

Partners of Sex Addicts Impact Letter

The goal of the [Partners of Sex Addicts](#) Impact letter is to collect and organize the impacts you have experienced as the partner of someone whose sexual behaviors have wounded you. If you plan to share this letter with your partner then the use of shaming language can foster an atmosphere that doesn't contribute to you feeling heard and understood. Remember, the story is about you and your emotions, your sexuality, your body, and your heart. Your words will be potent and compelling if you speak about what your experience has been to the sex addict. Be vulnerable but don't soften how it has hurt you.

Structure of Impact Letter

Chapter 1: Introduction

Explain why you are writing this letter and discuss how you hope this will be received. For example:

“Dear (Person who has hurt you),

Here is why I am writing this letter: to explain the process I have been going through ever since I learned about your (unfaithfulness, infidelity, porn addiction, etc.). I am hoping that you will hear this letter with humility and honor of where I am at with it. My hope is that as you listen to it, that you will allow any defensiveness that arises in you to be put aside so that you can step into my experience.

I am being vulnerable in this letter. I have worked hard to share it with you. It takes a lot of courage to share it with you. My hope is that through this process, you will have a better understanding of my experience.

Are you willing to listen to my story?”

Chapter 2: My Experience

In this section, you are writing about the toll of your partner's sexual actions. Include descriptions of the impact in the five zones: Cognitive, physical, emotional, sexual, and experiential. This section may be very long.

You can use bullet statements for each to get started of how you are affected. Then add more later. Use the results from your “Partners Zones of Impact Survey”.

Chapter 3: My Experience (Process)

In this section, you are highlighting the stages you have gone through – the highs and lows, the chronology of things however you'd like to put a frame around your experience. You can use dates, estimated timelines that help you describe what it has been like to be faced with this pain. Describe how long your pain has been going on. Include the most difficult parts of the

process, etc. What is your timeline: sequence of events. This can include what you were was happening in your life prior to the discovery/disclosure (i.e., My mother had just passed and I have not been able to grieve because shortly afterward, I discovered your affair.)

Chapter 4: Going Forward (What I need)

This is the section that you communicate your needs going forward in the relationship. Write each down and invite your partner to demonstrate support for you in these areas.

Highlight areas that your partner can be involved in meeting your needs such as:

Examples:

“I need you to initiate a checkin with me (every day, once a week, once a month).”

“I want to do a monthly checkin that covers these topics: (Recovery, Sobriety, Step work, etc.).”

“I would like to see you maintain your 12-step group participation, weekly therapy sessions, etc.”

“These are my expectations and needs going forward in order to feel that we are both taking care of this.”

“I need a therapeutic separation in order to focus on my own healing.”

Chapter 5: Going Forward (My Vision)

1. Write about what you hope for in the future.
2. List the things you long for starting with yourself, your partner, and the relationship you share.
3. (For Therapists: Hope Ray & Ken Adams are creating worksheets to help partner develop this section).

Chapter 6: The Closing

1. Thank your partner for listening
2. List any expectations you have for a response:
 - “I expect you to respond to me with an Empathy Letter in a therapeutic setting within a month or two.”
3. List some appreciations:

For yourself:

- “I’ve spent all this money on therapy to get well.”
- “I drove an hour to attend therapy.”
- “I didn’t tell all my friends of your affair in order to shame you.”
- “I let myself be in awkward family gatherings with you and listened to them say what a great couple we are together.”
- “I worked hard and I am resilient and I am moving forward.”

For your partner:

(Humanize the Addict.

- “I know you could’ve done better if you had the tools/skills to deal with your own pain.
- “I recognize that this wasn’t intentional.”

Note: the addict can write his own impact letter from the perspective of what he thinks the partner would write (writing as the partner to himself). This better prepares the addict to be ready to hear his/her partner’s real impact letter and not shut down.

Notes Taken From CSAT Symposium workshop “Impact Letter: The Axis of Healing Partners” by Hope Ray & Kenneth Adams

Categories

Spouse/Partner of Sex Addict

Tags

Partner of Sex Addict Counseling



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I am a marriage counselor that uses Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT). EFT goes to the root of the destructive patterns, harsh words, and defensive reactions that overwhelms a relationship or marriage. When couples argue, fight, and do not get along it is usually because they do not feel safely connected, close, heard, valued and loved. I am also a Certified Sexual Addiction Therapist (CSAT) and work with men that struggle with sexual addictive and/or porn addictive behaviors. I believe the real issue is past relational hurt either in the family-of-origin or other relationship trauma. I will help you find solutions and freedom from the cycle of your addiction. I fully understand the frustration of trying to stop on your own but finding failure each time.