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

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| **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.** |