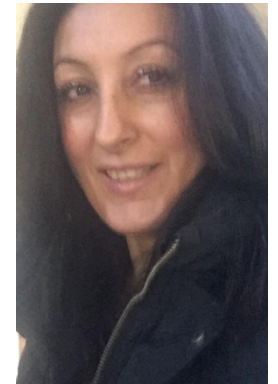


“In the experience of clients who identify as addicts with shame-based experiences, how might counselling help with their recovery?”



Results/Findings:

All respondents felt that:

- Shame was central to their self-identity and contributed to their addiction.
- Carried shame their whole lives.
- Disclosed using substances from a young age to change the way they felt.
- Addiction increased their feelings of shame. Suppression of shame led to increased substance use.
- Kept their shame hidden for years fearing others' rejection/judgement.
- Counselling offered a safe, non-judgemental environment in which to reveal, explore and understand their shame.; where it came from, *'who it actually belonged to'*, and its corrosive effect on their identity.

Conclusions/implications:

The findings suggest that:

- Counselling within a non-judgemental/empathic alliance, is instrumental in facilitating the exploration/understanding of underlying shame-based experiences and their relationship to the individuals' addiction.
- Counselling leads to enhanced self-awareness and self-acceptance.
- Continued counselling support appears central to on-going recovery and may be the most effective long-term treatment.