Shame in medical education

What it is, what it can cause, and why we need to be talking about it

**SHAME (n.)** Shame occurs when a person attributes a failure to reach a standard or ideal to something global and stable about themselves. Shamed individuals assess themselves to be globally flawed, deficient, and/or unworthy.

**SHAME** “I am bad”

**GUILT** “I did a bad thing”

**VS.**

Shame can be caused by events related to

- **Patient Care**
  - e.g. making a medical error, showing emotion to a patient

- **Learning**
  - e.g. answering questions wrong in public, undergoing remediation

- **Personal Goals**
  - e.g. failing to become chief resident

**These factors can contribute to shame**

- high focus on performance
- perfectionism
- difficulty with subjective standards
- fear of judgment

- comparisons to others
- diminished psychological & physical wellness

- disengagement from learning
- impaired empathy

**These negative effects can occur with shame**

**WE NEED TO...**

- **Recognize** shame in ourselves & others
- **Confront** shame through self-compassion & reaching out
- **Normalize** shame through honest & open conversation
- **Understand** shame through further study

**Sentinel Emotional Events:**

_The Nature, Triggers, and Effects of Shame Experiences in Medical Residents_

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