

Imposter Syndrome's bigger, badder sibling: Shame

October 16, 2025

John Albin Wilkins

Drupal & React Frontend Developer

Annertech



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October





SHAME.js

- ★ Now at 2.0
- ★ Imposter Syndrome included!



SHAME IS NOT GUILT.

Guilt: I *did* something bad.

Shame: I *am* bad.



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

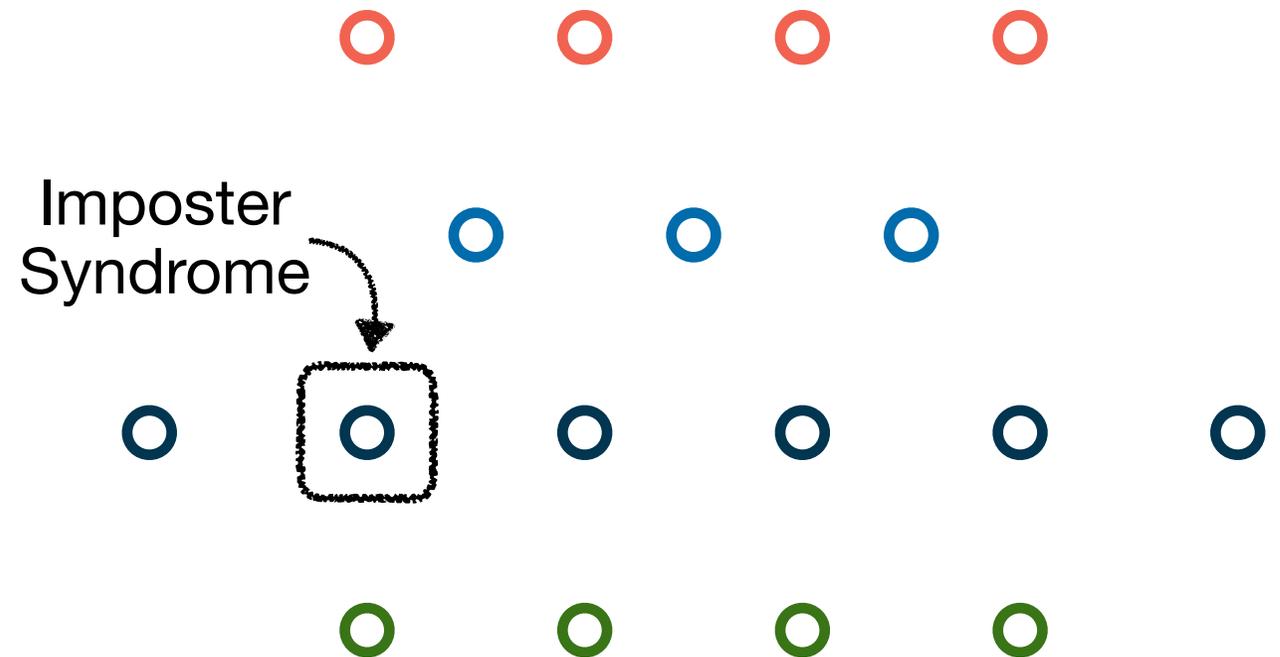
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it





DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

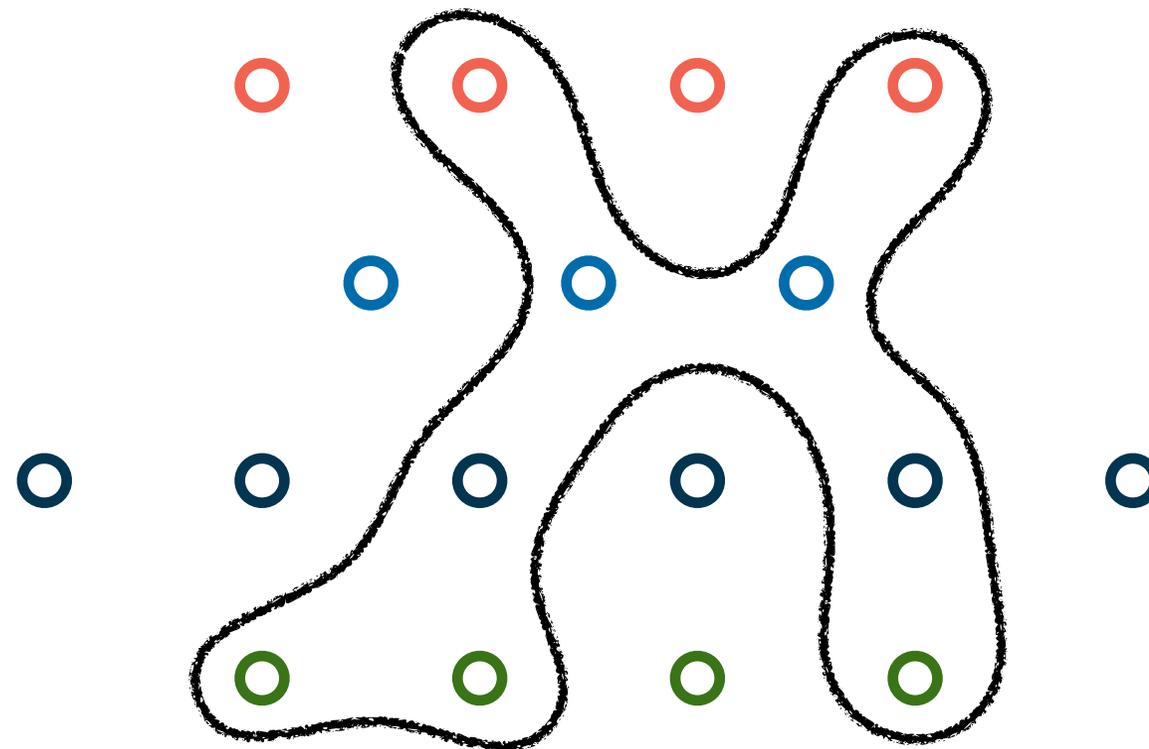
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it





HOW SHAME MANIFESTS (in work contexts)

- **Imposter Syndrome**
- **Avoidance**
- **Isolation**
- **Poor communication**
- **Absenteeism**
- **Resentment**
- **Disengagement**
- **Procrastination**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Narcissism**





What is Imposter Syndrome?

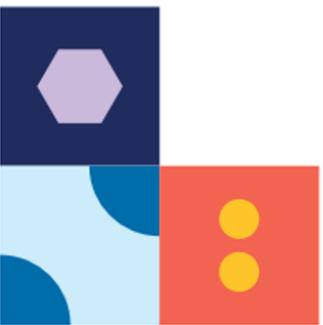
- ★ Being qualified
- ★ Believing you're not



What is at the root of
Imposter Syndrome?

SHAME

SHAME IS A RELATIONAL WOUND



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



**SHAME IS THE
ABSENCE OF
CONNECTION**



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



SHAME IS A
RELATIONAL
WOUND

SHAME IS THE
ABSENCE OF
CONNECTION



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

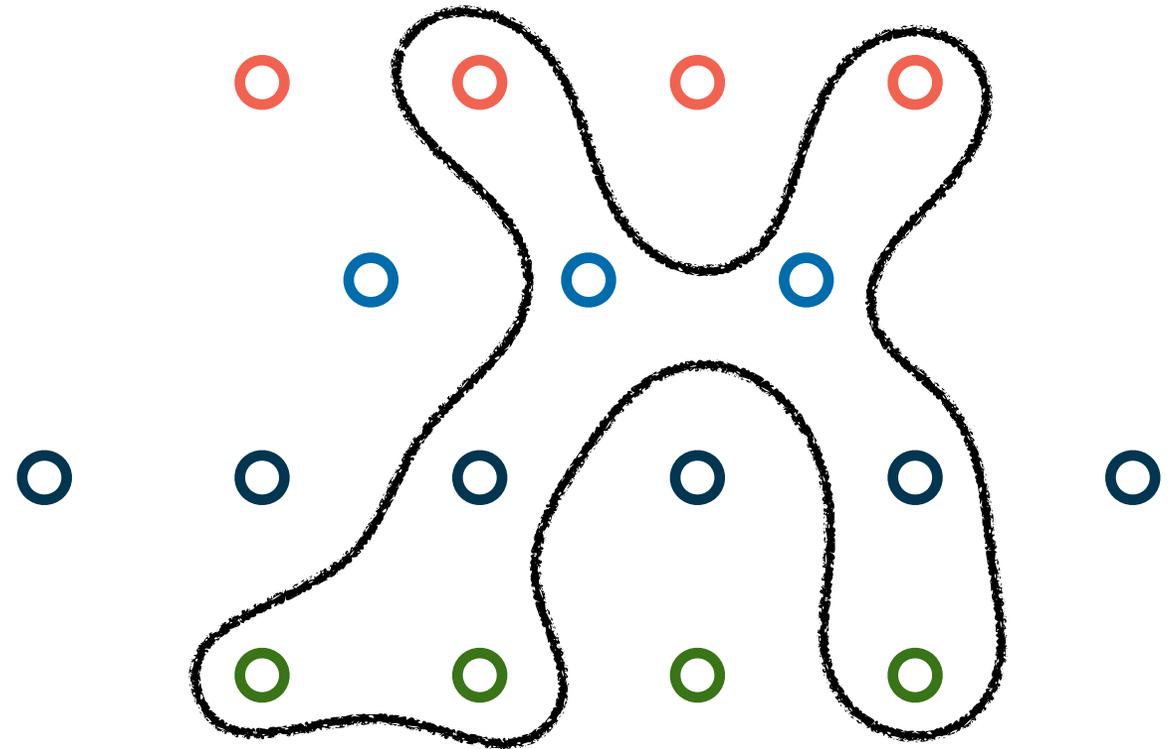
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it



HOW DOES SHAME START?

DIRECT SHAME

shame directed at us

INDIRECT SHAME

shame directed at others

NEGLECTFUL SHAME

feeling as if you
deserved neglect

or

shame of the neglect's
consequences

GRANDIOSE SHAME

hiding shame through
grandiosity



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

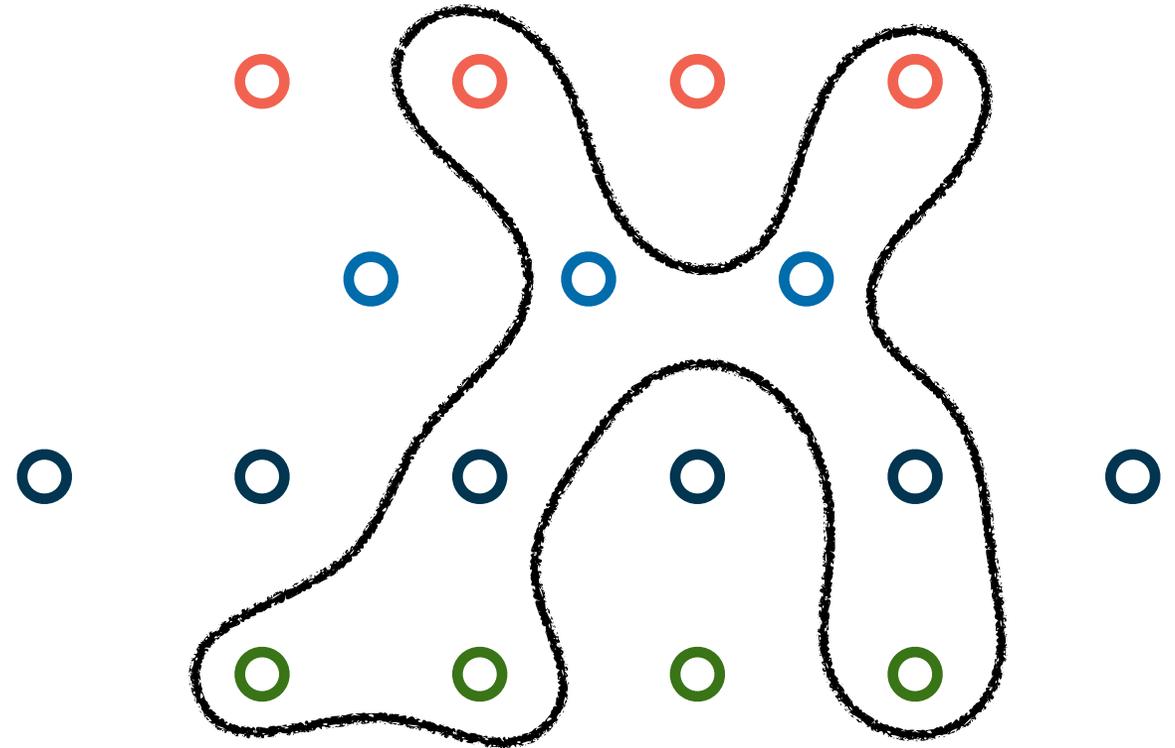
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it



4 TYPES OF SHAME

(how our minds process it)

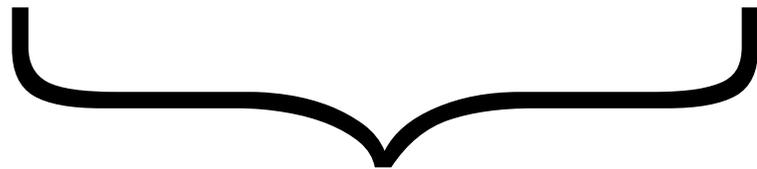


“Good enough”
me

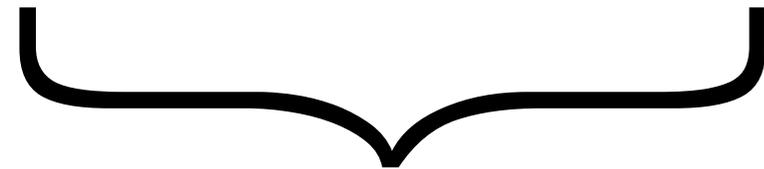
Bad me

Not me

No me



Emotional process



Traumatic state

Shame, Attachment, and Psychotherapy: Phenomenology, Neurophysiology, Relational Trauma, and Harbingers of Healing

by Ken Benau



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

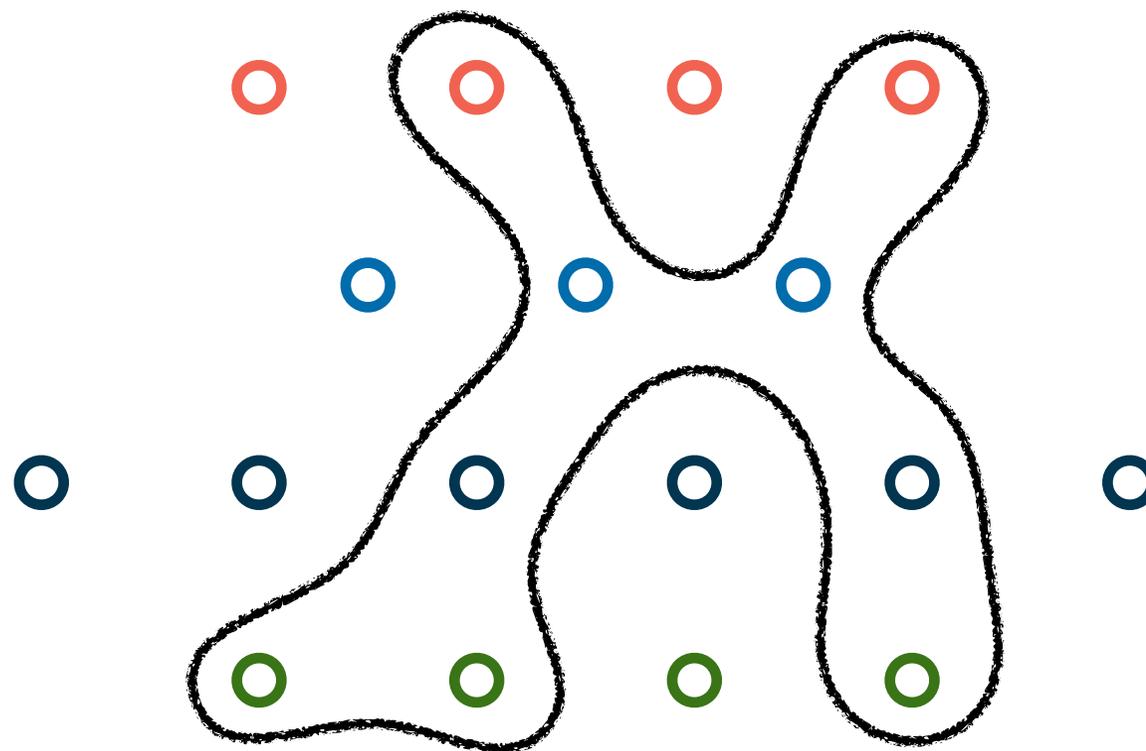
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it





HOW SHAME MANIFESTS (in work contexts)

- **Imposter Syndrome**
- **Avoidance**
- **Isolation**
- **Poor communication**
- **Absenteeism**
- **Resentment**
- **Disengagement**
- **Procrastination**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Narcissism**





DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

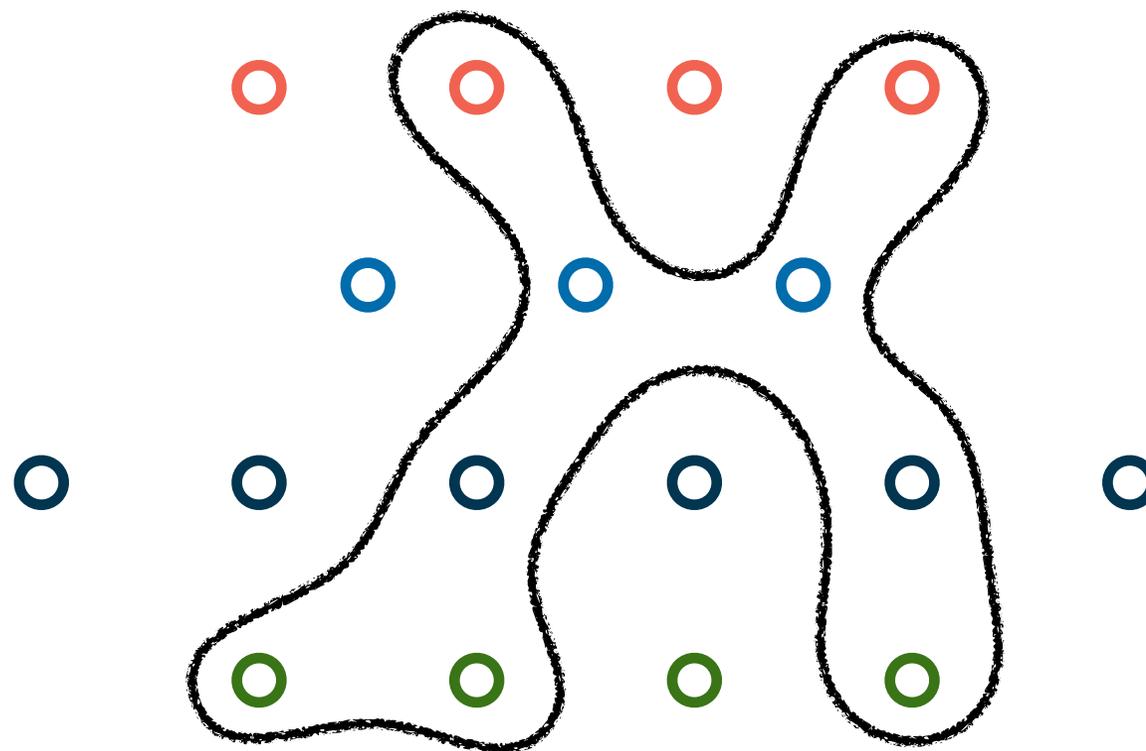
SHAME IS COMPLEX.

How it starts

How we process it

How it manifests

How we heal from it





YOU CANNOT
INTELLECTUALIZE
YOUR WAY TO
HEALING



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

**SHAME IS A
PROTECTIVE
EMOTION**





HOW DOES **SHAME** **PROTECT US?**

Down-regulate our nervous system

Moves us from Hyperarousal (Fight or Flight)
to Hypoarousal (submission)

Temper other strong emotions

Shame narratives helps us make sense of a situation
and allows for hope



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

DEALING WITH **SHAME** AS IT HAPPENS

1. Give ourselves **permission** to feel it
2. **Label / name** the protection; be grateful
3. **Be mindful**
of our current emotional needs to see
if shame is needed



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



SHAME IS A
RELATIONAL
WOUND

SHAME IS THE
ABSENCE OF
CONNECTION



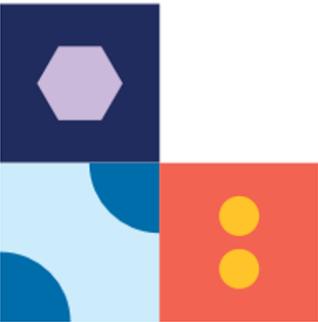
DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October



SHAME is
HEALED WITH
CONNECTION



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

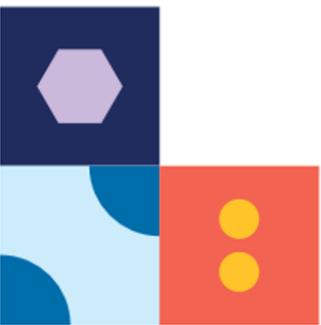


SHAME is **HEALED** WITH **CONNECTION**

CONNECTION TO OUR BODY

CONNECTION TO OUR EMOTIONS

CONNECTION TO OTHER PEOPLE



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

CONNECTION TO OUR BODY

MINDFULNESS

MEDITATION

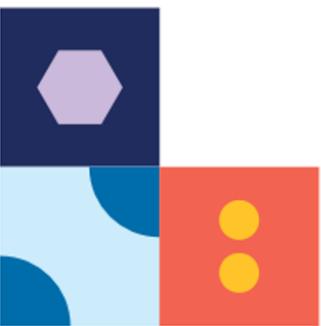
CONNECTION TO OUR EMOTIONS

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

CONNECTION TO OTHER PEOPLE

COMMUNITY

SUPPORT NETWORK



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

CONNECTION TO OUR BODY:



MEDITATION LEADS TO **MINDFULNESS**





MEDITATION IS A
PRACTICE OF MOVING
FROM **DISTRACTION**
TO **FOCUS**



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

CONNECTION TO OUR EMOTIONS:



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE





DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES WITH
EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE
ARE VERY GENDERED



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



COMES FROM:

- ★ **SELF-AWARENESS**
- ★ **SELF-MANAGEMENT**
- ★ **EMPATHY (for others *AND* ourselves)**



CONNECTION TO OTHER PEOPLE:

**COMMUNITY +
SUPPORT SYSTEM**



I AM

GRATEFUL THAT YOU ARE HERE TODAY

THANK YOU

[https:// john.albin.net/presentations](https://john.albin.net/presentations)



DrupalCon
Vienna 2025
14 - 17 October

