

Recovery Steps

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT		
	Offender	Partner
STOP	END AFFAIR. Zero contact with the third party or parties. If possible, end contact with 3 rd party or parties in a way that your partner can “witness” it. Agree to what happens if further contact.	Witness offender ending the affair. Collaborate with plan re: further contact.
NEGOTIATE BOUNDARIES	Discuss boundaries for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication – when we talk and where (what room) • control of and access to money • coordination of daily responsibilities • how much time to spend together or apart • whether to sleep together • whether to maintain sexual relations • degree of physical contact (none, hold hand, hug, shoulder touch) • what further contact, if any, the participating partner will have with the outside affair person • and what information to share with potential interested parties (e.g., children, in-laws, or friends) 	
COMMUNICATION	Learn to use each of these approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monologues • Reflective listening • Diary and letter writing 	
TRANSPARENCY	Grant full access to emails, texts, phone, computer, schedule... Share all accounts and all passwords. Do so without resistance. Place phones in set location in the home. Make it so the betrayed partner does not have to ask to check.	
ANGER & ANXIETY MGMT	Gain coping skills for trauma, anger and anxiety (including PTSD-like symptoms such as flashbacks): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation techniques • Worry times • Thought records • Physical self-care (e.g., sleep, diet, exercise) • Engaging social support while maintaining appropriate boundaries • Spiritual support if consistent with your belief system • Individual therapy • Comfort from partner if appropriate 	
SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STD testing is recommended for both parties • Are any 3rd parties (spouse of person who cheated with betraying partner) who are threatening anyone? • Communicate if any laws or work rules were violated that create risk 	

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FORGIVENESS		
	Offender	Partner
WHAT	Offending partner should prepare a Formal Therapeutic Disclosure (FTD) letter (see Tools section) which will be read to the betrayed partner. Discuss what happened until each partner is clear on the details. Answer questions completely and openly. Do not lie to protect. Discuss the third party, who initiated, and related details.	Ask yourself: "Do I really need to know this?" You do NOT need to know every detail, especially about the sex. Listen to responses.
WHY	UNDERSTAND WHY THE BETRAYAL HAPPENED. Distinguish contributions from taking responsibility. The offending partner will prepare a WHY letter (see template in the Tools page). Identify and discuss internal and external factors. Prepare a Marriage History. Review Family of Origin. This step takes the longest.	
Impact	FEEL THE IMPACT. Identify how the behavior affected your partner (tangibly and emotionally). Betrayed partner writes an Impact Letter (see Tools section). Use the Reflective Listening Exercise.	Clearly express the emotional consequences of what happened. Use "I" statements.
RECONCILIATION		
	Offender	Partner
OWN IT	Be specific about what you did that hurt your partner, without minimizing. Take responsibility for your actions. Be clear. Eliminate the word "but".	Listen. If there is something that is missing, gently point it out.
PLAN	Build a plan together to assure that the behavior will not occur again. The offending partner must own the plan but both partners need to believe in it. Love is a choice, but trust is earned. Transparency, identify triggers, pre-decisions, accountability,... The plan must address core issues of offender and issues in the marriage (if any).	
FIX IT	RESTITUTION. Fix it, even if symbolic. If your actions deprived your partner of time, attention or trust, take actions to make up for it.	Give feedback on the restitution. Does it fit? Accept it gracefully.
WRITE	Write down the plan. The offender should prepare the plan but the couple should both believe in it.	

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RECONCILIATION		
	Offender	Partner
SORRY	SAY "I'M SORRY". Express heart-felt regret.	Listen with an open mind and soft heart.
ASK FOR FORGIVENESS	<p>Make a clear request for a release from the consequences of the grievance. You are asking for forgiveness for today. You may have to ask again many times, often every day.</p> <p>Every time you ask for forgiveness and receive it, you are rebuilding your bond and your trust. Even though this is hard at first, your goal is to do this whenever the feelings of pain arise.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, I forgive you for now. In this moment, I have decided to let go of the right to punish my partner and the negative emotions associated with this action. 2. Not yet; I cannot forgive you now, but I am working on it. Tell your partner what may be missing from the prior steps that may help.