Title: Dams, barriers and beating yourself up: Shame in groupwork for addressing sexual offending

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Abstract

Shame is a powerful emotional experience embedded in prevailing social and cultural norms. It is the judgement or fear of judgement for who we are rather than what we have done. Braithwaite (1989) proposes shame can be re-integrative or stigmatising, where re-integrative shaming condemns the behaviour not the person, to enable their re-entry into society. Shame is relevant to sexual offending and its treatment, yet little research has explored how it is expressed or responded to in treatment programmes. We applied conversation analysis and discourse analysis to examine expressions of shame in 12 video recorded sessions of a court mandated groupwork programme addressing sexual offending. Both social workers and the other men on the programme distinguished between being a bad person (shame) and being responsible for a bad act (guilt) as a way to empathise with the individual, build motivation, instil hope and leverage optimism towards positive change. We demonstrate that shame constitutes topics, resources and actions drawn on to achieve the programme's rehabilitative aims, including separating the person from the behaviour, as per re-integrative shaming, demonstrating empathy and congruence, and motivating change. We discuss the paradoxes and dilemmas of shame for practice that addresses sexual offending.

Keywords: Shame, Sexual Offending, Groupwork, Conversation Analysis, Desistance, Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Shame has been examined across a range of disciplines, yet there is no consensus on its definition (McAlinden, 2007). Broadly, shame is a negative evaluation of the self as defective, following the perceived violation of a moral or normative standard (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame is inherently relational, as the self-condemnation arises from our imagination of how we are viewed or judged by others after a transgression (Every, 2013; Scheff, 2013). Guilt, in contrast to shame, is a negative judgment of the behaviour rather than the person (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame has been conceptualised as a powerful negative emotion, where people are in a debilitating state of extreme self-criticism and as a result withdraw from social interactions to avoid judgment or become defensive (e.g., blaming others), whereas guilt has been linked to motivating prosocial behaviours such as reparation and apology (Gilbert & Andrews, 1998; Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1991). We define shame as instances where people describe themselves, explicitly or implicitly, as *being* wrong due to previous behaviours, and differentiate this from guilt, where people feel *responsible* for wrongs of the past.

However, Gausel and Leach (2011) argued shame also motivates prosocial action, such as a desire to reform the moral self through contrition and restitution. The judgement or fear of judgement from others inhibits people from committing moral or social transgressions (Braithwaite, 1989; Goffman, 1963, 1959; McAlinden, 2007; Scheff, 2013; Cooley, 1922). Scheff (2013) proposed shame is the invisible internalisation of social punishment in modern society. Braithwaite (1989) suggested 'reintegrative shaming' occurs when a person's behaviour is censured but they are respected as an individual and supported to remain part of the group, reinforcing their membership in civil society and preventing them from adopting a 'deviant master status' (Becker, 1963). In contrast, disintegrative shaming, or stigmatisation,

may perpetuate criminal behaviour as people themselves are shamed, labelled and shunned, eroding their bonds to prevailing social norms.

Given that sexual offences, especially against children, are societally abhorrent, most people feel shame about behaving in this way (Proeve & Howells, 2002). Shame positions the self as having an unchangeable bad character, and can therefore be a barrier to treatment (Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & O'Brien, 2009). Contemporary policy, legal and popular approaches to risk posed by people who have committed sexual offences are largely disintegrative, as they label and stigmatise individuals (McAlinden, 2007), although there are some examples of reintegrative initiatives (e.g., Circles of Support and Accountability; Thomas & Thompson, 2014). Stigmatising risk management strategies and popular reactions to sexual offending inadvertently increase the risk of re-offending as they cut off opportunities for individuals to behave in a prosocial manner (e.g., the impact of disclosure of offences on employment, social isolation; McAlinden, 2007).

Shame leads to defensive actions where people will hide or externalise blame, increasing the risk of reoffending (Tangney, Stuewig, & Martinez, 2014). People may avoid treatment, disengage or engage only superficially (Marshall et al., 2009). Shame is related to other relevant features of risk of sexual offending, such as hostility (Hoglund & Nicholas, 1995) or anger (Tangney, 1995). Marshall et al (2009) and Proeve and Howells (2002) advocate for treatment to turn shame into guilt by separating the behaviour from the person. This would constitute reintegrative shaming, where practitioners censure the person's *behaviour* but accept their *self* in the public forum of a treatment programme for sexual offending. Research and theory on desistance from crime suggests the public recognition of the individual as a changed and moral person is important for moving away from offending, whereas shame, stigma and exclusion are barriers to change (Maruna, 2001).

In sum, shame is paradoxical. Practitioners are likely to discuss shame, as it is bound up with the nature of sexual offending and its treatment, yet it is difficult to pinpoint in interaction and people on such programmes may avoid discussing shame due to the painful emotions it evokes. In this study, we explore how shame is expressed and dealt with in a groupwork programme addressing sexual offending, drawing out the implications for rehabilitation and desistance from crime.

Methodology

This study focuses on interactions within a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending, 'Moving Forward: Making Changes', run by local authority criminal justice social work services in Scotland. This programme works with adult men (18+) convicted of sexual offences who are Court mandated to attend, either on a community sentence or post-release licence following imprisonment. On this rolling programme all clients undertake six essential modules (e.g. introduction to thinking styles, discovering needs) and some of seven optional modules (e.g. relationship skills, empathy/ perspective taking), based on individual assessment. These are completed at the client's pace, and as such clients do different modules concurrently to each other and there is no set number of sessions per client or group. Each group was made up of two facilitators and between four to six men convicted of sexual offences (eighteen men in total). Their offences included accessing indecent images of children, rape of adult women, incest, intent to abduct and sexually assault a child, and child sexual abuse. The facilitators were two men and three women; as such, the facilitator team per session varied between mixed and same gender.

Research participants gave written informed consent and identifying features have been anonymised. The authors' university and the relevant local authority gave ethical approval. The first author watched and orthographically transcribed twelve video recordings of the

groupwork sessions, from three separate groups, amounting to approximately 28 hours of interaction.. These video recordings were routinely collected for quality assurance and training purposes. The recordings in this study were chosen primarily due to their quality, i.e. audibility and visibility. Due to this selection strategy and the rolling nature of the programme, the data includes clients undertaking different programme modules.

As noted above, shame can be invisible and may be conflated with guilt in interaction given their close relationship. Expressions of shame, like other emotional expressions such as crying (Hepburn, 2004), may be evident in speech perturbations, hesitations, and speech repair (when someone corrects what they or someone else has said; Tate, 2018). Given the negative connotations of shame, the term itself may be avoided in social interaction, instead indexed by references to guilt, regret, feeling bad, and non-verbal cues that signal a reluctance to talk about certain topics.

For the purposes of the present study, we limited our working definition of shame to those instances involving clear reference to the self as bad or to the emotion of shame. The first author identified 18 instances of interaction that indexed shame, implicitly or explicitly, within the 28 hours of interaction. These extracts were analysed in greater detail, looking at the ways shame is evoked as an expression or a topic, and how this is treated in the talk. The first author watched the relevant sections of the videos multiple times and transcribed these in greater phonological detail to allow a deeper exploration of the interactional nuances (i.e. Jefferson 2004). The extracts below represent a larger sample of extracts where similar patterns of interaction were identified; they were chosen for their clarity and brevity.

We examined the talk-in-interaction with conversation analysis and discourse analysis, as discursive psychology (i.e McKinlay & McVittie 2008; Potter & Wetherell 1987). These methods concern the micro-level utterance by utterance sequence of talk, looking at how

participants make sense of the conversation and what they are doing through their use of language; for example, encouraging, advising, rejecting or censuring. We treat language as actively constructing social reality and accomplishing social functions (Liddicoat 2011; McKinlay & McVittie 2008; Potter & Wetherell 1987). This includes an analysis of how people manage the epistemic authority of who has the right to make claims about emotions, events and experiences (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Following Ruusuvuori (2012, p. 247), we treat 'emotion as a social display that is co-constructed and thus emerges as observable in specific situations in talk-in-interaction'. In this paper we examine the ways the emotional displays of shame are present and dealt with in the groupwork programme.

Analysis

In this paper, we present four extracts. The first two focus on 'Frank', in relation to shame and past offending, illustrating how shame is expressed through references to the self as 'bad', how group members respond empathetically, the role of references to forgiveness and redemption, and how practitioners can topicalise shame as a barrier to change in order to encourage future-focused action. Extracts three and four relate to 'Brian' and demonstrate how shame can be expressed in relation to the *consequences* of offending behaviour, particularly how shame is associated with the inability to take on a generative role, and the rejection of help from others. They show how practitioners can use concepts such as 'unhelpful thinking styles' to manage speakers' epistemic authority over their experiences, while inviting them to consider alternatives and rewrite narratives in ways that are more hopeful.

Clients primarily indexed shame implicitly through their descriptions of themselves as bad people alongside other non-lexical behaviours, rather than stating explicitly they felt shame or ashamed. This is reflective of research on shame (Retzinger, 1995) as well as CA research

on emotion and affect in interaction, where a variety of behaviours 'form a gestalt of emotional display' (Ruusuvuori, 2012: 331). Extract 1 below demonstrates the use of such descriptors in the emotional display of shame. Here, Frank is outlining his goals for the programme under the domains of the Good Lives Model (see Ward & Maruna, 2007). In all extracts G# denotes a group facilitator.

Extract 1

```
1    G1: .hh I'm just e- I'm just taking from what you said em Frank so you said
2    you want to look at yourself in the mirror

3    Frank: yes yeah and see I'm a better person

4    G5: ((nodding))

5    G1: right

6    Frank: I'm a good person again

7    Brian: you have to learn to forgive yourself a bit though

8    Frank:      [((one nod))

9    G5:         [((nodding))

10   Brian: if you keep internalising and blaming yourself and saying I'm bad
11   you're going to start believing it but actually that was what you did

12   Frank: well that that that's the bad part

13   Brian:      [mhh hmm

14   G1:         [ok so is is has B really hit it on the head there is it about
15   forgiveness↓

16    (2)

17   Frank: I'm not ready to forgive myself yet for this

18   G1: hmm↓
```

19   Dave: tch what about acceptance then

20   Frank: that's a problem

21   (2)

22   Frank: it's easy it's easy to say I could forgive myself and that but I

23   phff I don't feel it I don't feel it yet

24   G1: hmm↓

25   Brian: [(unclear)

26   Frank: [Although I can be happy but I still feel I'm not ready to forgive

27   myself for this

28   Brian: °hmm° ((nodding))

29   Euan: I'm the same (.) b::u- what I usually do on a daily basis is I look

30   myself just once in the mirror and I say I've made a mistake it's time to

31   get on with it I've got a second chance so (.) do the best with it

32   Frank: see when I look in the mirror I think gah just remember what you've

33   done

34   Alan: try to look at some of the positives about yourself you say you want

35   to help people

36   ((Clive tips Dave in the leg))

37   Alan: that's a good place to st- as good a place to start as any

38   Clive: but we're not looking in mirrors here you are

39   Brian: (you mentioned) at some point wanting to do volunteering some sort

40   of redemption for yourself

41   Frank: .hh free myself from guilt ((points to sheet))

42   Brian: hm(h)mm

43   Frank: that's it that's the next one

The expression of shame is evident in Frank's utterances (ll.[1]3 & 6) that he wants to be a 'better person' and 'a good person again', suggesting he currently sees himself as not a good person. Brian orients to this, highlighting self-forgiveness as a necessary step for Frank (l.7). This points to the self-focussed nature of shame, which reduces the capacity for empathy and provokes defensive behaviours. With minimal affiliation from Frank (Stivers, 2008), Brian separates the behaviour from the person, demonstrating a shift from shame to guilt (ll.10-11): it's not who you are but 'what you did'. Frank aligns with this shift, acknowledging what he did as 'the bad part' (l.12), although his orientation is unclear (i.e., he could be noting him believing he is 'bad' as the difficulty).

G1 builds on Brian's forward action orientation, presenting forgiveness as a way of dealing with the distress of experiencing shame (ll.14-15). Frank dismisses forgiving himself as a possible action on the grounds that he is 'not ready' (l. 17) and in reference to his epistemic knowledge of his feelings (ll.22-23), although the word 'yet' (ll. 17 & 23) implies hope that it may be possible in the future. The group moves into advice giving; a possible example of them demonstrating empathy in trying to ameliorate Frank's shame by advising him how to overcome it. For example, Euan uses a second story (ll.29-31); that is, Euan talks about his own experience (Sacks, 1992). In this way Euan equates his experience with Frank's – 'I'm the same' (l.29) – and uses his story to offer advice on how to deal with this, echoing the opening metaphor of looking in the mirror. However, this second story doesn't negatively evaluate the person, instead by using the word 'mistake' Euan highlights his behaviour as problematic yet implies he is currently morally good (as he recognises past wrongs for what they are), where having a 'second chance' (l.31) allows him to demonstrate his worthiness.

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[1] l. (ll.) indicate the line number(s).

Again this is not accepted or agreed with by Frank (l.32), where he highlights his persistent negative evaluation, although this time in reference to his behaviour. The other group members try to suggest ways Frank can change his self-assessment by focussing on the positives (l.34) and his desire to help others (l.35), volunteer (l.39) and redeem himself (l.40). These focus on Frank demonstrating he is a good person again, where redemption is the antidote to shame as it enables the restoration of your 'self'. Frank equates this to the next section of his exercise, that these activities are to 'free [himself] from guilt' (l.41). Echoing Lewis (1971), guilt, rather than shame, is linked to the reparative action. Both guilt and reparation portray the present-day self as morally good, as they imply a recognition of past wrongs and efforts to address them. As evident here, shame implies ongoing moral problems with who one *is* (rather than who one *was* or what one *did*).

In rare instances, people explicitly referred to shame, topicalising it as a conceptual resource to encourage prosocial future-focused action. In Extract 2 we return to Frank, in a session exactly 3 months following Extract 1, where the group members again discuss self-forgiveness. Within the module 'Motivation for Change', this exercise looks at the necessary conditions for change.

Extract 2

```
45   Brian: he wants change but I don't think Frank is gonna fully accept the
46   fact he can get change until he starts

47   Frank: (yes yeah)

48   Brian: forgiving himself. It feels like sort of self-flagellation going on.
49   There's a- there's no light at the end of the tunnel cause I've been such a
50   bad person I don't deserve the light at the end of the tunnel

51   Frank: yeah ((nodding))

52   G1: what do
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53   G3: does that sound

54   Frank: yeah

55   G3: (plain) it's about I don't deserve

56   Frank: hmm

57   G3; It's that stuff yeah,

58   Frank: .hh hmm

59   G1: It's the it's the idea perhaps that- the argument that shame is acting
60   as a barrier for hope it's like a big dam that's holding it all back

61   Frank: for me

62   G1: yeah

63   Frank: yeah

64        (3)

65   G1: break down that sort of wall of shame

66   Frank: ((nodding))

67   G3: so if that's true what's the goal (.) if it's that that's getting in
68   the way what's the goal

69        (4)

70   Brian: you you need to forgive yourself learn to accept

71   Frank: yeah well (I ken) that will come in time

72   Brian: yeah
```

Brian's description (ll.45-46, 48-50) builds on G3's suggestion that Frank's negative self-evaluation is stopping him from changing, a prosocial action: 'I've been such a bad person I don't deserve the light at the end of the tunnel' (ll.49-50). Using the image of 'self-flagellation', or whipping yourself to remind yourself of your sin and depravity, Brian notes

Frank's ongoing self-evaluation as self-punishment. He is described as beating himself up about his offending behaviour, where self-forgiveness is the prosocial action suggested to ameliorate this, which is necessary for any further prosocial action (i.e. change, reparation etc.). Here, Brian uses a form of footing (Goffman, 1979) where he speaks as if in Frank's voice ('I've been such a bad person': ll.49-50), which functions to clarify and empathise with Frank, while not necessarily endorsing his account.

Frank agrees with Brian's description, where G3 confirms his orientation to the description of not deserving hope (l.55) as opposed to other aspects (i.e., the suggestion of forgiveness). On lines 59 and 60, G1 explicitly specifies shame as the emotion being discussed in the description of evaluating the self as undeserving, and which is inhibiting change. Shame is used as a resource to promote forward rather than defensive action; 'break down that sort of wall of shame' (l.65). It is constructed as a problem to address, one that is getting in the way of Frank's real goals (ll.67-68). Again Brian provides the answer in returning to his suggestion of self-forgiveness. Frank aligns with this, producing a 'well' prefaced turn that both serves as a topic closure and a 'my side' corroboration leading the end of the discussion (Heritage, 2015) without affiliating with the suggested action – forgiveness – but which implies some hope for the future. Here we can see explicit reference to shame is used to promote prosocial action, in being positioned as 'a barrier for hope' (l.6).

We now turn our focus to Brian and discussions of shame in relation to the consequences of offending, rather than the offending itself. Extract 3 is from an exercise looking at unhelpful thinking styles. Three clients have kept a diary of unhelpful thinking styles over the last fortnight.

Extract 3

73 Brian: but this is the only thing that's the worst that I felt over

74 Christmas picking up was my laddies bike cause I'd to go down with my mum's

75 card her em visa card

76 G1: hmm ((nods))

77 Brian: to pay for it

78 G1: hmm ((nods))

79 Brian: cause she had just we'd booked it online we were paying for it in

80 the shop and in the back of the car I was thinking I feel quite bad quite

81 small

82 G1: hmm ((nods))

83 Brian: so I would say that's probably the personalisation labelling myself

84 an idiot

85 G1: hmm

86 Brian: with it coming to that

87 G1 °oh right ok°

88 Brian: and that that that eh ma- i- o- it was more than made up for on

89 Christmas day seeing the wee boys face (.) when we rolled out his new bike

90 and ((hands in the air, exclaiming face)) waaaah big cuddle that was great

91 but actually going to picking it up it made me (.) emasculates probably the

92 wrong word but that sort of I didn't feel like a dad cause I wasn't buying

93 it

94 G1: yeah so it kind of links into what you see as eh being your role ah and

95 maybe feeling disappointed with yourself

96 Brian: oh yeah (1) really really disappointed it's:: the first Christmas

97 where I've not been able to go out and physically spoil my son

98 G1: hmm (1) hmm

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 99   [28 lines omitted]

100   Brian: um I'm no longer where I was (.) 6 months ago (1) where I was

101   earning shit loads of money had a family respect money career now I've got

102   nothing and that just pointed it all out how how I've fallen

103   G1: hmm↓

104   Brian: but I wasn't as low as I was when I first got arrest(h)ed

105   G1: hmm

106   Brian: but it was still not very nice it did feel like I can't really

107   provide because of- cause I offended I've .hh lost my job so blaming it it

108   was all myself I was (.) yeah it was all my fault

109   G1: hmm ((nodding))

110   Brian: and that even though it was my mum helping me helping me out trying

111   to make me feel better

112   G1: hmm

113   Brian: it didn't make me feel better I couldn't tell her

114   G1: hmm↑

115   Brian: thank thanks for paying for that mum but you're making me feel crap

116   I don't think that would have quite gone  [down well

117   Euan:                                       [aye it's I I get the same way

118   with my mum offers me cash and I'm just like oh I can't take it

119   Brian: yeah
```

Here shame is expressed indirectly through cognates (Retzinger, 1995): e.g., feeling bad, small (ll.80-81). Furthermore, Brian positions himself outwith the category of father (l.92), downgrading the initial suggestion he is not even fulfilling the duties of being a man (l.91:

'emasculates'), because he couldn't pay for the present. In this way he is self-stigmatising, promoting a spoiled identity as not adhering to the normative standards of being 'a father'.

Stigma is considered to be a cause of shame (Goffman, 1963; Gilbert & Andrews, 1998). Here it is an expression of shame, justifying Brian's shame experience, where self-blame supports Brian's global self-attribution that he is a failure. In paraphrasing, G1 notes two aspects central to shame, displaying empathy with Brian's position: failure to meet a standard ('being your role': l.94) and negative emotions about the self rather than about behaviour ('disappointed with yourself': l. 95). In doing so, G1 subtly shifts the emphasis from shameful feelings to the wish that things could have been different. Brian affiliates with and upgrades G1's reflection, highlighting the negative emotion and emphasising by comparison his recent failure to fulfil the role of father (ll.96-97). This alignment and empathising with B's account encourages B to elaborate on his experience.

Again on lines 100 to 102 Brian uses cognates, which are indicative of shame in describing his losses, but particularly in the figurative phrase 'how I've fallen' (l.102), demonstrating his reported demise. Brian refers to the Unhelpful Thinking Styles outlined, noting 'personalisation', which is described in the programme literature by the phrase 'it is my fault', as not only relevant but factually correct. Self-blame is positioned as central to experiences of shame as in order for people to experience shame it is posited they must hold themselves responsible for the perceived violation of standards (Gilbert & Andrews, 1998). Furthermore, at this time he reported help from his mother was not positive, but actually increased his feelings of shame (ll.110-111, 113, 115-116). This appears to be self-focussed, which reflects Tangney's (1991) work, where the self-focussed nature of shame results in people not being able to experience empathy from others and possibly blaming them for their experience ('you're making me feel crap': l.115). This is also illustrative of what McAdams (2013) refers to as 'contamination sequences', whereby people narrate their lives such that

good events are ruined by bad outcomes, and the generative efforts of others are rejected. Brian's experience is sympathised with by another group member (ll.117), as a second story (Jefferson & Lee, 1981; Sacks, 1992), which functions to normalise the account and give the impression that Brian is not alone. Brian tells his story through this extended turn; G1 aligns throughout (ll. 103, 105, 109, 112, 114) with some affiliation at line 109 demonstrating an understanding of Brian's stance (Stivers, 2008).

G1's treatment of Brian's display of shame follows in Extract 4, illustrating ways of considering other interpretations of events and possibilities for moving beyond shame. This extract begins just after G1 invites the group to comment on examples of 'unhelpful thinking styles' they heard in Brian's account.

Extract 4

```
120   [16 lines omitted]

121   Brian: it's personalisation I thought eh

122   G5: some    [personalisation yeah yeah

123   Brian:       [my fault

124   Euan: (unclear)

125   Brian: oh yeah but see personalisation this is all my fault it is all my

126   fault (.) I know it's an unhelpful thinking style but in my head everything

127   the reason I'm sitting here and facing a court case coming up I'm on bail

128   it is my fault you could say cause I never went to the doctors when my dad

129   died originally which my doctor like (noise) and I'd (unclear) again five

130   years down the line

131   G1: hmm

132   Brian: but it's still my fault I had a problem I didn't seek help for
```

133 G5: that may well be true Brian but I suppose the issue is that those

134 thoughts were coming to mind about something that was very kind of specific

135 Brian: hmm↓

136 G5: which was eh you trying to do a nice thing which was about buying your

137 son

138 Brian: hmm↓

139 G5: a Christmas present that he's going to enjoy and yet your thinking went

140 to into this it's all my fault

141 Brian: hmm

142 G5: to me that sounds like a bit catastrophizing going on

143 Brian: hmm

144 G1: and certainly being kind of self-critical you know beating yourself up

145 about something which °you know° as it stands by itself (.) ah::m is it

146 really necessary how you say to beat yourself up about it

147 Brian: yeah I have to learn to love myself a bit more (.) I do but (it

148 hurts)

149 G1: but what could you what could you say to yourself as an alternative in

150 that situation you're busy buying paying for the bike on your mums thing

151 what could you say that could be an alternative kind of more positive way

152 of looking at it

153 Brian: tck (.) thanks for the loan of the money and I'll pay you back and

154 make sure physically I actually give her the money back (3) you say just

155 son's IOU and I'll give you cash actually (.) just so as I can say to

156 myself yes I actually did buy it ok I bought it and got a loan

157 G1: hmm yeah

Brian upgrades his previous talk, asserting that his current circumstances, which prevented him buying his son's Christmas present, are due to his own behaviour (ll.125-130, 132). His statement does moral work (Drew, 1998) through the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) 'all my fault' (l.125), and later repetitions about it being his fault, which deny alternative explanations and justify his shame. This pragmatism is difficult to challenge in its presentation as truth. However, rather than challenging the veracity of Brian's statement, G5 orients to the global attribution as the difficulty (i.e., Brian's description of a good experience as evoking negative self-conscious emotions; ll.133-134, 136-137, 139-140), and links this to the Unhelpful Thinking Style 'catastrophizing' (l.142). In doing so, he manages Brian's epistemic authority regarding the past events and his feelings about them, but, in line with the ethos of the programme, questions whether there are alternative ways of thinking about the past that allow different evaluations and responses (Weiste, 2015). Brian's uptake is weak, with minimal utterances that could be considered passive resistance (Heritage & Sefi, 1992) or he could be aligning with G1's assessment (Stivers, 2008). G1 highlights the issue of Brian blaming himself, questioning its appropriateness in this context, using the idiomatic phrase 'beat yourself up' (l.146). This achieves more affiliation from Brian (l.147) as an acknowledgement and a note of a resolving action ('love myself a bit more'), albeit a further global attribution. G1 however calls for Brian to be more specific in how he could resolve or avoid his negative emotional response, which is to feel shame, in the circumstances he described. In this way the groupworkers discourage clients from making global negative attributions, particularly relating to self-failure, and encourage them to consider and address specific circumstances and behaviours. This encourages a shift from shame to guilt, to promote prosocial action (Tangney, 1991).

Here we can see that the groupworker orients to Brian's positive intentions ('you were trying to do a nice thing': l. 136), collaboratively identifies and labels the 'unhelpful thinking styles'

and provides an opportunity for Brian to re-narrate the events in a different way (ll.153-156). Brian's revised version of events leaves the plot unchanged (i.e., he bought a bike for his son at Christmas using his mother's money), but significantly alters the meaning of the story by reconstructing the money as a 'loan', which positions him as fulfilling his generative role as a father and allows him to recognise the supportive role played by his mother. Rewriting this contamination sequence appears to push away feelings of shame and permits the writing of a 'redemption script', whereby good things follow bad things, which may be important in terms of desistance from crime (Maruna, 2001).

Discussion

As expected, shame is evident in the sessions of the Moving Forward: Making Changes groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending. However, perhaps surprisingly a reasonably small number of instances were identified, potentially due to the concealed nature of shame or due to the criteria defined for identification. Shame is rarely referenced explicitly but rather indexed by those occasions where individuals treat their personhood as being wrong, which can be highly ambiguous, particularly in relation to non-lexical cues. People's accounts of shame convey a hopelessness around the potential for change (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Displays of shame are oriented to by the groupworkers and other group members, who, through second stories, advice giving and validating the person's experience, display empathy and suggest opportunities to change. Shame is topicalised and constructed as a barrier to change in order to encourage alternative ways of thinking and motivate future-focused pro-social behaviour. Group members enact a form of acceptance and reintegrative shaming, without denying the wrongness of the previous behaviour. In this way they attempt to separate the person from the behaviour, to shift the emotional experience from shame to guilt. This separation is considered central to promote future desistance from offending by allowing the person to develop a narrative, a story of who they are, consistent with having a

moral core self rather than being a bad person destined to do bad things (Maruna, 2001).

These practices have implications for social work practice more broadly; as Gibson (2015)

argued, shame can function as a barrier to social work engagement, whereas empathic

practice that attempts to turn shame into guilt offers a non-threatening way for social workers

to help service users learn about their harmful behaviours and focus on specific changes in

behaviour.

However, we have identified two interactional dilemmas for dealing with expressions of

shame: managing the epistemic authority of speakers and moral constraints on the individual.

Encouraging people to separate their behaviour from their view of self raises the interactional

dilemma of managing the epistemic authority of speakers; that is, their right to tell their own

stories and be experts on their own experiences (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). As illustrated

in the extracts, the programme has a clear orientation towards this: identifying 'unhelpful

thinking styles', naming them and considering alternatives. Extract 3 demonstrates this

tension. Brian's narrative here is illustrative of 'contamination sequences' (McAdams, 2013)

whereby good things are immediately followed by bad; in this case, the good act of buying

the bike for his son is ruined by the feelings that he was not able to provide the money

himself and therefore feels ashamed about the events. He dismisses his mother as the

generative other, negatively reinterpreting the situation to highlight his wrongness and

reinforcing feelings of shame. The groupworker encourages a reinterpretation of the events,

emphasising B's prosocial and generative action, replacing the contamination sequence with

a tale of redemption.

A second dilemma relates to the suggestion that self-forgiveness is an antidote to shame. It is

morally contentious for someone who has committed a sexual offence to forgive themselves.

In Extracts 1 and 2 we can see this suggestion is resisted and rejected. In line with

Pomerantz's (1978) work on compliments, these possibly well-meaning suggestions pose

conflicting interactional constraints for the respondent. The preferred response is to accept the suggestion, however this competes with the moral stance of not exonerating yourself or 'letting yourself off the hook'. Furthermore, forgiveness is arguably the domain of the injured party, so it may not be morally feasible for the person to forgive themselves. Perhaps the acceptability for self-forgiveness varies depending on the relationship to the victim; e.g., is 'self-forgiveness' resisted more in the context of incest offences than viewing indecent images of children online?

In conclusion, shame is present in a groupwork programme for addressing sexual offending, although it does not dominate. The paradox of shame means it is avoided even when highly relevant. To the extent that criminal justice interventions treat individuals as still risky, they may reinforce shame (i.e., 'I am bad'), whereas treating the offences as guilty actions in the past (i.e., 'I did wrong') may permit the recognition of a moral identity and the possibilities for redemption and reform. However, this is contentious, both interactionally, as it challenges people's right to their own experiences, and societally, as forgiveness is in the hands of those who have been harmed. The practical implications are that social workers can demonstrate empathy and respect while also naming shame and 'unhelpful thinking styles' to elicit constructive possibilities for the future. Subtle, empathic and supportive responses offer the potential to build motivation, instil hope and leverage optimism towards positive change.

Appendix

Jefferson transcription notation:

(.)	A micro pause - a pause no significant length.

(0.2)	A timed pause - long enough to indicate a time.
[ ]	Square brackets show where speech overlapping.
(h)	Laughter in talk
underline	Emphasis on talk
( )	Unclear section
(( ))	An entry requiring comment but without a symbol to explain it.
°word°	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech
:::	Colons - indicate a stretched sound
.hh, hh	In-breath (note the preceding fullstop) and out-breath respectively

From Jefferson, G. (1984) "Transcription Notation", in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds),

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