

Shame & Blame Reflection Worksheet

Podcast Companion Tool

1. Start here: What are you blaming yourself for?

Prompt:

When you think about HS (or chronic illness in general), what are some things you secretly blame yourself for?

Finish these sentences honestly:

- “If I hadn’t _____, maybe I wouldn’t be sick.”
- “Sometimes I feel like HS is my punishment for _____.”
- “I feel ashamed about _____.”

You’re not writing this to lock it in as truth.

You’re writing it to drag it out of the dark.

2. Myth vs reality – what HS is not

Check anything that has ever crossed your mind (even once):

“I think my HS might be because...”

- ☐ I’m not clean enough
- ☐ I’m overweight / underweight / don’t look like I “should”
- ☐ I ate badly
- ☐ I’m lazy
- ☐ I don’t try hard enough
- ☐ I didn’t exercise enough
- ☐ I did something wrong and this is my punishment
- ☐ I’m broken
- ☐ Other: _____

Now read this slowly:

HS is a chronic, autoinflammatory disease.

Your immune system and genetics are involved.

Hygiene, weight, and food choices do not cause HS.

They might affect comfort or flares, but they did not create your condition.

Prompt:

Which myth hits you the hardest right now?

Why do you think that one sticks so strongly?

3. Hygiene – rewriting the story

Old story many of us heard:

“If you washed differently, this wouldn’t happen.”

Reality:

You can be extremely clean and still have HS. Hygiene might help with comfort and care, but it does not cause or cure the disease.

Prompt:

One way I know I am taking care of my body already:

A gentler sentence I can use when I start to feel “dirty” or “gross”:

“My skin is struggling, but I am not dirty. I’m dealing with a medical condition.”

Write your version:

“My skin is _____, but I am not _____. I’m dealing with _____.”

4. Weight – letting go of blame

Old story:

“If you just lost weight, this would go away.”

Reality:

People of all sizes live with HS. Weight can affect comfort and friction, but it does not invent an autoinflammatory disease.

Prompt:

- What have you been told (or told yourself) about your weight and HS?

- How did that make you feel about your body?

Now try this reframe:

“My body size did not create HS.

I am allowed to pursue comfort, health, or nothing at all without shame.”

Write one sentence of body-neutral truth for yourself:

5. Food – triggers vs causes

Old story:

“You ate your way into this.”

Reality:

Certain foods might make symptoms worse for some people, but food did not create HS. That's like pouring lighter fluid on a fire—the flame was already there.

Prompt:

Have you ever punished yourself for what you ate because of HS?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what did that look like?

Now finish this:

"Food can influence how my body feels, but it did not create my HS.

I am not sick because I ate _____."

6. Effort – "not trying hard enough"

Old story:

"If you just tried harder, you'd be fine."

Reality:

Trying harder doesn't cure an inflammatory condition. You are already trying every day just by living in this body.

Prompt:

List 3 ways you've already been trying:

Now answer honestly:

If someone else described this level of effort to you, would you call them lazy?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, what would you call them?

7. Punishment – the quiet fear

This one is deep:

“Maybe this is my punishment.”

Prompt:

Has that thought ever hit you, even for a second?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, complete this sentence:

“Sometimes it feels like I’m being punished for _____.”

Now gently answer:

If someone you loved told you that, what would you say back?

Write one sentence you’re willing to try on for yourself:

“I am not being punished. I am a human living with a condition.”

8. A new story

Finish this paragraph in your own words:

“I did not cause my HS.

It is not because I’m _____, or because I failed at _____.

I am allowed to seek treatment, comfort, rest, and support without proving I deserve it first.

From today forward, I want to practice letting go of the belief that

_____ and instead choose _____.”
