Shame can result in internalized negative self-defeating images and internalized self-hate. In the session, we will explore what shame is, how it impacts on GLBT clients and a few ways we can help clients reduce the shame they feel. Because religion can be a source of shame for GLBT clients, the role of religion in shame will be discussed. While this session will explore the shame dynamic, especially it relates to GLBT clients, the principles can apply to other client groups.

SHAME

- Introductions
- What hoping to learn?
- Something unique?
- Why this topic?
- Is shame universal?

Puppy Shame
SHAME

More than Emotions

• Includes physical responses
  • Blush
  • Looking down (1)
  • Trying to be smaller
• Self-protection


SHAME

• Root is Indo-European - meaning 'hide or cover up' (1)

• Guilt - stop what you are doing. Shame - stop, you're "no good" (2)


POSITIVE ELEMENTS?
Varied Opinions

- Some believe shame has a role
- Some believe shame has no positive role
- Berecz and Helm - "nearly always counterproductive"

ORIGINS

Childhood

- Erick Erickson - shame starts in second year
- During Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt stage
- Might be due to over control of child
  - Child can start to see self as weak and incompetent
- Due to fear of being abandoned

ORIGINS

Childhood

• Messages children receive that can cause shame
  • Not good or not good enough
  • Do not belong
  • Not loveable.
  • Should not exist.*

Bullying Often Involves Ridicule

• Ridicule \(\rightarrow\) negative self-talk

• Internalized as shame and owned \(\text{(1)}\)

• Self-hate starts "one insult at a time." \(\text{(2)}\)

• Anxiety increased by chance could experience shame again \(\text{(3)}\)

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SHAME

- Addictive shame as a cognitive process, personal & congregational
  - Denial
  - Silence
  - Secrets
  - Defensive


I made a mistake

I am a mistake
mistake

I made a mistake

embarrassed

I can do better

evil
terrible
awful

I am a mistake

I am unable to do better
SELF-SHAMING
Common Thoughts

• Defective, bad, dirty, incompetent
• Undeserving, worthless, unlovable
• Pitiful, nothing (1)
• Should not exist (2)
• God hates me
• To bad for church/synagogue/
• Spiritually damned


Self-Actualization
Esteem
Love & Belonging
Safety
Biological Needs
"Even the most minor slight can be perceived as invalidation."

SHAMEFUL IDENTITIES

- Sinner
- Racial and Ethnic
- Religious
- Occupational
- Gender and Gender Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Ability
SHAMEFUL IDENTITIES

• societal shame – part of a group that is discriminated against

SEXUALITY

Does our world worship masculinity?

- Treatment of male athletes
- Treatment of women
- Treatment of gay men
SEXUALITY

Masculinity as Identity

Gender Expression Shame

- John Wayne
- Take pain
- Not show emotions
- Drink a lot
- Sex not for love
- Independent
- Strong
- Keep problems to self
- Winner

SEXUALITY

Masculinity as Identity

Gender Expression Shame

• Not a "real" man
  • "shame on you" (1)

• Boys may be shamed by bullies, because they are too effeminate (2)


SEXUALITY

Femininity as an Identity?

Gender Expression Shame

- Cannot suffer pain
- Emotional
- Sex for love and companionship, not for enjoyment
- Dependent
- Weak
- Share problems/burdens
- Winning is not the object
SEXUALITY

Shame

• Shame underlies sexual dysfunction

SEXUALITY

- "avoidance of shame" as "the most powerful driving force" in the lives of young gay men

You cannot see me.

Closet is a sign of sexual shame.

Fig leaf the original closet?
We can only affirm what we see
SEXUALITY

- Labelling orientation as sinful "serves no good purpose."
- Not encourage monogamy (1)
- Not affirm sacrament of human love (1)
- Only shames (1)
- "Orientation shame" - discounts GLB and classifies them as not completely human and not completely sacred (2)


SEXUALITY

• GLB can come to see self as

• Sick, deserving shunning and bashing (1)

• Damaged and unlovable (1)

• Contributes to higher suicide rates among GLBT teens (2)

(1) Karen McClintock. Sexual Shame: an Urgent Call to Healing. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 97

Homosexuals suffer double shame, the shame of being considered to be "physically defective" and the shame of abandonment (1)

Sexual identity shame - due to "religious oppression" (2)


SEXUALITY

Identity-based shame

• Toxic shame – "deeply held belief" one is unacceptable, unlovable and "flawed" (1)

• Shame-based learn to shame selves (2)


SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Problems

• Spend much of life avoiding shame more difficult to discover passion in life (1)
• "Unable to satisfy his own needs, feelings of rage emerge." (2)


SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Attempts to Cope

- Outrageous and "over-the-top"
- Get any acknowledgements possible
  - More validation/less distress (76)
  - More validation get more crave (76)
- Invalidate those who invalidate (81)
- Hypersensitive to invalidation (81)
  - "Bitchy queen", bitter

SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Problems

- Sizeable minority of gay men engage in risky sex, because rather die young than grow old (1)
- Acceptance of body (1)
- Only show perfect to others - feel anxiety (2)
- Deeply wounded people cannot form healthy relationship (3)

SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Problems

• 4 major types of relationship trauma
  • Betrayal
  • Abuse
  • Abandonement
  • Relational ambivalence
    Cycle of kindness and affection to emotional
distance

SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Identity-based shame

- Gay men—higher income, better stuff, more sexual partners, more emotionally expressive
- Higher rates of depression, suicide, STI, shorter term relationships

SEXUALITY - GAY MEN

Identity-based shame

Abuse and fear of rejection

- Fear of rejection
- Sense that there is something "disgusting, aberrant, and essentially unlovable"
- Attempts to win approval by excelling at everything
- Puppets others and not able to trust self

Identity-based shame

- Growing up gay—hide "ugly realities" inside "finely crafted facade"
- Gays trying to act straight become "starved for authentic validation"
- Validation received by gays who are in the closet is not authentic to who the person is

SHAME-IMPACT

Attempts to Cope

- Perfectionism
- Self-Righteous
- Controlling
- Blaming others
- Martyr Complex
- Withdraw

SHAME-IMPACT

Common Responses to Shame

- Powerless – reduced energy
- Mask pain
- Perfectionism and criticism
- Rage
- Spiritual crisis
  - Believes wrong & should not exist
  - Worthless
  - No personal identity

SHAME-IMPACT

Common Responses to Shame

• Shame and internalized homophobia contribute to domestic violence among lesbians

• "... the batterer may feel that at some core level, she is attacking herself when she hits her partner"

SHAME-IMPACT

- Use of drugs to medicate shame
- Cannot have sex unless intoxicated
- During "identity crisis" the "drum beat of shame beats louder and louder" (63)

SHAME-IMPACT

Common Responses to Shame

• More downward spiral than cycle (1)
• Attempts impossible – Ex-gay ministries
• Exodus International

SHAME-IMPACT

Shame & Forgiveness

- 657 sexual minority people - proneness to shame negative correlation with the ability to forgive self and to others

- Negatively correlated with self-esteem

- For some shame could make self-acceptance of their sexuality more difficult

SHAME & RELIGION

• Shame-based religion
• Famous song – Amazing Grace – that saved a "wretch like me"
SHAME & RELIGION

Rule-Based Religion

• when bad things happen "may swing miserably back and forth between the poles of 'I hate thee!' and 'I hate me.'" (1)

• people who are not sure God loves them are "radically insecure" (2)


SHAME & RELIGION

- Shame-based religion

- Atonement theology can cause people to feel unworthy (1)

- Redemption emphasis can aggravate sense of shame (2)

- Cross can also be seen as liberation

- Michael Piazza CoH thoughts


SHAME & RELIGION

• Carl Jung - sexual questions turn out to be religious questions and religious questions turn out to be sexual questions (1)

• "The shame-based individual is like an individual attempting to walk on water . . . failure to do so results in anxiety about being rejected by others . . ." (2)


SHAME & RELIGION

• Churches link sexuality and sin
  • Augustine – sex as disgusting
  • Arnobius – sex as filthy and degrading
  • Jerome – sex as unclean
  • Tertullian – sex as shameful

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (King James Version, Matthew 5:48)
Matthew 5 - Part of Sermon on the Mount

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48)

Background - ethnic, include J. Vernon McGee

Jesus as example

"It is in attempting to be 'like God' that we generate the highest levels of shame."

BIBLE - SERMON ON THE MOUNT

• Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48)

• Greek does not mean "flawless or error free" (1)

• "not a prescription" for salvation

• Standard for those who already in kingdom (2)


Anchor Bible – Matthew 5:48 "Be true, just as your heavenly Father is true."

Closet life is not true.

Aramaic word translated perfect was an active word meaning people are to include all in their love, just as God's love includes all (1)

Greek word translated perfect can mean "physical development," being 'fully grown, mature,' full age'

CHRISTIANITY & SHAME

"Xerox Syndrome"

• Trying to copy Jesus life causes "unnecessary shame." (1)

• Larger difference between ideal and reality more shame

• "It is in attempting to be 'like God' that we generate the highest levels of shame." (2)

• Perfectionism distances from others and causes obsessive introspection (3)


BIBLE BULLYING

- Machine-gun Bible quotes
- Literal understanding of English
- Ignore social, historical, contextual background
- Bible to condemn
  - Creates toxic faith
  - Attacks mental health and spirituality of GLBT
BIBLE BULLYING

- Christianity is not same as Bible
- Much of Bible predates Christianity
- Some passages of Bible not in harmony with Christian perspectives
- all theology should be in line with the cross of Christ (1)

1 Corinthians 6:9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (malakoi), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (arsenokoitai)

Greek effeminate - root word literally means "softness" (1)

Greek mankind - precise meaning is disputed and unknown

SEXUALITY

Generalized Shame?

- After roughly high school people drop out of church for about 8 years
- Also period of peak sexual activity

REDUCING SHAME

Movie - Witness

• Rachel falls in love with non-Amish man
• Father-in-law says forbidden and she could be punished by elders.
• Claims Rachel acting like a child.
• She disagrees.
• He says elders will judge that and he will to "if you shame me.
• Rachel replies, "You shame yourself."

REDUCING SHAME

Coming Out

• When admit gay, "gives up striving for authenticity

REDUCING SHAME

Gay Men

Steps In Handling Shame

• Overwhelmed – closet period, afraid of identity

• Compensate for shame – try to reduce shame by being highly successful, attractive, masculine

• Discover authenticity – build life based on personal values and passions, not on being worthy of love

REDUCING SHAME

• Shame-based religion

• Can shift focus from cross to creation
  • Goodness of creation and person
  • In creation story

REDUCING SHAME

Shame

• God intended for humans to be naked and unashamed

• After sin, Adam and Eve do not want to see God, because they realize they are naked

• Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Unconditional Positive Regard

- Ephesians 1:4-5 - According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

- Helps reduce guilt - God knew who you are and everything you will do and still wanted you

- Establishes value on the basis of existence, not effort
REDUCING SHAME

Bible

• 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 - Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

• Emphasizes people are sacred

• Value in being (1)

• God does not live in junk

REDUCING SHAME

Self-Acceptance

- "You don't need to be more spiritual, richer, friendlier, better looking, younger, or living on a beach. In this moment, all you need to be is you. Only in that space will you find lasting contentment."

RE DUC IN G S H AM E

AA Quote

- "Would you rather be right or loved?"

Add to quote

- Would you rather be perfect or loved?
- Would you rather be buff or loved?
- Would you rather have tons of sex or be loved?

REDUCING SHAME

Passion in Life

- When find purpose and passion people validate the purpose and passion
REDUCING SHAME

Own Behavior and Weaknesses

• Helps reduce distress of shame (1)
• Celebrate limitations
• Human limitations are "not a curse", but a "gift" that liberates us from the "anxiety of having to be like God". (2)


REDUCING SHAME

Spiritual Importance of Being Yourself

- “Before Rebbe Zusia died, he said: 'When I shall face the celestial tribunal, I shall not be asked why I was not Abraham, Jacob or Moses. I shall be asked why I was not Zusia.'"

No-Apologies Pride

• Conviction – "... I need not apologize for my existence!"

RE DUC IN G SH A M E

Empower With Personal Model of Morality

• Cite protection of women/vulnerable

• "Sex is special"

• Could be as simple as:

  • Genital contact involving "imbalance of power is sinful"

REDUCING SHAME
Empower With Personal Model of Morality

- UCC questions
- Motivation of love for self and other?
- Produce fulfillment?
- Committed to increase in intimacy sex causes?
- Results?
- Protecting all from STI?
- Able to share with others?
- Responsible if pregnancy?
- Enhance my relationship with God?

REDUCING SHAME

God Gets It

- Cross as either source or solution
- Can be seen as shame bearing
  - Jesus experienced
  - Ridicule, contempt
  - Being mocked
- Public exposure

REDUCING SHAME

Blessing People

• Treat people as royalty - accept, restore, honor (29)

• Henri Nouwen preaching and Downs girl story (26-27)