

The Addiction Cycle & Shame vs. Guilt

At the core of every addiction is shame.

Who it's for:



Addicts and their loved ones who are struggling with addiction, depression, destructive behaviors, anxiety, OCD, etc.

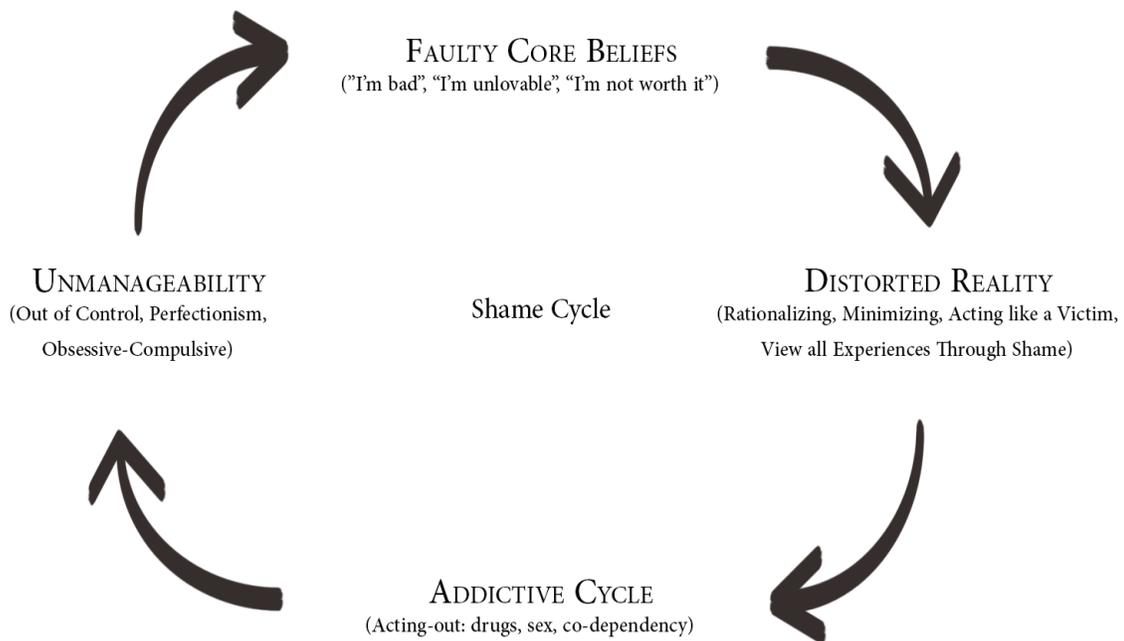
That friend you've been trying to "help" for 20 years

Family Home Evening lessons

Do you wonder why you or a loved one continues to cycle through addictive behaviors, as if unable to leave them behind?

The Truth is, **addictive behavior is never about the substance, activity, or attitude with which the person is acting out addictively.** It is always about the **distortion of the person's real feelings and the inability to connect with self and others.** Addiction is driven by **shame** and **fear**. Shame and fear are extremely uncomfortable feelings. **Shame** says things like, "I'm not enough," "I'm no good," "no one loves me," "I don't matter," "I'm bad and unworthy," "I get everything right," "I'm better than you," etc. Fear then says, "Those statements are true." And because we so often believe our shame, we feel sad, bad, unloved, unwanted, disconnected from others, fearful, trapped, needing to hide, wanting to isolate, etc.

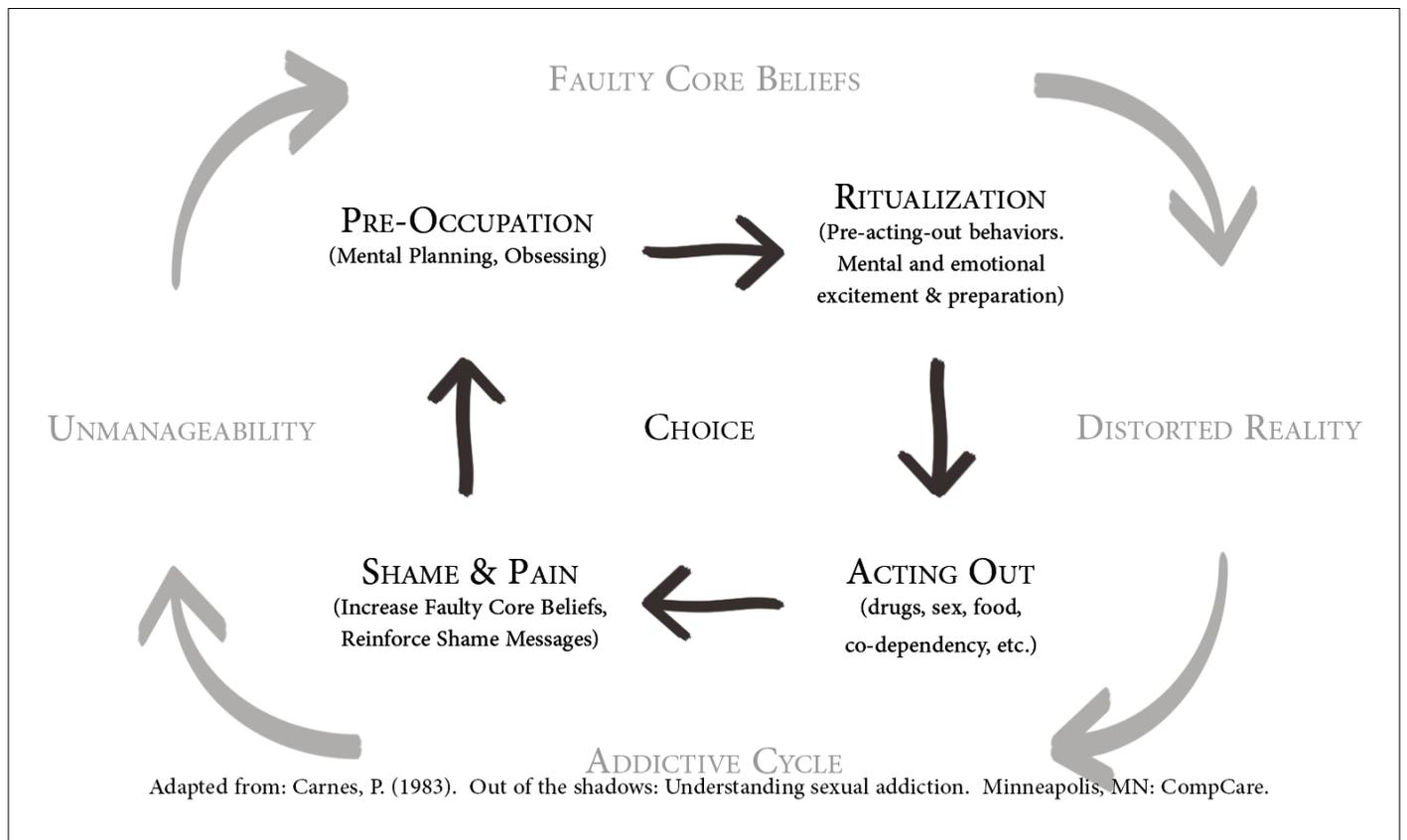
Addictive behavior is the ability to alter reality in such a way that we don't have to feel anything that we deem as "uncomfortable"—to numb ourselves to any emotion, event, relationship, trauma, and/or experience that we believe will create any dis-"comfort" emotionally,



Adapted from: Carnes, P. (1983). Out of the shadows: Understanding sexual addiction. Minneapolis, MN: CompCare.

mentally, physically, socially, financially, and so forth. The outcome is that **addiction destroys connection**—all connections.

Addiction is not a respecter of persons. It will penetrate anyone who is not willing—or does not know how—to feel and experience reality as it presents itself to them. If we are not willing to experience reality as it authentically happens, then addictive thinking will begin to “control” our reality with faulty core beliefs, or beliefs based in shame. As we unconsciously engage in this distortion of emotions and reality, cyclical patterns (addictions) develop.



Again, addictions not the core issue—they are a symptom. Addressing shame heals addictions. The ConneXions Classroom Shame vs. Guilt and Addiction Cycle materials will empower you with understanding of what is truly driving the destructive behaviors of yourself and others. These materials will walk you through a process of understanding self, healing shame and healing addiction by living in recovery (not only sobriety).