

Hope Redefined

Support and Coaching for Wives of Sexual Betrayal

As a pastor, church leader, small group leader, or mentor you may be a woman's first place for support. You can provide a safe place that offers wisdom and encouragement. You can help support the whole marriage in the midst of sexual betrayal.

When we intersect a marriage that is being impacted by pornography addiction and/or infidelity we must recognize that the whole marriage requires support. When both members of the couple are receiving support, they are able to heal more quickly and become stronger for it. One of the biggest mistakes we make when supporting a marriage in the middle of this storm is overlooking the betrayed wife/partner. She was profoundly wounded by the shrapnel that blew through their home. She needs specific attention and support, much like the husband who is struggling to overcome his addiction.

Don't:

- **Assume she recognizes her need for support.** Many partners would tell you that the realization didn't come until more turmoil hit their family and she "buckled." This could be from personal pressure, a slip/relapse by the addict or a completely separate event that pushes her over the edge.
- **Force a partner into quick forgiveness.** Allow them the space to grieve first and then work toward forgiveness.
- **Ask about her sin issues from the onslaught of the addiction.** This communicates that she has some responsibility or ownership for the addictive behavior., which is not true. Questioning her sin issues early on can cause a great amount of shame and harm to a wife.
- **Don't ask about the couple's sex life.** If you study any part of sexual addiction you will know that sexual activity, including frequency, does not directly impact the choice to view porn or seek relationships outside of the marriage. More sex in the marriage does not equal less sexual betrayal behaviors.
- **Rush her to heal.** Much like working with the addict, we are not able to push someone into recovery or healing. Our biggest impact comes when we choose to walk along side and offer as much compassion as possible, even when we don't completely understand.

Do's:

- **Give her space to acknowledge the "aftermath" and the destruction.** Her entire reality just exploded in her face. Grief is a natural response but many partners don't realize this is needed or allowed.
- **Allow her to be angry and feel.** Help her to know that anger is permissible and understandable. It's not a place we get to camp in for indefinitely, but it's a valid emotion and also helps us learn that there is more beneath it.
- **Encourage her to seek support for herself.** She needs someone who is well qualified to walk with her through the various levels of pain and trauma that partners encounter. Professionals with a certification of APSATS are highly trained and skilled to support a partner and couple. In addition, therapists who are trained in trauma , biblical worldview and have several years of experience are also a good option.
- **Help her understand she is a part of the care concern,** not an after thought. Many women feel overlooked in the aftermath of a sexual addiction confession. There are support and recovery groups available for the addict, but limited resources for the wife. Help her understand that she is a part of the care/concern and not an after thought or non-issue. Maintain a list of referrals (local and online) and give them to the wife so that her pain is not list in her husband's recovery.

If you would like a more complete and thorough understanding of how to support marriages impacted by sexual betrayal contact Hope Redefined at Support@Hope-Redefined.com