# Chapter 46 Survivor Guilt

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# Abstract

Guilt is an internal moral judgement that aims to modify instinctive survival drives and pleasures in a prosocial direction. Guilt is felt as a specific emotional pain that is part of a bad conscience. Shame and not being fair are other moral modifiers. In traumatic situations, survival drives (survival strategies) are insufficient to prevent suffering of others. Unappeased moral judgements, including survivor guilt, are then relived and avoided like other posttraumatic symptoms.

This chapter examines the history and purpose of survivor guilt. Subsets of survivor guilt are examined in terms of the survival strategies that have not fulfilled their purpose. Lastly, treatment of survivor guilt is examined.