



The responsibility pie

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A tool for use exploring relative responsibility, alleviating guilt and managing shame.

In a society obsessed with allocating blame, there is a social tendency to attempt to make one person guilty and another innocent. However, it is rarely the case, and often disempowering for the 'victim', that there is only one individual who could have done anything different. This micro article will explore the *responsibility pie* as a simple way of moving beyond the binary allocation of blame and its implications.

What is the pie metaphor?

Think of a pie chart where different size portions are allocated to different pieces of data, or, a physical pie where slices can be cut to different sizes for different people. This is the simple idea underpinning the *responsibility pie*.

When is it useful?

Here's some typical examples where the *responsibility pie* might be useful:

- **Someone feels an event is wholly their fault.** Use: To explore who the other actors are who might have influenced the event.
- **Someone feels an event is wholly someone else's fault.** Use: Without

talking about blame, the pie can be used to explore what influence the person could have had in the situation.

- **A person is feeling guilty or has a sense of shame about a situation.** Use: The pie can help explore a different perspective on a situation. This can promote letting go of what is not the responsibility of the individual.

The *responsibility pie* is useful in all these situations as a means of developing self-compassion and honest realistic responsibility whilst enabling an ability of being able to let go.

Drawing the pie

What counts is not the mathematical accuracy, but how the pie is divided between actors all with varying levels of influence and responsibility. Here's an example; discussing a game lost with a a goalkeeper who feels guilty about letting in a penalty:

Who could have changed the situation?

