

## **Affair Recovery...How to Cope at the Beginning by Dr. Stan Hyman**

Once it has been discovered, an affair's aftermath can be very ugly. If there is any hope for the individual or the couple to weather this event, taking the time to reflect is critical.

This tear in the fabric of the relationship often takes a long time and a lot of hard work to repair, so be prepared. Some suggestions for coping and getting through this very difficult beginning period are listed below.

Don't make hasty decisions. Despite feelings to the contrary, it is extremely important to let some time pass before deciding what to do about your relationship. You will benefit more in the long run if you give yourself some time to reflect. I know this sounds easier to say than it is to do but you must try to control your impulse to behave in a way you may later regret.

Don't tell everyone right away. Although you may feel the need to share your pain with friends and family, you may end up influencing the way they feel about your spouse or get opinions that you are not ready for. Should you decide to repair the marriage you may not want family members or friends, who have become intolerant of your spouse, trying to influence your decision.

On the other hand there may be a close friend or friends in whom you may feel the need to confide. Try to use as much discretion as possible. There are many emotions that get triggered by discovering an affair. Anger, depression and shame are just a few. You need time to sort out your feelings before sharing the story with people who do not need to know.

Take care of yourself. Your emotional state will be very delicate and you are likely to become preoccupied with intrusive thoughts. However, you need to pay attention to your physical health.

There is often a tendency to spiral down; gain or lose weight, not sleep, drink too much or use drugs to escape bad feelings. Force yourself to take a walk, swim, eat properly and spend time with close friends for support. You will need your strength.

The children. If you have kids they will know something is wrong. It is unlikely that you will be able to hide your pain completely. However it is very important to be careful about what you discuss with them.

It is one thing for them to be told that you and your spouse have had a fight or disagreement and that you need some time to calm down. It is quite another to put them in the very awkward and probably untenable position of having to process the ugly news of a betrayal.

They may never need to know about the breach at all. But if you have told them in a moment of anger, distress or sorrow, you will only make things worse for them to deal with the anxiety about the future of their family and the view they might have about their own marriage in the future.

Understand the roller coaster. You will likely feel many emotions, not just anger, disgust, fear or sadness. Understand that it is normal to feel everything you may be feeling. Powerful emotions can overcome you at any time so be prepared for that possibility.

If you find that your emotions have become so powerful that you can't function, consider seeing your doctor to discuss a mild medication for the short term.

Leaning on close friends at this time can be very helpful.

Create a personal journal. Journaling can be both reflective and cathartic. You will likely benefit from this form of self-expression during this difficult time. You need to write down your thoughts and feelings. I also suggest you use a recorder (an app for your smartphone will work) so that you can record your thoughts and feelings as well.

The idea is write and/or record what's on your mind but also to read and hear back what you have written or recorded

Get counseling. This may seem obvious but many people let too much time go by before seeking professional help. Whether as an individual or as a couple (I recommend both) counseling will help you (and your spouse) better understand what really happened and why.

If you and your partner are willing to engage in the repair process it is extremely important that you get the help you need. If you are not ready to come together to a therapist then at least go alone. Most spouses dealing with this issue benefit greatly from therapy at this time as it helps them to work through the confusion and angst.

Finally, you will want to work with someone who understands the nuances and complexities of relationships. The issues of infidelity and betrayal of trust are powerful and personal and require a seasoned, well trained professional to help you to work through this difficult time.

### **About Dr. Stan Hyman**

Dr. Stan Hyman has been helping couples recover from affairs and rebuild trust for over 25 years. He is listed in the National Registry of Marriage Friendly Therapists and is deeply passionate about helping couples to stay together and thrive.

He is also a board certified clinical sexologist with a deep understanding of human sexual behavior.

Dr. Hyman's office is located at: 2999 NE 191 Street, suite 703, Aventura, Miami, Florida, 33180.

Dr. Hyman can be reached for a consultation by phone at 305-933-9779 or by email at [drstan@drstanhyman.com](mailto:drstan@drstanhyman.com) . Sessions can also be conducted via Skype.