Shame/Guilt

Participant Workbook | Private reflection • Sharing is optional

Understanding the difference

Guilt often focuses on a behavior: “I did something I wish I had handled differently.” Shame often focuses on identity: “There is something wrong with me.” Both can feel intense. Feelings are signals to explore, not proof that a thought is true.

Reflection 1: Recognizing the message

Think of a low-intensity situation or use an imagined example. What happened? What did you tell yourself?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Which message was closer to your experience?

☐ “I did something I regret.” ☐ “I am a bad person.” ☐ Both ☐ Neither

What emotion, body sensation, or urge did you notice?

_____
_____
_____

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Responsibility Without Self-Condemnation

Step 1 — Describe the situation using observable facts.

_____
_____
_____

Step 2 — What part, if any, was within your control?

_____
_____
_____

Step 3 — What responsibility is NOT yours to carry?

_____
_____
_____

Step 4 — Is repair possible and safe? Consider apology, changed behavior, restitution, boundaries, or no contact.

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_____
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_____

Step 5 — Write a balanced, compassionate statement.

Example: “I can acknowledge what happened, learn, and take an appropriate next step without defining my worth by it.”

_____
_____
_____
_____

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Coping Skills & Support Plan

Choose one small action from each area that fits your circumstances.

Emotional awareness

How can I notice guilt or shame before reacting?

Self-compassion

What would I say to a friend in the same situation?

Resilience

What is one realistic step that supports my values?

Connection and support

Who can I safely speak with, or what professional resource can I use?

My next step within 24–48 hours

Remember

Accountability and dignity can coexist. You can learn from a decision without treating yourself as permanently defined by it. You may keep this worksheet private.

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