

How to Work with Clients Who Blame

Introduction

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Introduction

Dr. McGonigal: I was thinking about what a bizarre dynamic blame is, if that is how you view a relationship. It would be like if you were literally in the same boat with your partner; you're going somewhere in this boat with your partner, and you start to sink. While your partner is trying to bail out the water, you're down there trying to make the hole bigger in the bottom of the boat to guarantee that you sink together, rather than get where you want to go.

Dr. Buczynski: How do we help clients who blame other people for their problems? Specifically, how do we uncover what's underneath their tendency to blame and how do we help them get curious about it?

Hi, I'm Dr. Ruth Buczynski, a licensed psychologist in the state of Connecticut and President of the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine.

These are questions I asked some of the top experts in the field. And in this program, we're going to get into some of the sharpest insights and strategies to help clients shift out of a blaming mindset.

Now before we begin, I just want to mention something. There are times when a client accurately identifies the cause of the problem – it might be something racist that occurred or perhaps it's about spousal abuse.

Here of course, the most urgent plan of action is to ensure the client's safety.

And I want to say up front, these are NOT the types of cases we are referring to here.

This is an important consideration when discussing this topic, but I just want to reiterate, we won't be covering it here.

Today, we're going to focus on clients who struggle with a need to blame others.

To start, we're going to look at the brain science underneath blame. Why are some people more prone to finding fault in others? And how does a blaming stance get hardwired into our thinking?

We'll then look at the unique way trauma can alter a client's relationship with blame.

Then we'll look at mentalization. We'll get into why mentalizing is so important in helping a client stop the blame cycle. We'll review what mentalization is and what role it plays. Or should I say, the role that the LACK of mentalization plays when we look at the root of blame.

We'll also take on the specific roadblocks of working with a client whose blame may be fueled by narcissistic personality disorder. We'll share a practical strategy to help that kind of client shift their focus inward so they can move away from blaming others.

After that, we'll look at practical strategies to spark change in others when they really ARE to blame.

And then we'll get into how to help clients take responsibility for their actions without succumbing to self-blame.

From there we'll look at how to work with the rigid blaming patterns that might be poisoning your client's relationships.

And lastly, we'll finish with some expert insights on how to help your client shift from a blaming mindset to a growth mindset.

By the end of this program, you'll have a substantial set of practical tools that you can immediately use in your work with your clients.

So let's get right to it. Enjoy this quick insight on blame from Dr. Peter Levine and then please join me over in module one.

I'll see you there.

Dr. Levine: There's a place just down the road here; there's a kind of overlook to the ocean. And I go there, usually in the morning, and I do some stretching. And there's a garbage can with a whole bunch of tiles that kids from the junior high school, they either make a picture or they write something. And one of the kids wrote this on their tile: that "Maybe if I give all the blame to you, then I won't feel so bad about myself."

That kid nailed it. I think that's what's really underlying blame.