What does it mean to minimize? What is minimization?

Here is the dictionary.com definition: **minimize** verb (used with object), minimized, **minimizing**. 1. to reduce to the smallest possible amount or degree. 2. to represent at the lowest possible amount, value, importance, influence, etc., especially in a disparaging way; to belittle. **NOTE: SHAME & MINIMIZATION GO HAND IN HAND.**

There are a variety of ways we as survivors participate in shame & minimization. Most of the time we do not even realize we are doing it.

Our minimization is a byproduct of the shame we carry from childhood—which is multi-pronged:

1). We can shame ourselves & minimize the abuse we incurred by thinking and saying things such as-
   • "I was only abused a few times."
   • "My family doesn't believe me and since I don’t have any proof, I might as well just get over it.”
   • “My aunt says I should just be grateful for the roof over my head and that it could have been much worse, after all some kids don't even have a house or food to eat.”

2). We can shame ourselves & minimize the progress we've made in our recovery in the following ways-
   • "I should be so much farther along by now."
   • "I was doing so good and now I unraveled all of my progress.”
   • "I am doing much better than I was, but it is only because of _________.” (fill in blank with any number of minimizing statements that take away the good feeling of working hard to recover from our childhood trauma)

3). We also tend to minimize compliments people give us for a number of different reasons.
   • During childhood, compliments often came with a hefty price tag; therefore compliments can be triggering.
   • We reason in our minds, as survivors, that if we choose to accept others’ compliments, it must somehow mean we are actually “totally fine” and our abuse must not have even happened, or at the very least—it was definitely not as bad as we say/think it was. The list goes on and on… We always find new ways to shame and minimize ourselves and our experiences.

There is **Hope & a Cure** for minimization/shame

• **Brutal honesty** with ourselves: calling “abuse”—“abuse” (always, even when/if it changes our worldview)
• **Committing** to learning and practicing self-compassion and self-championing as a part of a daily routine.
• Dialectical Behavior Therapy Workbooks have great examples of healthy daily habits to adopt as part of your overall health regiment.