

Shame competence training

To highlight the impacts of shame on policing relevant issues and enable individuals to recognise and manage shame dynamics.

Key details

Lead institution	University of Exeter
Principal researcher(s)	Professor Luna Dolezal research.map@college.police.uk
Police region	South West
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	April 2022
Date due for completion	March 2024

Research context

Despite its wide-ranging effects and impacts, along with its ubiquity in experience, shame is often unacknowledged and remains unspoken in policing contexts, even within trauma-informed approaches.

The aim of this research is to demonstrate how shame impacts on policing and police relevant issues (in various contexts) and to apply existing principles for shame-sensitive practice (Dolezal and Gibson 2022). These can then be implemented by practitioners, organisations and institutions in order to create more humane and shame-sensitive interactions, practices, policies and institutions.

Shame-sensitive practice involves not only attempts at minimising unhealthy shame, thereby reducing the potentially damaging effects of shame, but also an awareness of shame dynamics.

This is where practitioners are more attuned to bypassed, deflected or invisibilised shame and its consequences, while also being alert to ways that shame and shaming may be produced through organizational practices and policies.

The overall aim is to improve outcomes and to create more humane and emotionally intelligent practice, for both practitioners and service users.

Aims and objectives

- To produce evidence-based 'shame competence' training to develop individual and organisational shame competence in the Devon and Cornwall Police.
- To empirically test the effectiveness of teaching 'shame competence' through piloting and evaluating the training package with the Plymouth Trauma-Informed Network.
- To develop this training as a continuing professional development (CPD) option and deliver it to the Devon & Cornwall Police, with the aim of disseminating it across other police forces.
- To advance knowledge and improve practice in human and health services with respect to the understanding of shame, its impacts and effects.
- To co-create the training with practitioner stakeholders by integrating the applicant's research-based knowledge of shame and shame-sensitive practice with the collaborator's applied understanding of the need for shame competence within various services and roles within their organisation.

Research methodology

An innovative and evidence-based 'shame competence' training package will be developed. A further 'shame competence in policing' training package will also be developed.

By Spring 2023, both products will be ready. At this point further funding will be sought as well as opportunities to begin implementing the training in forces and in other relevant agencies, organisations and networks.

The format of the training will be established in consultation with the relevant stakeholders in the first phase of development and through the evaluation of the training pilots, it is envisioned that a half-day to full day training, delivered face-to-face, and with accompanying workbook materials, will be the most effective format for this material (with provision to move the training online via Microsoft Teams if trainings are needed to be made COVID secure).

Interim reports or publications

Recent research outputs that are of particular relevance include:

Dolezal, Luna, and Matthew Gibson. 2022. "[Beyond a Trauma-Informed Approach and towards Shame-Sensitive Practice.](#)" Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 9, no. 214 (2022): 1-10. Online here: .

Dolezal, Luna, and Barry Lyons. 2017. "Health-Related Shame: An Affective Determinant of Health." Medical Humanities 43 (4):257-263.

Dolezal, Luna. 2015. "The Phenomenology of Shame in the Clinical Encounter." Medicine, Healthcare and Philosophy 18 (4):567-576.

Dolezal, Luna. 2021. "Shame, Stigma and HIV: Considering Affective Climates and the Phenomenology of Shame Anxiety." Lambda Nordica 2-3:47-75.

Tags

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