Assessing Guilt Towards the Former Spouse

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Abstract

Divorce is often accompanied by feelings of guilt towards the former spouse. So far, no scale has been available to measure such feelings. For this purpose, we developed the Guilt in Separation Scale (GiSS). Content validity was assured by using experts and lay experts to generate and select items. This item pool was comprehensive in terms of both content and quantity. Exploratory analyses were run on samples of 214 divorced individuals and confirmatory analyses on 458 individuals who were in the process of divorcing. Evidence was provided for the reliability and construct validity of the GiSS. The internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .91$), as were the 6-month and 12-month test-retest reliabilities ($r = .72$ and $r = .76$, respectively). The GiSS was related to shame, regret, compassion, locus of cause of the separation, unfaithfulness, and psychological functioning.

Keywords: emotion, guilt, scale development, divorce, mediation

When spouses divorce it is likely that at least one of them feels guilty (Baum, 2007). Until now, however, there was no instrument to assess feelings of guilt towards the former spouse. Such an instrument would be useful for two major reasons. First, in the context of divorce, guilt has a number of negative correlates, such as continuing attachment to the former partner (Walters-Chapman, Price, & Serovich, 1995), decreased satisfaction with life (Spanier & Margolis, 1983), and difficulties in developing new intimacy (Baum, 2007). Moreover, feelings of guilt towards the former spouse have been shown to increase collaborative behavior in divorce negotiations (Wietzker, Buysse, Loeys, & Brondeel, in press). The latter is not negative in principle, but excessive collaboration as a result of feeling guilty might work against self-interest (Wietzker et al., in press).

Second, noticing guilt may be challenging for the professional helper. In contrast to other emotions, guilt has no typical verbal expression such as shouting or crying, and is difficult to recognize in people's facial expressions (Keltner & Buswell, 1996). We therefore developed the Guilt in Separation Scale (GiSS)[1], a brief questionnaire that easily detects feelings of guilt towards the former spouse and is suitable for different contexts such as counseling, mediation, and research.

We define guilt as an emotion that occurs when people have committed a transgression—such as harming another person--, which can be a real or a imaginary act (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994, Landman, 1993). Predominant appraisals associated with guilt are self-blame (Roseman, 1991) and a sense of responsibility. The attributed cause of guilt is internal and controllable (Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982). Guilt evokes the action tendency to repair (Baumeister et al., 1994; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984), which can involve real actions, such as apologizing or making amends, and counterfactual thoughts, such as mentally undoing the harm one did (Tangney, 1995).

[1] A copy of the GiSS is available at [to be added by APA].

Guilt should be differentiated from shame, with which it is often treated interchangeably (Tangney, 1991), and regret (Zeelenberg & Breugelmans, 2008). Like guilt, shame occurs in the course of moral transgressions. Unlike guilt, shame is elicited by the feeling of exposure. The focus is rather on the self, which is perceived as bad, than on a certain deed. A typical action tendency associated to shame is the urge to hide (Tangney, 1995). Regret is, like guilt, elicited by acts, which had a negative outcome and for which the person feels responsible. Unlike guilt, regret arises from intra- rather than interpersonal harm Action tendencies associated with regret are (mentally) undoing what one has done, wanting to make up for the mistake, or self-reproach (Zeelenberg et al., 2008).

In spite of their conceptual overlap it is important to differentiate these three emotions; they are related to different concepts and work differently. For example, some studies showed that the relation between guilt and psychopathology diminished or disappeared altogether when controlling for shame (e.g., Tangney, Burggraf, & Wagner, 1995). In anger-related processes, shame was positively related to malevolent intentions and negatively to adaptive responses, whereas guilt was positively related to constructive intentions and negatively to indices of aggression (Tangney, 1995). Moreover, in contrast to guilt, shame was related to destructive behavior in divorce negotiations (Wietzker et al., in press).

To date there are manifold guilt measures (for a review and critique on existing measures see Tilghman-Osborne, Cole, & Felton, 2010). Some of them are not appropriate for measuring guilt towards a former partner because they present emotion (-related) words without any context and leave the definition of the emotion to the responder. Moreover, persons who score highly on such tests could feel guilty for many different reasons, which makes the test too unspecific. Examples for such (mostly frequency-based) measures are the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), the

Leuven Emotion Scale (LES; Fontaine, Luyten, De Boeck, & Corveleyn, 2001), and the Perceived Guilt Index (PGI; Otterbacher & Munz, 1973). Other guilt measures are too specific to measure guilt toward a former partner. They measure certain aspects of guilt or use guilt-eliciting scenarios to investigate peoples' proneness to it. Examples of such measures are the Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (O' Connor et al., 1997), the Guilt Inventory (Kugler & Jones, 1992), the Situational Guilt Scale (SGS; Klass, 1987) and the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1989). Tilghman-Osborne et al. (2010) conclude from their review that the existing guilt measures, being based on different theoretical concepts, assess different aspects of guilt. They suggest that "each question about guilt should be embedded in a situational context. … The types of events that are represented in the assessment should reflect the domain to which the investigator or clinician wishes to generalize" (2010, p. 544).

The present study consists of four parts. Part 1 describes the development of an item pool. Part 2 describes statistical item selection procedures with a sample of divorced individuals (the "selection sample"). Part 3 describes the replication of results from Part 2 and the application of the GiSS in a longitudinal study with a sample of currently divorcing individuals (the "validation sample"). Part 4 describes psychometric aspects of the scale and is followed by a general discussion.

Part 1--Item Development

Items were developed within the framework of componential emotion theory. Each emotion consists of a specific combination of different components (e.g., appraisals, facial expressions, physiological characteristics), which makes it unique and distinguishable from other emotions (e.g., Scherer, 1984). We used those components that are easily assessable via self-report, namely thoughts/appraisals, feelings, and action tendencies. Because we did not want to restrict item contents to our own concepts of emotions we had the items formulated in

two focus groups: one with professional divorce experts and one with divorced laypersons. First, participants were asked to discuss which emotions divorcing individuals experience towards their former spouse. We then asked the participants to reflect on the following questions with regard to each emotion named: “When a person who divorces has this emotion: (a) What does he or she think? (b) What exactly does he or she feel? (c) What would he or she feel the urge to do (even if it might not be realistic)?“ In this way, we generated items (in form of statements) related to the emotion components (a) thoughts/appraisals, (b) feelings, and (c) action tendencies for each relevant emotion. The sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed among 12 divorced persons. This questionnaire had the form of a grid. For each emotion there were three cells, one for each emotion component (appraisal, feeling, action tendency). Emotion components were introduced with the same three questions as described above. Participants were requested to formulate as many statements as possible for each cell of the grid. The statements from both procedures formed the initial item pool.

Several steps were taken to select items from this item pool. Unclear statements were discarded. If several items had the same content, only one of them was retained. Content validity was provided by the expert ratings of clinical psychology Ph.D. students who were familiar with emotion theories. For each item, these experts determined which emotion it was supposed to reflect. At least two out of three judges had to agree on this assignment. The judges’ and authors’ assignments of items to emotions were compared, and only matching cases were retained in the item pool. In the present study we used the preliminary item lists for guilt, shame, and regret. Each item list comprised items reflecting appraisals, feelings, and action tendencies for the respective emotion. This approach resulted in a combination of a prescriptive and descriptive definition of guilt. The prescriptive definition was based on a

review of the guilt literature. It was implemented in our item construction by forcing participants to use categories of emotion components, and by having experts familiar with emotion theories assign items to emotions. The descriptive definition was implemented by basing the item contents (and verbalizations) on the general public's concept of guilt (cf. Widen & Russell, 2010).

Part 2--Statistical Item Selection

Selection Sample: Participants and Procedure

Participants were 214 volunteers (65% women), whose mean age was 43.2 years (*SD* = 9.6, ranging from 23 to 73). Seventy-eight percent had been married, 22% had been cohabiting. On average their relationship/marriage had lasted for 13.7 years (*SD* = 8.5, range 0,75 to 43). They had been separated/divorced for 6.64 years (*SD* = 5.9, range < 1 - 30). Most were moderately (40.1 %, high school, vocational, or technical training) or highly (40.6 %, college or university) educated.

Participants were recruited from a variety of companies and civic organizations as well as a newspaper article describing an opportunity to participate in research about the experience of divorce. To ensure privacy, every employee of the participating companies received a version of the questionnaire together with an information letter, which explained the purpose of the study and the inclusion criteria (being divorced or separated from a relationship partner with whom they had been cohabiting). Employees could decide anonymously if they wanted to volunteer. This procedure made it impossible to determine the response rate. The questionnaires were either paper-pencil or electronic (completed by 63 % and 37 % respectively). Data were collected for 10 weeks.

Measures[2]

[2] Please note that all measurements were applied in Dutch versions throughout the study.

Guilt, shame, and regret were measured with the preliminary item sets of guilt (25 items), shame (28 items), and regret (10 items), as described in Part 1. Participants were asked how often they had the respective thoughts, feelings, and action tendencies when thinking of their ex-spouse in connection with the divorce. Emotion items were presented in random order. Items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *never* to (7) *always.*

Psychological functioning was measured with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) and the state version of the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, 1983). Each of the 21 BDI items could be answered with four symptom-related answers, which range in intensity and are assigned to scores from zero to three: a higher sum score indicates higher depression. The average BDI score was 9.38 (*SD* = 9.73, range 0 – 46, $\alpha = .93$). The STAI consists of 20 items that can be rated on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *not at all* to (4) *very much.* A higher sum score indicates higher anxiety. The average score was 38.29 (*SD* = 12.69, range 20 – 72, $\alpha = .96$).

Locus of cause of the divorce (LOC) was assessed with the single items "The cause of the divorce can be ascribed to me" and "The cause of the divorce can be ascribed to my ex-spouse." The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *totally disagree* to (5) *totally agree* (internal LOC: *M* = 2.43, *SD* = 1.02, *range* 1-5; external LOC: *M* = 3.53, *SD* = 1.09 *range* 1-5).

Reasons for divorce were inquired with an open-ended question. Answers were coded according to categories developed by Amato and Previti (2003). Here, we used the category "infidelity" ("Cheating on a spouse, leaving spouse for another partner," p. 612), which we subdivided into infidelity of either the participant or the former spouse (ex-partner's unfaithfulness: 36 %; participant's unfaithfulness: 9 %).

Results[3]

The analyses were performed with SPSS17 and R2.13.0 (see http://www.r-project.org/). To select items we carried out exploratory factor analyses (EFA). Expecting the factors to be correlated, we opted for maximum likelihood extraction with promax rotation. The number of factors in the respective models was determined with parallel analysis (PA), which is more accurate than the frequently used eigenvalues-greater-than-one rule or the scree plot (Hayton Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). In order to enhance content validity, the 25 guilt, 28 shame, and 10 regret items were analyzed together. The item:subject ratio was 1:3,4; nevertheless, the assumptions for EFA were met (cf. Worthington & Whittaker, 2006): the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was .88 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant. Communalities ranged from .24 to .99.

In accordance with Worthington et al. (2006), we ran a series of analyses in which items with communalities less than .35 and items with crossloadings were excluded. PA resulted in a three-factor solution for the remaining 34 items (KMO = .91). The first factor (accounting for 34 % of the variance, based on initial eigenvalues) included shame-related items, the second factor (19 %) included guilt-related items, and the third factor (10 %) regret-related items. Factor correlations were as follows: shame and guilt r = .17, shame and regret r = .54, guilt and regret r = .09. Four items from the guilt item set were excluded because they loaded most highly on other factors. The remaining 11 items formed the preliminary GiSS, which in an EFA yielded one factor that explained 55.7% of variance (for factor loadings, cf. Table 1). Results regarding the validity of the GiSS are reported in Part 4.

Part 3--Replication of the Factor Structure and Longitudinal Application

Validation Sample: Participants and Procedure

[3] Hypotheses and results regarding the validity of the GiSS are reported in Part 4.

The validation sample was a subsample of the Interdisciplinary Project on the Optimization of Separation Trajectories (IPOS; see http://www.scheidingsonderzoek.be for information). Our subsample consisted of 458 participants (60% women), whose mean age was 43.5 years (*SD* = 9.2, range 22 - 71). On average, participants had been married for 17.8 years (*SD* = 9.5, range 0.5 - 55), and separated for 0.98 years (*SD* = 1.93, range 0 – 17) before one of the spouses had filed for divorce. Most were moderately (41.5 %) or highly (44.1 %) educated. Ninety-eight percent were Belgian citizens.

Participants were recruited at four Flemish courts, where project staff approached every person summoned to a divorce court hearing in the course of one year. The response rate was 24%. Participants completed the electronic questionnaire at the university computer lab (7.6 %), online at home (67.5 %), or had a staff member visit them with a laptop (24.9 %). Participants were randomly assigned to one out of three questionnaire versions, one of which provided the data used in the present study. Of our initial sample (Time 1), about 69% (*n* = 315) participants (60% women) completed follow-up questionnaires after six months and 51% (*n* = 235, 61.7% women) after 12 months (Time 2 and Time 3, respectively).

Measures

At Time 1, *Guilt* was measured with the eleven-item GiSS that resulted from the selection procedures. Moreover, we used 14 shame and four regret items that had been tested in Part 2. Because the participants were still in the process of divorcing, we reworded the items from past to present tense. The items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *never* to (7) *always.* Scores were subscale means (guilt: *M* = 2.23, *SD* = 1.21, range 1 – 6.8, α = .91; shame: *M* = 2.15, *SD* = 1.08, range 1 – 6.43, α = .88; regret: *M* = 2.7, *SD* = 1.52, range 1 – 7, α = .85).

Guilt induced by the ex-spouse was assessed with the single item “How guilty does this person (the ex-spouse) make you feel?” from the Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI;

Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991). The item was rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *not at all* to (4*) very much.* The average score was 2.11 (*SD* = 1.13, range 1 – 4).

Locus of cause of the divorce was assessed as in the selection study. The items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *totally disagree* to (7) *totally agree.*

Reasons for divorce were inquired as in the selection sample (ex-partner's unfaithfulness: 26 %, participant's unfaithfulness: 4 %).

At Time 2, we assessed the 10-item GiSS (one item was deleted following analyses described later) as a separate measure (*M* = 2.14, *SD* = 1.08, range 1 – 6.6) and again the QRI, (*M* = 1.79, *SD* = 1.01, range 1 – 4), LOC (internal: *M* = 2.75, *SD* = 1.49, range 1 – 7; external: *M* = 5.08, *SD* = 1.56, range 1 – 7), and r*easons for divorce* (ex-partner's unfaithfulness: 25%; participant's unfaithfulness: 2%).

In addition, we administered the guilt, shame, and compassion subscales of the Leuven Emotion Scale (LES, Fontaine, et. al., 2001). Each subscale consists of four to six emotion words that form an emotion syndrome. The items were rated on a nine-point Likert scale ranging from (0) *not at all* to (8) *very much.* Mean values were used as subscale scores (guilt: *M* = 1.64, *SD* = 1.71, range 0 – 7.4, α = .82; shame: *M* = 1.85, *SD* = 1.92, range 0 – 8, α = .91; compassion: *M* = 2.08, *SD* = 1.82, range 0 – 7, α = .81). We also used the LES single item "guilt" (M = 1.71, *SD* = 2.24, range 0 - 8).

At Time 3 we administered the 10-item GiSS (*M* = 2.05, *SD* = 1.00, range 1 – 5.9). *Shame* and *regret* were assessed with three items each (resulting from Part 2, shame: *M* = 1.78, *SD* = 1.11, *range* 1 – 6.33, α = .82; regret: *M* = 2.28, *SD* = 1.46, *range* 1-7, α = .82).

Results[4]

The analyses were performed with SPSS17 and AMOS. First, we replicated the factor structure that was obtained with the selection sample. An EFA revealed that the item "I'm

[4] Hypotheses and results regarding the validity of the GiSS are reported in Part 4.

ruining my ex-husband's (ex-wife's) life" showed a substantially lower factor loading (cf. Table 1). The change of grammatical tense might have led to a different connotation of the item (e.g., revenge). We compared two separate CFA models: one with the item in question (χ^2[44]= 207.30, $p < .01$, $\chi^2/df = 4.71$, *GFI* = .91, *AGFI* .87, *TLI* = .92, *CFI* .94, *RMSAE* = .09, *SRMR* = .05) and one without (χ^2 [35]= 152.21, $p < .01$, χ^2/df = 4.35, *GFI* = .93, *AGFI* = .89, *TLI* = .94, *CFI* = .95, *RMSEA* = .09, *SRMR* =.04). The latter model revealed a better fit (χ^2 difference test: χ^2[9] = 55.09, p < .01). Hence, we dropped the item from further analyses. In a further CFA with the remaining 10 items, we modified the model by adding a covariance between the error terms of the items "I am making my ex-husband/ex-wife sad" and "I hurt my ex-husband/ex-wife without wanting to." The chi-square was significant (χ^2[34]=129.65, $p < .01$, χ^2 difference test: χ^2[1] = 22.56, p < .01) but the modified model showed an acceptable fit (χ^2/df = 3.81, *GFI* = .94, *AGFI* = .91, *TLI* = .95, *CFI* = .96, *RMSEA* = .08, *SRMR* = .04*).* All items loaded significantly on the latent factor.

[Table 1 about here]

Part 4--Psychometric Aspects

To examine convergent validity, we tested several hypotheses. First, individuals who had been unfaithful have been found to feel guilty (Spanier et al., 1983). So, participants who had betrayed their former partners should score higher on the GiSS than participants who had been betrayed. Second, given that feeling guilty implies an internal LOC (Weiner et al., 1982), we expected a positive association between the GiSS and internal attribution of the LOC of the separation, and a negative association between the GiSS and external one. Third, guilt overlaps conceptually not only with shame and regret, but also with compassion. Like guilt, compassion is a moral emotion that serves the maintenance of social relations by eliciting the action tendency to relieve other people's pain (Baumeister et al., 1994; Haidt, 2003). This similarity suggests a relatedness of guilt to compassion, leading us to expect

positive correlations of the GiSS with shame, regret, compassion, and guilt induced by the ex-spouse. Fourth, someone who feels guilty towards the ex-partner while answering a survey should at that moment also score higher on a frequency-based measure of guilt, so we expected a positive relation with the LES guilt subscale as well.

Previous research has shown that guilt seems to be positively correlated with anxiety and depression but that these correlations are substantially lower (or even negative) when controlling for shame (e.g., Tangney et al., 1995). Thus, discriminant validity should be shown by minor (or negative) correlations of the GiSS with depression and anxiety, when controlling for shame. Moreover the GiSS should not be related to a person's age.

Results

All reliability and validity analyses are based on the 10-item version of the GiSS at the different measurement occasions. The internal consistency of the GiSS was high on all measurement occasions (Selection sample: $\alpha = .91$; validation sample: $\alpha = .91$ [Time 1], $\alpha = .90$ [Time 2], $\alpha = .89$ [Time 3]). The corrected item-total correlations were high as well (Selection sample: .57 - .81; validation sample: .62 - .81 [Time 1], .55 - .82 [Time 2], .50 - .81 [Time 3]). The 6- and 12-month test-retest reliabilities were $r = .72$, $p < .01$ and $r = .76$, $p < .01$, respectively.

We tested the first hypothesis with an independent samples t-test. As predicted, participants who admitted having been unfaithful or who stated that their new partner was the reason for the separation scored significantly higher on the GiSS than participants who had been betrayed (selection sample: t [22.19] = 7.43, $p < .001$; validation sample Time 1: t [17.32] = 6.10, $p < .001$; Time 2: t [6.20] = 3.19, $p < .05$). All other hypotheses were tested with Pearson correlations (cf. Table 2). As hypothesized, the GiSS was positively related to an internal LOC of the separation and negatively to an external one, and moderately positively to shame, regret, compassion, and guilt induced by the former spouse. Further, it

was highly correlated with the LES guilt subscale and even more highly with the LES single item "guilt." The GiSS was associated with psychological functioning, but, as expected, these effects were substantially reduced when controlling for shame. Finally, the GiSS was not related to age in either sample.

[Table 2 about here]

Discussion

The present article describes the development of the Guilt in Separation Scale (GiSS), a situation-specific, target-oriented measure of guilt towards the former spouse. The GiSS is short and easy to apply. Results of the present study provide evidence for the reliability and validity of its scores; the internal consistency and test-retest reliability were high. Findings from a sample of divorced men and women were replicated with a validation sample of currently divorcing participants, which shows that the GiSS can be administered to persons who differ to a large extent in the time elapsed since their divorce. Below we discuss the most important findings and their implications.

In measurement development, there are two major approaches to item construction. One is to formulate items based on the literature or theoretical assumptions (e.g., Kugler & Jones, 1992), which would imply a prescriptive definition of guilt (Widen et al., 2010). The other, more empirical approach is to base items on a descriptive definition (Widen et al., 2010), for example, statements from focus groups (e.g., Klass, 1987). We combined both approaches, which proved to be fruitful. The items were formulated by divorcees or divorce experts and reflected the target group's concepts of guilt rather than that of the authors'. Although none of the items' authors was an expert on emotions, the resulting items matched the characteristics of guilt that are described in the literature surprisingly well.

The internal consistency of the GiSS was high on all measurement occasions, as was the test-retest reliability, especially given the fact that emotions following separation decline

over time (Sbarra & Emery, 2005). Content validity of the GiSS was provided by expert ratings. Construct validity was demonstrated by meaningful relations of the GiSS with concepts such as LOC, shame, regret, and compassion. Our results also show the importance of differentiating guilt from similar emotions such as shame or regret, which is sometimes disregarded even in assessment (O' Connor, Berry, Weiss, Bush, & Sampson, 1997). Shame and regret were correlated with the GiSS but were related in different ways and to different constructs. For example, the correlations of the GiSS with depression and state anxiety decreased considerably when controlling for shame (e.g., Tangney, et al. 1995).

The GiSS can be used in research as well as in counseling and mediation. A first application of the GiSS in the context of divorce has demonstrated that feelings of guilt towards the former spouse are positively related to yielding and negatively to coercing behavior in divorce negotiations (Wietzker et al., in press). Such results support the relevance of assessing guilt in contexts such as marital counseling and divorce mediation. A clear benefit of this research is the involvement of divorced people in the different steps of scale construction and validation. Most of the results from the selection sample were replicated in the validation sample. This shows that the GiSS can be administered both to persons who have been divorced for some time and to those still in the process of divorce. Because the questionnaire was administered in a computer version it would be interesting to test an application that conforms more closely to the typical counseling setting.

The current research contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we demonstrate an interesting approach, namely the empirical generation of items within a theoretical framework. Second, in response to the suggestion that feelings of guilt should be measured in a situational context, we demonstrate that the GiSS is suitable for measuring feelings of guilt towards the former spouse. Third, the results show that it is important to differentiate emotion concepts clearly when studying a possible impact of specific emotions.

Finally, data from other studies provide hints that feelings of guilt influence divorce negotiations, which makes the GiSS interesting for divorce mediation. We also believe that it can be worthwhile to assess feelings of guilt in the context of marital counseling and recommend further research in this area. Future research may also provide information on psychometric properties of the GiSS in different cultures and languages. A better understanding of guilt in the divorce process may well improve divorce counseling and mediation.

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Table 1
EFA Factor Loadings of the 11-Item GiSS in Both Selection and Validation Sample

Items[a] (selection sample)	Selection Sample	Validation Sample
I (felt) feel sorry for what I did to him/ her.	.87	.87
I (was) am responsible for his/her misery.	.82	.72
(I thought:) I am making my ex-husband/ex-wife sad.	.80	.64
I (ruined) am ruining my ex-husband's/ex-wife's life.[b]	.77	.39
(I thought:) I wish I could soften the pain I caused my ex-husband/ex-wife.	.74	.78
I (wanted) want to apologize to my ex-husband/ex-wife.	.73	.81
The divorce (was) is ascribable to me.	.67	.67
I (felt) feel guilty.	.65	.68
I (had) have broken a promise.	.62	.60
I did something that (hurt) hurts my ex-husband/ex-wife without meaning to.	.61	.66
I (wanted) want my ex-husband/ex-wife to forgive me.	.57	.66

Note. Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. [a]The instruction was as follows: "Thinking of your former partner, how often did (do) you feel or think the following, or want(ed) to do the following (even if it was/is not possible)." [b] This item was not included in the 10-item GiSS.

Table 2

Construct Validity: Pearson correlations of the 10-item GiSS and other constructs

	Selection sample			Validation Sample		
	GiSS	Shame	Regret	Time 1 GiSS	Time 2 GiSS	Time 3 GiSS
LoC int	.49***	.01	-.11	.53***	.42***	–
LoC ext	-.47***	.11	.04	-.51***	-.41***	–
Shame	.34***	–	.58***	.39***	–	.33***
Regret	.21**	.58***	–	.37***	–	.42***
LES Guilt	–	–	–	–	.54***	–
LES Guilt[a]	–	–	–	–	.61***	–
LES Shame	–	–	–	–	.28***	–
LES Comp.	–	–	–	–	.44***	–
QRI Guilt[b]	–	–	–	.32***	.18***	.22**
BDI	.18**	.39***	.49***	–	–	–
BDI $_{\text{controlling for shame}}$	.02	–	–	–	–	–
STAI	.29***	.33***	.44***	–	–	–
STAI $_{\text{controlling for shame}}$	.18*	–	–	–	–	–
Age	-.10	-.08	-.09	-.03	-.11	–

Note. [a] single item "guilt"; [b]guilt induced by the ex-spouse. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$