



A GUIDE FOR USING THE CARDS

# Exploring Shame

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Innovative Resources acknowledges the Jaara people of Dja Dja Wurrung country, the traditional custodians of the land upon which our premises are located and where our resources are developed and published. We pay our respects to the elders—past, present and future—for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and other First Nations peoples. We must remember that underneath this earth, upon which we so firmly stand, this is, was and always will be, the traditional land of First Nations peoples.

Exploring  
**Shame**



The importance of shame as a vital affect has been overlooked, understated and often avoided in counselling practice. Shame has tended to be regarded only as an impediment to be overcome. *Exploring Shame* offers a valuable resource that provides an opportunity to name, explore and regard shame as the necessary affect that it is. The cards provide an engaging and productive means to understand and experience shame in ways that can open to new possibilities for ethical life choices. *Exploring Shame* provides a useful and valuable asset for counsellors and educators.

Alan Jenkins

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# Foreword

When I look at this magnificent tool to assist therapists to sensitively access and release shame from their clients, I am astounded that we, the therapeutic community, have not thought of doing this sooner. It was 1990 when Alan Jenkins first put the spotlight on shame in his ground breaking work with adult sex offenders and perpetrators of violence. He developed this focus further with young people with sexually harmful behaviours.

*Exploring Shame* broadens the lens of people who experience shame and adds nuance to the narratives of shame experienced by a variety of clients. It also looks at cultural differences with shame and includes culturally appropriate cards to assist in shame reduction in different cultures.

The idea for these cards was seeded by Michael Derby, a therapist working with young people in residential care. These young people all carry shame to some extent, and invariably most traumatised young people struggle to talk to and articulate to a therapist or carer. Michael's attunement and sensitivity to these young people, and his quest to find ways to help them, prompted him to reach out to Innovative Resources.

The partnership of Michael Derby and Innovative Resources has culminated in this superlative tool. It will be game changing for a range of different clients and I strongly encourage therapists, counsellors, carers and other helpers to integrate *Exploring Shame* into their practice.

Dr Anne Welfare

Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist  
Anglicare Statewide Principal Practitioner

# Introduction

While shame is a common emotion experienced by almost everyone at some point, we don't usually talk about shame directly. We may talk about self-critical thoughts, feelings of embarrassment or behaviours we regret. We may describe the physical symptoms of shame like a wave of heat washing through us or a racing heart. However, we may not call it by name.

And there lies the problem. Much of the power of shame comes from the fact that we try to avoid it and don't address it head on. Shame and secrecy often go hand in hand, and because we don't talk about it, shame grows.

The *Exploring Shame* cards can be used to name, engage, challenge and work with feelings of shame. They are designed to open up constructive and respectful conversations about things we may prefer to keep hidden or things we don't like about ourselves. By taking the time to gently explore feelings of shame, we can start to discover some new, more positive ways to move forward, leading to connection with ourselves, our ethics, our loved ones and our communities.

## WHAT IS SHAME?

Shame is regarded as one of the primary emotions driving our behaviour. It is vital in establishing a sense of belonging and emotional connection. Its function is to help us establish boundaries with ourselves and with others, manage our behaviours, and lead us to consider a sense of ethical connection and how we want to be in the world.

The desire to avoid or erase shame is the problem, rather than the shame itself. As social animals, we know we need other people to

survive. To avoid the exclusion and isolation that can accompany shame, we try to limit the number of 'shameful' things we do. In this way, shame helps us to connect emotionally and ethically with ourselves and others.

When avoided, shame feels painful and uncomfortable. It can erode our sense of self, leading to feelings of humiliation, embarrassment or unworthiness. The drive to avoid the feelings of shame can lead to harmful or destructive behaviours - violence, aggression, depression, addiction, eating disorders and bullying - which increase the disconnection from our communities, from loved ones and from ourselves.

The physical experience of shame is the body's way of pointing to a painful ethical challenge to connection and belonging. The body is acknowledging that ethical and emotional connections have not been upheld. The body is desperate to fit in but feels unable to do so. The physiological symptoms or physical sensations include things like a nauseous feeling in the pit of the stomach, a wave of heat moving up the body, racing pulse, constriction of the throat, dry mouth and hot cheeks. Some people experience a highly judgmental inner-critic, or what might be described as a 'voice of shame'. This critical voice can be relentless and can significantly undermine a person's capacity to grow and change.

Shame stops us in our tracks. It shocks us. The shock can be a call to action, one that invites us to reflect on what is of value and what really matters. Shame is here to promote ethical consideration and, when engaged with, shame opens space for connection.

*Exploring Shame* has been designed to enable conversations about the anatomy and purpose of shame and how it can distort our thinking. Use the cards to support people to build a toolkit that enables them to recognise, engage and transform feelings of shame into more constructive and hopeful emotions and actions. The cards can also be used to talk about how being able to feel shame is actually a strength as it indicates that the person cares deeply and can feel empathy for themselves and others.

## HOW CAN WE RECOGNISE SHAME?

When people look for support, they will rarely tell you that they want to treat their feelings of shame. In all likelihood, they will talk about feeling worthless, unlovable, judged, excluded or angry at the world. Underneath all of these feelings, there are probably feelings of shame.

Shame comes in many shapes and sizes. Anywhere you find a strong inner-critic, you will likely find shame. People may present with depression, anxiety, an eating disorder, perfectionism or self-harming behaviours. They may be experiencing an addiction, a family breakdown, violence, abuse or isolation. They may be people who have used violence or other forms of abusive behaviour against others. People who have experienced exclusion, oppression or violence as a result of race, gender, religion, sexuality, disability, culture nearly always have underlying feelings of shame.

Because shame is present in many experiences of trauma, violence, exclusion and mental illness, it may feel difficult to recognise and name it directly. Shame can seriously undermine a person's capacity to move forward. Supporting people to develop the skills and insight to recognise, engage and reflect on shame can be an effective way to empower them to make positive changes in their lives.

Use the *Exploring Shame* cards to talk about:

- what shame feels like in the body
- the various potential sources of shame
- how we can learn to recognise shame
- where our feelings of shame originated
- the 'voice of shame'
- whether the shame belongs to us or to others who have passed it on to us
- how causing harm to others can generate feelings of shame.

## SHAME AND GUILT

A discourse exists with differing viewpoints concerning the use and differences between shame and guilt. From one viewpoint, shame and guilt are seen as different emotions that lead us to behave in very different ways. As Brené Brown describes, the difference between shame and guilt can be summarised as the difference between 'I am bad', *shame*, and 'I did something bad', *guilt*. Shame is about who we are and guilt is about behaviour. Both these emotions can leave us feeling negative about ourselves. Brené Brown would argue that guilt is a motivator, while shame attacks our sense of self, leaving us hopeless.

However, another viewpoint holds that if the function of shame is acknowledged, hope can be created by engaging with shame, creating multiple possibilities. Alan Jenkins would highlight that once we have fully understood the role of shame, we don't need to create cognitive concepts such as guilt. Guilt can be used as a defence mechanism and justification for not acknowledging the painful injustices someone has experienced. This reduces the potential to properly engage with shame, creating inaction. In situations where harm has been caused, this can become problematic. The person who has used harmful behaviours can utilise guilt-based defences as a way to reduce true responsibility and engagement with the self-challenging force of shame - 'I'm not a bad person, but I did a bad thing'. This can leave the person who has been harmed to suffer the effects of the abuse with no choice but to hold the shame, and with no means to avoid the painful emotions and experiences. Not only is this another injustice for the person who has been harmed, but also impacts on the relational repair, if this is being considered.

We have included a Guilt card in *Exploring Shame*.

The card has been included:

- as a way to create action, and to fully engage with shame
- to help to deepen people's understanding of the difference between shame and guilt

- as a way to consider motivation and how people can truly change their behaviours by engaging with shame.

Use the *Exploring Shame* cards to talk about the difference between shame and guilt. The cards explicitly name things like Addiction, Body, Guilt, Regret, Responsibility and Denial, and include questions to encourage exploration of these topics. They are also designed to help open up conversations about what we believe about ourselves—the stories we tell ourselves about who we are—and how shame and guilt play a role in these stories.

### SHAME, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Shame is often experienced differently by people of different genders, cultures, ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. As Clara Fischer summarises in her article '*Conceiving of gender and the politics of shame*':

In patriarchal societies...gendered shame may form a disciplining device operating through structures of oppression, such as gender, but also class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and related intersectional categories. The question of a *politics of shame* therefore arises in a context of the consideration of the social and political deployment and manipulation of shame, and the reported divergence in the shame experience itself... (Clara Fischer, *Hypatia*, Volume 33, Issue 3: Special Issue: Gender and the Politics of Shame, Summer 2018, pp. 371 - 383)

Women may experience shame differently to men or people of other genders. People from different socioeconomic groups, ages or cultures may feel shame for different reasons. The triggers or experiences that cause them to feel shame may also be different.

For example, if a person comes from a background where sex before marriage is frowned upon or where there are strict gender roles, they may experience different types and sources of shame than people who come from a background where gender identities and roles are more fluid.

When we are working with people around shame, it can be valuable to reflect on our own experience of shame—its causes, its sociocultural origins, how it manifests in our body, what triggers it. By doing this, we are less likely to project our own experiences and assumptions about the sources and causes of shame onto others. We are also more likely to ask curious, open questions about people's experiences, values and beliefs.

It can be useful to use *Exploring Shame* cards such as Culture, The Past, Gender, Sexuality, Letting Go and Freedom to understand what people value and how they define themselves in terms of identity. Actively creating a space for people to talk about beliefs, values and identity not only helps build rapport and trust, it can also encourage people to explore how their experiences of shame may have been generated by familial, social or cultural expectations and norms.

## SHAME AND DISABILITY

People who have a disability often report having experienced feelings of shame. Our society still has a long way to go in being inclusive and respectful of people who are differently abled. As a result, many people with disabilities describe feeling judged, excluded and shamed at different times.

If these feelings go unacknowledged, people with disabilities may avoid circumstances where there is a high risk of shame. This may include situations where they believe they might inconvenience others, where access may be challenging or where they may feel exposed or judged. For example, a person with a learning disability may avoid situations where they are required to read, write or speak in front of others. This can significantly impact on educational and vocational opportunities. People with a mental health condition that leaves them unable to work may feel shame that they need to take regular periods of sick leave or they may feel they are a burden on the people around them. This is not their shame, but they may take it on as their shame.

Parents of children with a disability often describe feeling judged or excluded from community spaces or groups. They may be made to feel shame about their child's behaviour (and they may feel shame for feeling ashamed). Some parents may have been made to feel that they have contributed to their child's disability in some way – genetics, behaviour during pregnancy, not noticing early enough, giving the child certain medications, and so on. While this is rarely valid, it is not uncommon for parents of children with disabilities to question or blame themselves in some way. These parents also often describe feeling ashamed to admit that they need time away from their child and respite from care.

### **BODY SHAMING**

Body shaming, where a negative comment or inference is made about another person or group's appearance, is rife in Western society and increasingly in other parts of the world. Rigid beauty ideals generated by the diet industry, social media, the fashion world and cultural expectations around gender all contribute to a society that puts enormous pressure on people to look a certain way. Body shaming may include comments about a person's weight, height, facial features, body shape, hairiness, lack of hair, hair colour or muscle tone, amongst other things.

People may go to extreme lengths to avoid the shame they feel about their bodies or about the bodies of others. Cosmetic surgery, fad diets and extreme exercise are commonly upheld as positive and life-affirming but they are often motivated by feelings of shame. We only need to look at the high rates of eating disorders (which have the highest mortality rates of any mental health issue) to see the detrimental impact that body shaming is having globally.

### **SECRECY AND SHAME**

The way to reduce feelings of shame is to talk about them. However, often when we have done or experienced something we feel is shameful, the last thing we want to do is tell someone. In fact, we may go to great lengths to keep it a secret.

There is a biological reason for us having these responses to shame. Neuroscience suggests that humans respond to perceived threats in one of five ways—fight/flight/freeze/flop/(be)-friend. Polyvagal theory explains that shame often initiates a frozen response, because people feel like they can't fight or flee the threat. This 'frozen' response often manifests in the form of secrecy and an inability to talk about the experience, which is the body's way of trying to calm itself. By supporting people to talk about shame, we can help them reduce the frozen response and increase their ability to self-regulate and manage difficult feelings.

Often people feel scared to talk about their experiences, preferring to ignore or bury their feelings of shame. They may be scared of the judgment of others, losing face or status, alienating the people they care about, exposing other people to shame, legal consequences or magnifying the shame.

It is worth exploring their feelings of fear. What are they fearful of? How valid are these fears? How can these fears be addressed in practical ways? What would help reduce the fear? Normalising the experience by letting them know they are not alone and (if appropriate) connecting them to people who have had similar experiences can also help reduce fear and enable people to let go of shame and secrecy.

Cards like Alone, Honesty, Blame, Blocks, Courage, Denial, Guilt, Regret, Responsibility, Safety and Vulnerability can all be useful in exploring the relationship between shame and secrecy.

## **CYCLES OF SHAME**

When shame is not faced and engaged with, it can grow and perpetuate more shame, leading to what is sometimes called a 'shame cycle'. Often shame is accompanied by ruminating and obsessive thoughts. When this happens, our sense of self can be eroded, overwhelming everything else and reducing hope in our lives. People can quickly spiral into hopelessness and despair. When caught in this cycle, it can be helpful to talk about the patterns of shame to understand where shame is sitting, and see how we can engage with it from an ethical position.

Shame cycles or patterns can also happen in families, across generations and in communities. We may teach children that certain feelings, behaviours and identities are not ok, leading to them feeling shame but unable to engage with it. For example, a parent may stop a child talking about abuse because they were abused themselves and were made to feel deeply ashamed. Or an LGBTIQ+ person may have inherited a feeling of shame about their identity from their family, community or the broader society. This is not their shame, but they may experience it as shame none-the-less.

Similarly, shame can also be contagious. When one person or group feels ashamed, they may consciously or inadvertently pass their shame on to other people. Body shaming is a good example of this. When we don't engage with the shame and question where it's come from, the feelings of inadequacy are passed on and perpetuated.

It is not uncommon for family or friends who are supporting a person who has experienced trauma or abuse to also experience shame—shame for not protecting the person, for not noticing what was happening or they may share the person's feelings of shame. Similarly, if someone has caused harm, the people around them may feel shame for the reasons above, plus they may feel shame for being associated with the person.

This can become a kind of 'shame party', where everyone is experiencing shame but no-one is engaging, connecting or talking about it. Being part of a shame party can often feel lonely, painful and scary. Therefore it is useful to talk about the experience of shame, consider the ethical ways in which we want to connect with others, and allow action to occur around the injustices that have happened.

*Exploring Shame* covers topics like Patterns, The Past, Culture and collective shame, encouraging people to think about shame cycles and the ways in which they may have inherited, or perpetuated, experiences of shame.

## **WHOSE SHAME IS IT?**

An important question to ask when working with people around shame is, 'Whose shame is it?' This question doesn't aim to erase or eradicate shame, or blame others, but rather examine the political and power structures in which shame exists. Often people who have experienced abuse, violence, neglect, oppression or exclusion carry deep feelings of shame, due to shame being weaponised within power hierarchies. If we ask this question then ethical considerations can emerge, informing a sense of outrage, and shaming can be addressed, with the source of shame attributed appropriately.

'Whose shame is it?' can be an equally powerful question to ask people who have caused harm. These people may feel deep shame but it may be projected onto the person they have harmed. This is common in family violence, for example, and it leaves the person who has been harmed with no choice but to hold the shame. Therefore asking the person who has caused harm 'whose shame is it?' can lead them to consider the message that shame has delivered and evaluate their ethics, allowing a deep engagement with shame and appropriate attribution of responsibility and shame. Then the power of shame can shift, reducing the power hierarchy that it was caught in.

Caution: When working with people who have caused harm, think about timing when asking this question. It may be more effective to ask this question after they have spent some time exploring and reflecting on their behaviour. If introduced too early, they may not have the insight needed to take responsibility for the behaviour and the associated feelings of shame.

## **EXPLORING SHAME WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAUSED HARM**

People who have caused harm may not initially look like they are feeling shame as shame is often hidden under layers of defensiveness, justification or other avoidant responses. Additionally, people will often do anything to avoid feeling or acknowledging shame as it is a highly vulnerable and exposed state.

As Alan Jenkins notes, people who have caused harm (e.g. violence, abuse, trauma, neglect, oppression) often exhibit a range of behaviours as an attempt to mask their shame. These may include:

- Denial
- Blame
- Minimising behaviours
- Justifying behaviours
- Distraction of thinking about/ talking about harmful behaviours.
- Withdrawal
- Aggression and violence
- Self-harm.

Jenkins, A.(2005). Making it fair: Respectable and Just Interventions with disadvantages young people who have abused. In M. Calder (ed), *Children and Young People who Sexually Abuse: New Theory, Research and Practice Developments* (1st Ed, PP. 114-127). Lym Regis, UK: Russell House publishing.

Jenkins, A.(1990). *Invitations to Responsibility: The Therapeutic Engagement of Men Who are and Abusive*. Dulwich Centre, Adelaide: Dulwich centre publications.

People who have caused harm need to acknowledge, explore and engage with shame before they are able to genuinely change their behaviour. In this way, shame can be a healthy and healing emotion, as it enables people to become more insightful and empathetic, in relation to both themselves and others. Reframing shame as a strength rather than a weakness can be helpful. If people are feeling shame, it means they understand that harm has been caused and that they care. If they didn't feel shame, they wouldn't care.

When working with people who have caused harm, taking a caring, curious and open approach can reduce defensiveness and can be a way to model respectful behaviours.

Creating a safe space for people can help them feel more comfortable being vulnerable.

Some people are concerned that creating a safe, supportive environment can be seen as condoning the person's behaviour or minimising the experience of the victim-survivor. They may also have concerns that shame may simply be part of the cycle of abuse and by acknowledging it, we are enabling the cycle to continue. However, to break any cycle of violence or abuse, people need to feel motivated, engaged and hopeful. And also held to account. Acknowledging and engaging with shame is a powerful way of supporting people to take responsibility and change their behaviour.

These conversations require skill and preparation as they are a balancing act between empathising with the pain the person is experiencing and holding them accountable for the harm they have caused. The balancing act is described by Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy as multi-directed partiality (Goldenthal, P. (1996). *Doing Contextual Therapy: an integrated Model for Working with Individuals, Couples and Families*. New York: WW Norton). The trick is often to get behind the defensiveness and to hear the vulnerability of the person, acknowledging the difficulties they have faced, while simultaneously holding accountability and protecting the victim-survivor.

Helping people acknowledge their values and ethics can really help them face their shame. Here are a few questions you could ask:

- What is important to you?
- How would you like your children to describe you to their friends?
- How would you like your friends to describe you?
- What do you value most in life?

From here, you can have a conversation about whether they are living in a way that aligns with their values. This encourages them to externalise their behaviour and creates a space for them to reimagining what their sense of self could look like. It also gives them a way forward.

In this way we can support people to face their shame, which can help motivate them to take responsibility for the harm that has been caused, work towards changing their behaviours and start to make amends.

It is important to consider the ethical and political position of shame, the following questions can help when you are supporting someone facing their feelings of shame:

- What does it say about the person that they can face up to the harm?
- How do you think it might feel for them to face the harm?
- What does it mean that they are taking responsibility for the harm and not leaving it for others to worry about?
- What changes do you notice in their body language or physiology when they are talking about shame?

It is worth noting that sometimes the more empathy and insight a person who has caused harm gains, the more shame they feel, as they understand how their behaviour has impacted on others. As a result, supporting people to explore shame may involve many ups and downs.

A note on language: You may have noticed that we are using 'people who have caused harm' rather than 'perpetrator' or 'offender'. We have chosen to do this for a few reasons:

- Terms like 'perpetrator' or 'offender' link a person's identity to their behaviour and this can reduce hope for change. Using language that distinguishes between the person and their behaviour affirms that change is possible.
- Separating the person from their behaviours encourages them to explore ways they can control or modify their behaviour. It also suggests that they are responsible for their behaviour and can make different choices regarding how they behave.

- By distinguishing between a person and their behaviour, we can also create a space to talk about whether their behaviour aligns with their values and beliefs.

## HOW TO TALK ABOUT SHAME WITHOUT SHAMING?

As shame thrives on not being talked about, one of the most effective ways to reduce the shame is to acknowledge and explore it. It is important to understand our own shame triggers so that when we feel shame rising, we have a plan for managing these feelings so they don't impact on the person or people we are working with. Understanding our own shame also allows us to empathise with other people who are exploring their feelings of shame.

The *Exploring Shame* cards are designed to enable people to share their experiences in a way that feels right for them. Encourage people to play with the cards, talk about their responses, notice which cards resonate and which don't. By supporting people to lead the conversation, we can reduce the likelihood of increasing feelings of shame.

## FINDING A WAY FORWARD

Here are a few tips for working with people around shame:

**Develop a sense of safety** - Shame triggers the five 'f's - fight/flight/freeze/flop/be-friend. For people to talk about shame they need to feel safe to be vulnerable and exposed. When you know you are likely to be having a conversation about shame, make sure the space feels welcoming, you are unlikely to be interrupted, you are calm and focussed, and it is a good time for the person.

**Come from a place of empathy and curiosity** - To reduce people's anxiety, build rapport by asking open, curious questions and being genuinely interested in their responses. This will help them to feel calm and stay engaged. People will immediately be able to sense if you are being judgmental, which is likely to make them feel threatened and heighten their anxiety. One way to reduce the risk of this happening is to

explore your own beliefs and shame triggers before the conversation so you are able to hold a space of acceptance and exploration.

**Externalise the shame** - As shame is often tied into a person's sense of identity, a great way to work with shame is to invite people to imagine that it is a separate entity. You might ask them to talk about what it looks like, sounds like (the voice of shame), what it eats, where it lives, when it comes out and when is it quiet, who it admires and who it hates. By imagining it as something external, it is easier to have a conversation about how to make it smaller or reduce its power. (Caution: be wary if the person moves into the territory of 'the shame made me do it'. If this happens, ask them to consider who is responsible for the behaviour caused by the shame?)

**Reframe the shame** - To support people to move through their shame, help them to connect with it and see it as a positive thing, reframe shame. Feeling shame indicates that they care, they are empathetic and they want to treat other people with respect and dignity. Shame shows that a person has a strong moral compass and clear values. In this way, shame can be seen as something positive and useful.

**Place the shame where it belongs** - If a person has experienced harm and they are feeling shame, encourage them to think about where the shame belongs. It is not their shame. How can they put the shame back where it belongs?

**Take back your power** - Shame can undermine a person's whole sense of identity. As shame is so secretive and corrosive, it tends to fester and grow without us noticing. Naming, acknowledging, exploring and contextualising shame can help give people perspective and insight. This can be empowering and can help people free themselves from its hold over their lives and identity.

# Purpose and structure of the card set

## THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS

There is something powerful about being able to accurately name something—it becomes more accessible and communicable; something that can be witnessed, examined, and 'externalised'. This can help create more space between the problem and the person so that the problem can be explored in more meaningful and nuanced ways.

Having conversations about shame can be challenging and uncomfortable. Sometimes people may avoid these conversations, fearing how the person may react or worrying that they will make the situation worse. These cards are designed to encourage respectful and constructive conversations.

## WHO ARE THE CARDS FOR?

*Exploring Shame* has been designed to be used by anyone. They are great for counsellors, psychologists, social workers, teachers and trainers, and other professionals working in the human services and education sectors. They are primarily aimed at adults and young people.

The cards can be used in either one-on-one settings with a counsellor or social worker and a client, or in group settings like classrooms, universities, or professional development for social workers, psychologists, counsellors and other allied health professionals.

Equally they could be used by individuals or families to talk about feelings of shame, embarrassment, regret or other emotions. See our suggestions for creating safe spaces for conversations on page 25.

## TOPICS COVERED IN THE CARDS

Each of the 30 cards has an image and one or two words on the front, and two prompting questions on the back. The words on the front of the cards name the various aspects and manifestations of shame. They include words like Addiction, Honesty, Body, Culture, Fairness, Forgiveness, Relationships and Hope.

The questions on the back can be used to prompt the conversation further. While people may choose to only focus on the image and words on the front (and that is fine), the questions can support the conversation to be more nuanced and reflective. While the cards have a focus on healing, they also don't shy away from naming the more challenging aspects of shame.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The *Exploring Shame* cards include a series of photographs, combined with illustrative elements that are designed to enhance the emotional resonance of the images. Each image contains a human element—a face, a hand, a silhouette, a group of people—to encourage people to think about how shame manifests in the body, in relationships and in communities.

Designer, Marylouise Brammer, uses a range of graphical techniques to create a sense of movement and texture, and to draw the viewer's attention to body sensations, thinking patterns and interactions between people in the cards.

The cards include people of different ages, cultures, identities and backgrounds, enabling as many people as possible to engage with them. They also include a mix of images, some that depict powerful emotional states and some that reflect hope, healing and connection.

## THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES USED TO DEVELOP THE CARDS

The cards draw strongly on the work of Alan Jenkins, narrative therapy, family systems approaches and the work of researchers like Brené Brown.

They are also heavily influenced by strengths-based and solution-focused approaches to practice, approaches that believe people have the capacity to change and grow.

# Creating safe spaces for conversations

As most social workers, counsellors and teachers know, simple tools can be surprisingly powerful. This is something to take into careful consideration when using *Exploring Shame* since this resource is designed to encourage reflection and conversation about people's experiences, attitudes and emotions. These topics go to the heart of our identity, our relationships and the values, beliefs and stories that shape us.

Talking about shame can touch on buried thoughts and feelings that are very sensitive and painful. As such, conversations should be entered into carefully. The person themselves should always be able to determine what they want to discuss and when is the most appropriate time. Be respectful by not making assumptions, inferences or drawing conclusions – let the person lead the conversation.

Remember, whenever you are using any card set with people, ask yourself:

- Am I familiar enough with the cards?
- Is this the right time? Have we got enough time?
- How will I ensure that people feel as safe and supported as possible if powerful emotions surface?

- How will I ensure that people from diverse backgrounds and with different gender identities feel as respected as possible?
- What will I do if I am triggered by the cards or conversation?
- What is my 'Plan B'?
- How will I follow up with people after the conversation?

It is important that as much as possible, the person makes their own choices, does their own sorting and articulates their own meaning. It may be useful to sit in silence for a while, giving valuable time for the person to reflect on the significance of the pictures and words before they speak.

If you are using the *Exploring Shame* cards in a group setting, you are warmly encouraged to view the free video 'Creating Safe Spaces for Conversations' on our website. This video contains expanded material for facilitators on creating respectful conversations, especially in groups.

**If you believe a person is unsafe, get support for them immediately. See Emergency and Support Services at the end of this booklet.**

# Thumbnails and uses for each card

In this section you will find thumbnail images of all 30 cards, with information about the purpose of each card. This information will naturally suggest many activities and questions that can be used with each card.

Some of the descriptions below include suggestions for cards that might naturally pair together. Other descriptions include additional questions you might use to expand the conversation.



## 1. Acceptance

There are many things we can't change in the world, including the past. Acceptance isn't about forgiveness or minimising what happened - it is about acknowledging the reality of a situation so that we can find a constructive and hopeful way forward. Pair with Letting Go or The Past.



## 2. Addiction

People experiencing an addiction may feel shame for not being able to overcome the addiction, its impact on family and friends or for their behaviour when in the grips of the addiction. It is common for people to experience addiction, and shame, cycles. Use this card to talk about the impact of addiction and how feelings of shame can hinder recovery.



## 3. Alone

One of the almost universal features of shame is that it makes us feel alone and isolated. When shame isn't named and acknowledged, it tends to grow. It also tends to make us push others away to protect its secrets and story. Could be paired with Connection, Relationships or Hope.



## 4. Anger

It is not uncommon for people to project their shame onto others. Often unacknowledged or unexpressed shame manifests as anger. Use this card to externalise both the shame and the anger. What does the shame look like? Why is it so angry?



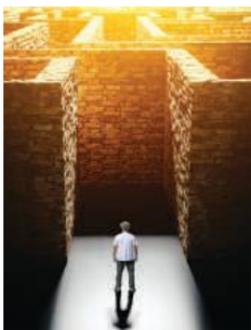
## 5. Apology

Talking about what a genuine apology might look like can be valuable, even if it never happens. An apology may include things like acknowledgement, empathy or restitution. When someone has caused harm, an apology may be a way of reducing shame or guilt for them. But it can also be a way to discuss what redress might look like. What do they think the other person may need for an apology to feel genuine and meaningful?



## 6. Blame

Another common way that people project unacknowledged shame is to blame others. This may include distorting versions of events. The key is trying to understand the cognitive distortions and why they are occurring. Would someone else give the same account of those events? How else could those events be interpreted? Could be paired with Denial or Responsibility.



## 7. Blocks

Shame can leave people feeling vulnerable, scared and exposed. As a result, people often bury or block feelings of shame rather than face them. Shame can also stop us from engaging in the world or connecting with others. Use this card to talk about how feelings of shame can limit us and stop us being who we would like to be.



## 8. Body

Shame manifests in a very physical way—blushing, tight chest, dry mouth. Use this card to talk about how to recognise shame by noticing the signals our body gives us. It can also be used to talk about negative self-talk and body shame. Could be paired with Self-worth, Patterns or Vulnerability.



## 9. Connection

Shame can be isolating so supporting people to reconnect with others can be important. For victim-survivors, it could be normalising their experiences by connecting with people who have had similar experiences. For others, it might be sharing their story with supportive family or friends. How has shame stopped you connecting?



## 10. Courage

It takes a lot of courage to face up to feelings of shame as shame can leave people feeling vulnerable and exposed. While shame is often experienced as weakness, talking about it can reframe it as a strength, an act of courage. Could be paired with Freedom or Letting Go.



## 11. Culture

Every culture has different versions of what is unacceptable or shameful. Additionally, some people feel ashamed or have been made to feel ashamed because of their culture. Use this card to explore how a person's culture may be linked to feelings of shame. Could be paired with Patterns or The Past.



## 12. Denial

People may not acknowledge the harm that has been caused (perpetrator or victim). They may experience a vague, free-floating sense of shame that they can't, or are unwilling, to link to specific events or experiences, or they may avoid facing up to the pain. Could be paired with Honesty, Responsibility or Courage.



## 13. Fairness

People who have experienced harm often want justice. However, justice may or may not happen, and even if it does, it may not lead to healing. Use this card to talk about what justice or redress might look like and how the person could move forward, even if justice doesn't happen. Could be paired with Apology, Blame or Letting Go.



## 14. Freedom

People who have caused harm often use shame to control others. Shame can feel all-encompassing and may stop us being able to imagine what freedom looks like. Use this card to talk about how to take back power and control, strategies for releasing shame, social justice and freedom from oppression. Could be paired with Hope or Letting Go.



## 15. The Future

Creating a future picture where shame is absent or greatly reduced can be powerful. Invite people to imagine they are already in that future now. What do they notice? What do other people notice about them? How do they feel? Could be paired with The Past, Letting Go or Hope.



## 16. Gender

Women, men and people of other genders may experience shame for different reasons. Sometimes people have been made to feel ashamed of their gender identity—this is a common experience for people who are non-binary or gender fluid. Use this card to talk about gender stereotypes, gender identity and how shame and gender may be linked. Could be paired with Body, Safety or Self-worth.



## 17. Guilt

Shame and guilt are often confused. Shame is about who we are, and guilt is about behaviour. Guilt can act as motivation to engage with shame, and as a defence mechanism to avoid shame. Use this card to explore guilt and how it's being used. If you feel bad about what has happened, what does that say about you?



## 18. Honesty

Shame doesn't want its story shared so it tries to keep us silent. If someone has experienced harm, they may keep their experiences secret in an attempt to protect themselves. Whether someone has been harmed or has caused harm, honesty is fundamental. You might ask, how has the shame stopped you from being honest? Could be paired with Denial, Responsibility or Vulnerability.



## 19. Hope

When people are in a state of shame, it can be difficult for them to see their strengths, capacities and options. Hope can be a powerful motivator of change. Invite people to imagine a positive future picture. Could be paired with Blocks, Letting Go or The Future.



## 20. Letting go

Shame can absorb a lot of our energy. It can feel overwhelming and endless. Often people have not considered that they can actually let go of those feelings. Sometimes, people who have experienced harm also hold onto shame that belongs to the perpetrator, believing it is their own shame. Invite people to externalise their shame, then visualise themselves letting it go.



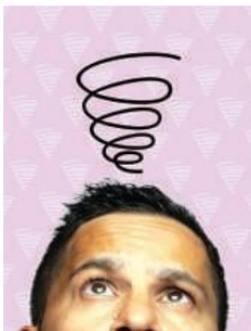
## 21. Pain

Pain and shame go hand-in-hand as shame goes to the heart of who we are. Painful memories or experiences are often the source of our shame. Use this card to talk about how pain can be managed in unhealthy or healthy ways. Could be paired with Alone, Addiction or The Past.



## 22. The Past

Often people minimise past trauma and feel they should be able to move on. Use this card to talk about how early trauma or experiences of oppression can impact on a person's life and decision-making in the present. Could be paired with Culture, Relationships or Patterns.



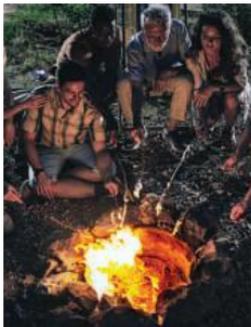
### 23. Patterns

Shame is often cyclic and certain events or experiences can trigger shame spirals. It can also be passed on in communities via community norms and expectations. Addiction and family violence cycles usually involve periods of deep shame. Use this card to talk about patterns or cycles of shame in families, different cultures, religions, communities or individual shame patterns.



### 24. Regret

For people who've caused harm, feeling regret can be an important step towards change. However, the more we have insight into the pain caused by our actions, the more shame we may experience. People who've experienced harm may also feel regret in the form of survivor guilt or they may ask themselves what they could have done differently. Could be paired with Responsibility or Courage.



### 25. Relationships

Shame disconnects people from those they care about. Strong healthy relationships with family, friends or community are important for mental wellbeing. Support people to reflect on which relationships in their lives are healthy and supportive and which ones may be exacerbating feelings of shame. How could you step back from unhelpful relationships?



## 26. Responsibility

This card should never be used punitively. Supporting a person who has caused harm to take responsibility for their actions requires a lot of empathy. Start by acknowledging that taking responsibility requires courage. People who've experienced harm may blame themselves so it can be helpful to invite them to reflect on who should take responsibility for the pain caused.



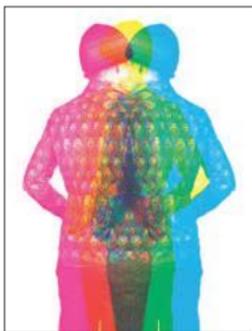
## 27. Safety

You could start with this card as a way of talking about creating a safe space in which to talk about shame. Use the card to talk about psychological safety and physical safety. What do we need to put in place for you to feel safe to talk about your experiences?



## 28. Self-worth

Shame chips away at self-worth and often manifests in the form of negative self-talk or a strong inner-critic. People who have been harmed often have a low sense of self-worth or may have been controlled with shame. Use this card to talk about people's strengths, personal qualities and other positive things in their lives.



## 29. Sexuality

Many LGBTIQ+ people have been made to feel shame in relation to their sexuality. While this is changing, people may still carry past shame, plus experiences of discrimination and violence are still common. In family violence, sex and sexuality can be used as a weapon or form of control. People who have experienced rape or sexual abuse may also have feelings of shame attached to sexuality.



## 30. Vulnerability

It may feel counterintuitive but vulnerability can actually be one of the antidotes to shame. Allowing ourselves to feel exposed and vulnerable by sharing our shame stories helps to reduce their power over us. Being vulnerable can feel like weakness but it actually takes incredible courage to embrace the vulnerability required to confront shame. Could be paired with Honesty or Pain.

# More ideas for using the cards

The previous section features thumbnails and comments about the purpose of each card. This information will very naturally suggest ideas for the kinds of conversations and activities that you can build around each individual card.

This section of the booklet contains lots more ideas for using the cards. These ideas are not 'instructions'; they are suggestions for activities you may wish to use. Please adapt these ideas to your style as a practitioner or facilitator, and more importantly, to the needs of the person or people who will be using the cards.

Some of the activities presented in this section may not be appropriate for particular people, circumstances or settings. Always be guided by your own discernment and practice experience, and that of respected and experienced colleagues. With a small tweak from you (or a complete re-vamp) an activity may work so much better than implementing it exactly as presented in this booklet.

In addition, it is part of 'reflective practice' and the ongoing professional and personal development of any practitioner to be open to the feedback given by participants during or after the activities. Their comments will help you adjust the activities for next time.

And finally, please make sure you have read the section on page 25 about creating safe spaces for having conversations before you use the cards with others.

## WHEN SHOULD I INTRODUCE THE CARDS?

A resource introduced at the right time can transform the conversation. It can support people to describe their situation very quickly. It can open up fresh insights and ways forward in a relatively short space of time.

It is always important to listen to the person as they share their story. If introducing a card set might interrupt that flow, then it is best not to introduce it at that point. Always be guided by the person sitting in front of you and your own sense of what is happening for them in the moment.

The more you experiment with using the cards, perhaps in simple, small ways to begin with, the more confident you will become with the various activities, and the more tuned in you are likely to become about the time and place to introduce a tool.

As mentioned earlier, it is respectful to seek the person's or group's permission to introduce the resource. It is important to make it genuinely possible for them to say no from the start, or to bail out of using the cards at any point.

It is often advisable to establish a connection and get to know the person's situation a little first before introducing a card set in a one-on-one situation. Moments when the conversation seems to be stuck or stalled can be great opportunities to introduce a card set.

If you think you would like to have a conversation with someone using the cards, you might prepare a couple of potential activities you could introduce if the right opportunity arises. Trust your own judgement about whether to try them or not.

If you do decide to introduce the cards into the conversation, let participants know that it is ok not to have a response to a particular card. Simply invite the person to choose another card.

There is an endless variety of activities you can built around the cards. All of these will fall into two broad methods: 'Deliberate selection' or 'Random choice'.

## DELIBERATE SELECTION

This method involves spreading the cards out on a table or other flat surface and inviting an individual (or group) to look them over and make a selection based on a question or other prompt. Some activities may involve picking more than one card—or even a series of cards.

The cards can also be displayed on a wall, window or noticeboard. Spreading the cards out on the floor is another possibility. People can get a bird's eye view of the cards, walk around them or follow a line or meandering path of cards. If you are inviting people to pick up a card from the floor, take care that everyone involved can bend down comfortably.

Activities that involve movement such as walking or shuffling cards can open up different pathways to learning, particularly for those who favour a kinaesthetic learning style.

## RANDOM CHOICE

Activities using random choice can take the pressure off and lighten the mood. It is amazing how meaningful and poignant random selections can be for people. Time and again people see significance in the cards they have randomly chosen. Random choice activities can also open up unexpected learning and fresh insight because people interact with cards they may not have chosen deliberately.

Here are some random choice ways of getting the activities started:

- Place all the cards in a bag or container and invite participant/s to pick a card from the 'lucky dip'. It is useful to give people the option to put a card back and chose another randomly, if they wish. This helps to keep people safe because it allows the person to reject a card they may not want to speak about at this time.
- Put the deck of cards in front of the person and ask them to 'cut' the deck wherever feels right. Take the top card of the cut deck.
- Shuffle and deal out three random cards to the person or each person in the group.

If you are working with a group you may want to try one of the following:

- Place a card randomly on each person's seat before they enter the room.
- Form pairs. Each participant randomly selects a card for the other.

Once people have a card or cards, invite them to reflect on what the card means to them. Alternatively, use any of the many questions in the activities that follow.

### **STARTING WITH A SPREAD OF ALL THE CARDS**

As a simple starting point for a deliberate selection activity, you may wish to spread all the cards out on a table, image side up, and invite people to look them over. Then you can build the conversation with questions like:

- If you are comfortable, pick one or more cards that you can use to describe what you are experiencing at the moment.
- Pick a card that catches your attention or stands out for any reason.
- What drew your attention to this card?
- What does this card mean to you?
- Pick a card that shows a change you have made in your life recently.
- What brought about this change?
- Pick a card that shows something you would like to change.
- Pick a card that represents something you don't like to talk about.
- Pick a card that represents something you would like more of.
- Pick a card that represents something you would like less of.
- Which cards stand out most for you today or at this time in your life? Why?
- Which cards reflect challenges that you are experiencing at the moment?

- Which cards reflect strengths you admire?
- Is there a card that represents something that was important to you once, but is less so now?
- Which cards would you like to focus on for the next couple of days/weeks/months?

### **SORTING CARDS INTO PAIRS OR GROUPS**

There are many cards in *Exploring Shame* that could be paired or grouped together. Pairing or grouping cards can encourage people to expand their thinking about a topic. There are no right or wrong pairings and everyone's interpretation of the cards is valid. You may wish to ask participants questions like:

- Can you choose two cards you think complement each other?
- How are they related?
- Can you choose two cards you think have opposite meanings?
- How are they different?
- Do you experience both of these opposites?
- When you are experiencing each one, what thoughts are you thinking?
- What causes your experience to shift from one to the other?
- Do you experience one of these more now than you used to?
- Choose one card that represents where you are now and one that represents where you would like to be.
- Find all the cards that sum up what shame looks like to you.
- Find all the cards that represent things that would help you move forward.

## CREATIVE WAYS TO USE THE CARDS

There are also many creative ways to use the cards, including:

- Storytelling
  - Choose three cards that represent the beginning, middle and end of a story. Share the story with someone else or write a paragraph describing what happens in the story.
  - Choose two cards randomly and use them to write a story.
- Create your own card:
  - What does shame look like to you? What colours and textures does it have? How does it move?
  - Choose a word from one of the cards that resonates for you and draw your own image.
- Choose your favourite image. Write down a list of words to describe the image. Now choose an image that leaves you feeling uncomfortable and do the same.
- Act out the words on the cards. What does your body do? What do you feel? What are you thinking? Imagine the card is a character. Speak as if you are that character.

## GOALS, PLANS AND NEXT STEPS

Here are some questions you can use for supporting people to work on their goals, plans and next steps.

- Is there one card (or 2 or 3) that represents something you would really like to work towards? Why?
- What is one step you could take today?
- Who do you know who might help you take this step?
- How will you know when you have reached your goal?
- What will you notice?
- What might others notice?

- Thinking of something that is about to happen in your life, which three cards do you think will be of most value to keep in mind?
- Can you create your own card that represents a key goal in your life? What image will you choose? What words will you include?
- What do you think will be key milestones and steps along the way towards your goal?
- What do you imagine you will be doing, thinking and feeling when you achieve this goal?

# Pointers for specific settings

The previous section outlined a wide range of ideas for using the cards. We hope that health practitioners, social workers, teachers, facilitators, trainers, counsellors, psychologists and parents will find these suggestions useful. As mentioned earlier, feel free to adapt or modify these activities to the needs of the people you are working alongside. In addition, we would like to offer the following pointers and ideas related to specific settings.

## **TALKING ABOUT TRAUMA IN THERAPEUTIC SETTINGS**

As shame is such a hidden, sensitive and secretive emotion, it can be difficult to know how to approach it in a therapeutic setting. One of the reasons the cards were created was to provide opportunities for practitioners to explore the impacts and complexities of shame with people in supportive, non-threatening and respectful ways.

Most of the suggested activities above can be used in a therapeutic setting. Here are a few more ideas.

One way to create safety is to normalise the person's feelings. You might talk about the fact that many people who have had similar experiences have talked about feeling shame. You might say something like, 'Other people who have faced trauma often talk about how they have a sense of shame, even though they know it wasn't their fault. They often find it useful to name and explore those feelings. How do you feel about that?'

From here, you could either ask them to pick out a card which resonates for them or ask them to pick a card or cards that best describes shame.

Another gentle way to start a conversation is to invite people to imagine shame as a character. You could then ask:

- What cards would the shame character choose to describe itself?
- What cards make the shame character feel uncomfortable?
- Are there any cards that make the shame character feel angry?
- Are there any cards that make the shame character feel hopeful?
- What cards might make the shame character shrink?
- What cards might make the shame character get bigger?
- What does the shame character value?
- Are there any cards that help the shame character feel safe?

## FAMILY THERAPY

Shame can impact every member of a family. One person's experiences can create feelings of shame in other family members. Equally, shame can be passed down in families and communities, so it can be worth exploring the ways in which shame has shaped the family dynamic.

As shame can be an isolating experience, talking about shame as a family can help break down barriers and build a sense of connection, understanding and empathy. Sharing stories challenges the secrecy that so often accompanies shame—this can be transformative in and of itself.

If you are working with shame in a family, you might ask:

- What do they, as a family, hope to get out of the conversation?
- What would they like the conversation to focus on in particular?
- Ask each person to randomly choose a card and ask them to describe what it means to them.
- Ask each person to choose a card that best describes what they are thinking about today.
- Are there any cards that are particularly relevant for your family?
- Which cards represent things you would like more of in your family?

- Which cards represent things you wish you could talk about?
- Pick a card that represents the strengths that you've heard in what other family members have described.

Another great way to introduce the cards with a family is to use circular questions. Circular questions can be a useful way to support different family members to understand how their experience of shame is the same or different to other family members. Examples of circular questions using the cards could be:

- Family member A, if I were to ask family member B what card would resonate with family member C, what card do you think family member B would choose?
- Family member B, what do you think about the card family member A has chosen for you?
- Family member C, how is this for you hearing family members A and B talking about the card that was chosen for you?

### WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAUSED HARM

When people have caused harm and they are not ready to acknowledge that harm, it can be useful to use an indirect approach when talking about shame. One way to do this is to use a 'same but different' scenario. To do this, share a scenario that is similar to the situation of the person who has caused harm, with different details.

This might involve changing some minor details like names of the characters, the places where the harm was caused, ages etc. Make sure the behaviour is the same.

If possible, include characters that represent everyone involved—family members, friends, community members etc. This creates opportunities to look at the situation from different perspectives as the cards can be used to explore how each character might be viewing the situation and carrying shame.

You might ask the person to:

- Pick a card for each character.
- Which characters are feeling shame?
- Which cards describe something that would help?

When the person is facing up to their behaviours and the harm they have caused, the cards could be introduced as a way to explore the shame in a non-judgemental way:

- Choose a card that summarises what is going on right now.
- Choose a card that represents things that get in the way of the behaviour changing.
- Are there any cards that would help acknowledge the pain that has been caused?
- What might the person who has been harmed be feeling?

## SCHOOLS

Feelings of shame can be heightened as children and young adults start to compare themselves to others. As children grow, they become more aware of what is considered normal—if their experiences and feelings don't fit into this version of 'normal', this may result in feelings of shame.

Shame underpins many mental health issues. As mental health issues often emerge in the teenage years, this is an ideal resource for supporting conversations about mental health in schools. We may use the cards to talk about things like the impact of the media—including social media—on our identity, negative self-talk, perfectionism, idealised images of attractiveness and gender stereotypes, and how this feeds into feelings of shame. The cards can also be used in educating students about social and emotional literacy—this can include recognising the symptoms of shame and how to manage these feelings.

In school settings the cards can be a valuable tool:

- as part of the curriculum related to health and wellbeing, sociology and psychology
- in English classes as inspiration for creative writing, dialogues, character profiles
- in art classes as inspiration for collages, paintings and drawings
- in sessions or workshops related to self-esteem and wellbeing
- in sessions with school counsellors and wellbeing staff.
- in staff meetings or professional development sessions to help staff build their understanding of shame, how it presents in students and how to manage it.

Leave a set on a table or shelf in a common area or library for students, staff or parents to find.

If using in a school setting, the cards can be used to talk broadly about shame and the different ways that shame manifests. One activity to try would be to divide the class into small groups. Give each group three cards and ask them to respond to the questions on the back of the cards. Invite them to consider how these concepts and questions relate to the theme of shame.

To introduce a game element, each group could have the option of 'phoning a friend' from another group, using a lifeline (the facilitator) or calling on the brains trust (the whole class) if they get stuck.

At the end of the session, invite the students to reflect on what they have learnt about shame and invite them to suggest some things they could do at school to reduce experiences of shame for students.

Some of these cards could be triggering so make sure there are supports for students during and after the session. Feel free to watch our free video 'Creating Safe Spaces for Conversations' on our website to get some ideas on how to support students when you are having conversations that may be challenging.

## SUPERVISION

The *Exploring Shame* cards are ideal for use in supervision, particularly in relation to reflective practice and self-care.

In human services and education settings, we are constantly exposed to stories that can be distressing or triggering. If we don't reflect on our responses and feelings, we may inadvertently bring our own experiences of shame to our work with people. Additionally, if we are unable to recognise our own shame responses, we may carry these feelings and emotions into our personal lives.

When using the cards in supervision, you may ask questions like:

- When thinking about this situation, which card jumps out at you?
- Which card says something about your response to the situation?
- Which card represents something that could be a trigger for you? How does your body tell you that you have been triggered? What does your mind do?
- What strategies can you use to manage these feelings?
- Choose three cards that sum up your feelings about the situation. Does this situation remind you of another story or experience? Whose story is this?

Understanding shame can help us to manage our emotions, debrief more effectively, support each other and work with clients in more effective ways.

# About the creators

## **The lead author**

**Michael Derby** is an accredited mental health social worker and clinical family therapist. He has worked for many years with children, young people and their families who have experienced significant trauma including family violence, sexual abuse, neglect and physical abuse. He also has extensive experience working with parents who have caused harm to their partners and children, as well as children and young people who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours.

## **The development team**

Joining Michael in the development and writing of the cards and booklet were Sue King-Smith and Karen Bedford.

**Sue King-Smith** is the senior editor and writer at Innovative Resources with a background in online course creation, managing social work services for children and families, writing, lecturing, research and community development.

**Karen Bedford** was the managing editor at Innovative Resources and has a background in writing for therapeutic purpose, resource creation, education, counselling psychology, coaching and group facilitation.

## The publisher

Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, a community services organisation providing child, youth and family services. We publish card sets, stickers, digital and tactile materials to enrich conversations about feelings, strengths, relationships, values and goals. Our resources are for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, ability or age. They are used by counsellors, educators, social workers, mentors, managers and parents. We also offer 'strengths approach' training and 'tools' workshops, both online and in-person.

[www.innovativeresources.org](http://www.innovativeresources.org)

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## EMERGENCY AND SUPPORT SERVICES (IN AUSTRALIA)

ORGANISATION	SERVICE PROVIDED	CONTACT DETAILS
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	Works to address issues associated with depression, anxiety disorders and related mental disorders, and to reduce associated stigma.	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a> Phone: 1300 22 4636 Available 24/7. Chat online (3pm to midnight). Available every day. Email response within 24 hours. Online forums/chat groups available.
<b>headspace</b>	Provides free online and telephone support and counselling to young people aged 12–25, and their families and friends.	<a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a> Visit a headspace Centre throughout Australia. Phone: 1800 650 890 (9am – 1am AEST). Available every day. Chat online or email (9am – 1am AEST). Available every day.
<b>Lifeline</b>	Provides all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to online, phone and face-to-face crisis support and suicide prevention services.	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a> Phone: 13 11 14 Available 24/7.
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	Provides free, private and confidential phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.	<a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a> Phone: 1800 55 1800 Available 24/7.



*'...a useful and valuable asset for counsellors and educators.'*

Alan Jenkins

Shame is present in almost every experience of trauma, mental illness, disempowerment and exclusion. It is a difficult emotion to face and when we try to avoid it, shame grows.

The 30 evocative, photo-based cards in *Exploring Shame* can be used to gently name, unpack and work with feelings of shame. They are designed to open up constructive, safe and respectful conversations about things people may prefer to keep hidden or things they don't like about themselves.

Use the *Exploring Shame* cards to talk about:

- how we can learn to recognise shame
- what shame feels like in the body
- how shame can be contagious
- our inner-critic or 'voice' of shame
- whether the shame is ours or someone else's
- how causing harm can generate feelings of shame.

Perfect for counsellors, social workers, psychologists, teachers and parents to use with adults and young people in one-on-one therapeutic conversations, groups or classrooms.

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