## GUILT vs SHAME

Guilt and shame are not the same. Understanding the differences between them can help us work through our negative self-judgments.

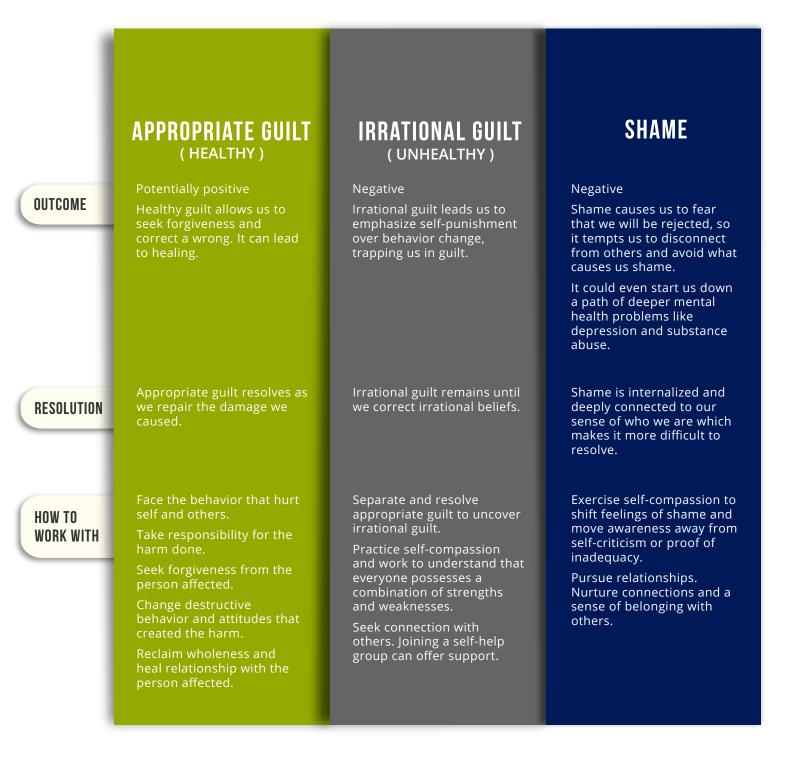
When we are better able to grasp the difference between healthy guilt, irrational guilt, and shame, we can begin to halt self-criticism and reject shame messages.

Guilt is often experienced when we act against our values. Shame, on the other hand, is a deeply held belief about our unworthiness as a person.

Here's a way to visualize it:

	APPROPRIATE GUILT	IRRATIONAL GUILT ( UNHEALTHY )	SHAME
DEFINITION	A feeling of psychological discomfort about something we've done that is objectively wrong	A feeling of psychological discomfort about something we've done against our irrationally high standards	An intensely painful feeling of being fundamentally flawed
EXAMPLE	Greg hit someone while driving drunk and feels guilty.	Sam forgot his coworker's name and feels terribly guilty about it.	Tommy feels as though he shouldn't take up space in the world and doesn't deserve to exist.
CAUSE OF FEELING	Actions or behaviors that break objective definitions of right and wrong	Actions or behaviors that break irrationally high standards	Innate sense of being worthless or inherently defective
WHEN IT DEVELOPS	We can experience guilt as early as age 3-6. (Developmentally, guilt is a more mature emotion than shame.)	We can experience guilt as early as age 3-6.	We can experience shame as early as 15 months. (That's why shame is more deeply wired in our brain and is more difficult to reverse.)
WHY WE FEEL THIS	We act in a way that breaks objective standards of moral behavior.	We act in a way that breaks irrational standards of behavior developed early in childhood to please adult.	We see ourselves as unworthy and deeply flawed.
	objective standards of	irrational standards of behavior developed early in	We see ourselves as unworthy and deeply

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