

Effective Ways to Deal with Abandonment Issues

Coping with Shame, Trauma and Abandonment



During her childhood, Lia had to take care of herself a little bit, had to withstand some disappointment that other kids didn't have, and had to get used to being with someone who was physically present, but not emotionally present. She thought it was okay. But when she was going through a [breakup](#), she ended up beating herself up more than expected; she had doubts about herself, feeling more depressed than expected to feel over a breakup, and had a strong reaction. **Contrary to her beliefs, the abandonment issues were very real.** This was accompanied by overwhelming feelings and thinking that something's wrong.

Such reactions can be triggered for even the slightest gesture of someone not responding to you in case they didn't hear you or were oblivious to you talking to them.

Have you ever faced something similar? The uncomfortable feelings that you coped with, but now as an adult they're all very large, and looming in you, and you're feeling the effect, facing the brunt as all these feelings come back to you. **The [wound](#) we get in abandonment from even relatively small triggers is cumulative.** It contains all the disconnections and disappointments that we ever had in our entire life and they all come back and are reflected cumulatively in the wound when we're going through a trigger. It can be very subliminal and not even picked up consciously, but we can be so easily slighted by any kind of dismissal, or not being recognized, or not being seen.

The feeling of losing loved ones and of loneliness is something that we might be all too familiar with. We have lost people, have dealt with broken friendships / relationships, and have dealt with loneliness sitting on the cold tiles at a place we have called our homes. But for some of us, they develop into abandonment issues. Abandonment issues can be a form of [anxiety](#) or phobia, stemming as a result of various factors such as loss, fear of loneliness, trauma, environmental and medical factors, psychosocial factors, genetics, and brain chemistry. It is a complex phenomenon, an overwhelming feeling that people whom you love will leave you physically and/or emotionally. It is also a feature of some mental health conditions and can affect relationships throughout life, thus preventing the development of healthy bonds.

Signs and Symptoms

How do you know that you are dealing with something related to abandonment? While it might look different for different people, the following list highlights some of the signs that are reflected in someone dealing with abandonment issues.

1. Having a sense of insecurity / jealousy in relationships
2. Having trouble trusting someone's intentions or difficulty in opening up emotionally
3. Being a people-pleaser and a giving person who gives too much
4. Fear of getting abandoned or left alone by people around them
5. A need for having frequent / constant reassurance
6. Staying in relationships that are unhealthy due to their fear, a lack of boundaries, or sabotaging their own relations
7. A quick attachment to people or unable to commit fully and moving on quickly

These signs and symptoms are usually related to the [abandonment issues](#) that adults face. In children, such issues might be highlighted in the form of fear of being alone, having separation anxiety about their parents going away, among others. Such issues can occur at either childhood or adulthood and can be dealt with by people of any age group.

Shame and Trauma Related to Abandonment Issues

Shame and Abandonment

Are you familiar with the feeling of drowning in shame and dealing with it because of your abandonment issues?

Abandonment issues bring in a lot of different emotions with shame being one of them that we end up dealing with. Shame is an emotion of outstanding social importance that relates to our social interactions. It helps in self-evaluation with regards to uselessness, defectiveness, powerlessness and

exposure. This makes it one of the most self-reflecting of emotions. [Studies](#) have established a correlation between shame and 'ignoring' behaviors by mothers. Shame-prone persons will be especially sensitive to behaviors that could be interpreted as ignoring, rejecting. In terms of interpersonal relationships, shame returns the individual to its state of primary isolation.^[5] **The link between shame and fear of abandonment is very intimate and detrimental to mental health.** Shame often arises from the painful messages implied in abandonment that one is not worthy and important. This is the pain from which healing is needed. At times, the pain often stays thus becoming a driving force in people's lives.

Trauma and Abandonment

Trauma and abandonment together contribute to abandonment trauma, also known as post-traumatic stress disorder ([PTSD](#)) of abandonment. Adults may experience abandonment trauma as a result of an unwanted divorce, the death of a partner, abusive relationships, emotionally unavailable partner, ghosting from family members, romantic partners, or loved ones in general, experiencing emotional abuse at any age, or traumatic experiences they faced in childhood. **Everyone reacts to abandonment differently, and being abandoned won't always result in traumatic stress.** Issues in relationships can stem from fear of abandonment. For instance, relationship conflict, marital discord, or infidelity can foster feelings of anxiety. **Some are also more likely to develop symptoms of other mental health conditions such as chronic depression, psychosis, thoughts of suicide, and non-suicidal self-injury behavior.**

Getting over the Trauma and Shame of Abandonment

1. *Dropping off the shame*- Feeling ashamed and the hint of shame in our issues makes it difficult to talk about it as we are afraid that it will lead to more blame and rejection. However, we can talk to a trusted source so that it begins to fade away and we can focus on the issues and ways to deal with them.
2. *Rewiring thoughts*- We are plagued by a number of negative thoughts ranging from uselessness to the feeling that we are unlovable. The false beliefs that hold and define us and feed our fear of abandonment can be challenged with evidence so that we can get rid of their hold.
3. *Honoring Needs*- It is to identify the emotional needs we feel, honor them and try to work on them that will be based in self-love and self-nurturing.
4. *The imaginative process*- Imagination is an under-used resource. It can be used to create positive images for the future, so that your mind has a trajectory. This helps in having ideas for a positive future, of positive outcomes, so that we not only work to create that imagery for the mind, we reinforce it, we work on it and we continue.
5. *A look into self-confrontation*- In the times of conflict and due to a fear of abandonment, we at times overlook our actions, our way of self-sabotage, or our ways of blaming the other person. It is required to have a self-confrontation, hold yourself accountable for your actions, work on the issues and the thought process in order to heal from abandonment.

6. *Productive outlets*- It is necessary to find time for little things that bring joy and can also help as a productive outlet to let go of your trauma. There are certain other effective coping mechanisms like mindfulness and meditation that might be helpful. It is always a journey to find out what works best for you.
7. *Self-help guides*- At times, self-help guides also help. Some books for the same are "[Love Me, Don't Leave Me: Overcoming Fear of Abandonment and Building Lasting, Loving Relationships](#)" by Dr. Michelle Skeen PsyD; '[Black Swan: The Twelve Lessons of Abandonment Recovery](#)' by Susan Anderson. Self-help guides are also usually available online that can serve to give an insight. However, it is best to consult a professional and refrain from self-diagnosis.
8. *Talking to a professional*- Ultimately, abandonment issues, the fear, shame and trauma they bring along can be really difficult to deal with and might require the intervention of a therapist, psychologist, counselor, or a psychiatrist. Choosing a professional can be a highly challenging process. It is important to understand that and steer through it so that one experience doesn't define the entire process and deter you from looking for another professional that might suit your needs better.

Getting the required support will help you to move ahead into the healing journey, deal with your abandonment issues better, and get over them and other conditions that have stemmed from them.

References

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