Gender Response Care-Role and Impact of Shame

**David Stanley** 00:00

So Role and Impact of Shame. Shame can result in intense emotional pain, a feeling of wanting to hide parts of oneself. I always talk a lot about, it's necessary to bring your authentic self to the table, which means bringing all parts of yourself to the table in order to get to engage in substance use disorder treatment, but also to engage in trauma recovery. That's why we always, you've probably heard me say it if you've been to my trainings, talk about the authentic self. So in this instance, when we talk about men and shame, we're talking about men trying to hide a part of a vulnerable part of themselves, because they feel that that part of themselves is associated with shame, because that part of themselves violates those gender norms and expectations. It's a feeling that the self is bad, unworthy and deficient. And it does not promote positive action or interpersonal connection, when we experience guilt towards mark that can move us towards positive action and interpersonal connection. Because we feel bad about something we did, not something we are. Shame is about, you know, feeling bad about some part of you, some part of who you are. And guilt is something that's more about what you did versus who you are. So shame can be external, and it can be internal. So a man doesn't necessarily have to face a lot of external shame, in order to be affected, he can have internalized all of these messages about what it means to be a man or not be a man. And then that shame can exist internally versus externally.

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So gender norm enforcement, this is how it kind of works. So if a boy steps out and starts playing with dolls we have here Oh, he's a homo, he's a queer, you know, you get those sorts of comments, why is he breaking norms and expectations, you're not supposed to do that. Boys aren't supposed to play with girl dolls. And then what happens is that at the same time that this boy is being pointed out in a targeted and maybe bullied for stepping out of that the what I call the man box, at the same time, those who sit within that box, and who adopt those stereotypical behaviors are often praised and lauded. So if you think of like the Tom Brady's of the world, all through high school, I'm sure they were the, you know, the quarterback, and all that, you know, you guys know what I'm talking about, you've seen enough movies to know that our culture kind of has that thing going so that people who adhere to the standards get praised. And those who step out, oftentimes get shamed. And sometimes they get physically threatened. But also other people who are watching this happen to these other two are going, I'm glad it's not me that's playing with the dolls, I'm just gonna stick to doing what I'm doing over here and not get involved and not step out of that box, because I see what happens when you step out of this box. So a lot of men and also I should say that a lot of women also have their own box that they kind of, their own gender norms and expectations. So a lot of men sort of grow up sort of never wanting to step out of that box, because they know that shame feels unsafe for them. So what they learned is that stepping out of gender norms and expectations is not safe. So it's not safe, because it leaves me open to shame. And it leaves me open to ridicule and disconnection from the people around. So what ends up happening is that men often make a split internally and say, okay, the female part of me, that's bad, don't, that's we need to devalue that. Take away all that feminine stuff that's within me, I can't deny it, you know, it's still there, it's going to be there, it's always going to be there but I'm going to make a split. And that stuff, I'm not going to value, I'm not going to recognize, I'm going to push down as much as I can. And on the flip side, all of those masculine, "masculine" behaviors, I need to up that. That's good, that's what you should do. That's what you should value. Men oftentimes do that internally. But we oftentimes do it externally as well. So we devalue those things in our culture that are perceived to be feminine, and we overvalue those things that are perceived as "masculine". So it ends up having this split between the authentic self within the authentic self, where one part of oneself is left hidden, and left disconnected from the rest of one's sort of identity and conscious. All of this results in, well, let's look at some of the data. 86% of juveniles in residential juvenile detention placement are boys. 75% of student suspensions, expulsions, grade failure, special education, referrals, school violence, casualties, and all other assaults were males. So clearly, there's a just imbalance in the data here, for showing clearly that something's going on with boys in our culture because 86% of juveniles in residential juvenile detention placement are boys. You know, you got to wonder what's going on in our culture that's leading to that, supporting this type of, these types of behaviors. What we see for adults is that, men make up 70% of suicide, 76% of people living with HIV, 72% of victims of robbery, 75% of the chronically homeless and over 96% of people fatally shot by police. 73% of fatal overdoses and greater than 2 million men in the US have experienced a sexual assault or rape. So if we look at this, there's really something wrong. And I look at these numbers. And I say this should be a red flag for what's going on with men in our society, because clearly, there's something and I say that it's the result of a lot of these gender norms and expectations and expecting men to live into, interact with and connect with others under those unrealistic norms and expectations.

**David Stanley** 05:48

Some cultural challenges. Society often views men's traumatic experiences as normal and normative. You know, if a boy, young boy gets beat up on the playground, instead of seeing that as traumatic, we sometimes, I'm not saying everybody, but oftentimes there's sometimes people see that as well, you know, that's just part of growing up as a boy, you get beat up, you get bullied, you have these traumatic experiences, and that's what makes you a man, you know, and there's a notion that men aren't really men until you've gone through something or you've been to war or you've gone through some traumatic event. So oftentimes, we inadvertently say, well, you know, that traumatic event isn't really trauma, that's just boys being boys. Also rites of passage into manhood are often associated with trauma and violence. So I think about gang violence, you know, in order to be considered a man and to be part of the gang, you might have to go out and do some, exhibit some violence for the gang. You know, rites of passage into manhood, actually circumcision on cutting the foreskin off the penis is something that most, a lot of men go through. And that itself is extremely traumatic for the child but it's considered a rite of passage in our culture for many people in our culture. But the trauma of having that done to that child who feels the pain oftentimes isn't recognized or acknowledged. Society often denies or invalidates men's traumatic experiences and perpetration of violence. So on the one hand, we often overlook instances of things that might be traumatic for men, say we, our society isn't very good at looking at situations where men might be being abused by their female partner, or even from their male partner. We might overlook that and say, well, men can't be abused by women, men can't be abused, you should stick up for yourself. So though it might be a traumatic event for a man, oftentimes, we don't perceive it as having the impact that it really did. And kind of just say, oh, you know, again, boys will be boys, and the same thing with the perpetration of violence. So oftentimes, men will perpetrate violence, but we"ll say, you know, that's just normal. You know, that's just, that's just boys being boys, or then we'll go and protect, you know, all the men will protect that, that person, that man for the perpetration of violence and somehow justify it. So we have this weird relationship where on the one hand, we don't see the traumas that men go through but on the other hand, sometimes our society overlooks the traumas that men are causing on other folks. Men often deny their own trauma out of fear of internal external shame. So to admitting that you've been traumatized or victimized, might be a very vulnerable thing to admit to somebody else. And with that vulnerability comes that shame. Even just some, for some men feeling that vulnerability all over again, can lead them to a place of shame and denial.