



### CASE HISTORY

*I never realized I struggled with binge-eating until after my alcohol sobriety  
I started drinking initially out of rebellion  
Ultimately, my alcohol use was out of my sense of shame to fulfill the role I saw myself in (in the family)  
I would alternate between binge drinking and binge eating*

### CASE HISTORY

*Growing up I was rewarded by my mother with food  
My mother had an ED and was obsessed with dieting and body image  
I can only relate to my mother through outward appearance  
If I lost weight there was jealousy from my mother  
If I struggled with weight she felt better because she looked better  
She felt better about herself when I was wounded*

### CASE HISTORY

*I would feed off the attention from my mother  
My mother and food are linked  
If I don't give in to cravings I can't survive and I'm rejecting my mother  
  
If I detach from my mother, I detach from survival*

### PURGING

Reverse Object Relations

## PURGING

- Uses the children as “receptacles” for her unresolved emotional issues
- Blames the children for her own anger and self-loathing



## PURGING

*• My mother seemed to be unable to contain her own anxiety. She had to dump it onto me by telling me about every detail of her problems, no matter how personal. It really didn't matter what I had to tell her. She would give a cursory listen to what I had to say, but then it was like a list that she had to get out at all costs. It really didn't matter about the severity of my problems, she was compelled to try to hand over her problems to me. Even when I was struggling with colon cancer at the time, I couldn't 'trump' my mother's need to dump her problems."*





WHAT HELPS

- Breaking through the denial
- Probably the most difficult aspect of therapy
- Demonstrates the power of needing love and resistance to the awareness that it did not exist

WHAT HELPS

- Feelings Work
- This awareness will lead to some very deep feelings that will need to be expressed

WHAT HELPS

- Recognizing and releasing what does not belong to the person
- The projections of the parent

**WHAT HELPS**

- Insight-oriented therapy in combination with cognitive behavioral therapy
- Have the person choose a myth/story to examine what it reveals about their life
- It will become their "hero journey"

**WHAT HELPS**

- Explore issues and feelings of the past while challenging old beliefs and creating new beliefs and behaviors in the present
- Anger work – Projected anger towards the children that gets internalized and anger from the shame messages

**WHAT HELPS**

- Feelings Work
- Emptiness – Expressing the existential emotions of the projected "hunger" for more. This may include depression or despair or lack of motivation

**WHAT HELPS**

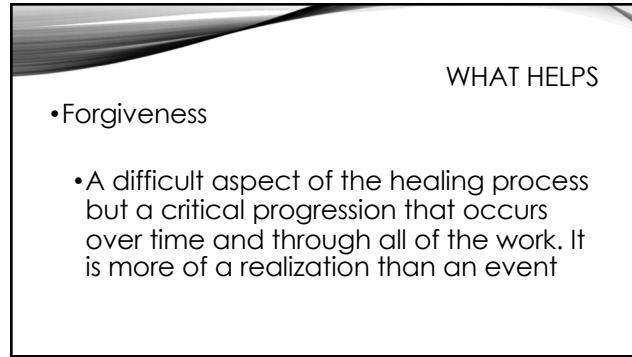
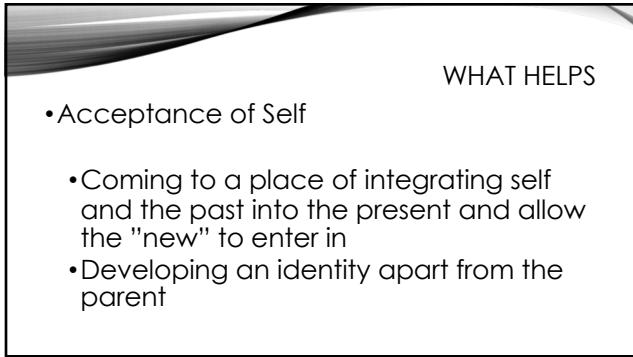
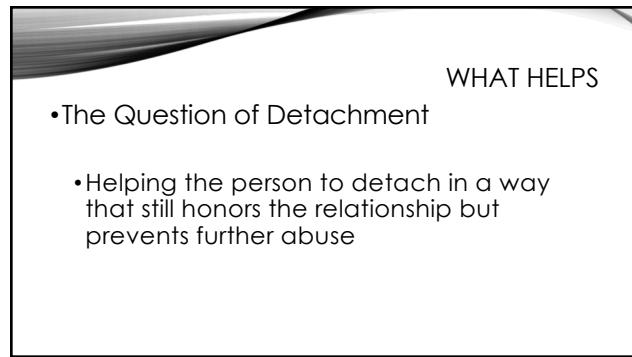
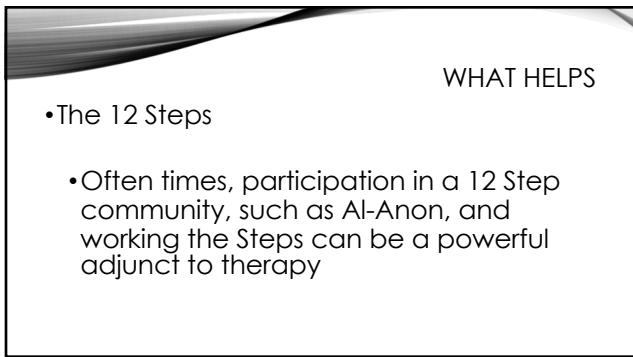
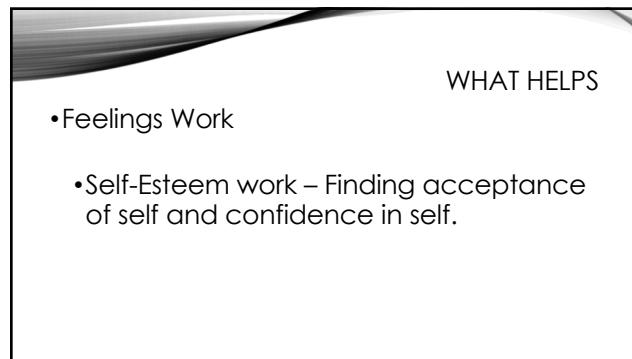
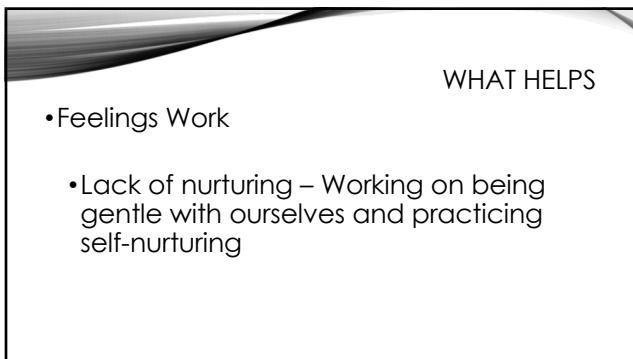
- Feelings Work
- Anxiety – A deep anxiety that is undefined and not attached to any specific event. Driven to seek and find approval

**WHAT HELPS**

- Feelings Work
- Shame – Working on becoming aware of the shame messages/beliefs and creating new and affirming beliefs

**WHAT HELPS**

- Feelings Work
- Attachment issues – Education and practice with healthy attachment



## FORGIVENESS

- Getting Ready
- Hurting
- Hating
- Healing
  - Recognize the context
  - The question of confrontation

## FORGIVENESS

- You may choose to confront
  - If you have ongoing contact
  - You wish to renew the relationship
  - You feel confrontation is necessary
- Be careful of expectations!

## FORGIVENESS

- You may choose not to confront
  - If you no longer have contact and don't want to
  - The confrontation would be harmful because the injurer is in denial

## FORGIVENESS

- Letting go
  - This is a gradual process in which we notice that we don't hurt as much and do not feel driven to change the other person, we feel more secure and hopeful, and don't give others the power to hurt us.

## FORGIVENESS

- We may not want to forgive because:
  - It feels like we're giving up
  - The other person is not "punished"
  - We can use the situation
  - It may be the only identity we know
  - We don't want to lose the victim role

## FORGIVENESS

- Forgiveness frees us:
  - From focusing on the abuse(r)
  - From reacting to life
  - From trying to control others
  - To get our power, identity, and potential
  - To use our energy for ourselves

## FORGIVENESS

- The final word:
  - My willingness to open the door to hear her provided my path to forgiveness for both her and myself.

## RESOURCES

- This Mean Disease: Growing Up in the Shadow of My Mother's Anorexia Nervosa* by Daniel Becker
- Forgiveness, Hazelden Press