

Overcoming Shame for Trauma

Trauma can leave deep marks on how we see ourselves, often creating feelings of shame that can be hard to escape. This shame can come from the idea that we're somehow at fault for what happened or that we're not worthy or good enough because of it. These feelings are a natural response to trauma, but they can keep us stuck, making it harder to heal and feel good about ourselves.

Overcoming this kind of shame is an important step in moving forward. By learning to notice and challenge these beliefs, we can start to see ourselves with more kindness and care. Through creative exercises like drawing your "shame monster" and practicing self-compassion, this worksheet will guide you in exploring feelings of shame and finding healthier ways to cope.

PART 1: Identify Shame

Understanding what shame looks, sounds, and feels like for you is a first step toward healing.

What does shame look like for you?

Is there a particular facial expression or posture you associate with feeling ashamed?

What actions or behaviors do you engage in when you feel shame (e.g., withdrawing, avoiding eye contact)?

What does shame sound like for you?

What are the critical thoughts or phrases that go through your mind when you feel ashamed (e.g., "I'm not good enough," "Why can't I get it together")?

Do you hear a particular voice (e.g., your own, a parent's, a teacher's) when you experience shame?

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



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What does shame feel like for you?

How does shame manifest in your body (e.g., tightness in the chest, heaviness, a pit in your stomach)?

How does it affect your energy levels (e.g., feeling drained, wanting to hide)?

PART 2: Draw Your Shame Monster

Drawing your shame monster can help you visualize this emotion and see it as something separate from yourself.

Grab some markers, pencils, stickers, or any other art supplies you have on hand. On the blank space provided, draw what your shame monster looks like. It doesn't need to be a perfect drawing; the goal is to capture how you perceive your shame. Think about what colors, shapes, and features represent your shame. Is it big or small? Does it have a voice? Is it looming or hidden?

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PART 3: Journal Questions for Reflection

Journaling can be a powerful tool for processing emotions and shifting your perspective. If journaling feels overwhelming, try setting a timer for maybe 10 minutes, and come back to this part as needed.

What triggers my feelings of shame the most?

How does shame impact my daily life and self-esteem?

What can I do to show myself more compassion when I feel ashamed?

How can I think about my trauma in a way that helps me feel less ashamed?

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PART 4: Practicing Self-Compassion

Shame often thrives when we are too hard on ourselves. Self-compassion is about treating ourselves with the same kindness and understanding that we would offer a friend.



Replace self-critical thoughts with compassionate ones.



Use gentle physical touch to comfort and soothe yourself.



Journal your thoughts and feelings with a focus on self-compassion.



Observe your thoughts and feelings without judgment.



Speak to yourself with the same kindness as you would a friend.



Practice gratitude, focusing on what you appreciate about yourself.



Pamper yourself with some over the top self-care



Surround yourself with people and animals who love you



Protect your well-being by setting boundaries - say no when you need to.

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PART 5: Positive Affirmations & Mantras

Positive affirmations and mantras can be used to counteract shameful thoughts. Circle one or two that resonate and repeat them daily.

1. I am enough just as I am.
.....
2. I am learning to love and accept myself.
.....
3. Mistakes are a natural part of growth.
.....
4. I am worthy of compassion and understanding.
.....
5. I did my best today, and that's enough.
.....
6.
.....
7.
.....

PART 6: Action Plan

Write down four steps you can take when you notice shame arising. Make the action plan as specific as possible, keeping in mind where you are and what is available to you.

Situation #1:

.....
.....
.....

Self-Compassion Practices:

.....
.....
.....

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Situation #2:

Self-Compassion Practices:

Situation #3:

Self-Compassion Practices:

Situation #4:

Self-Compassion Practices:

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

