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Angela G Vierling-Claassen* (avierlin@lesley.edu), Cambridge, MA. *Understanding and Addressing Mathematical Shame.*

People's difficulties with mathematics often get blamed on what educators and researchers call mathematics anxiety, the fear of doing mathematics. The term "math anxiety" first appeared in the literature in the early 1970s, and was popularized by Sheila Tobias and others working in the late 1970s to address mathematical avoidance, particularly in women. The frame of mathematics anxiety has problems, however, including pathologizing mathematical difficulties and obscuring the role of community and culture. Framing difficulties in terms of shame provides a way of placing mathematical problems in a relational context. Shame is an intensely painful and disruptive emotion in which a person feels a deep-seated failure or flaw in their core self. Although shame can occur in private or in public, it is an emotion that signals a threat to our social being, and it can be characterized as feeling unworthy of human connection.

In this talk, I will discuss the impact of shame on adults and students, based on research in process that uses written memories to investigate narratives of mathematics. I will also discuss research-based methods to help developmental mathematics students investigate and re-frame their memories and become more powerful mathematically. (Received September 25, 2012)