the community/society etc. and those rules and fundamental are life enhancing and stabilize the community and improve living for every body in the community.

Give us 3 sources of healthy shame for you.

8- healthy guilt:

Healthy guilt is a feeling that is the result of violating you own rules or fundamental etc. that are life enhancing and constructive in your life and those rules and fundamental are approved and accepted as constructive by the society and are consistent with social standards of the community.

Give us 3 sources of healthy guilt from your life.