

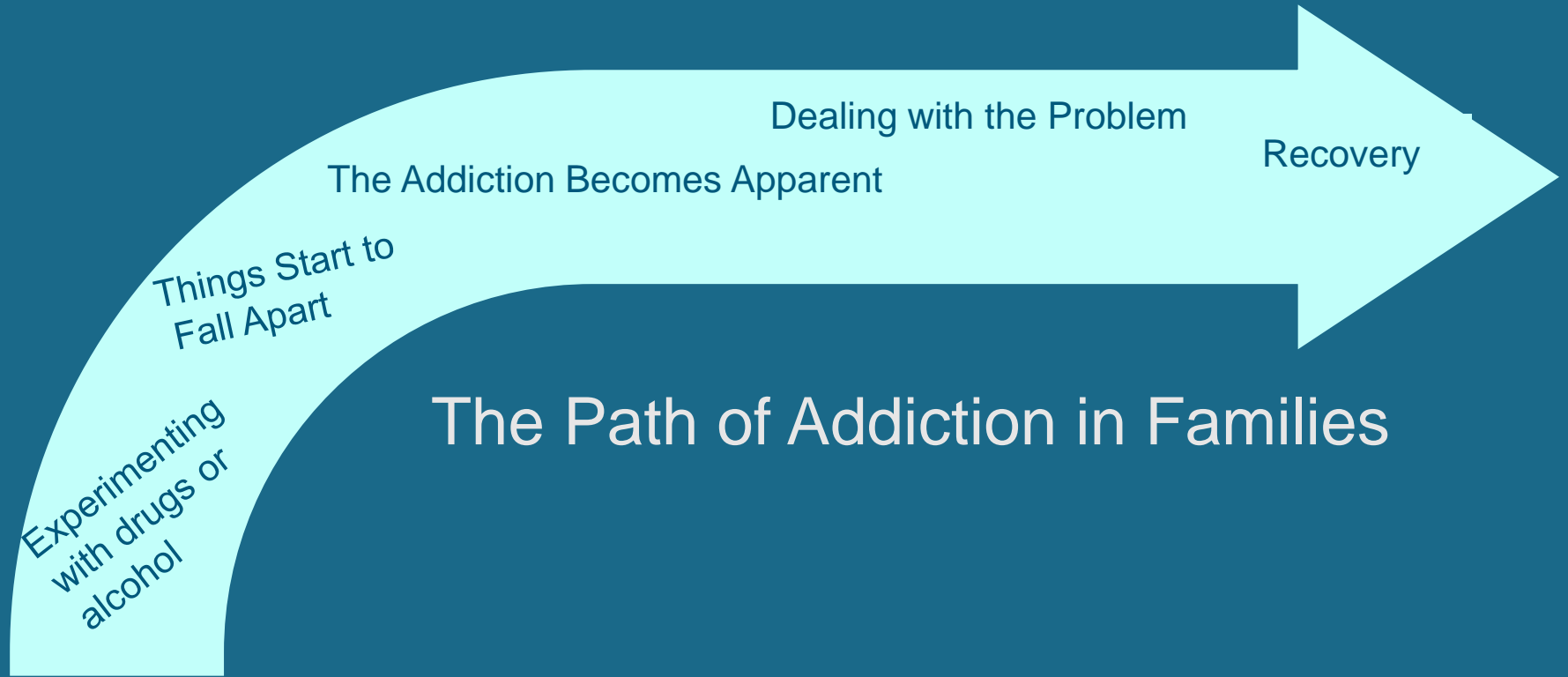


# Finding Compassion, Help and Hope for Parents of Young People Struggling with Addiction

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Foundation



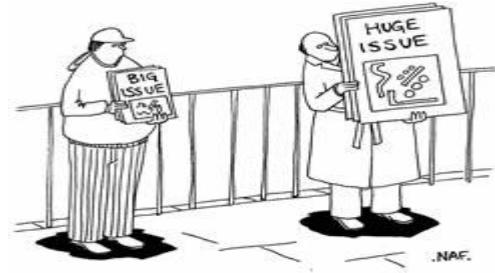
## The Path of Addiction in Families



# Adolescence and Young Adulthood

## Going thru the Normal Stages

- Independence
- Authority
- Power
- Agreeing on what the problem is



# Things Start to Fall Apart



# The Addiction Becomes Apparent

Loss of Hopes and Dreams



Facing the Risks and Realities

# The Costs to Parents

- Physical Health
- Stress
- Job
- Relationships
- Mental Health



# The Cultural Stigma of Addiction



“To have a chemically dependent child is even more threatening to a parent’s self esteem than to have a dependent spouse. When a husband is alcoholic, society holds him responsible; when a child is alcoholic, society blames the parents.

-Wegscheider, 1981

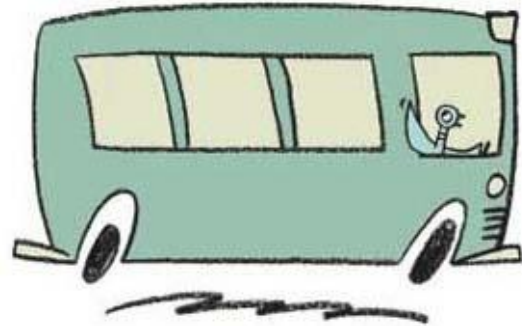


# The Effects of Cultural Stigma



# Dealing with the Problem

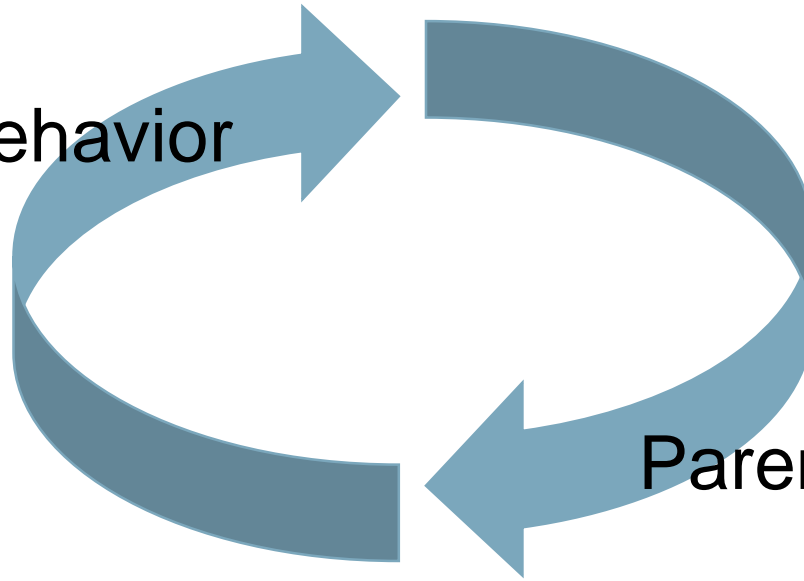
Trying to keep  
the wheels on  
the bus



# Parenting

## Addiction Context

Addictive Behavior



Parenting Tactics

# Complementary Behavior Patterns

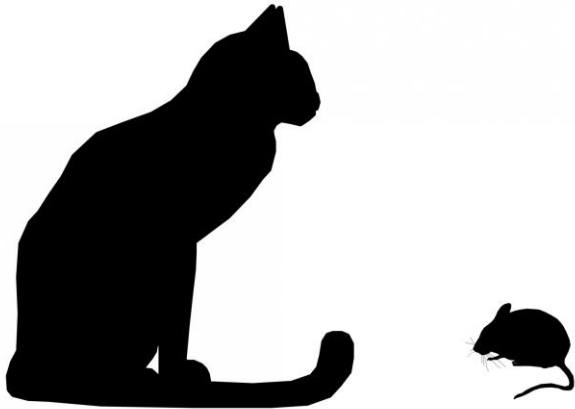
Over-functioning vs. Under-functioning (Enabling)



Fuzzy Emotional Boundaries (Enmeshment)

# Complementary Behavior Patterns

“Cat and Mouse” Chase

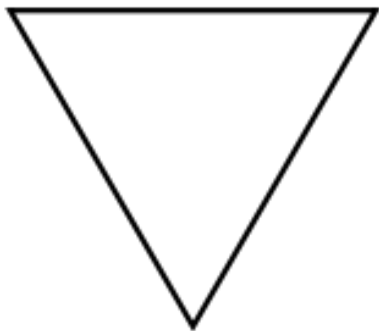


Reactive Interactions

# Triangulation

Persecutor

Protector



Blamer

- **Persecutor**- “more control or punishment is needed to fight the addiction”
- **Protector**: “more love or nurturing will fix the addiction”
- **Blamer** “It’s \_\_\_\_\_’s fault”



# Parallel Process: Parent's Drug of Choice is the Addicted Child

## Adolescent

- Denial: "I don't have a problem"
- Blaming parents and society
- Emotional rollercoaster
- Emotionally stunted or immature
- Loss of trust in self, others
- Irrational actions
- Poor cognitive functioning
- Fear of letting go of the drug

## Family Member

- Denial: "It's just a phase"
- Blaming self, "bad friends"
- Emotional rollercoaster
- Parents not acting in age appropriate roles
- Loss of trust in the addict, self
- Irrational actions
- Poor cognitive functioning
- Fear of letting go of the addict

# Family recovery requires a paradigm shift.....

## Old Paradigm

- I'm responsible for my adolescent's actions. I need to find the right answer and then everything will be okay.
- I'm supposed to protect my adolescent
- Society holds me accountable by reinforcing these beliefs

## New Paradigm

- I can only be responsible for my own actions
- I will support and guide my adolescent. I cannot protect or control them
- I will set clear expectations and hold my child accountable for his or her choices

# Filters for parents

## Recovery Filter

- How do I want my household to be?
- How do I want to use my assets?
- Role models effective parenting and good boundaries

## Relapse Filter

- How do I keep my adolescent sober or alive?
- Fuels chaos, robs adolescent of opportunities to learn and implies they are not capable



# What can Parents do?



# What can Parents do?

Make room for  
your experience



Find help to Support  
your efforts to  
change



A photograph of two women sitting at a table outdoors, laughing heartily. The woman on the left has long dark hair and bangs, wearing a light-colored patterned sweater. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a dark turtleneck. They are both smiling broadly, showing their teeth. The background is slightly blurred, showing some foliage. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

Questions?



## **Cigna Behavioral Health Awareness**

If you are a Cigna customer and have questions about Substance Use treatment or about your benefits and how to use them, please contact:

**Stephanie Gissal - 800.274.7603 x398516**

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**Wanda Russell – 800.274.7603 x342063**