

RAFT

Resilience for
Advocates through
Foundational Training®

Building Blocks to Resiliency Series: Building Resilience to Shame

RAFT VIRTUAL TRAINING WORKBOOK



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ABOUT RAFT

RAFT supports organizations and advocates to cultivate human-centered workspaces through foundational wellness practices, resources, and training to build resilience and promote a healthier gender-based violence advocacy ecosystem.

VIRTUAL TRAINING OBJECTIVES

In this 2-hour workshop you will learn how to identify and deal with shame to improve your well-being and build resilience.

You will:

- ★ Identify Triggers and Sources of Shame
- ★ Practice Critical Awareness
- ★ Understand the Difference between Shame and Guilt
- ★ Name Your Trusted Network

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Resilience Definition

According to the American Psychological Association, Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

While these adverse events are certainly painful and difficult, they do not have to determine the outcome of your life. There are many aspects of your life you can control, modify, and grow with. That is the role of resilience. Becoming more resilient not only helps you get through difficult circumstances, but it also empowers you to grow and even improve your life along the way.

Understanding resilience as a practical process that involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions, means that anyone can learn to develop resilience.

Reflection:

Using the definition of resilience, what is a light to medium story of when you were resilient and adapted in a challenging situation?

Example: I had to miss a full workday to stay home sick. The whole time I thought about what I was missing at the office. I still don't feel fully rested, but I've received multiple emails and text messages from my supervisor/coworkers needing my help at work. In some cases, I would call back immediately and even try to work from home, but this time, I'm taking off tomorrow too. This is my commitment to taking care of my health.

The Difference Between Shame and Guilt

Dr. Brene Brown, research professor and expert leader in the study of courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy, provides the following definitions:

Shame:

Shame is an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance, love, and belonging. Shame is a fear of disconnection.

Shame says, "I am bad."

Guilt:

Guilt is a remorseful awareness of having done something wrong. Guilt is uncomfortable but helpful as you can heal from and change when you do something bad by apologizing, communicating, and using empathy.

Guilt says, "I have done something bad."

The difference between shame and guilt is a difference between "being" something negative and "doing" something negative.

"I am a mistake" is shame.

"I made a mistake" is guilt.

Reflection:

How are feelings of guilt or shame affecting you uniquely right now?

Example: I am working from home right now, but my partner is working on location. Even though I am working hard all day I feel like I am lazy because I am not doing more around the house. I feel like I am a bad partner.

Building Shame Resilience

Shame Resilience Definition

According to Dr. Brene Brown, we cannot become resistant to shame or get rid of it all together, but we can develop shame resilience: The ability to recognize shame when we experience it and move through it in a constructive way that allows us to maintain our authenticity and grow from our experiences. In the process of consciously moving through our shame, we can build stronger and more meaningful connections with the people in our lives.

Empathy is the strongest antidote for shame. Empathy is the ability to understand, be aware of, be sensitive to, and vicariously experience the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another.

According to Dr. Brown, the opposite of experiencing shame is experiencing empathy. In her research, people with the highest levels of shame resilience were both givers and receivers of empathy.

Critical awareness

Defined as knowing why something exists, how it works, how our society is impacted by it, and who benefits from it. Critical awareness increases our personal power in three ways by giving you the ability to:

- ★ **Contextualize** – see the big picture.
- ★ **Normalize** – realize you are not alone or the only one.
- ★ **Demystify** – understand shame source and share with others.

To identify your shame triggers answer these questions:



I want to be perceived as:

Example: I want to be perceived as wise, loving, strong, intelligent.



I do not want to be perceived as:

Example: I do not want to be perceived as impatient, angry, out of control, boring.

What do these perceptions mean to you?

Why are they so unwanted?

Where did the messages that fuel these identities come from?

Activity:

Identify categories where you feel or experience shame. Who and what cause you to experience shame, and why do they cause shame?

Examples: parents, social groups, media, appearance, sexual preference, race, trauma

Who

What

Why

Identify Shame in Your Body



I physically feel shame in or on my:

Shame feels like:

I know I'm ashamed when I feel:



If I could taste shame, it would taste like:



If I could smell shame, it would smell like:



If I could touch shame, it would feel like:



If I could see shame, it would look like:

Contradictions of Placing shame

We often feel conflicting expectations of who we are supposed to be and what and how we are supposed to be. For example, look “hot” but effortlessly. Be confident in yourself, but don’t brag. Be in touch with your feelings, but don’t let your emotions bother others. Reaching all these goals is unattainable, which is frustrating. We can move through these feelings in a constructive way and maintain our authenticity by focusing our efforts on what we have control over – what we can change, modify, and grow with.

Building Your Trusted Network

Reaching out and experiencing empathy is an important part of shame resiliency. It requires that you choose to share your story and create change over separating and isolating yourself. In doing so, connections are built, and we start to see that we all experience challenges and need support. [When reaching out and sharing your story it is important to do so with someone you trust.](#) Who should you reach out to?

Journal:

To help you recognize who is in your trusted network write down:

Note: Some people may fit in more than one category.

Some people you love may not fit in any of these categories.

**Three People at
Work you can
connect with:**

**Three People
who share your
worldview:**

**Three People you
can call when
having a hard time:**