



## **Sex After an Affair**

Outline to the Recovery Room Podcast #403

[AffairHealing.com/podcast403](http://AffairHealing.com/podcast403)

### **I. Obstacles to Sexual Connection After an Affair**

The sexual struggles that couples experience can be caused by a number of factors, some of which have nothing to do with the affair. However, any sexual problem that already existed becomes more pronounced within the painful mess that follows betrayal.

#### **A. Struggles Resulting from an Affair**

1. **SEXUAL COMPARISONS** by both partners
  - a) feelings of inadequacy by the betrayed partner
  - b) feelings of disappointment by the unfaithful partner
2. **TRIGGERS** due to known details about the affair
  - a) Specific acts of intimacy
  - b) Specific circumstances

#### **B. Struggles Intensified after an Affair**

1. **PRIOR SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION IN THE MARRIAGE**
  - a) Sex was never satisfying in the relationship.
  - b) Sex was a regular source of conflict.
  - c) The involved partner's pattern of using sex as a substitute for true intimacy (and now the injured partner needs assurances of value beyond sexual gratification).
2. **PERSONAL HISTORY** of sexual trauma or dysfunction in the injured spouse, newly agitated by the affair

### **II. Steps for Involved Partner**

- A. **BE PATIENT.** this is going to take time for your spouse to heal. You may be ready for sex much sooner than your partner, but you have to respect the time they need.
- B. **GAIN INSIGHT** into ways sex become a substitute for vulnerability and true intimacy in your relationships. Focus on establishing a safe and secure emotional bond with your partner and begin to view sex as an expression of that connection rather than the cause of it.
- C. **FOCUS FIRST ON YOUR PARTNER's** needs, emotional and physical.

- D. RESOLVE ANY UNCERTAINTY about your goals for future sexual connection with your partner. Individual counseling can help.
- E. BE WILLING TO INITIATE sexual experiences even when emotion isn't completely behind it, *assuming you are certain about wanting to heal the disconnection in your marriage.*

### III. Steps for Injured Partners

- A. Recognize THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE RIGHT OR WRONG in your choices regarding sexual connection (either in the timing or level of sexual connection).
- B. REFRAIN FROM SEX WITH A PARTNER WHO IS STILL INVOLVED with the affair partner. To be part of healing, sex should occur within a re-commitment to our safety.
- C. ADDRESS TRIGGERS through individual therapy.
- D. TAKE SMALL STEPS OF RISK *as your partner earns your trust.*
- E. CREATE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS. Pre-affair sexual problems will need to be addressed in order to begin experiencing the long-term healing of your sexual bond.
- F. GUARD AGAINST USING SEX AS A WEAPON, penalty, or bargaining chip. Doing so will hurt, not help, your move toward better sex in your marriage.

### IV. Steps for Couples

- A. Eventually explore the question: What can we bring into our marriage that would help us feel more connected and satisfied sexually?
- B. Focus first on issues related to clarity and cooperation.
- C. Resources
  - 1. Couples Counseling
  - 2. Couple's Exercise: Sex Talk (available on podcast link)
  - 3. Recommended Books (available on podcast link)