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## Women Dealing with Shame through Story, Dialogue & Drama Techniques

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## **Women Dealing with Shame through Story, Dialogue & Drama Techniques** [Abstract by Natalie Steiner]

“I’m not enough,” says the woman covered in shame. For women, shame looks like a web of unattainable expectations based on identity, as found by Dr. Brene Brown in her recent research (“Shame Resilience Theory” 46). Shame is her inability to maintain societal expectations on appearance, living in a broken home, or thinking she isn’t smart enough. Throughout my undergrad I’ve learned what drama can do, and after making that list, I found that my only remaining question was ‘Can drama help people deal with shame?’ My research will seek to answer: “How can using dramatic methods such as; story, dialogue, and Play Back Theater help female university students to explore and overcome feelings of shame?” My goal is to utilize narrative inquiry, dialogue, and the techniques of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed to help undergraduate women gain self-awareness and healing in terms of their personal shame. Utilizing a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research I’m going to run 3-5 exclusive Play Back Theatre sessions – a style of theatre that involves sharing the stories of audience members and retelling them in theatrical ways - for 10-15 participants during the winter semester. I will use prior and post questionnaires, and focus group meetings for dialogue to obtain my results. This research question is important because if shame *fuels* disconnection and drama *promotes* connection, then I want to find out if these ‘therapeutic’ aspects of drama can help women explore and overcome shame in their lives. If my research is successful, some desired outcomes are that the women feel heard and helped, as well as the findings be used to help other educators guide women through their shame by utilizing these drama techniques. The program may also be integrated into curriculum outside of psychotherapy.