



THE 7 AFFAIR TYPES

ACCIDENTAL AFFAIR

TYPE 01



TYPE 02

INTIMACY/CONFLICT
AVOIDANCE AFFAIR



TYPE 03



PHILANDERER AFFAIR

TYPE 04



ENTITLEMENT AFFAIR

SPLIT SELF AFFAIR
(ROMANTIC AFFAIR)

TYPE 05



TYPE 06

EXIT AFFAIR



TYPE 07

SEXUAL ADDICTION AFFAIR



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Introduction

“Your husband had an affair? That’s terrible! How could he do this to you and the children? You know, once a cheater, always a cheater. He will never change.”

I am sure you have heard of this common saying that is used to describe the character of an unfaithful partner. Is it true that a person who cheats on their partner will always cheat on their partner, or for that matter, any other person they are with? There is some truth to this theory. The Monogamy Pyramid will talk about this in greater detail. However, the single most important factor in affair recover, is the distinction between affair types.

The perception of infidelity is idiosyncratic. Some betrayed partners will recover after their partners multiple affairs, and others who cannot mend following one affair.

I believe the secrecy and dishonesty, not the sex, is the real problem with infidelity. It is our job to help the couple rediscover their own relationship, and decided the best way forward from that point.



Differentiating between types of affairs

The affair *is* a symptom of problems in the marital relationship, for most types of affairs. The affair discovery will start the “crisis” in the relationship. The most threatening aspect is not the affair it's self, but the dishonesty that it casts out over the entire relationship.

Observation of the couples' behavior patterns being played out in front of you helps in distinguishing between the different types of affairs.

Some clients make it easy to identify the type of affair by providing a detailed picture of their relationship issues. You will know their affair type by their phone interview or by the detail provided on the Clients Forms.

You will notice with some of your clients who have had multiple or long term affairs, that the affair type will change over time and circumstance.

Other individuals are less forthcoming about their situation initially, but when both spouses are present, observation of their communication patterns provides information about the affair type.

Here we look at the various affair types and provide a basic treatment strategy for that affair type.

The 7 Types of Affairs

1. [Accidental Affair](#)
2. [Intimacy/Conflict Avoidance Affair](#)
3. [Philanderer Affair](#)
4. [Entitlement Affair](#)
5. [Split Self Affair \(Romantic Affair\)](#)
6. [Exit Affair](#)
7. [Sexual Addiction Affair](#)

How the affair types are ranked.

The affair type ranking for coaches is based on the underlying issues and patterns of interaction between the marital partners, and not just on the unfaithful partner alone.



- Each of the 7 types of affairs has a characteristic pattern differences in feelings, behavior, age, gender and outcome.
- By identifying the message embedded in the affair the coach can begin to formulate a plan for treatment.
- We **are not** going to talk about arrangements that couples sometimes work out either verbally or nonverbally. For some couples they turn a blind eye to their spouses indiscretion. This is acceptance. We also exclude open marriages and other consensual if nonverbal arrangements between spouses.

We do include:

- Un-married couples
- Same sex couples

Affairs of the heart are called "emotional affairs, but do not include sexual contact, are also affairs. Although the dynamics are similar the lack of an overtly sexual component means that the volatility and sense of betrayal is substantially less. Affairs of the heart are sexual affairs in the making. I choose to treat and classify emotional affairs, with the affair message they are sending.

We will classify an affair as a sexual involvement with somebody other than the spouse, which is hidden from the spouse.

The key elements: extramarital, sexual and secret.

What is your role as a coach

When our clients are involved in an affair they are hurting, even though the affair itself maybe deeply satisfying. The affair indicates that they want something better in their marriage and in their life, but that they do not know how to pursue it honestly. They are not often clear about what they do want, knowing best what they do not want.

It is a pain that has brought them into therapy, and I know at some level that pain will also be part of changing how they handle the Intimate relationship.

As a coach we can be most helpful if we take a systemic approach.

- what does the affair Mean?
- what is the message to the spouse?
- what issues are being avoided?



- is the affair holding the marriage together, keeping the marriage interrupt, or providing a way out of the marriage?

Our role is to help the client address and sort through these issues. The process of coaching must be an honest one. Issues of the betrayal cannot be addressed through secrecy and betrayal.

Remember that a relationship has two main ingredients = Intimacy & Friendship.

If your couple did not have friendship or intimacy before affair discovery, they must work harder as a couple to bring these ingredients into the relationship. If they will not be friends, then affairs will reoccur in the future. These couples will struggle to have a relationship regardless of future affairs or not.

With some types of affairs, the outcome will not be positive. However, by using the 7-Step coaching program, the couple will end the relationship with less emotional trauma, and be able to rebuild their life faster.

The table on the following page provides a reference to each of the 7 Affair Types.



	1 Accidental Affair	2 Avoidance Affairs	3 Philanderer	4 Entitlement Affair	5 Sacrifice Affair/Spilt Self	6 Exit Affair	7 Sexual Addiction
	THE ONE NITE STAND			ROMANTI C AFFAIR			
Personal Story	"I wont hurt anyone, just this once, it's not who I am"	"I am committed to my marriage, but have emotional needs my spouse can't meet"	Monogamy is difficult."	" I should not be limited, as I deserve what ever I choose"	"I love my family but I'm in love with my affair partner"	"help me make it out the door"	"fill me up as I'm running on empty"
Sex Involved	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Gender of Infidel	male or female	male or female	male	male or female	male	male or female	male
Age Of Infidel	any	20s & 30s	any	any	40 +	any	any
Length of relationship before affair	any	<6 yrs	Any	any	20+	15+	0
Theme of Affair	Curiosity	Avoid Conflict and/or Avoid Intimacy	Does not want the wife too close to him emotionally.	Entitled	family & should v wants	avoid facing end of marriage	individual feels empty
Duration of Affair	Once	Can last for years	once or twice	Brief to 2 yrs	2+	6m to 2 yrs	brief
Level of Emotional Involvement	None	Varies	None	Little	great	Some	none
Infidel Presents as	Guilt/Shame	Guilt	gracious/seductive	seductive	depressed	Uninvolved	Guilt/Shame
Betrayed presents as	Angry	Angry	denial	denial	depressed	angry	denial
who presents for therapy	Both	infidel or couple	Betrayed partner or couple	Betrayed partner or couple	infidel or betrayed partner or couple	Betrayed partner or couple	infidel or betrayed partner
Interaction pattern of couple	No Problems	conflict	Separate lives	Separate lives	troubled communication	Infidel uninvolved, Betrayed partner angry	Separate lives
Treatment mode	couple	couple	Individual therapy, marital therapy later	Individual therapy, marital therapy later	Individual therapy, marital therapy later	couple	Individual therapy, marital therapy later
probability for divorce	Low	Low	Average	average	above average	Extremely High	low



Best outcome	Solid Marriage	solid marriage	Revived Marriage or divorce	Revived Marriage or divorce	Revived Marriage or divorce	resolves issues of ending marriage	Family in recovery
Worst Outcome	Other affairs or divorce	Other affairs or divorce	Empty Marriage or Divorce	Empty Shell Marriage or Divorce or Public Humiliation	Empty Shell Marriage or Divorce	Unresolved Loss	damaged family & Public Humiliation



AFFAIR TYPE QUIZ

This quiz first appeared on the Infidelity Recovery Institute's website. Until you are easily able to tell the difference between your clients' affair types, you can use these questions to assist you as well.

Feel free to add to these questions, and share your thoughts with other students on the Facebook page or student forum.

The one night stand was not listed, as it is obvious.

[Intimacy/ Avoidance Affair](#)

[Conflict Avoidance Affair](#)

[Philanderer Affair](#)

[Entitlement Affair](#)

[Split Self Affair \(Romantic Affair\)](#)

[Exit Affair](#)

[Sexual Addiction Affair](#)

- 1) Is this your (or your partner's) first or second affair?
- 2) Do you (does your partner) feel guilty about the affair?
- 3) Have you been married less than 12 years?
- 4) Did the affair last less than 4 months?
- 5) Do you and your partner avoid talking about issues that might lead to disagreement or conflict?
- 6) Do you and your partner usually try to avoid hurting each other's feelings?
- 7) Do you believe that you are regarded by friends and acquaintances as the model couple?
- 8) Do both of you want your marriage to continue?
- 9) Are you (is your partner) having a hard time ending the affair?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably a [Conflict Avoidance Affair](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 8 and no to question 9.



- 1) Have both of you had affairs in the last year or so?
- 2) Did the affair(s) last less than 4 months?
- 3) Do you get into a lot of fights with each other?
- 4) Do you find that every disagreement turns into a battle?
- 5) Are your fights the most emotionally intense moments in your relationship?
- 6) Do both of you want your marriage to continue?
- 7) Are you (is your partner) having a hard time ending the affair?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably an [**Intimacy Avoidance Affair**](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 6 and no to question 7.

- 1) Are you addicted to alcohol, drugs, food or any other substance?
- 2) Do you (or does your spouse) engage in other compulsive sexual behavior, such as porno, or cybersex?
- 3) Do you (or does your spouse) engage in numerous one-night stands or brief affairs?
- 4) Have you (or your spouse) had affairs throughout your relationship?
- 5) Was either of your parents sexually addicted?
- 6) Were you sexually abused as a child?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably a [**Sexual Addiction Affair**](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 6.

- 1) Has your affair (or your spouse's affair) lasted more than 2 years?
- 2) Do you and your spouse live separate lives?
- 3) Have you (or your spouse) had fewer than 5 affairs?
- 4) If the affair has ended, are you (or is your spouse) tempted to resume it?
- 5) Do you believe that marriage and family are important?
- 6) Has much of your marriage been devoted to parenting?
- 7) Are you troubled by your inability to choose between your spouse and your affair partner?
- 8) If you answered yes to #7, do you find yourself changing your mind about which one to choose?
- 9) Do you typically put a lot of energy into making things work the way you think they should?
- 10) Is your affair partner ten or more years younger than you are?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably a [**Split Self Affair**](#) if you answer yes to



most of the questions from 1 to 10.

-
- 1) Do you (does your spouse) want to end your marriage to be with the affair partner?
 - 2) Have you (or your spouse) already cut your emotional ties to the marriage?
 - 3) Have you (or your spouse) decided to end your marriage?
 - 4) If yes to #3, do you believe that you can move ahead with your plans to separate?
 - 5) Was the duration of your affair (or your spouse's) from 10 months to less than 2 years?
 - 6) Is your affair partner fifteen or more years younger than you are?
 - 7) Are endings hard for you?
 - 8) Do you have ambivalent feelings that make it difficult for you to act on your decision to end your marriage?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably an [Exit Affair](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 7 and no to question 8.

-
- 1) Are you focused on achievement and success?
 - 2) Do you compartmentalize the different aspects of your life?
 - 3) Do you take risks, believing that somehow it will all work out – it always has in the past?
 - 4) Were you brought up to be the “star child” or to fulfill a parent’s unfulfilled dreams?
 - 5) Do you sometimes lie to avoid unpleasant outcomes?
 - 6) Are you consciously aware of your emotions?
 - 7) When you want something, do you expect to get it?
 - 8) Do you actively participate with your spouse and your children?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably a [Entitlement Affair](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 7 and no to question 8.

-
- 1) Have you always had affairs or cheating on your partner?
 - 2) Did the affair(s) last less than 4 months?
 - 3) Have you lost count of the number of affairs you have had?
 - 4) Do you believe monogamy is a myth?
 - 5) Are you highly competitive?
 - 6) Have you “seduced” ex-partners?



- 7) Would you like to stay married?
- 8) Do you believe Men & Woman's role are equal?
- 9) Do you want to stop having affairs?

Your affair or your partner's affair is probably an [Philanderer Affair](#) if you answer yes to most of the questions from 1 to 7 and no to question 8 to 9.



TYPE 1: ACCIDENTAL AFFAIRS

Accidental Affair	
Other Names	One Night Stand
Excuse	"I wont hurt anyone, just this once, it's not who I am"
Message	Curiosity
Affair Duration	Once
Development	Immediate
Emotional Involvement	None
Sexual Activity	Single experience, intense, lustful.
Remorse	Usually immediate & intense
Typical Gender	Male or Female
Age	Any
Length of Relationship at Affair Discovery	Any
Recovery	Can be immediate with forgiveness and closing the "windows"
Infidel Presents with	Guilt & Shame
Betrayed Presents as	Angry

Sometimes called: The "One Night Stand"

- ✚ Not preplanned/pre-meditated
- ✚ No emotional involvement
- ✚ Affair length – one night
- ✚ Single or one off sexual experience
- ✚ Does not come from FOO issues
- ✚ Relationship Issue/Deficit – Usually None



- ✚ Recovery Change – Very good with forgiveness
- ✚ Worse Case Scenario if not treated – Can turn into Sexual Addiction Affair

About:

An accidental affair is not always a one night stand (ONS), though many ONSs are accidental in the way they take place. What I mean by accidental is that there was no real decision to cheat, no underlying marital problem that was causing a rift or other circumstances that caused a person who fell into the affair to be looking or seeking another person out for any reason whatsoever.

A one night stand can be considered an impulsive and regrettable reaction.

This type of affair is usually unplanned and is usually due to an impulsive decision in which one was lost in the moment. Business trips or nights out on the town are often when these occur and, while one night stands can sometimes happen with someone known, the majority of the them involve a relative stranger. Alcohol or other recreational drugs may contribute to the situation.

The vast majority of people who have one night stands want to stay in their marriages and are plagued with guilt or a fear of being found out. Frequently the opportunistic affair is associated with a person with low self-esteem who needs the attention of a stranger to feel better about themselves and feel desirable and attractive.

Curiosity can be a significant drive. Those who married young and sexually inexperienced, and be curious what sex would be like with someone else. It is not premeditated to seek out sex. But under the right time and conditions, mistakes are made, and regrettable.

For example, a man could be happily married for years, but then hears his buddies talking about sex. He starts to wonder what he is missing out on.

This type of affair, because of the type of person it attracts, is dangerous and can often become “serial” in nature – turning into Addiction Affair Type (eg, one encounter after another as opportunity arises). Bringing STDs back to the spouse is a major issue.

Why this affair happens:

Many of these happen simply because circumstances put two people together and in



part due to the fact that so few people understand enough about affairs to prevent them from happening. No one came on to the other, there was not any flirtation at the beginning of the relationship and maybe even not a great deal of attraction between the affair partners. Neither was really looking for anything at all.

While many of these are the result of alcohol, circumstances or other mitigating factors like long periods away from home with a coworker of the opposite sex, they are really the result of missing or poor boundary types of things. As an example, it is sometimes necessary for a man and woman travel for business together. Often times these trips will require meetings with clients AND without the clients in order to discuss specifics of the business at hand.

The problem starts when these “off line” meetings begin to take place in a quiet restaurant or even worse, a private motel room. If the meeting starts over dinner, moves to the motel bar, involves a bit of consumption of drinks that lower selective reasoning and then moves on to the motel room it is really a recipe for disaster.

What many don't realize is that simply working together on a project, communicating about things that the two people share a common passion about and without it even being personal information that is being shared, they are allowing a relationship to form that at some level deep inside that part of the brain that does not deal with logic but purely with emotion. As the situation continues, unless prevented by one or both from going beyond the strictly business phase, the two people start to GET something from each other that triggers a pleasure response in the brain that feeds them a reward on a level they can't even put a name to.

Once this point is reached it becomes almost entirely a matter of the will to turn and walk away from the friendship that is beginning to develop. Neither one might be particularly vulnerable, both might have good marriages by their own descriptions and the thought of even considering cheating might never have crossed their minds. However, the feelings the pleasure centers of their brains are feeding them are something they begin to want more of. Two people can actually fall in love with each other and begin to desire being together more and more with absolutely no sexual attraction being present.

At this point, the bond becomes an addiction as chemicals in the brain start taking control of actions and unless something has been done to prevent the whole chain of events from continuing, falling in love or simply giving in to unmet needs that result from being away from the spouse at the time can be almost overwhelming.



The affair isn't a destination anyone was headed when the whole trip began. It is rather the road that the potential affair partners are on that causes this type of affair. It might be a ONS based entirely on lusts and unmet needs of the moment or it could be falling in love with that cute guy or girl at the office that is the net result of accidental infidelity. It is an accident because neither one was looking for anything at all when it began and neither had any intention of even getting involved personally with each other.

Research:

The late Shirley Glass who wrote the book *Not Just Friends* created on her website what she calls "Quizzes" that measure the vulnerability of marriage partners to an affair. These quizzes measure personal vulnerability, relationship vulnerability and social or network vulnerability. She also has quizzes designed to help identify if the relationship you might have with that friend or coworker has crossed any boundaries and not just established some sort of arbitrary line in the sand as the definition of infidelity.

Frank Pittman states that the majority of first affairs even for eventual philanderers are accidental. The reaction of the one having the affair often determines if it will be a one time mistake or accident or if it will lead to a life of secret dalliances and string of sexual conquests. Those who react with a sort of "what was I thinking" or guilt over the affair will often never repeat the process. Those who find it exciting, blame their spouse for the affair or find another "reason" outside themselves for cheating are likely to repeat the affair given the same or similar circumstances.

Pittman uses the analogy of a traffic accident to describe how an accidental affair happens. He talks of driving his 1971 Jaguar down the highway. The car left to its own devices seems to pull always to the left, which here in the US leads it straight into the path of oncoming traffic. He says it doesn't take a lot of effort to prevent the car from causing death and destruction, simply a moderate control of the hand on the wheel to prevent it from going astray.

This is the way accidental affairs happen. The cheater will seem genuinely surprised that they cheated and have no idea in some cases how it happened. They say things like "It just happened" to describe the incident.

But just like the traffic accident, the fact that it was not purposely caused does not result in blame being transferred off of the shoulders of the cheater and onto the betrayed spouse nor entirely onto the affair partner. The fact that it was not a clear choice to cheat is not an indication that there is innocence and the part of the cheater.



Like driving in traffic requires paying attention to conditions, adjusting to those conditions as they change and taking actions to avoid putting oneself into a situation that is more likely to result in mayhem, to protect a marriage from infidelity requires a vigilance and attention to the current conditions in the marriage and the situation surrounding us at the time. Accidental affairs “just happen” as if there was no real cause though the cause was in large part a failure in judgment, a lapse in concentration and a lack of commitment to protecting the marital partnership from intrusion by others.

Unless precautions are taken, accidents happen. And if the same or similar conditions occur and we don't see them taking shape, if our concentration of active prevention continues, they tend to happen again and again.

Treatment Strategy:

I have separated a one-night stand from sexual addiction because the treatment strategy is different. Once an addiction has taken root, other professionals are needed to help the couple overcome the sexual addiction challenge. Whereas a one night stand, if caught early, you can treat by yourself.

The treatment for a one night stand is by going the 7 Step Program Step by Step.

- Keep the couple together throughout the whole program.
- Focus on improving communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Help the betrayed spouse with obsession and triggers.

And finally ensure you get them back in one yrs time to do a PREPARE-ENRICH or other form of relationship check up.

Remember, that is not to say this type of affair is harmless - A one night stand that is not properly dealt with can set the stage for future, long time sexual affairs.

Keeping a one nightstand secret is never recommended. Overtime, the secrecy will create a loss in intimacy and emotional involvement.

CASE STUDIES:

Tyrell & Ebony

- 📌 Occupations: Handyman / Doctor
- 📌 Ages: 30s
- 📌 Problem: Concerned that his “roving eye” will lead to future infidelity



Presenting With: Guilt & Shame

Tyrell was concerned that his lifestyle and appreciation for beautiful women would one day lead him to be unfaithful to his wife of 2 years. Tyrell had issues with being told what to do, and therefore found married life a challenge. While Ebony was not assertive and preferred to avoid all conflict, both people realized married life required boundaries to be set in order to survive. Tyrell wanted to do the 7 Step program to talk about his past life, and reset the marriage for a new fresh start. Ebony also worked on expressing her emotions, and letting down her wall that lack of communication and sex had built.

The 7 Step Program worked extremely well with this couple as a preventative measure, and an amazing relationship enrichment tool.



TYPE 2: AVOIDANCE AFFAIRS

Two Types of Avoidance Affairs:

1. Intimacy Avoidance
2. Conflict Avoidance

- ✚ Contributing factor: The Martial style contributes to this type of affair starting.
- ✚ Cheaters are often unsatisfied with the “emotional” interaction in the relationship.
- ✚ Develops slowly and gradually
- ✚ Usually know each other well
- ✚ Feels like they are in love with affair partner
- ✚ Recovery is tough for these types of affairs

1. INTIMACY AVOIDANCE FEATURES:

Intimacy Avoiders are frightened of getting too close, so they keep the barriers high between them. Conflict is one barrier, affairs are another. Their emotional connection with each other is through frequent and intense conflict. Often, each spouse becomes involved in an affair. These couples are the mirror opposite of the Conflict Avoiders.

Characterized by:

- ✚ Avoids Intimacy
- ✚ Critical – hurtful words and comments
- ✚ Bickering
- ✚ Open conflict
- ✚ Relationship feels safe because it is predictable
- ✚ Efficient is a good description
- ✚ Both people are “equal” in the relationship

Problem during recovery

- ✚ Neither will take responsibility for the issues in the relationship
- ✚ New rituals can be difficult to implement due to relationship efficiency
- ✚ Can work if they both are open to trying something new
- ✚ Will they see a different relationship as better?



2. CONFLICT AVOIDANCE FEATURES:

Conflict Avoiders are nice -- they're terrified to be anything but nice, for fear that conflict will lead to abandonment or losing control. They don't have a way to stand up to each other when there's a problem, so they can't resolve their difference and the marriage erodes.

🌈 Features of the Martial Relationship:

- A predictable relationship = drudgery & lifelessness
- Couple will either have:
 - Separate lives, activities, interests OR
 - One will control everything, and the other is obedient
- The cheaters behavior will be vastly different during the affair, as they feel as new lease on life
- It is very difficult for the betrayed spouse to hear the cheaters unmet need/s. Remember that in a “predicable relationship everyone thinks they are doing the right thing, and doing nothing wrong. So the betrayed spouse doesn’t like to be told there was something “they “ were not doing.
- Because of this belief, it is difficult to work through affair recovery, and as a result, the relationship may not make it.

- couple has not learned the skills of conflict resolution
- typically happens early in a marriage
- The couple is typically in 20s or 30s
- both will collude in their attempts to make things go back to the way they used to be
- **conflict avoidance may also begin coaching with the affair still ongoing**

The conflict avoidance affair screams to the spouse “I'll make you pay attention to me”. Couples who cannot talk about the differences and disappointments may use an affair to get out from under a blanket of controlled amicability.

The strain is the more dissatisfied spouse, whether that is a husband or wife. The unfaithful partner always manages to be discovered, and the discovery blasts loose the covers and make it clear that there are several problems in the marriage.

The pattern can flow on into subsequent marriages.

The timing of the affair is tied to increased frustration combined with opportunity.



Why this affair happens

- preoccupation with a new baby,
- frustration over being told many times to do something
- work pressures that competes with the marriage
- The demands of an elderly parent
- A sense of inadequacy in gaining the spouses approval

The conflict being avoided stems from dissatisfaction that a spouse is not available. It may also come from a lack of attention or approving.

Many of these couples struggling with the normal disappointment that comes only in marriage when the honeymoon phase is over. Some expected that marriage would make them feel whole and just hasn't done that. Others feel that voicing their discomfort could end the marriage. Rather than learning to interact with each other at a deeper level, these couples deny and avoid the uncomfortable feelings.

The couple has constructed their marriage to avoid conflict in the hopes of gaining emotional security.

As long as problems and conflicts are not verbalized, it is possible to believe that they do not exist. It is this denial that forms the shaky basis of the security. The affair is a clear message that the foundations of the marriage are not what they seem.

As the obsession with the affair dies down and the nature of the couples issues becomes known, rebuilding can begin.

TIP: there is a degree of resistance and exploring past relationship conflict areas. The panic spouse will often declare "I can't forgive". Your job is to reframe this comment and offered reassurance...

Eg "of course you can't it's too soon! You haven't done the work you need to do. The last thing you're going to do now is forgive". At this point the couples commitment can only be two the process of exploration not to continuing the relationship or marriage. They will determine as they work together weather they can build a solid foundation for their marriage.

The couple can appear to looks like the model couple . They can be somewhat perfectionistic. The couple tends to be trying to make their marriage work and please each other. But the pleasing appear to be self-sacrificing to the person.



Communication is limited by the efforts to avoid conflict. And also by the couples collusive focus on idealistic goals instead of on reality.

Underneath the surface is a tendency towards depression. They have a hard time expressing dissatisfaction. They also find it difficult to discuss problems. Sometimes they are not even aware of how dissatisfied they are.

In conflict avoidance affairs, differences get put aside, and resentments begin to pileup. The pressure builds and without verbal means to resolve the issues that exploded into an affair which is discovered.

The affair itself is really a serious relationship since a real purpose is to get the spouses attention.

The threat to the marriage is not the affair but the avoidance of conflict. The affair becomes a threat only when it's message is misinterpreted or ignored.

Forgiving prematurely will be seen as doing nothing. The result will be more affairs. The message will be sent again and again until the messages heard

Why they shouldn't end the marriage

- ending the marriage abruptly short changes both spouses, neither learns how to handle the normal give-and-take of the marriage
- there is a good prognosis for the marriage when the affair says as a catalyst for facing problems and learning how to resolve differences
- if they complete the seven step infidelity recovery program, and they decide to end the marriage - it will end with the understanding and closure if the spouses have addressed the issues with each other.

Seeking therapy/coaching

- Discovery of an affair is a common reason for seeking therapy.
- sometimes it is the infidel who comes individually for help, Sent in by but their partner to find out what's wrong with them, and to fix it
- The infidels guilt plus their tendency to be over responsible makes than willing to accept full responsibility for the affair
- in other cases the betrayed will come in for the initial appointment to check out the coach, and inform you of the situation before bringing in the infidel
- if they present as a couple, the spouse is likely to be extremely obsessive about the affair, and will probably attempt to hang the therapist the responsibility for blaming and



punishing or fixing the infidel

- The dominant effect with conflict avoidance is a controlled amicability.

Both spouses fully engage with each other, but they continue to avoid open conflict. It's not that there is never any conflict, it's that any conflict expressed by one spouse is dropped by the other.

Even the spouses position with the affair has an element of control. If this becomes too emotional, the infidel deflects the charge with a rational response and vice versa. They try to move as little as possible from an invisible centerline.

Conflict goes nowhere.

Family of origin

- they were told as a child that anger was bad
- they could have been punished for disagreeing

The Third Party

- The emotional ties between the infidel and the lover are not usually strong
- The loss is more the fantasy than the lover
- if the affair was with a friend or if there are emotional ties of any significance the infidel will need to grieve the loss

As a coach you can help by reframing the grief as an important part of letting go, whether it is letting go of the lover or of the fantasy.

Treatment Strategy:

First we decide if we are willing to make a commitment to work on the marriage.

Then we decide if we can truly close the affair. The infidel needs to close directly and openly with the lover. Help the infidel understand that without closure of the affair, it is still open.

Then the spouse needs to hear about what actually happened – The Affair Story.



After we deal with personal healing, obsessions

- more energy is available for rebuilding trust.

This is the hard work for conflict avoiders. It means getting into issues that the couple has been avoiding of the years.

Problems will include:

- some couples choose to sweep the issues back under the rug and pretend all is well
- premature apologies
- denying The existence of marital problems
- viewing the affair as a one time event
- engaging in distractions
- buying off the spouse
- if the personal belief is that affairs equal divorce, they will need help in seeing that other options exist
- A mild degree of narcissism often interferes with the spouses ability to accurately perceive the situation, as when feelings of worthlessness old offenses against such feelings, block out all the truths

Treatment of couples who fear conflict centers on helping Each partner identify he's on her own in a language of feelings and on learning effective ways to express those feelings. Applying these new skills to old issues test the couple's ability to rebuild a workable marriage. The family of origin provides a backdrop for this work, as current issues tend to replicate those of the past

NOTE- if you are trained in Prepare Enrich you will have wonderful graphs and information to work through family of origin, and include this in your treatment plan.

In the rebuilding phase, the pace slows down. After a brief moment to catch their breath, it is time to delve into working on themselves and their relationship.

This shared definition of the marital problem, developed in the process of addressing position, provides an understanding of the specific ways in which the couple got off track, and the sense of direction for therapy.

The goals of the building phase of treatment are:

1. Helping the spouses learn to talk about the uncomfortable issues that I've been unable to discuss, with an eye to develop open, honest, and complete communication
2. Building trust, which means learning to share one's self emotionally and excepting the



emotional experience of the other

3. Making a well considered decision about the viability of the marriage

To reach these goals, the spouses must face together their problems with conflict.

They must share feelings, positive as well as negative, that they have never confided in anyone before, and must hear each other's real story.

It is helpful as a homework activity, to talk about family of origin in the 20 minute monologues. It is also good to do a personal history questionnaire as on the marriage builders.com website.

This will help the couple take the time to read learn each other, with the instructions of positive communication in place.

It is best to do couples therapy with conflict avoidance affair types. Only do individual treatments as an adjunct, if and when needed. Individual treatment might be used to help a passive spouse stand up for him or herself, to provide temporary emotional support to the stress spouse, or otherwise to confront or encourage. It is essential that any individual therapy feedback into the couple therapy. Homework given in an individual session must be presented in the couple session.

As we move into 2015, we need to re-visit what we actually desire in our own relationships.

Have YOU thought of what type of relationship YOU desire in 2015? Do YOU need to re-visit what is happening in your own life?

Affirmations are a great way of revisiting what is truly important to us. If we focus on what we want more of, rather than what we do not like, we will find that we notice and appreciate the good stuff!

This is the BLUEPRINT for personal happiness!

The following is a list of affirmations that can create an emotional connection in a marriage or partnership. Use this list as a guide to start your own list, or use this list as is:

1. I want to enjoy receiving pleasure from my spouse and easily communicate desires.
2. I want to accept and respect a "no" from my partner.



3. I want to communicate my personal needs around sex and have them understood.
4. I want to have sex be a choice, not a compulsion.
5. I want to feel great after an erotic time together.
6. I want to trust my partner more than anyone else.
7. I want to keep my word to my partner.
8. I want to be careful in what I promise and not set up partner for disappointment.
9. I want to respect my partner's friendship with attractive people.
10. I want to receive all the affection and touch I want from my partner.
11. I want to experience moments of tenderness, kindness and gentleness in our marriage.
12. I want to laugh at my humanness.
13. I want to lovingly tease my spouse.
14. I want to create time to be with children and close friends.
15. I want to have us surround ourselves with friends and family.
16. I want to have this marriage contribute to the lives of those around us.
17. I want to have my partner know me intimately.
18. I want to have this marriage be a place where we constantly grow, learn and evolve.
19. I want to face change and the unknown with my partner.
20. I want to get what I need and more within this relationship.
21. I want to be overwhelmed with gratitude and love and express it.



22. I want to give and receive great gifts from each other.



TYPE 3: PHILANDERER AFFAIRS

Sometimes called: The “Sexist” Player, Womanizer, or Casanova

“What most wives don’t realize is that their husbands’ philandering has nothing whatever to do with them.”

AFFAIR TYPE OVERVIEW

- ✚ There is no emotional attachment to the affair partners – they are conquests.
- ✚ Require a steady change of sexual partners. Only then can they “commit to one partner”/wife
- ✚ Obsessed with gender – not gender equity
- ✚ Sexist attitudes – “women exist to serve men”
- ✚ Do not believe in Monogamy
- ✚ Seduction is a part of their game
- ✚ Humiliation does not come from the affair discovery, but from the change in the wife’s relationship power
- ✚ There is no guilt from the affairs
- ✚ They typically do not want a divorce – but for you to “fix” their spouse, so they can get back to Philandering
- ✚ Philandering is an addictive behavior. Change must begin with the desire to want to change.
- ✚ They will not be FORCED or CONTROLLED
- ✚ Insecure
- ✚ Many married Philanderers are also Bisexual, and lead a highly promiscuous sex life
- ✚ Highly Manipulative
- ✚ A Habitual Liar

ABOUT PHILANDERERS

The *phil* in *philanderer* means “love” and a philanderer’s love never seems to stop. “So many ladies, so little time...” — That may just be the motto of the quintessential philanderer, those delightful serial womanizers who specialize in brief affairs of the carnal kind.



A philandering husband doesn't just have a wandering eye. He also has wandering hands, and probably a long line of jilted lovers.

Men in pursuit of extramarital sex can carry on their philandering actions for decades without being detected, or they could encounter personal and professional catastrophes because of their habitual risk-taking behaviors.

The paradox that is difficult for most women to understand is that these philandering men frequently perceive that they are committed to their wives and regard themselves as happily married.

They are able to compartmentalize their sexual exploits as separate from their marriages until they are discovered. The underlying causes are usually individual issues which vary greatly although the contrasting patterns may look similar on the surface.

FAMILY OF ORIGIN (FOO)

- He may get along with family members better than his wife
- Often adored and pampered by his mother
- Father would have left the family in some way by cheating, withdrawing, or chasing other women

Therefore, masculinity is seen as an escape from female control, either because his father achieved it or because he wanted to but couldn't.

He wants women to serve him – masculinity and dominance = safety & happiness. Therefore, a woman could never be his equal.

Female philanderers have had philandering fathers, whom seen their daughter different from other women. They may have had an unfaithful husband, so they turn to seduce then humiliate men.

Often a philandering woman will be the “other woman” seen in others’ affairs, as she now destroys other marriages. Sex is the weapon of weapons

WHY THIS AFFAIR HAPPENS

Successful men often perceive that they are **entitled** to enjoy the fruits of their labor by taking advantage of the women who are enamored of them.



The common stereotype of the powerful man and the trophy woman is consistent with research findings across cultures and across time that men are attracted to beauty and youth, and women are attracted to power and resources.

These prominent men are captivated by opportunities for the conquest of beauty queens who scorned them when they were young, awkward, and starting their climb up the ladder.

Infidelity is a legacy carried down through the generations in families such as the Kennedys where the men are committed to family life but have affairs, and the women "stand by their men."

Occupations which were prone to rampant infidelity as an industry standard before the advent of sexual harassment suits not only condoned extracurricular "fooling around" by married men but actually fostered "territorial amnesia" by providing women for hire at conventions.

I have heard a number of men try to diminish the impact of their infidelities by saying, "You shouldn't be this upset. It didn't mean a thing." When the wife asks how they would feel if the shoe was on the other foot, the common response is, "I'd kill you, but I know you'd never do anything like that." They inherently recognize that a wife's affair is usually more threatening to the stability of the marriage because of the greater likelihood of an emotional involvement.

The Betrayed Partner

"A *philanderer* is a guy who likes women. A lot. So much that he's got a beautiful wife, and a date with a different girl every weekend."

Characteristics:

- ✚ Romantics at heart
- ✚ Subservient
- ✚ Attractive/feminine
- ✚ Attracted to successful men
- ✚ Feels unappreciated, lonely and has anxiety
- ✚ Has ignored the affairs for many years, or pretends not to have known

Masculinity is served two ways – by competing with other men, and by exerting dominance over women. Therefore, men who are not defeating of men and not screwing women are losing masculinity and status. The greatest loss of status would be to come under control of a woman.



A woman could never be an equal partner in life, she has a defined role, usually at home. He is at “home” amongst men of his own caliber. Usually other Philanderers, where they can talk about their man victories, and their conquests over women.

They are usually very attractive, with well polished social skills and talents. They are very seductive, and quite often, popular. Think of the Kennedy’s. They will keep their marriage in a state of hot and cold so that they can have their affairs

Women in relationships with men like these have to deal with long-term emotional abuse, which leads to feelings of betrayal, abandonment and shame. However some women may refuse to believe the truth about their womanizing husband even when the signs are right there. Many choose to turn a “blind eye”. This is because accepting that your man is not a good partner is admitting the failure of a relationship and everything that a woman may hold precious.

Problems will come into the marriage if she tries to exert her power. The philanderer will not accept equality or closeness in the marriage. He does not wish to be understood by his wife, or under her “control”.

CAN A PHILANDERER CHANGE?

The philanderer will find monogamy difficult.

If he really wants to change, and this will be difficult, then **he has to believe that the affairs are hurting him**. Recovery means much more than just stopping the sex/cheating. It means a different level of honesty and equality, a shifting level of marriage sexuality, and above all, a rethinking of everything these men think they know about Gender!

The changes required for the spouse **would be equally drastic**. If a woman is determined to stay, she must be careful to keep a distance. She has to understand that the reason for his behavior is that he believes his life is dependent upon escaping her control. **There is no way in which she can please him sufficiently, or impress him enough so he can declare her an equal**. She must pursue her own life giving him as much independence as he requires, while she takes as much freedom as she needs to develop our own self-esteem.

Guild producing dependency will only bring out the worst in him, and will deprive her of a life that could be fulfilling.



Threats will not help, but using a plan separation can often wake the man up.

Philandering is an addictive behavior and like all addictive behaviors, it is difficult to change without great honesty and the willingness to put yourself under someone else's control.

Many men and women in these situations are not willing to make such drastic changes, and if they did, they might be little basis left for the marriage.

Recovery and healing are possible if the philandering husband takes responsibility for his actions, is truthful about the full extent of his betrayal(s), is empathic about the pain he has caused, and is truly committed to a monogamous marriage. The motivation for change is often the destructive consequences of the behaviors or the pain caused to loved ones. Couples counseling is used to explore the causes, open the windows of honest communication, and rebuild the marriage.

FIRST TIME OFFENDER

If the philanderer is a first time or one-time offender, I would say that the prognosis for working things through is somewhat more positive. In order for this to happen, however, the exposed cheater must come completely clean with what happened, take full responsibility for it, and be prepared to beg the partner's forgiveness for his or her devastating misstep.

Any pre-existing problems in the relationship prior to the affair (and obviously, an ongoing affair is typically much more damaging than a one-night-stand) or indiscretion should be systematically addressed and resolved.

Communication skills must be evaluated, improved, and regularly practiced between the couple with a therapist's assistance. And, perhaps the hardest part, trust must be rebuilt.

Trust cannot--and should not-- just be freely given again. Trust now has become a privilege, not a right. Trust must be earned, gradually re-established by offenders consistently following through faithfully on whatever they say they are going to do--or not do. There is no real wiggle room here. Zero-tolerance. It should be the injured or betrayed party that dictates what will be required for him or her to ever fully trust the offender again. And whatever they say it will take, within reason, is what the offender



must be willing to commit to providing unconditionally. And deliver, consistently, willingly and unequivocally.

Ultimately, the victimized or offended party will have to reach a point (frequently requiring individual [therapy](#) in addition to couples counseling) where they can get past their hurt, [humiliation](#) and anger to a place of forgiveness and compassion. And find the courage to trust again. We all make mistakes. Humans are imperfect beings. But we can also learn from our mistakes, so as to avoid repeating them.

REPEAT OFFENDER

Here the prognosis gets poorer. Once can be considered a slip up. An aberration. Twice or more is a **pattern**. Why should the serial cheater be forgiven or provided a third, fourth or fifth chance? Of course, this is for the person who was betrayed to decide. Some see their own unequivocal commitment to the relationship and love for the offending partner as reasons for either overlooking such bad behavior or for giving them repeated chances to change.

This can become a kind of co-dependency, unintentionally enabling and perpetuating the problem. As with [domestic violence](#), the victim may be bamboozled and confused by the offender's apparent heartfelt contrition and proclamations of love and dedication.

Or they come to see the offending partner as suffering from some mental disorder or [substance or sexual addiction](#) that both compels and excuses their abusive behavior.

In certain cases, say of severe [bipolar disorder](#), [substance abuse](#) or compulsive sexual behavior, it may make sense to compassionately support and stand by the offender during his or her treatment or rehabilitation.

But the key is that commitment is a two way street. Both parties must be equally committed to the relationship and to monogamy, if that is what is promised and expected. Commitment is an existential choice. A choice one reaffirms each and every day. One chooses not to cheat not necessarily because one doesn't desire to. But because one chooses to honor one's commitment and because one cares about and values the relationship with the partner so highly that taking the risk of threatening, damaging or losing that relationship and deeply wounding the partner is completely unacceptable.



A womanizing husband may seem like an impossible cross to bear. However recovery is possible with awareness, time and commitment. Finally, the rewards of recovery are worth the effort for it not only makes the husband a better partner and person but gives a fresh lease of life to the marriage.

TREATMENT STRATEGY

Personal Healing

Spouse:

- Self esteem issues to work on?
- Understanding boundaries
- Having a fulfilling life with enjoyable separate activities
- Work on communicating their true feelings and emotions

Philanderer:

- Self-discovery – Are their addictive patterns serving them?
- Requires new personal habits & rituals.
- Change of social circle?
- Are there other addictions such as drugs or alcohol?

7 Step Model Tips

- For the philanderer to take ownership of their actions, and realize the hurt they are causing, Step 1 can be difficult, dramatic. If the personality style of the Philanderer is overly narcissistic, then do not expect too much honesty, and more of a “show”. The show is for the partner to believe in them again, and to be able to move forward.
- Do not spend the usual amount of time on “Ending the Affair” exercises, as they are almost useless with the Philanderer. They have had so many affairs, that they will not remember all the names and places. There is no emotional attachment to the affair partners – they are conquests.
- The spouse can also mirror the philanderers mannerisms e.g. Narcissism, so will try and turn your coaching session into a battle field, with insults and dramatic behavior. This could be the first time they have had a chance to have a “voice” and be able to display frustration and anger. It is YOUR office. Set your stage – remember that your clients are your guests.



- While we encourage the couple to work through the program together, the Philanderer may need a session to be able to understand why he is doing what he is doing, and decide if it will serve him long term. Because of their need to succeed, they often listen to stories of the older Philanderer with no one to love in later life, and feeling empty.
- Working individually with the Philanderer, is only recommended for the experienced therapist or counselor. These people are highly skilled at seduction and manipulation. They will have you pitying them for “putting up with” their spouse!
- Encourage them to set rituals for their relationship, that are desired by both people
- STEP 7: Focus on the Dr Harley’s “Policy Of Joint Agreement”, and “Policy of Radical Honesty”
- Encourage them to write a contract of what is betrayal, what is allowed, and new relationship agreements

Aftercare

There are self-help programs for the addicted philanderer such as Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous and Sexaholics Anonymous which are based on 12-Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous.



TYPE 4: ENTITLEMENT AFFAIRS

Sometimes called:

- ✚ Celebrity Affairs
- ✚ Royalty Affairs
- ✚ Revenge Affairs

Quote:

" I should not be limited, as I deserve what ever I choose"

Features:

Attempting to fill an inner void, but actions fueled by narcissism

Quote:

" I should not be limited, as I deserve what ever I choose"

About:

The Entitlement Affair is usually a serious, long-term one in which the straying partner is charming, popular, successful, and powerful. Professional interests become more important than family relationships, and the couple lives separate lives.

The third party is attracted to the power and the perks of the straying partner, and may have more in common with the straying partner than the spouse.

When the affair comes to light, we often wonder "what are they thinking?" Actually they weren't thinking - they were assuming that their hard work entitled them to the power and related perks.

Frank Bruni, in the *New York Times* (Nov. 12, 2012) states that the "adulation in the public arena probably isn't mirrored in their marriages. A spouse is unlikely to provide it. A spouse knows you too well for that."



We cannot assume that all married couples want to be intimate partners. In many parts of the world, couples don't aspire to such closeness. The closest relationships are with the children, the couples parents and siblings, or with their same sex buddies.

In some parts of the world, the spouse is treated with great respect and dignity, while the greatest closeness is with a mistress or master who functions as a lover and companion.

The Betrayed Spouse

The real difficulty comes when one partner wants closeness and the other one wants distance. Then they are in constant conflict, with one trying to stop fights that will require interaction and discussion and attention being paid, while the other uses conflict to justify leaving the house, going to another room and locking the door, or just going into a silent mode - stonewalling. Anything to reduce interaction.

One pursues, the other runs away. The pursuer pursues harder, the runner runs farther, and around and around they go, each believing that their model of the marriage is the right one.

Either the partner who wants distance or the partner who wants closeness can achieve it by getting involved with someone else. The marital arrangement requires a third or fourth person to stabilize a relationship that is alternately too intense for one Partner and too flat for the other.

There are a variety of marital arrangements by which a less than ideal marriage is stabilized through the addition of a marital aid, someone who is willing to sacrifice or complicate his or her domestic life for the sake of preventing the mismatch couple from having to get a divorce.

Types of arrangements

Here are some of the marital arrangements that can be made when they decide they want to be unhappily married, yet stay in the marriage. Rather than solve the problems that they blame for the marital unhappiness, they decide to stabilize the marriage and it's in perfect state, and they do this by bringing in an affair partner.

There is no secrecy about the marital unhappiness. There is usually no secret about the affair. Only the identity of the affair partner maybe kept a secret.



The permanent triangle- some people don't want to be married and they don't want to be divorced. They want everything as stable as possible. They do not want the stress of philandering. They have past their romantic phase. They don't believe that swapping wives or husbands will make them any happier. They have a permanent triangle with the lover so that it stabilizes the marriage. It protects it from intimacy, and provides a safe outlet from having to fall in love.

Sex haters - some people just don't like sex. There are really marriages that have been sexless for years, even decades. They may have even told their partners to go outside for sex. Of course just because someone tells you to go outside to find sex, doesn't mean he or she will like it when you do. In this situation, the infidel may even fall in love with the sex partner, even if she is a prostitute. They truly need love and connection.

There are many other types of arrangements you will find - from swingers to revenge affairs.

Treatment Strategy:

They would have to be willing to do many monologue exercises to build a friendship and vulnerability in the relationship.

As one or both partners may feel horribly lonely, they will have to try and find recreational activities together to build interesting activities and lifestyle back into the relationship.

For those who lack emotional and sexual connection, you can try the activities for Avoidance affair types.

Remember, that the issues in this marriage are deeply rooted in the psychology of the individual.

- ✚ Take the couple through the 7 Step program together
- ✚ Encourage them to set rituals for their relationship
- ✚ Grow the friendship by focusing on completing homework activities, monologues, intimacy exercises, and healthy communication.



TYPE 5: SPLIT-SELF AFFAIRS

- ✚ Vulnerability comes from need for affection & attention
- ✚ The focus has not been on the marriage but the happiness and needs of the family.
- ✚ The marriage typically revolved around the children
- ✚ “The Great Family Man”
- ✚ “The Perfect Mother”
- ✚ Little if any attention to marriage enrichment
- ✚ Cheater will break up with the lover to “save face” with work and social or work position.

Sometimes called: The Romanic Affair, Middle Age Crisis, Coming Out Affair

About:

Romantic Affairs are intense. Of all the basic types of affairs, none is so crazy as falling in love with someone who is not your spouse. Often the romantic affair partner is someone much younger or older, someone with even bigger problems than our own, or with a lifestyle that is filled with the excitement that we feel has been missing from our lives.

“They feel life is for the taking, and that everyone deserves happiness no matter what the cost.” — Suzanne Finnamore, *Split: A Memoir of Divorce*

The Split Selves have tried to do marriage right. Both spouses have sacrificed their own feelings and needs to take care of others, and the deprivation has caught up with one of them. The affair is serious, long-term and passionate. The spouse who is having the affair focuses on deciding between the marriage and the affair partner and avoids looking at the inner split.

The "split-self" affair is generally a man living a double life, who values the comfort and appearance of a long-term marriage but also has a mistress, maybe even another family. We give a "poor" prognosis for resolving issues that come out of these affairs, but a "low" probability of divorce - perhaps the most depressing combination.



Why this affair happened?

The split self-affair is an attempt to experience the emotional self that has been denied for a lifetime in the service of doing things right. Typically this has been a middle aged mans affair, someone who has been married for 20 or more years, and he regards himself as a family man.

These men may never have had a strong emotional bond with their wives, and married to gain security all status, or to get away from home, to legitimize a child already on the way, or because it seemed to be what they should do.

Love had little to do with their marriage because the mantra was they would make it work. Personal needs were put on the back burner, as a try to make this family be what they believed a family should be.

Family of origin

Split selves, both the infidel, and the spouse, are people who learned early in life that they were supposed to do the right thing, rather than pay attention to their own needs and feelings. They have used their rational selves to survive and succeed. Because they have had to sacrifice their emotional selves in order to survive, they are about five years old emotionally.

The family they know best, the one they grew up in, provided a negative model. Split selves have worked at being just the opposite of their original family. If mother was smothering, they create some distance. If dad was angry, they are nice. Their intent was to build the perfect family- and this means Caretaking and accommodating.

When problems happen

It often becomes apparent in midlife, when the kids leave home. This leaves the couple with even less to talk about. As they lack in emotional partnership, they will look elsewhere for relief and satisfaction.

Close work friendships often provide some of the emotional satisfaction that is missing at home. Typically the affair partner is a unmarried woman a generation younger, who has unresolved issues with her father that she plays out in the affair. The younger woman is attentive, understanding, and accommodating. The affair is invigorating. It brings excitement and romance.

In this affair type, the marriage feels empty, as opposed to sexual addiction with the individual feels empty.

The couple may or may not even share a bedroom and may lead very separate lives. Their communication is limited to practical matters like taking out the garbage or social



necessities.

The Lovers Profile:

- The affair itself is a serious relationship.
- Much younger than the infidel – typically by 10 years +
- One up/One down relationship
- The lover will be waiting patiently for the infidel to get up enough courage to leave the wife/husband
- They feel passionately for each other.
- Has unresolved FOO issues; boundary issues
- Comfortable living in a “fantasy” state for an extended period of time.

Research

A Romantic Affair is what might be called an “affair of the heart.” It is one in which a strong connection and intimacy is felt by the person having the affair.

A person involved in a Romantic Affair will often speak of having found his or her “soul mate.” The draw can be quite powerful and feels almost as if fate has brought the parties together. For those involved in such an affair, the feelings attraction and connection can cause them to forsake nearly everything they might have to be with their lover.

While there is a common assumption that men and women fall in love at different rates, or that men cheat primarily for sex while women are more likely to be looking for an emotional connection, this may not always be the case. Dr. Frank Pittman suggests that men are typically more honest about the sex than women, perhaps because men are better able to separate the issue of sex from that of emotional attachment. He believes that this is due in large part to the fact that men have their genitals on the outside rather than inside and so men seem to separate sexual response from a lasting and committed relationship more easily than do women.

Gender Differences in Romantic Affairs

In his practice, he says that he has seen many cases where men admit to the sex and deny any emotional connection to the affair partner, while women tend to talk of strong emotions and feelings of love while denying that sex took place. He believes that if a



man denies the sexual context of the affair and dwells on the emotional connection above all else, he is probably lying. He finds that women, on the other hand, more easily talk of an emotional connection and the feelings induced by an affair while denying any sexual context to the entire episode.

Given the general gender differences in response to sex, many of these women may also be lying. It does, however, point to a significant difference between the sexes when it comes to the response to having an affair. The reasons men often give for an affair are related to more sex while women typically point to emotional reasons for deciding to cheat. At the same time, there is no real evidence that men and women fall in love at different rates, or that one sex cheats entirely for love while the other does so for sex.

Those caught up in a romantic affair seem quite capable of sacrificing any part of their lives to prolong or sustain the relationship. They are willing to give up their jobs, break up their families, destroy their own finances and give up almost anything that belongs to them to feed the relationship. Among the various types of affairs, romantic affairs are most likely to lead to divorce, though very few lead to lasting relationships between the affair partners. The obsessive desire to sacrifice for the cause diminishes as the chemical rush of the relationship subsides, and little is left that can be given by the time that takes place. The feelings of “I gave up everything for you” demand ever-higher levels of sacrifice in return, and with little return on investment, the feelings wane and eventually die.

The perfect romantic affair is between a victim and a rescuer. The ideal affair partner is that damsel (or dumsel) in distress, someone with even bigger problems than our own. They typically begin by helping the affair partner with some serious crisis and, as often as not, this crisis is related to the marriage of one or both of those about to have an affair. Intimacy is created that, while based on a falsehood coupled with a wildly out-of-character and even out-of-context sexual or emotional connection, leads the affair partners to the conclusion that the affair is kismet or destiny.

Advice for the betrayed spouse

Romantic affairs are the hardest to break when discovered, and they often go without detection until the cheating spouse leaves the marital home. They usually come as a complete shock to the spouse being left behind and seem so out of character that many looking upon the sequence of events question the sanity to the person having such an affair. Those involved in such an affair exhibit the symptoms of narcissistic and borderline personality disorders.



Little can be done to counter this type of affair. Various attempts to shock the unfaithful spouse out of the insanity of throwing away a life that has taken years to build are met with speeches of the marriage being wrong or for the wrong reasons, and this new relationship having all the right characteristics. The new is in reality mere fantasy, based in large part on the excitement of its inappropriateness. Not many couples recover from this type of affair unless the affair is ended or nearly so by the time of discovery, or unless it is discovered and confronted in the very beginning stages.

Once a spouse commits to leaving the marriage for this new relationship, the affair is seen as the new and right relationship, and the marriage has been turned into the biggest mistake of the cheater's life. Every reason that can be given as to why the marriage should be saved has already been resolved in the mind of the person walking away. Even if the affair itself dies quite soon after the choice to leave is made, a return to the marriage is nearly impossible and another "newer" and "better" relationship is sought instead. The old has been justified into being unviable and sent to the scrap heap as so much garbage.

Some couples do one day get back together after separation and divorce as the result of romantic affairs, but not many. However, there are some involved in such affairs who one day see the folly of what they are doing and choose to try to return to the marriage.

If the marriage was generally good or long term and both spouses had a strong sense of commitment to family and vows, some are willing to end the affair. This is more likely in the very early stages of the affair, which is why it is critical in a marriage to be aware of what is going on in the life of your spouse.

Once your spouse is in love with someone else, it might seem to be too late for the marriage. Since one of the subsets of romantic affairs is the conflicted romantic affair, this is not always the case. This is the classic "torn between two lovers" scenario about which songs, movies and romance novels rely upon for their lyrics and plots. In this case, a person feels as if they are in love with two people at the same time and do not really want to give either one up. When confronted, they often respond by claiming they want a divorce to pursue the affair relationship. Few actually follow through with this idea, however. What they want is the marriage and the affair. It is usually little more than an attempt to leverage the spouse who confronted them into accepting the idea of allowing them to continue both relationships.

If a romantic affair is discovered and confronted early enough, or if the cheating spouse does not see it as a replacement for the marriage, or the affair has not been justified by turning the marriage into Hell on Earth, even romantic affairs, especially the conflicted



romantic affair can result in reconciliation. Ignoring the infidelity once discovered or being so out of touch with your spouse that your first sign of trouble is when you come home to find the house empty is not very likely to result in keeping the marriage intact.

Treatment Strategy:

Your challenge will be with having the Infidel commit to Step 1: Commitment. The Infidel will say to you that they will not contact the lover over the next 90 days, but as they are “in love” with this person, here is the challenge – they won’t be able to stay away, so don’t ask them to lie! They will have a challenge in writing the Letter to the Lover activity, and delivering the letter.

In this affair type, you may need to be flexible in running your program, knowing that the lover is lurking in the background. The same can be said for Step 2: The affair story. The absolute truth is often too overwhelming for the betrayed partner, and can be counterproductive to the global program outcome.

With the Spilt Self Affair Type, it is best to focus on the positive aspects of the relationship in your treatment strategy. The marriage has been going for over two decades so have the couple do relationship enrichment assessments and activities earlier rather than later helps create empathy, friendship, love and rapport, where we can then work on communication and conflict resolution.

Suggestions:

1. Begin the program with a Prepare Enrich Assessment, or Emotional Needs Questionnaire.
2. Set the MSTL activity on the first session, for the couple to work on over the coming weeks together – positive activity, reviewing their long relationship, during a traumatic time.
3. Have every other session as an individual session with the Infidel. Rapport building is needed here, so you can understand the true nature between the infidel and the lover, and advise accordingly. The split between staying and going is often strong, and if you are a coach, this is a point where you would refer out to a professional therapist or counselor for individual sessions. DO NOT try and work on this issue yourself. The issues go back to Family of Origin and only a trained professional can advise the client.
4. The clients will have a renewed interest in their relationship in the first 30 to 60 days. But ...be warned. This is short lived. The betrayed spouse cannot compete



with the younger lover unless the emotional needs are consistently met, and before long, the infidel will be back in the lovers arms.

5. Aftercare – Follow up with both the couple and the infidel is very important, and needs to be done by the coach. After Step 7, we recommend seeing the couple every month for the first 6 months, and depending on the infidel, they may need to come in every month individually as well. As both people have lost motivation, and require 3rd party reassurance and coaching, a monthly visit can help keep the relationship on track and remind the infidel of what is important. After 6 months, we recommend every 3 months till 2 years. Then an annual “Relationship Health Check” using Prepare Enrich.

Tips:

- The infidel can't decide whether to end the marriage or end the affair. They will flip-flop between which relationship should end. As a coach, they will be expecting you to help them decide.
- The infidel may wish to see you by him or herself. They will feel troubled, unentitled and stuck. They will typically be chronically depressed, although they will function very well in their career.
- The outlook for marriage reconciliation is poor. If they decide to stay in the marriage they may remain emotionally committed to the affair. These affairs can continue until death.
- This spouse is often shattered beyond relief. Obsessing over the affair and the affair partner requires attention. The couple may need help with the depression if it is affecting day-to-day life.
- It is important to get commitment from the infidel, to work on the relationship for at least 90 days. The affair partner will probably be in the background somewhere. You can suggest that all forms of competing attachments must not interfere with this 90 day commitment.
- You may receive positive results by introducing new rituals into the relationship. Especially in the areas of sex and intimacy. Couple might also enjoy the monologues and reflecting on the life together using the marriage satisfaction timeline exercise.
- The couple will really enjoy learning about each other's emotional needs. They will discover much about themselves as well as each other in this exercise.



CASE STUDIES:

Examples of how we could tell the following clients were having a “Split Self” Affair.

1. Mona & Ossama

- Both Doctors married over 20 years
- Affair with one person
- Affair length, 10 years
- Affair partner 15 years his junior, & in a lower position/subordinate position to his
- Marital Relationship best described as “functional”
- Personal issues: Depression (both), STD (Mona)
- Proud of their career path/status as Dr’s, social status, religious affiliation, and as parents to 4 children.

Result:

After Ossama realized that Mona was able to meet his emotional needs, and was a funny woman, a wonderful lover, and great company, he was finally able to cut ties with the lover. The lover did not accept the decision with grace, and we worked with the couple to rid the lover from the relationship. The path to Mona’s recovery was tough, and had many challenges. Mona and Ossama worked on their own personal issues, and realized that they did fall in love and marry for love. We worked on a trial separation during the most stressful times, and viewed what a life apart would look like for the family. Life looks better together, than what it does apart. There is love.

2. Clive & Jenny

- Lawyer & University Professor
- Married over 22 years
- Affair with one person
- Affair length, 3 years
- Affair partner 18 years his junior, & in need of support
- Personal Issue – Middle Age Crisis: “I’ve never had children and the lover has two young children I can raise like my own” ;“Looking at the wife’s aging body makes me feel old.”
- Proud of career path/status in community, law society

Result:



Beware of the couple that presents themselves to clinic composed and steady, as you are about to see a wind storm! This was not the first time Clive had been busted cheating with the same woman. However, the line was drawn when Jenny found out that Clive had placed the other woman and her two children in the rental property, and was visiting them regularly. Truth be told, Clive enjoying not only the company of the younger woman, but of being a Dad. Clive had been focused on his career and had not the chance to raise children of his own. Here was his chance.

His relationship with Jenny was fulfilling as well. They shared a full social life and Jenny kept herself very well for a woman in her late 50s. Yet Clive was having a midlife crisis and looking at Jenny's aging body "turns me off."

Clive came to individual coaching and said honestly and with wide open eyes, "Jenny is happy and has a wonderful life, so if I am not hurting Jenny, what is wrong with having (the lover)." This comment is common in those having the Split Self Affair.

Clive agreed to Step 1 for at least a 90 day period to sort through his emotions. He asked the lover to leave the rental property. Jenny was proud of him and gave her distance to allow this process to happen. Jenny asked for full detail in Step 2, and Clive told Jenny the entire story. As the couple were also doing the Gottman communication activities as HW, they were applying these principles during Step 2 "which helped lot, and stopped us from going back into our old arguing cycle." Step 3 required weekly counseling sessions working on his FOO and Identity. Once again, time to hand over to a therapist if you are not licensed. Step 4 & Step 5 were readily accepted and enjoyed by the couple, who were looking for structured new activities in their relationship. By Step 6, they were both talking about a recommitment ceremony. However, as life became routine and Clive's desire for the lover cycled back (through text messages), Clive slipped back into the affair.

At this stage, I advised Jenny to end the relationship with Clive until the lover is completely out of Clive's life. This was after presenting the couple with alternative options on lifestyle. Jenny had been working on her boundaries in our personal sessions, and decided that she would not accept Clive having another affair, and needed to look after her own future and security. She took back her power.



TYPE 6: EXIT AFFAIRS

- Out The Door Affair

“Finally it’s my turn”

Exiters are Conflict Avoiders at heart, but they take it further. One spouse has already decided to leave the marriage and the affair provides the justification. The other partner usually blames the affair rather than looking at how their marriage got to this point.

AFFAIR TYPE OVERVIEW

- ✚ The relationship had underlying tension and resentment building up for years (perhaps starting before their wedding)
- ✚ They are either unwilling to meet each other’s needs, or unwilling to talk about meeting each others needs.
- ✚ The lack of conflict, is often misinterpreted as a sign “all is fine”
- ✚ Leaving the relationship is often surrounded in guilt, however staying in the relationship would be unbearable.
- ✚ The relationship with the lover would typically only last as long as the pain of leaving the relationship. The cheater will often spend many years by themselves avoiding commitment and “entrapment.”

Why the affair happened

This type of affair is usually the outcome of the 20 year train of thought based on some marker:

- The kids leaving home
- The end of a career
- end of government service

The affair is actually initiated years earlier in the mind of the infidel, and the marriage relationship is maintained and tolerated by the infidel on the basis of the future plan.

By the time the infidel is ready to leave the infidel often say "I've toyed with this idea for many years and I finally decided to do it"



The plan to actually leave the spouse usually comes as a result of the spouses refusal to change, adapt, communicate, or meet some key relationship need in the marriage. The infidel, or future infidel, may try to discuss his or her needs with the spouse, but the Spouse doesn't want to hear or doesn't want to understand.

After a time of arguing about the need, the infidel gives up and resigns himself to enduring the marriage until he can get out of it. The infidel tolerates the tension for many years on the basis of his decision to leave in the future. The spouse will interpret the lack of conflict as a sign that things are going fine. Big mistake!

Quite often the infidel will come to a counselor or coach in order to help the spouse in the aftermath and crisis. They wish no harm to their spouse.

After separating from the spouse, the infidel rarely marries the affair partner. If they do the new marriage will rarely last beyond two years. The lover simply serves as an aid to empower the infidel to leave the pain of the marriage.

The infidel really wants no commitment, and a new freedom.

TREATMENT

Exit affairs are very hard to treat. The infidel is exhausted. They will be polite and sit in coaching with their spouse. But they will be indifferent.

By doing activities such as the marriage satisfaction timeline, The four Horsemen, conflict resolution skills, understanding their attachment style, and helping them to set boundaries.

Working through the forgiveness and apology activities will also be hugely beneficial. This shows respect for the betrayed partner and respect for the marriage.

With this affair type, I do not focus heavily on ending the affair activities. I focus more on personal healing, and personal growth.

Aftercare

It is unlikely this couple will remain together. However you should still contact them every three, six, nine, and 12 months to check if they need your assistance. If they remain together they should do a Prepare Enrich assessment. And take it from there.



Chance for reconciliation:

- ✚ Highly unlikely
- ✚ May force the cheater to marry the lover to put certainty in dissolve
- ✚ If reconciliation would happen it would be after the “bubble pops” – generally in two years



TYPE 7: ADDICTION AFFAIRS

- The “Sex Addict”

Most people are familiar with how Tiger Woods’ sexual addiction drove him to have an extraordinary number of affairs. In fact, many people who have had a Tiger Woods type of affair, describe themselves as relatively happy in their relationship. However, they’ve never been able to find complete fulfillment from it because they are enslaved by obsessive needs and compulsive behaviors.

Hard as it is for many to believe, sex addicts truly feel powerless in their ability to control their desires.

Just like Tiger, more often than not the sex addict does not want his/her marriage to fail. It’s about something inside of them, not the marriage. Usually they were addicts before the marriage and may have stopped for a while when first married only to be pick up again when they realize that the marriage can’t meet the needs of their addiction.

They may feel trapped in a destructive cycle of feeling hopelessly trapped by their behaviors and at times by their marriages, but are afraid to come clean because they don’t want to lose their marriage or their addictive behavior.

This type of betrayal can be very difficult for the spouse because

a) the breadth of the betrayal can seem so enormous

b) while most people can understand alcohol or drug addiction, sexual addiction is a tough one for most to have much empathy for.

AFFAIR TYPE OVERVIEW:

- Multiple Partners
- Impulsive development “Can’t help themselves” – even at risk of losing their jobs, and family.
- FOO Issues
- Recovery – slower recovery, but can be successful
- Length of affair can go over years/ periods of binges
- The seduction is just as important as the affair
- The sex addict has little to any relationship with the affair partner
- Turns to sex when feeling lonely, empty, in pain, or uncomfortable
- The behavior runs in a predictable cycle



- Much of the addictive behavior can be seen on porn sites, chat rooms

SEX ADDICTS PROFILE

- ✚ Self-Serving - Often lies, cheats and steals to get the relief needed
- ✚ Has a detached attachment style
- ✚ Compulsive behavior
 - Regular pornography view
 - Visits to prostitutes, “rub & tug” parlors, strip clubs
 - Unprotected sex
- ✚ Multiple partners at same time or going from Partner to Partner
- ✚ Little if any emotional attachment with the affair partner. If there was emotional attachment, it quickly diminishes. “The relationship is about the sex.”
- ✚ The ‘lover’ is typically a lower social position than the ‘cheater’
- ✚ The thrill is in the chase

BETRAYED SPOUSE PROFILE

- Co-dependency
- Will put up with behavior for a long time
- Presents a brave face to the outside world
- Partners live rather separate lives
- Will tend to cover or defend the cheaters behaviour

What is Sex Addiction?

Addictions are generally characterized by compulsiveness, shame or guilt, and feelings of worthlessness.

Addicted individuals are driven by the high they experience and are unable to resist their impulses despite the potential or actual cost to career, family, or self.

The sexual addict is preoccupied with sex.

A forbidden act or illicit relationship which increases tension, accelerates physiological arousal, and focuses the drive toward that which offers pleasure. Relief which is obtained through orgasm is only temporary and is followed by regret and shame. The cycle starts again as anxiety builds up which can only be relieved by the sexual behavior.

(NOTE: In contrast, the entitled philanderer feels little guilt, is open to opportunities, but is not anxious during periods of abstinence.)

The Need For Excitement



The need for excitement is an especially compelling component for the sexually addicted man. He must remain married so his wife can assume the important role of the disapproving parent because secrecy and barriers intensify his passion. Sneaking around behind his wife's back adds to the thrill, even if the wife has no awareness of his extramarital involvements. Living on the edge such as being on the verge of bankruptcy and thrill seeking activities such as Black Diamond skiing or drag racing may also be sought after because of the constant drive for an adrenaline high.

Love Addicts

Men who seek excitement by falling in love with one affair partner after another may be love addicts. They are addicted to the high associated with the first stage of a relationship (Stage I). They appear to be incurable romantics who idealize their affair partners until reality bites or someone even more perfect comes along. The marriage suffers because of their perception that although they still love their wife, they are **"in love"** with the other woman. They are easily identified as men who engage in **sequential monogamy**; i.e. they are faithful only as long as the romantic idealization endures, but they bail out as soon as the excitement wears off and start another Stage I relationship.

According to the Sexual Recovery Institute, Sexual addiction is **"a persistent and escalating pattern or patterns of sexual behaviors acted out despite increasingly negative consequences to self or others."** The Sexual Recovery Institute states that the following behaviors are among those that may indicate sexual addiction:

- ✚ masturbation,
- ✚ simultaneous or repeated sequential affairs,
- ✚ viewing pornography,
- ✚ cybersex,
- ✚ phone sex,
- ✚ multiple anonymous partners,
- ✚ unsafe sexual activity,
- ✚ partner sexualization or objectification,
- ✚ visiting strip clubs
- ✚ adult bookstores,
- ✚ prostitution,
- ✚ sexual aversion.

Therapists maintain that sexual addiction is similar to alcoholism. Donna R. Bellafiore, MSW, LCSW, refers to sexual addiction as a brain disease that must be controlled through a 12-step program. "A sexual addict may want to stop the behavior but is unable to do so", she says, "even when the behavior contradicts his or her own value system."



There is a compulsive quality with sexual addiction that does not exist in people who have had a few affairs during the course of their marriage.

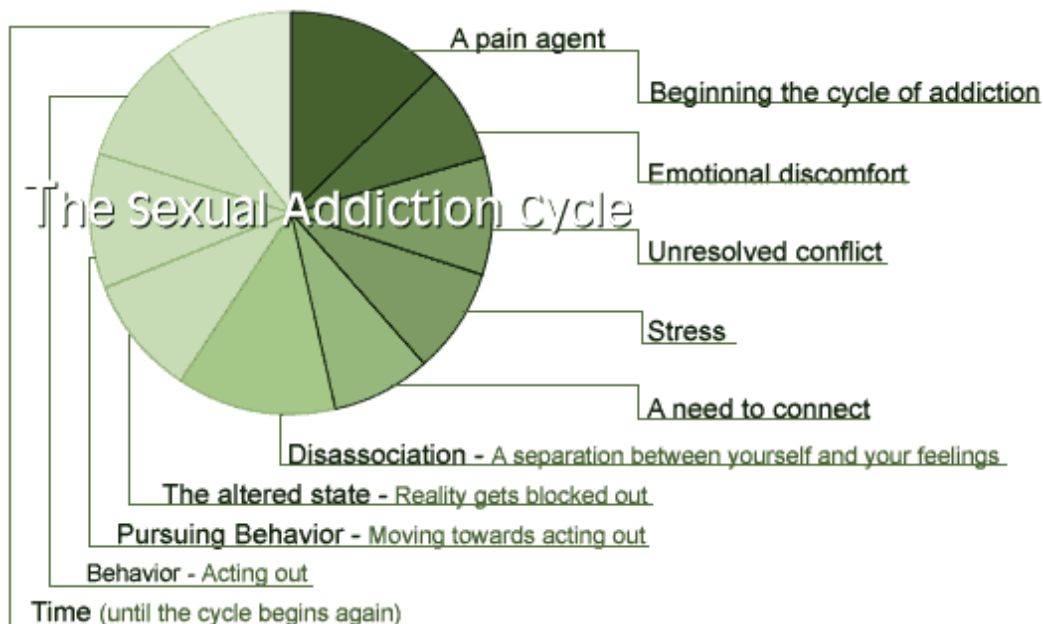
THE FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Underneath addictive behavior is shame, toxic shame. Children who have had emotional needs ignored in favor of the parents needs, learn to abandon their own feelings and display behavior designed to prevent abandonment.

Toxic shame is unbearable and always necessitates a cover-up, a false self. Since one feels his true self is defective and flawed, he needs a false self which is not defective and flawed. Once one becomes a false self, one ceases to exist psychologically.

The compulsive pursuit of sexual encounters is an attempt to avoid the pain of the inner emptiness. The addict rationalizes his behavior, just as the alcoholic or drug addict does, and blinds himself to the risk his taking and the effects of his behavior on others.

THE SEX ADDICTION CYCLE



This cycle describes what happens inside someone who has a sexual addiction.

First a pain agent is triggered; it could be any kind of emotional discomfort (i.e.. pain, fear, shame, anger, etc.), it could be unresolved conflict (inner or outer), it could be stress, or it could be the need to connect with another.



If the person doesn't take care of the pain agent in a healthy way, he may then move into the second stage of this cycle - disassociation. In this stage, you begin to disassociate or move away from your self and your feelings; a separation begins to take place between your mind and your emotional self.

If a person does nothing to help himself reconnect with himself at this stage, he may move into the third stage called the altered state. In this stage you become very disconnected from yourself and your emotions, so that sexual acting out makes sense (usually there is a lot of thinking about how good it will be and an absence of any awareness of any negative consequences). Reality becomes blocked out.

From this altered state stage, a person generally moves on to the pursuing behavior stage. In this stage, one begins to take action towards the acting out; perhaps by making a phone call to a sex line, or by getting in a car and taking off to find a prostitute, etc.

The next stage is the behavior itself - whatever it is for each particular person.

Then the final stage of the cycle is time, which simply represents the amount of time until the whole cycle begins again. This is different for each person; it could be several hours, a day or a week.

What is particularly important about this cycle is that it shows how in stage 1 the pain agents are what trigger the complete addictive cycle. What a person needs to do therefore is to work right at stage 1. One needs to learn how to deal with these pain agents in healthy ways, because if you do not you may begin to move deeper into the cycle. It is also possible to work in the 2nd stage by learning to recognize when you are disassociating from your self, and then learning how to reconnect with your self and your feelings.

If you can do this, you can stop the cycle from continuing. However, if a person has done nothing (or has not been able) to deal with one or more of the pain agents, or has not been able to reconnect with their feelings from the 2nd stage, he will most likely move into the 3rd stage - the altered state stage.

In the 3rd stage it's usually too late to get out of the cycle; in other words, once you get into the altered state stage, you are most likely going to act out. This is why it's so important to work in the 1st or 2nd stage. This is why it is so important to work with any difficult feelings coming up, or in dealing with stress in healthy ways, or in recognizing that one has a need to connect with another and taking action to get this need met. In addition, one can learn when he is disassociated or cut off from himself and learn



healthy ways to deal with it.

A lot of people end up getting down on themselves for not being to get out of the altered state stage. This is the stage usually where your thinking about doing something sexually really gets going. The truth is that for many people, once you've gotten to this stage it's very hard to derail the cycle - it will usually happen, particularly for early recovery people. It helps to know this (especially if you are early in recovery) so that you can be easier on yourself when you do act out and so you can learn to work on the stage 1 thing(s) that most commonly trigger the whole acting out cycle.

The main benefit of this cycle is that it clarifies how the pain agents begin the cycle, and that the most effective way to work on a sex addiction is at stage 1. When working at stage 1, you need to first learn what issues you have that are triggering the cycle, which will be one or more of the 4 pain agents (childhood trauma is included here as it can cause any of the 4). Then you need to begin to understand what these issues are all about, and then to begin both resolving them and learning how to deal with them when they come up.

TREATMENT

No significant marital healing can be accomplished or initiated before the infidel has:

1. Made conscious efforts to recognize and change his belief system
2. Submitted to structure and accountability in his daily schedule

Note that when a Type 7 affair gets into an accountability schedule, they will be, at first, tremendously bored. While he may acknowledge the old behavior was self-destructive, his feelings will take a while to catch up. The boredom will be followed by depression, introspection, and eventually a return to the normal feelings necessary to reestablish the emotional intimacy with the spouse.

A typical treatment program looks like:

1. Separating the addict from his or her harmful sexual behaviors
2. Breaking through the addict's denial regarding the problematic nature of those activities
3. Helping the client grieve the loss of who he or she may have seen himself/herself to be (versus what that person's sexual behavioral history reveals)
4. Helping the addict understand how past trauma, abuse, and/or neglect have informed his or her early learning experiences and current dependency needs



5. Reducing shame by helping the client view his or her adult sexual act out as a learned means of self-soothing, affect management, and dissociation (a misguided coping mechanism) rather than an inherent character defect
6. Providing relapse prevention, self-care and stress management techniques, family crisis resolution, aftercare planning, and the like

RELATIONSHIP SURVIVAL

Exposure and the removal of secrecy really helps the infidel find safety in their marriage, and reattach to their spouse. It helps take the affairs out of the fantasy world and into reality.

The outcome can be fantastic with this type of affair:

- ✚ The relationship will have a routine for connection and quality time
- ✚ The infidel will build to regaining trust by remaining transparent
- ✚ Both people will work on boundaries
- ✚ Both work on more honest and authentic communication
- ✚ Keep working on intimacy and sexual excitement for the relationship – both in touch and shared fantasy.



Reading

FURTHER READING RECOMMENDATION FOR THERAPISTS:

TREATING SEXUAL ADDICTION

For the most part, effective sexual addiction treatment strategies mirror the techniques that have also proven useful with substance abuse treatment. In short, sex addiction treatment specialists rely on a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), group therapy, trauma-informed assessment and awareness, and 12-step recovery work. One major treatment difference when dealing with sex addiction versus substance addiction is the definition of sobriety. With substance abuse, sobriety involves complete abstinence from all mood-altering substances, whereas sexual sobriety involves an ongoing commitment to behavior change but *not* long-term abstinence from sex. As such, sexual addiction sobriety is more easily compared to the way we handle eating disorders (understanding that clients cannot stop eating altogether).

As a first step toward creating sexual sobriety, a recovering sex addict, working with his or her therapist and/or 12-step sponsor, carefully defines the specific sexual behaviors that are (and are not) causing profound dysfunction in his or her life. Once those behaviors are clearly delineated, a written “sexual sobriety contract” is created, plainly stating which sexual behaviors the client will need to abstain from, and which are healthy and acceptable for that specific individual (taking into account his or her values, beliefs, and life-goals). As such, the definition of sexual sobriety can differ for each client. For example, the sexual sobriety contract created by a 28-year-old single gay man will probably be very different than the contract created by a 48-year-old married man with three children. In other words, a sex addict’s goals for behavior change are rooted in the problematic behaviors that brought that person into treatment in the first place (angry spouse, STDs, trouble at work, arrest, concurrent drug abuse, etc.), and also in that person’s life goals for the present and the future. In this way, the addict’s motivation for change both starts and remains high, as the addict sees that the elimination of problematic sexual behaviors will alleviate his or her present-day issues, while also helping to build self-esteem and a sense of control over life.

When sex addicts enter a sexual addiction/intimacy disorders treatment setting, clinical goals typically include:

7. Separating the addict from his or her harmful sexual behaviors



8. Breaking through the addict's denial regarding the problematic nature of those activities
9. Helping the client grieve the loss of who he or she may have seen himself/herself to be (versus what that person's sexual behavioral history reveals)
10. Helping the addict understand how past trauma, abuse, and/or neglect have informed his or her early learning experiences and current dependency needs
11. Reducing shame by helping the client view his or her adult sexual act out as a learned means of self-soothing, affect management, and dissociation (a misguided coping mechanism) rather than an inherent character defect
12. Providing relapse prevention, self-care and stress management techniques, family crisis resolution, aftercare planning, and the like

Because it is very difficult for either active or newly sober sex addicts to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy sexual behaviors, a brief period of total sexual abstinence (masturbation included) is usually encouraged, especially while the client is in primary treatment. Most often this period of abstinence lasts 30, 60, or 90 days, depending on the individual. This allows the sex addict, again working in conjunction with his or her therapist and/or sponsor, a sex-free cooling off period in which to fully assess his/her romantic and sexual acting out patterns (seduction, manipulation, lies, etc.) while also developing some basic coping skills that can be used when the desire to act out arises.

As mentioned above, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is the recommended therapeutic modality for treating addiction. For those unfamiliar with this work, CBT looks at the emotions and events that trigger and reinforce the addict's desire to engage in compulsive sexual activity, and then it identifies healthy ways for the client to short-circuit the process. In other words, CBT teaches addicts to transition their addictive sexual thoughts and behaviors into healthy self-care actions – usually things like going to a 12-step meeting, reaching out to a peer/therapist/friend/family member for support, and actively developing a spiritual connection. Essentially, CBT focuses on living a sexually sober life in the here and now rather than on uncovering and processing past traumas. As such, the therapist's role, at least early on in sexual sobriety, is to implement a task-oriented, accountability-based methodology geared toward containment of the client's problematic sexual behaviors. Later on, once sexual sobriety is firmly established, the therapist and client can look at other, deeper issues.

Unsurprisingly, the process of sexual recovery often presents challenges that can't be dealt with solely in individual, one-on-one therapy. Like other addicts, sex addicts nearly always require external reinforcement and support if they want to permanently change their deeply rooted patterns of behavior. Sex addiction focused group therapy can be extremely helpful in this regard. Generally, a treatment specialist works with between six and ten same-gender sex addicts. (Co-ed sex addiction therapy groups are a bad idea!) The facilitated group setting is a great way for sex addicts to learn that their problems are not unique, which goes a long way toward reducing the shame associated with their behaviors. Group therapy is also the ideal place to confront the denial that is so integral to sexual addiction. Such confrontations are powerful not only for the addict being



confronted, but for the addicts doing the confronting. As such, everyone present learns how minimizations, justifications, and rationalizations sustain sexual addiction. Clients are also able to learn which interventions and coping mechanisms work best based on other members' experiences.

If clients are struggling with core concepts of healing, or they just can't seem to establish a footing in sexual sobriety, they may benefit from [inpatient residential](#) or [intensive outpatient](#) sexual addiction treatment. These intensive programs can last as little as two weeks or as long as several months, depending on the program and the client.

In addition to individual and group therapy (and perhaps inpatient or intensive outpatient treatment), sex addicts nearly always benefit from 12-step "S" meetings. Sexaholics Anonymous ([SA](#)), Sex Addicts Anonymous ([SAA](#)), Sexual Compulsives Anonymous ([SCA](#)), Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous ([SLAA](#)), and Sexual Recovery Anonymous ([SRA](#)) are all nationwide programs for sex addicts. Some meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend, while others are open only to those who identify as sexually addicted. A few meetings are gender specific. It is best to check ahead by looking meetings up online or by calling the group's local hotline number.

Needless to say, every sex addict's treatment arc is different. Each individual arrives with specific problematic sexual behaviors and a unique background, so each client needs an approach tailored to his or her particular needs. Some will respond best to individual therapy supplemented by group and 12-step work. Others will do best in group settings, making little progress one-on-one. Still others will struggle utterly until they are physically separated from the people, places, and things that drive their addiction by the protective walls of inpatient treatment. The most important thing when dealing with sex addicts is to recognize their individuality in this respect, and to respond accordingly rather than by attempting to force-feed any particular approach, no matter how much success you've had with that approach in the past.

Source: Robert Weiss LCSW, CSAT-S is Senior Vice President of Clinical Development with [Elements Behavioral Health](#). A licensed UCLA MSW graduate and personal trainee of Dr. Patrick Carnes, he founded [The Sexual Recovery Institute](#) in Los Angeles in 1995. He is [author](#) of *Cruise Control: Understanding Sex Addiction in Gay Men* and *Sex Addiction 101: A Basic Guide to Healing from Sex, Porn, and Love Addiction*, and co-author with Dr. Jennifer Schneider of both *Untangling the Web: Sex, Porn, and Fantasy Obsession in the Internet Age* and *Closer Together, Further Apart: The Effect of Technology and the Internet on Parenting, Work, and Relationships*, along with numerous peer-reviewed articles and chapters.



COMPARISON CHARTS

COMPARISON: The difference between Accidental Affairs, Addiction Affairs, Entitlement Affair, and Philandering

Common to all four types:

- ✚ Infidel can be any age
- ✚ The marriage has little to nothing to do with the actions of the infidel
- ✚ There is little to no emotional involvement with the 3rd Party
- ✚ The Couple lives separate lives (exp. One-night stand affair)
- ✚ Individual Therapy is recommend as well as couple therapy (exp. One night stand)
- ✚ The Attachment Style is normally “Dismissive, Avoidant” (exp. One night stand)
- ✚ Keeping the marriage is important to them (exp. Philanderers are unlikely to feel guilty or to change)

Entitlement affairs occur when an individual breaks from reality. They’ve had so much success, they think anything they do will work. They see something they want, they think they can have it, and they go after it. Like many who turn to affairs, Woods was attempting to fill an inner void, but his actions were also fueled by his narcissism. It could happen to anyone when you’re treated and used that way by the public as some kind of icon. There’s an emptiness to a life when people want you for what you represent but have no interest in you as a human being. All these people want to chew on him but don’t really give a damn about him. The way he chose to fill it is not exemplary but is understandable. NOTE: Woods is a self confessed sex addict.

In this special circumstance, the infidel is given opportunities due to their social status. They may still want the relationship with the spouse, but will take advantage of tempting offers from adoring fans. Unlike the other Type of affairs listed here, the Entitlement Affair Type has affairs that can last up to 2 years or more. They think they are above following relationship rules and boundaries due to their special societal standing.

The Sex Addict has a constant need to “fill up” on impulse. They use sex as a way to numb inner pain and emptiness similar to the way alcoholics abuse alcohol. Sex addicts



typically come from dysfunctional families and may have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused. Sex addiction is treated with therapy designed to control the addictive behavior and help the person develop a healthy sexuality. The sex addict would like to be closer to their spouse, but does not know how to become emotionally closer, and protect their compulsive addictions – which they have little to no control over.

The philanderer struggles with being faithful. “Woman are a conquest” could be their mantra. The infidel is mainly male but can be female. The negative programming began as a young child. They have a strong definition of a male role and a female role, ingrained in them as a child. Their views can be often interpreted as sexist. They will not get emotionally close to anybody of the opposite sex – including their spouse. Often, they are open about their indiscretions amongst their peers. And there are many affairs to talk about!

The Accidental Affair type happens even in good marriages. There is guilt and shame after the affair. The affair comes as a shock to both husband and wife, as they thought their marriage was strong. Why it happens is due to a “temporary loss of control”. Recovery can be fast, depending on how the spouse views infidelity and forgiveness.



COMPARISON: Accidental Affairs to Addicted Affairs

- ✚ Common factor between these both is there is no “emotional involvement”
- ✚ Sexual addiction affairs & One Night Stands are classified differently even though a one-night stand can turn into sex addiction affair type if not caught or the behavior dealt with after first occurrence.

	One night Stand	Sexual Addiction
Common with	Business trips	
Recovery Journey	Can be easy, with forgiveness. Coaching time can be brief	Complex and long journey. Professional care from Mental Health Professional is generally Required
Emotional Involvement	None	none
Marital Problem	None	Issue from Family Of Origin or childhood/Attachment Style
Sex experience with lover	Single experience; intense; passionate; lustful	Instant satisfaction with various partners; sexual activity preference grows more distorted over time
Remorse	Usually immediate & Intense	Rarely.
Affair Length of Time	1 night	Years, with periods of binge behavior
Consideration of Lover	None	None
Chance of Affair Happening Again	If not dealt with properly, a pattern can immerge. The secrecy will create a loss in intimacy, encouraging emotional involvement with someone else.	High if not treated



COMPARISON: Accidental Affairs to Addicted Affairs

They seem similar but these are the finer distinctions:

- ✚ Both these types have similarities to the marriage bond, hence making these type of affairs so dangerous
- ✚ Can be the most difficult to over come due to the emotional involvement

	AVOIDANCE AFFAIRS ✚ Conflict Avoidance ✚ Intimacy Avoidance	ADD-ON AFFAIRS ✚ Exit Affairs ✚ The Entitlement Affair
Why Affair Happens	The relationship has emotional issues of some type	The relationship is lacking in some area (mainly sex)
Issue with spouse	Unsatisfying emotional interaction	Lack of activities
Affair Time	Up to 24 months	Can last for years
SIMILARITIES -Affair Fueled By:	Admiration & Affection; Rituals; Deceit & Lies; Secret Communications; “Spouse does not understand me” attitude; enjoys the fantasy world brought on by the affair. Self delusion by saying the lover is “just a friend”	Can occasionally develop in to a Avoidance Affair
Sex experience with lover	Passionate, and enjoyed by lover and cheater	Initiated by 1 person; and sometimes done out of obligation for the friendship. Rarely satisfying sex.
Catch Up With Lover	Wants to catch up often with lover, and will do so where & when possible	More infrequent – 2 or 3 times per year
Affair begins	Work	Social Group; Social Activity
Infidel feels...	Exhaustion, depressed, confused	Refreshing, invigorating, brightening
Talking about spouse to lover	Often will make the spouse out to be “issue/bad/problem/upsetting them”	Often will make the spouse out to be “better/good person” to the lover
Intent to leave Spouse	Will talk to lover about leaving spouse	Never talk about leaving family or spouse
Activities with	Many – dating, gifts,	Limited to single activity



lover	vacations, dinners, events	
Thought of Lover	Soul-Mate	Good friend

COACHING POINTS TO CONSIDER

While this list is by no means exhaustive, the following best practices can be incorporated into your work with couples undergoing Infidelity Coaching:

- **Maintain a nonjudgmental attitude.** Topping the best practices list among those interviewed are maintaining neutrality with a couple and demonstrating a nonjudgmental attitude toward the partner who strayed. Examine your own feelings about infidelity. If you do have certain biases, work through it. After participating in training, if you determine that you can't be unbiased toward the unfaithful partner, refer the couple to another mental health professional. I suggest simply telling the couple they would benefit from a counselor who is more experienced with their type of situation.

- **Refrain from swaying a couple in either direction.** As a coach, you should stand firm against swaying the couple in either direction—splitting up or remaining together. As Mick Jones sang in the popular 1981 song by punk rockers The Clash, “should I stay or should I go now?” must be determined by the partners without interference from anyone, including a therapist.

Each person is in charge of his or her own destiny. As long as they're comfortable with their choices, their eyes are wide open, and they know why they're making a decision, even if the decision is deemed unhealthy by others, such as when a wife stays with a husband for financial security because she's afraid to be alone or believes her children need a father in the household.

- **Instruct the couple to stop talking to family and friends about the situation.**

Furthermore, the couple should be instructed to stop talking to and subsequently influenced by family and friends who may have good intentions but can do damage by taking sides and demonizing one partner. If they can't talk to each other, they need to call you.

- **Teach a couple to access and share emotions.** Of course, the partners should be encouraged to talk to each other. And each can be taught to access his or her own emotions and share them with the other. A lot of people who have serious affairs don't



know their emotional self very well.

Partners sharing feelings is more than simply using “I statements” and avoiding “you statements”. It’s about putting feelings into words that a partner can hear and understand—a feat accomplished only when individuals are attuned to their own emotional selves.

An especially effective way to delve beneath the surface and reach deeper feelings, is via Imago Relationship Therapy’s “Imago Dialog,” a talking and listening skill that allows partners to share pain without criticizing, shaming, or blaming. This type of communication helps partners transcend the presenting struggle—in this case, infidelity—as well as reactive and dramatic behavior while moving toward understanding underlying triggers. Imago therapy is about helping people grow up and behave as what we believe maturity looks like, which includes impulse control and awareness of the impact of one’s actions on another person.

- **Quell the betrayed partner’s ruminations.** Getting down to gut level and tapping one’s emotions, can help the betrayed partner control obsessive thoughts or ruminations about the cheating partner’s actions with a lover. When rumination gets out of hand, you can teach thought-stopping techniques that consciously shift mental images from negative to positive.

- **Avoid secrecy.** It’s important that a therapist be honest, which includes refusing to keep a partner’s secrets because doing so is tantamount to colluding with one partner against the other.

If an affair hasn’t yet been disclosed, we recommend coaching the unfaithful partner about how to broach the topic with his or her partner. If you must hold the secret while you determine how to get the unfaithful partner to talk, it should be for no more than a few weeks.

To avoid secrets, we generally conduct therapy sessions with the partners together rather than apart. There are exceptions as per your training notes.

- **Obtain a thorough history for both partners.** A comprehensive family history is required of both partners, even the one who was not unfaithful. Talking with the partners about their parents, their childhood, and the ways in which they dealt with problems in their family of origin. The therapist must uncover the coping mechanisms that each partner used as children. What coping patterns were needed back then that get in the way now? E.g. children who tune out emotionally and hide physically to escape a raging parent. While that coping method may have been effective in a childhood situation, it’s



not conducive to a strong partnership.

Most of the time with infidelity, the partner who has not been unfaithful also has a coping mechanism or defense mechanism that leaks energy out of the intimacy of the couple, e.g. a new mother who doesn't pay attention to her partner. Although a mother in this situation is rarely morally judged, her action—or inaction—can have the same impact on the marriage as infidelity. It keeps people from being connected and makes the relationship vulnerable to other things.

- **Provide each partner with tasks.**

The unfaithful must be willing to do whatever it takes to reassure the partner—including showing empathy, sharing details, and remaining patient with a partner's ups and downs—during what can be an arduous and lengthy process. Especially in the beginning, most betrayed partners really want to know a partner's whereabouts because they're feeling insecure. Whether it means laying out details about the schedule for the next week, frequent calls home, or calls from the office phone rather than from a cell phone.

Occasionally, you will have an unfaithful person say, 'I feel like I'm in jail.' Then say, 'Yes, this is not a way to run a marriage. You won't have to do it for the rest of your life, but you're in a crisis situation, and you have to do things now that you wouldn't otherwise do.'"