



RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION



Family Addiction: Family as the Client

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**Government
of Alberta** ■

 *Norlien Foundation*

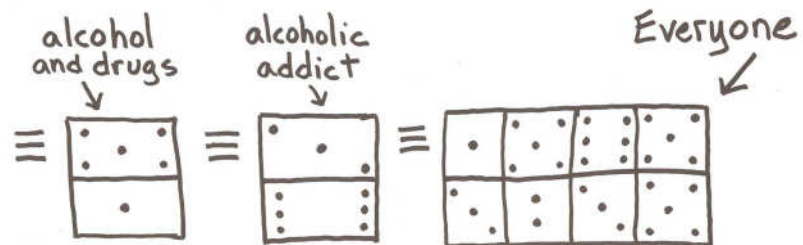
 Alberta
**family
wellness**
initiative



Family Addiction: *Family as the Client*

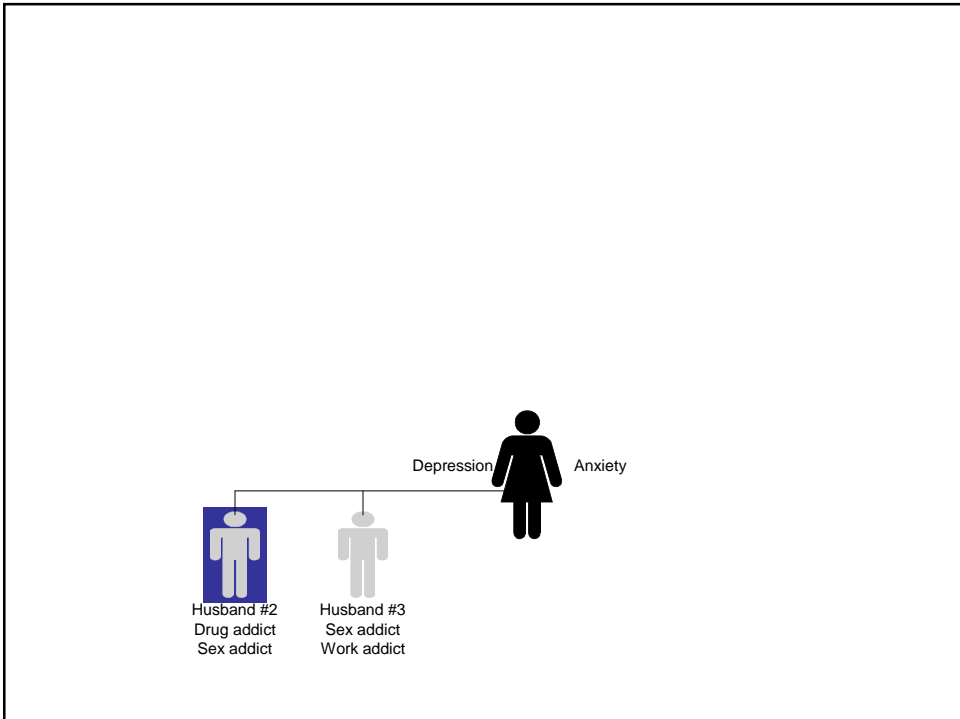
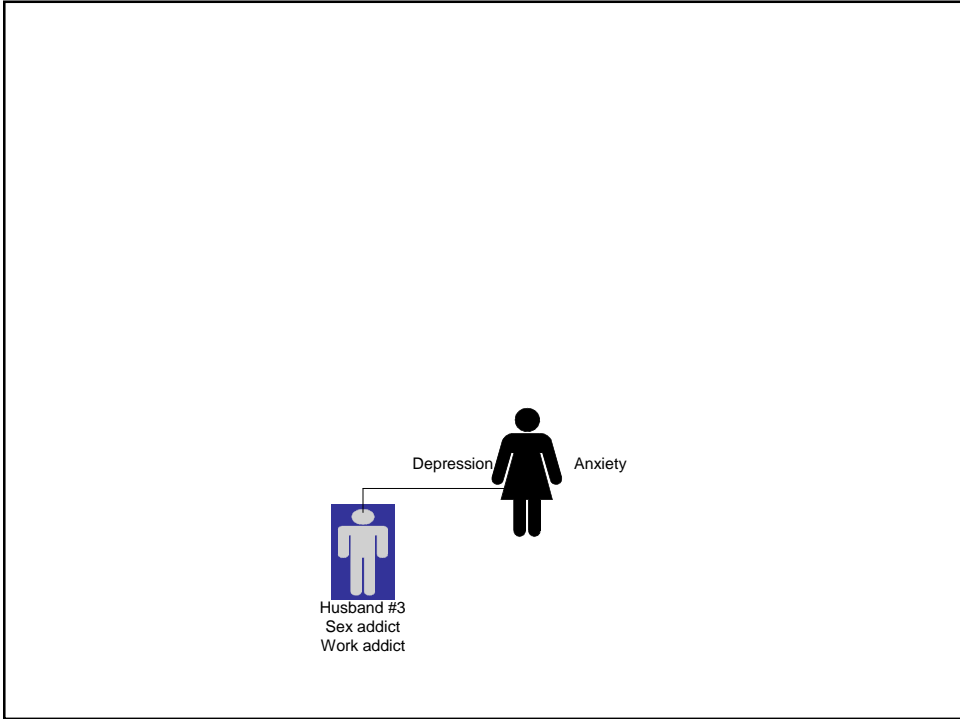
with
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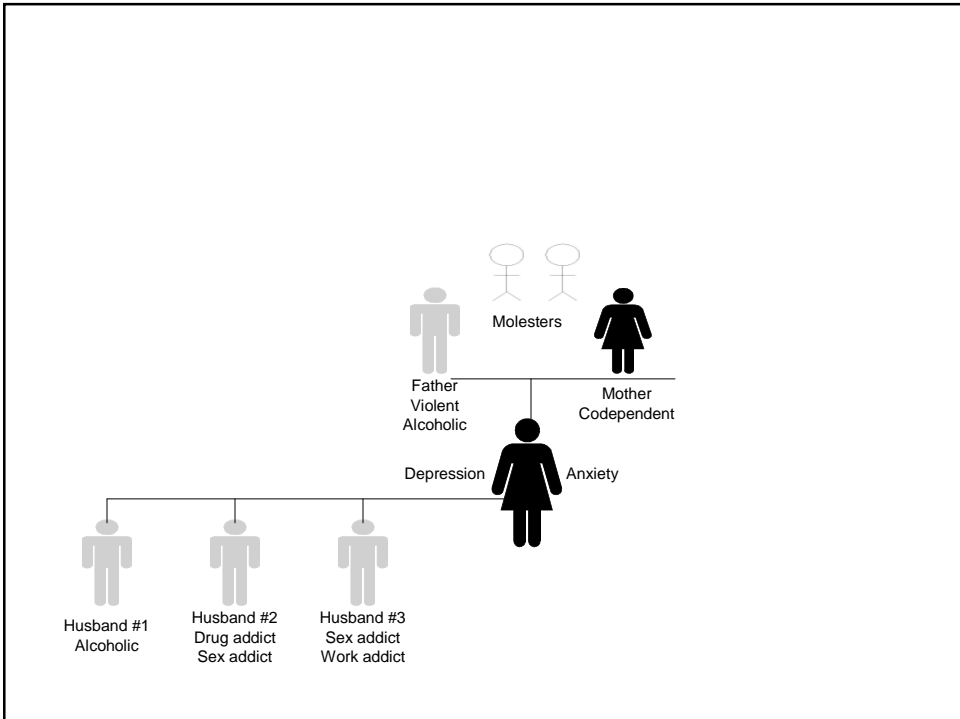
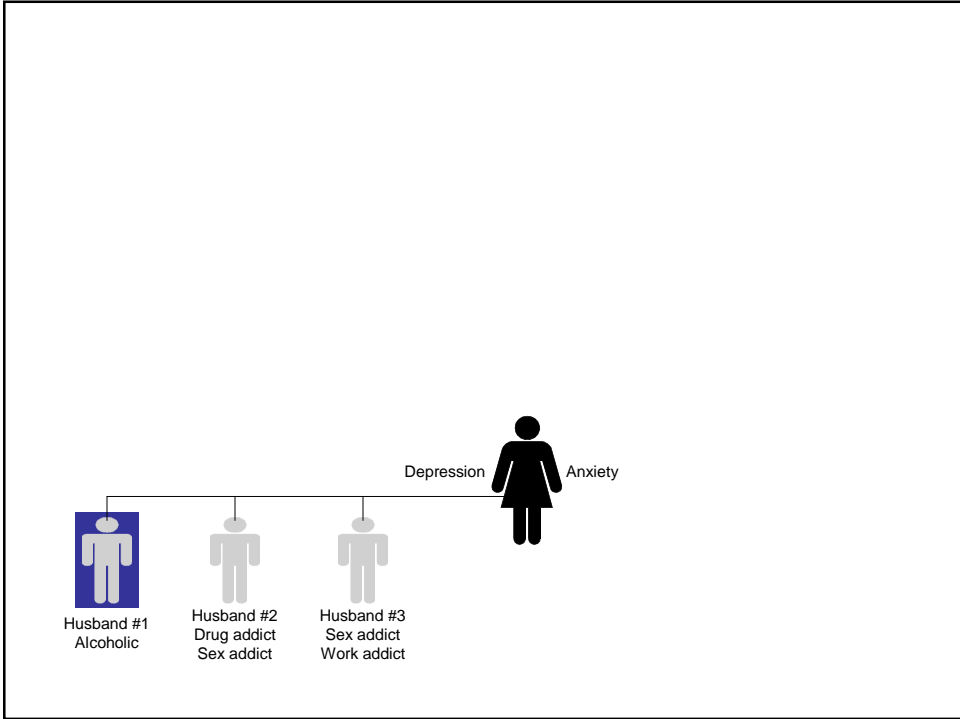
Alcohol and drugs are like dominoes. They knock down the person who knocks down everyone including themselves.

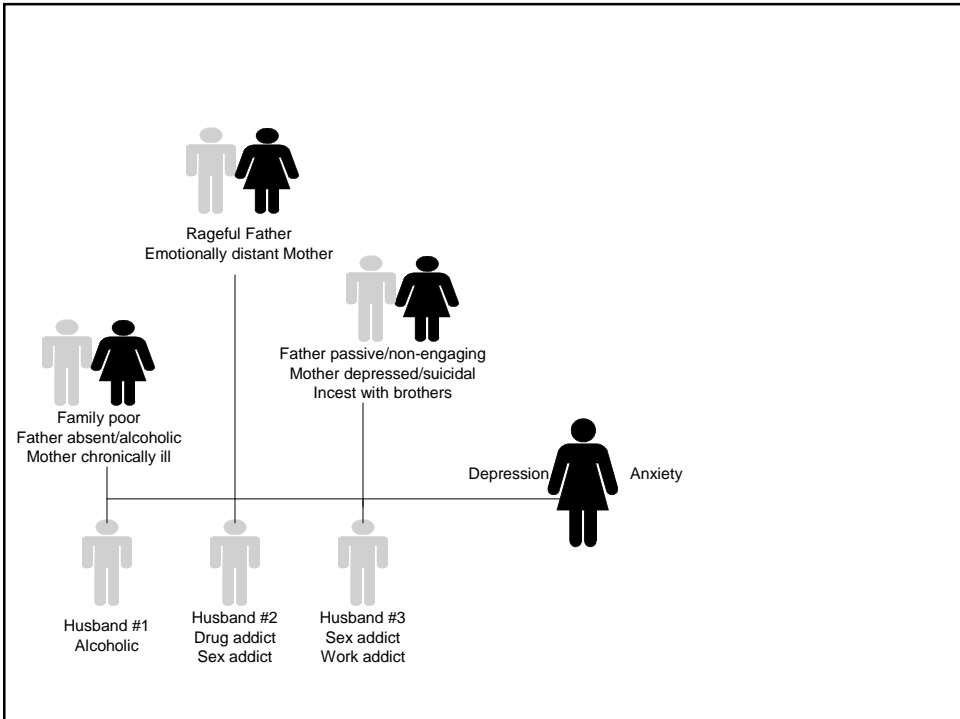
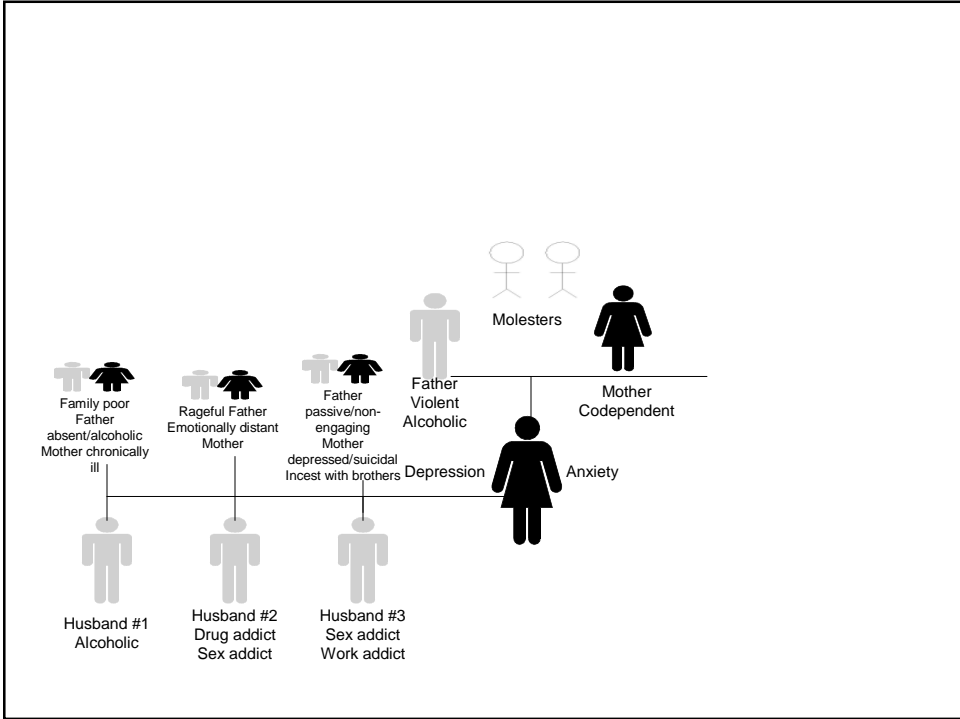


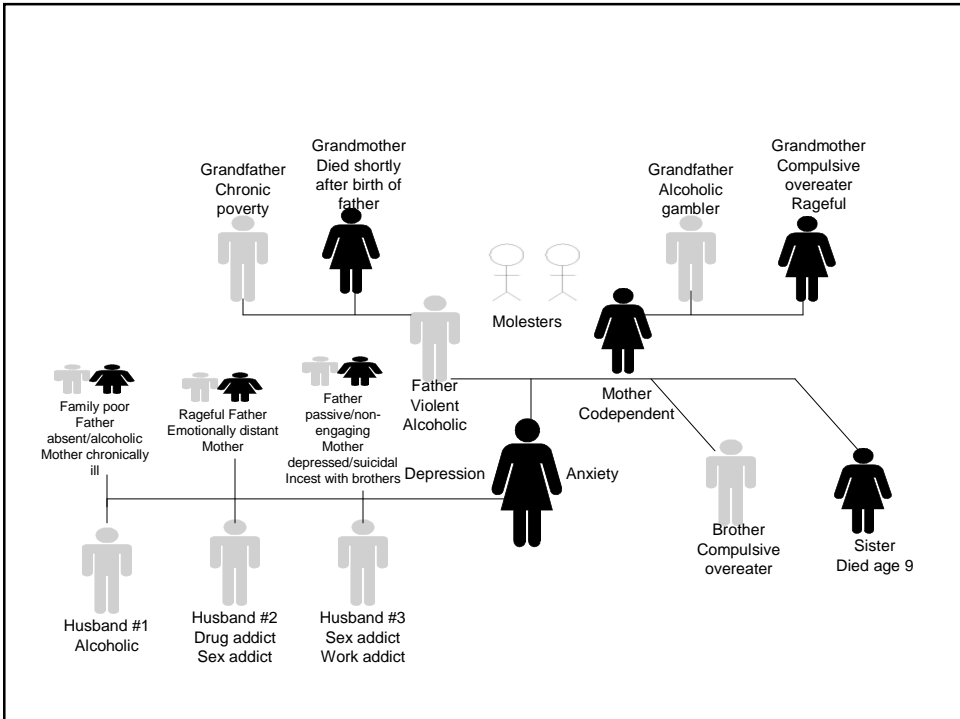
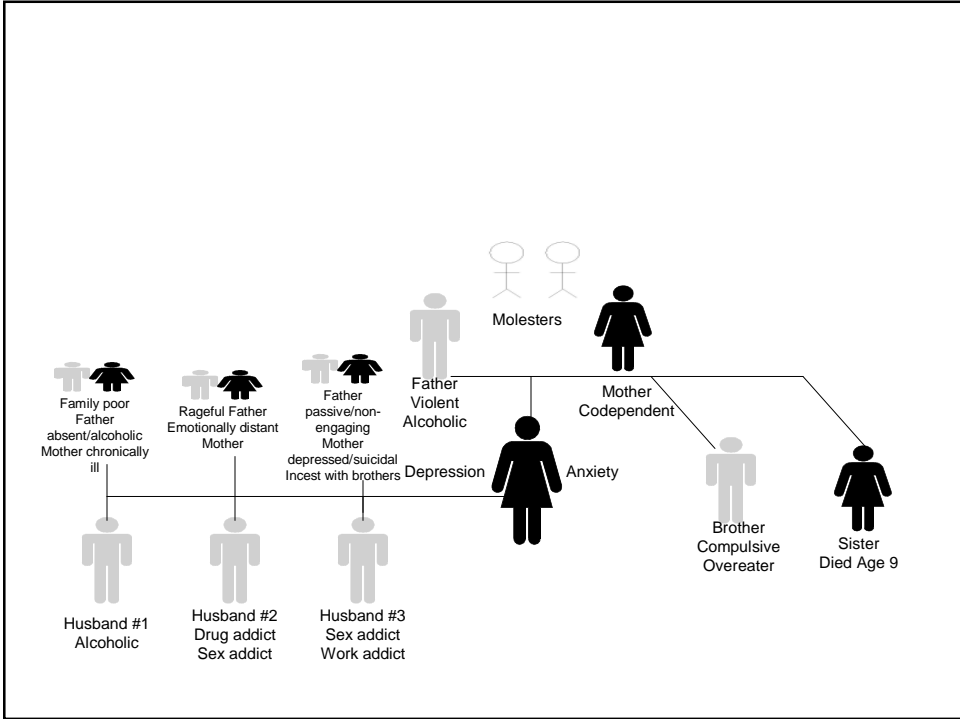
Each time we focus on the addict without focusing on the family, we are in denial that we are breaking the cycle of addiction.





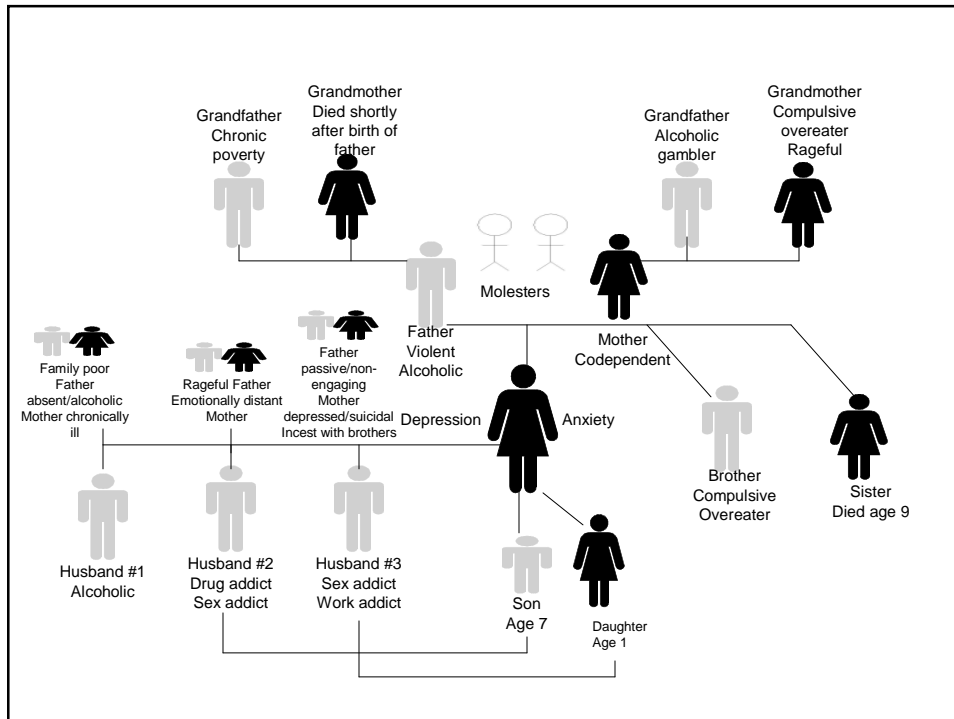






Therese's Family of Origin Issues

- Overlook (deny, rationalize, minimize) behavior which hurt deeply
- Appear cheerful when hurting
- Make excuses for the hurtful behavior
- Avoid conflict to minimize further anger
- Tolerate inappropriate and hurtful behavior
- Prioritize the needs of other over own
- Caretake others
- Fault self for family's problems
- Discount own perceptions, give others benefit of the doubt
- Believe no options are available
- Believe she is at fault, it is her job to find the answers
- Not ask for help
- Accommodate



*Be kind to me, Lord, my boat is
so small and the sea is so wide.*

Epigram for the National
Children's Defense Fund

Emotional Abandonment

Abandonment

**When you have to hide a part of who you are in order to be
acceptable/ to protect self.**

When you have to hide:

- Your mistakes/ vulnerabilities**
- Your feelings**
- Your needs**
- Your accomplishments/ success**

Emotional Abandonment

When you cannot live up to expectations of significant other due to expectations being unrealistic.

When someone is disappointed with you they attack your whole being, worth, and value versus what you did or did not do.

When another expects you to be an extension of themselves, fulfilling their dreams.

When another is not willing to take responsibility for their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors but expects you to take responsibility for them.

When parents' esteem is derived through child's behavior.

When children are treated as peers with no parent child distinction.

How Chronic Loss is Created

loss event occurs and/or
loss condition exists

Pain of loss felt by child

Attended

Family response to child's pain

Abandoned

Child Feels:

Comforted, cared for, allowed permission to feel, reality of loss validated, pain honored

Child Feels:

Isolated, ignored, shamed, blamed, reality of loss denied, pain discounted, diminished

Pain (grieved) (healed)

Pain of abandonment added to pain of loss

Child's reaction to attended, healed pain

Emotions	Beliefs
Safe	Okay
Protected	Worthy
Loved	Lovable
Connected	Guilt-free

Child's reaction to abandonment and loss pain

Emotions	Beliefs
Fear	Shameful
Unprotected	Unworthy
Unloved	Unlovable
Isolated, alone	Guilty

Behaviors

Open to being self, expressing self. Free of need for defensive, controlling role

Behaviors

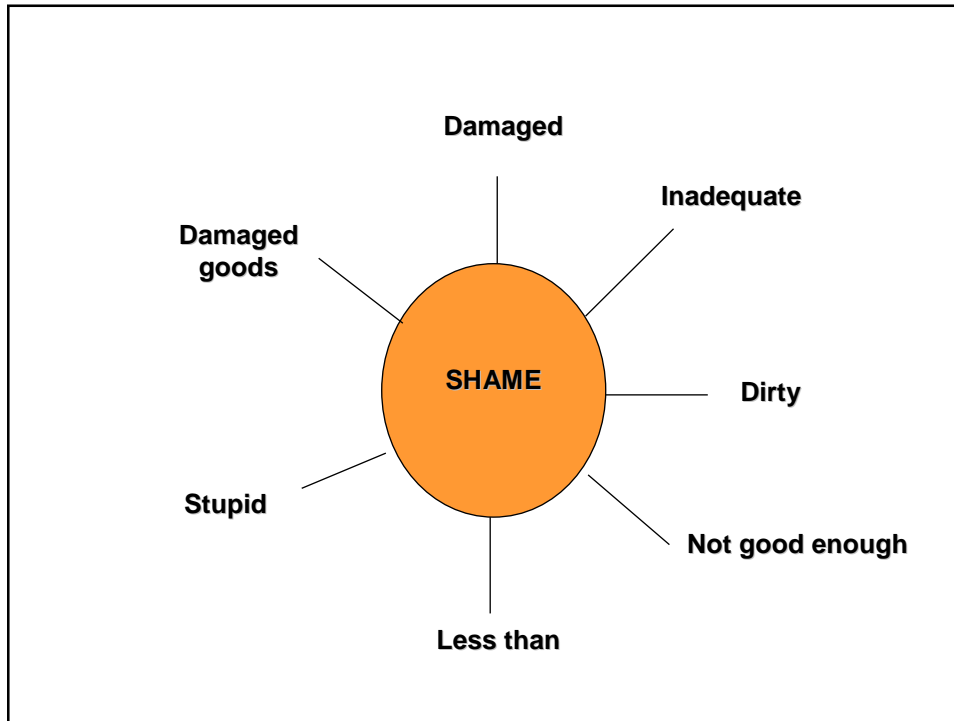
Closed to being self; needs to protect self. Tries To look good – seem lovable. Plays role to defend self, to control/fix family; Responsible One, Placator, Adjuster, Acting Out One

Attended child's family environment

Free to thrive
Sense of self developed
Boundaries developed, strengthened

Abandoned child's family environment

Struggle to survive
Sense of self undeveloped
Boundaries vague, violated



Characteristics of Adults Abandoned as Children

- Seek acceptance outside of self, taking care of others, forgetting own needs
- Under-regulated or over regulated emotions/difficulty with one's emotions
- Connecting to objects rather than people

Characteristics of Adults Abandoned as Children

- Miss social cues when relating to others
- Hypervigilant
- Don't see a problem until it is a crisis
- When they do recognize it is a crisis, can't ask for help

Characteristics of Adults Abandoned as Children

- Clinging while expecting rejection
- Become relationship nomads or stay in emotionally cut off relationships
- Put up barriers if people get too close – walled boundaries
- Lack of boundaries – enmeshment

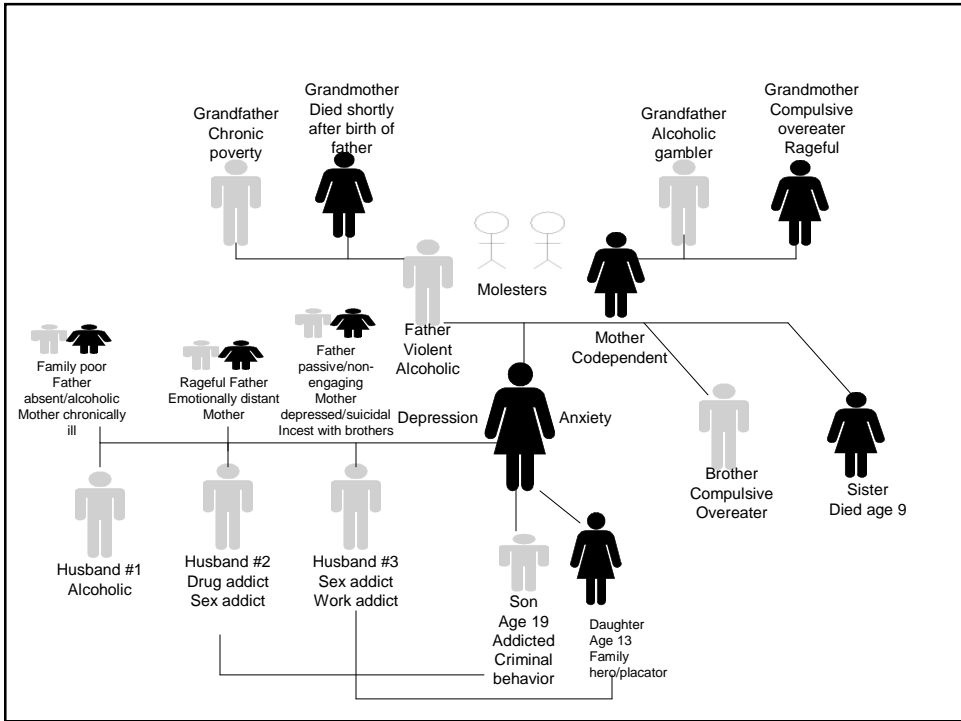
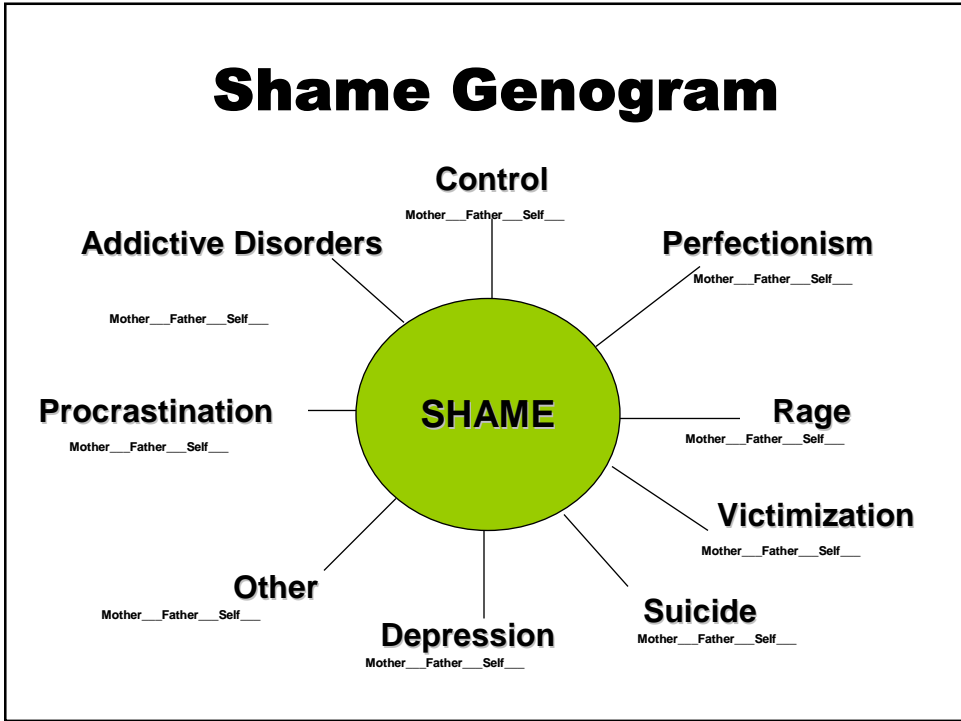
Characteristics of Adults Abandoned as Children

- Difficulty trusting or flip side – give trust when unearned
- Inability to articulate needs and feelings
- Unrealistic expectations / impoverished expectations
- Cognitive distortions, faulty thinking

Characteristics of Adults Abandoned as Children

- Inability to engage in healthy self care
- Image management- making every thing on outside look good to the outside world, feeling greater despair internally
- Lack of self-worth – shame responses

Shame Genogram



Family is the Client

- Family no longer means just the wife, it means partners, husbands, wives, step-parents, grandparents, siblings and children (young and adult)
- Address the immediate crisis
- Create a continuum of services to intervene with long-term consequences

Family is the Client

- Be trauma informed
- Go beyond educational framework
- Assist family members in recognizing their part of the addictive system

When we focus on the family and their recovery, the likelihood of the addicted person -

- *receiving help,*
- *staying in treatment and*
- *continuing in a recovery process*

substantially increases.

We all need to take responsibility
where we can.

Thank you for making a difference