

Factsheet

WHY DO I FEEL GUILTY OR ASHAMED?



1 True forgery

« Shame often prevents revealing an aggression. » **True !**

This is particularly the case for many victims of sexual violence.
Shame and guilt must be
Fights to break the silence
Who benefits the attacker!

2 It's experienced

“

I felt dirty... I was disgusted...
I felt ashamed! I haven't talked to anyone about it. I went home as fast as could. I washed myself several times. I lost my innocence! I was scared, I felt dirty and ashamed...

”

3 Know-Science

Guilt and shame increases the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder. People with poor self-esteem are more likely to feel guilty and to judge themselves negatively, to blame themselves for others' failings, even to punish themselves! The feeling of shame is clearly associated with a higher risk of traumatic disorders. This is the case, for example, with former prisoners of war or women who're victims of domestic violence. The feeling of shame following an event can also lead to unhelpful behaviours like silence, withdrawal, absence of self-care, alcohol abuse, pathological avoidance, or self-harm...

The context of war

Sometimes soldiers use rape to instill shame in the victims and rejection! It's a weapon of war.

Attackers often try to justify their unspeakable behaviour by blaming the victims... in the case of this war no one is fooled!!

4 My shrink says to me!

Guilt, shame, devaluation.

Guilt, shame and self -assessment are part of the same emotional family. They are based on the same key thought more or less associated with a negative judgment.

I shouldn't have done what I did - I should have done what I did not do!

In connection
with the trauma

+ « In the eyes of others, my value
Declier, they judge me negatively! »

+ « I think people see me as
worthless! »

GUILT

This is my fault if this assault/
accident took place ...
If I hadn't done this or
That, if I hadn't been there,
If I had managed to shout,
If I had saved myself,
If I was dressed differently.

SHAME

If they knew, they'd think of me like
a slut I can see in their eyes that
I'm no good because of what
happened.
I should have defended myself.
I feel that you're looking at me like
a criminal since it happened.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Since I did not react as I
should have, I am no one, I
have no value ...
Because I can't to feel better
despite the passing time, I
am weak, I have no will...

Why do you feel this way?

It's an illusion of mastery

It's an attempt to regain control of an unbearable experience.
Blaming yourself, saying it's your fault gives you the impression that you could avoid being a victim again. Guilt is useful when it helps us understand our mistakes and to correct them. But in the huge majority of cases, the victim didn't make a mistake... the victim was simply there in the wrong place at the wrong time... and it's not your fault! »)

Because of the attacker

Attackers generally try to make the victim feel guilty, tell them that it's their fault, that they were looking for it or that they deserved it, that they're worthless.

Because of the company

« It didn't happen by chance! » or « There's no smoke without fire! » feed into this guilt. It's often a double whammy for the victims, who find themselves having to justify their experience or their behaviour...