

Some Victim Shaming Comments

Victim shaming is a big problem in society these days. It happens when someone says something that makes a victim feel shame for whatever abuse was perpetrated against them or makes the victim feel to blame for what happened.

Some statements are especially common, & those will be addressed in this video.

"I know someone who had that happen to them, but they had it way worse." Trauma isn't a contest. Trauma hurts, period, & there is no reason to compare one person's traumatic experience to another's. This sort of statement does nothing good. It only minimizes & invalidates the victim's pain.

"Your abuser has had a rough life! You should help him/her." A history of being abused or through trauma is NOT an excuse to abuse other people. Yes, people who have been abused & traumatized don't always act like functional people. However, the vast majority also aren't abusive. I think this is because they know how badly it hurts to be abused, & they won't want to inflict that kind of pain on others.

"You know what the problem is? You weren't nice enough. You didn't kill him/her with kindness." Killing someone with kindness can help in some situations. It can help a person see that their behavior is wrong. They feel convicted & change. When dealing with a narcissist or other personality disordered individual though? Being overly kind is seen as a green light to abuse & take advantage of a victim more & more.

"I don't know why you two just couldn't get along." This phrase puts the blame for the abuse on both people in the relationship, which makes a victim feel at least partly responsible for the abuser's behavior. This is totally unfair! The only person responsible for the abuser's behavior is the abuser, period, end of story!

"Stop being a victim!" While this may sound empowering at first, it's also a way to stop a victim from discussing their experience & try to get the victim to get over their experience. There is absolutely no shame in being the victim of abuse. None! There is also no shame in the fact it takes time to heal from abuse. In many cases, it takes a lifetime. That doesn't make a person weak or a failure!

"You need to forgive/let this go. You've been holding onto this for too long!" I am a huge proponent of forgiveness. Holding onto anger isn't good for your physical or mental health. That being said, you can't let go of all anger just because someone tells you to! Doing so is a process. I firmly believe in forgiving immediately in the sense you don't expect your abuser to try to make it up to you for what they have done. In that sense, it's easy to forgive because you know an abuser can't truly make everything ok for what they have done. Letting go of your anger, however, isn't so easy. That takes a lot of time & actually feeling the anger as a way to get it out of you. There is no time limit on that.

"That happened in the past.. why are you still holding onto this?" This statement is beyond foolish. When something extreme happens to a person, either good or bad, they can't just "shake it off"! Not to mention, when a person is traumatized, there is an excellent chance of that person developing PTSD or C-PTSD if the trauma is ongoing. A hallmark of both disorders is not being able to let go of trauma, because it returns often as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks & nightmares.

When people say statements like these to you (& they will at some point), please remember, these statements are not about you. They are about someone who truly has no concept of surviving abuse & trauma in a healthy way. That person may have been through abuse too, but lacks the strength to face their pain. If they can make others not face theirs as well, it makes them feel more normal.

Many people also like to pretend that there is no ugliness in the world. If they can stop you from discussing your traumatic experiences, they can resume thinking that the world is a happy place at all times.

Rarely when people are insensitive & invalidating is the behavior about the person on the receiving end of their comments, but instead is about the person saying such things. If you can remember that, it will help you not to be devastated by their cruel comments.