



No one is perfect. People make mistakes. You may feel you have done something that went against your beliefs, or some rule.

When we feel we have done something wrong, we often look negatively at ourselves. We may think of ourselves as “bad”. We might think, “*If people really knew me they would not like me*”. Because we feel ashamed, we often keep the event secret. There are things you can do if you have feelings of guilt or shame.

Think of an event. Try the following steps to help you take the appropriate responsibility and come to terms with the event.

1. How serious was your action? (was it large or small, it depends on your internal rules and values)
2. How much of the event was your personal responsibility? (was there anything or anyone that contributed to the event?)
3. Break the silence. (tell someone you trust)
4. Make amends for any harm you have caused. (ask for forgiveness)
5. Forgive yourself. (we are not perfect, we all make mistakes)

Adapted from: Mind over Mood. Greenberger and Padesky (1995) by: Susan Charlton RN, BScN and Elizabeth Emberly RN, BScN (CDMHP, 2003)
Approved by: Catherine Thibeault, RN, MN, PhD(c), Clinical Nurse Specialist, Acute Care Capital District Mental Health Program, NS