Module:

**shame**

Reflective log questions:

What new content have you discovered you didn’t know before?

What have you discovered about yourself and your experience of shame?

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I have understood more about Affect Theory; that affects are out of our control and are there to keep us safe; that we are hard wired to seek positive affect and minimise negative affect and that expressing affect is good for us. I also found more clarity in the difference therefore between affect, feeling and emotion – that was particularly helpful.

What have you discovered about yourself and your experience of shame?

I have come to realise that I can remember only a very few occasions when I truly felt shame rather than guilt. My mother was way ahead of her time and was always explicit about not liking behaviour rather than not liking us. ‘I may not love what you do, but I will always love you’ was her mantra. That significantly helped develop a sense of me as a good person who sometimes messes up.

One example of feeling shame in my childhood came about because the event happened at school and my shame was rooted in the damage to how people might see me if it became known. Clearly I felt people would think I was a dishonest person, rather than a child who reacted to an unusual situation without having time for thinking it through. I wonder if children are particularly vulnerable to shame as they lack the experience to accurately gauge whether people will judge them or their actions.

As a young adult, I remember feeling shame because I said something that came out all wrong, then wondered if actually I **had** meant it and therefore was becoming smug and self-satisfied. Interestingly, in the context of affect theory, this feeling of shame made me question my motive and check in with my sense of self, therefore ‘keeping me safe’ from making similar mistakes in the future.

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Reflective log (continued):