

➤ Exercise

Talking About the Affair

Instructions: We estimate that it will take 50-250 discussions about the affair for it to be really healed for both of you. A vital element of healing is providing the space to talk about the affair and the pain associated with it. A critical component of these discussions is having safety for BOTH of you. In order to ensure the safety, feelings must be disclosed and explored. Both partners must anyone taking the high road. Schedule no more than 30 minutes to have this discussion (if 30 minutes is too long, make the time frame shorter). Decide together how many discussions you will have in a week. Please follow the instructions written below for Each Role.

The Hurt Partner – Your job is to express your feelings (including pain, sadness, anger, and humiliation), honestly ask questions, and understand why this happened. Your tendency will likely be to criticize your partner and make your case. If you follow those impulses – you will never get what you want – which is to have a partner you can trust. In fact, criticism will drive your partner away and invite in their best defenses. Make sure to allow your body to relax and breathe deeply from your diaphragm. Soften your position and remind yourself that you really love your partner. We recommend going through the **BEIN sequence** to begin the discussion:

B: **Breathe** from your diaphragm

E: **Express gratitude/positivity** (eg “Thanks for being willing to talk about this with me, it really helps.”)

I: **Use an I statement** to outline the situation and tell your partner about your feelings (eg “When I saw you with him, I felt devastated.”)

N: **Need** – tell your partner specifically what you need (eg “I need you to be sweet to me and touch me physically when I am hurting”).

(Tear Exercise in Half Here & Each Partner Keeps their Role in Front of them)

The Unfaithful Partner – Most people in your position want to move on from the affair and get on with life. Unfortunately, it’s very unlikely your partner will be able to move on without your active participation. Hurt Partners really need to feel like you understand and care about their feelings and pain. Often times it is really difficult to stay with partner’s hurt and betrayal. In our experience your readiness to listen, understand, and validate your partner is the most critical aspect of your relationship healing from an affair. We recommend you use the **BVA sequence** as much as possible with your partner:

B: **Breathe** from your diaphragm

V: **Validate** what your partner has to say. Let them know you hear what they are saying and feeling. If you want to take it to the next level – you can even paraphrase what your partner is saying.

A: **Offer assurances.** Let your partner know how important they are to you (eg “I really want this to work.” “I really want to be with you.” “You’re the only one I want”). Don’t be surprised when your partner fights you on these assurances. This is part of the natural healing process.