



If you are the partner of someone suffering from sex or porn addiction, you probably want to write an Impact Statement at some point in your healing process.

An impact statement is when you take the time and write down your experience, thoughts, and feelings of trauma and share it with the person you hurt you.

Betrayal trauma is an authentic experience that partners of those experiencing sex addiction or porn addiction need to heal. It is a complex series of stages a person goes through when their trust has been betrayed.

Behaving in Secret: A Characteristic of Sex Addiction

One of the hallmarks of someone suffering from sex or porn addiction is leading a separate or double life full of secretive and odd behavior. More often than not, the secrecy is due to the shame and guilt the person suffering from this intimacy disorder is experiencing.

You may bear this guilt and shame out of several underlying circumstances, such as trying to stop your sexual behaviors but finding you can't control them. Another is that you may have been dishonest and engaged in infidelity or other acts your partner would consider cheating. You have probably set aside your relationship, financial, or occupational priorities to pursue your sexual needs.

This web of choices may feel like complete and utter betrayal and cause your partner to not only be disappointed in you but also may provoke them to leave your side because of this addiction.

Writing an impact statement is instrumental in communicating your experience to your partner.

What is Betrayal Trauma?

Betrayal Trauma is multidimensional and complex. At its very foundation, it is the betrayal of trust you had in your partner and relationship.

While a person is healing from sex addiction, the partner is healing from betrayal trauma if not still experiencing it.

Writing down your impact statement allows you to describe how your partner's betrayal has impacted your life, relationship, and overall well-being. Impact statements are a critical part of moving forward and healing.

Sex Addiction Induced Trauma

Sex Addiction-Induced Trauma (SAIT) between intimate partners and spouses has thirteen key phases that a person goes through when they discover their partner's behaviors:

- Discovery Trauma
- Disclosure Trauma
- Reality-Ego Fragmentation
- Impact on the Body and Medical Intersection
- External Crisis and Destabilization
- Increased awareness and Re-Experiencing
- Dynamics of Perpetration, Violation, and Abuse
- Sexual Trauma
- Gender Wounds and Gender-Based Trauma
- Relational Trauma and Attachment Injuries
- Family, Communal and Social Injuries
- Treatment-Induced Trauma
- Existential and Spiritual Trauma

Multi-Dimensional Partner Trauma Model

In 2009 Dr. Barbara Steffins, the founder of [The Association of Partners of Sex Addicts Trauma Specialists](#), began to recognize the true impact that sex addiction has on a partner and co-authored a landmark book on it.

This is the Multi-Dimensional Partner Trauma Model. Before this, partners of those suffering from sex addiction were often seen as enablers or co-addicts, invalidating their traumatic experience.

This realization that partners experience trauma has created a massive shift in recent years. Partner healing is now widely recognized as a vital tool for saving relationships.

Acute Trauma Response/PTSD

An acute trauma response occurs when there is a major disruptive life event that occurs. It can produce irritability, poor sleep, avoidance of triggering memories or places, aggressive behavior, and many more. These symptoms may occur for a few days or even a few weeks.

The difference between this and [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) (PTSD) is that the symptoms of PTSD last for over four concurrent weeks. Those who have PTSD and acute trauma may show the same signs. However, those with PTSD may exhibit more intense symptoms.

Infidelity and discovering deceit in your relationship is an example of acute trauma. You may experience trauma response symptoms for a few days, a few weeks, or much longer if you do not prioritize self-care and recovery.



Trauma associated with betrayal is deeply rooted in the destruction of your relationships foundation: Trust.

Partner Support

You can do many things to support a partner going through a betrayal trauma experience. There are also many things they can do for themselves. Discussing your emotions thoroughly, writing impact and empathy statements, getting regular sleep, and exercising can be critical building blocks on which you and your partner rely.

Stages of Recovery for the Partner of a Sex Addict

There are many stages of healing for those who have experienced betrayal trauma. They may last a few days, a few weeks, or even years. It all depends on you: the state of your mental health and the support system you have.

The six critical stages as identified by [Dr. Stefanie Carnes](#) are:

1. **Developing/Pre-discovery:** This is when the partner identifies the behaviors that are secretive or out of place.
2. **Crisis/Decision/Information Gathering:** This is when the partner discovers the sex-addicted person's behavior and can try any number of ways to keep the pain and trauma at bay. That is when most people begin attending recovery programs or seek counseling.
3. **Shock:** The main feelings and actions of this stage are numbness and avoidance and period of conflict in the partnership. That usually feels very painful, and you may be beside yourself with grief or anger as well as intense self-doubt.
4. **Grief/Ambivalence:** This is the stage where the partner may turn their energy inwards and begin the healing on themselves rather than focusing on grieving.
5. **Repair:** This is when, as the partner, you need to be fully invested in self-care to help in recreating a sense of emotional and mental stability. The partner suffering from their addiction should be in a recovery program with a solid commitment to healing and rebuilding their relationship.
6. **Growth:** This usually happens after a partner has completed their recovery program and has come out on the other side. The partner who experienced the betrayal will move to identify with a state of resiliency.

The Disclosure Process

The disclosure process usually begins during stage two of recovery and is a critical piece of the healing puzzle. Both partners should sit down together with a certified sex addiction therapist, and the person suffering from the addiction discloses what they have done during periods of acting out sexually.

This statement is a way of taking responsibility and conveying your remorse for your actions, desire to grow, and empathy for your partner. It is a critical step towards rebuilding the bonds of trust.

Impact Statement

Writing an impact statement will be an essential tool for healing and conveying your feelings to your partner without putting a filter on yourself.

Impact statements should be a time to put everything down on paper to give it to your partner so you can feel seen and heard. It is usually a good idea to allow for some time and space for them to process all that you have written down.

Some of the critical parts of an impact statement are:

Explaining why you are writing your message and what you hope to gain from telling your side of the story

Write down how your partner's betrayal has impacted your physical, emotional, sexual, and mental experience. That can be bullet-pointed and simple or developed further.

Your experience from the process, your timeline of events, your highs and lows. Whatever characterizes the pain that you have been experiencing

Explain what you need from now on. Being specific is very helpful at this point. Monthly, weekly, or even daily check-ins, therapy expectations, whatever you need to move forward with the relationship and how you see your future together after healing.

Thank your partner for listening and include expectations here as well, such as an empathy letter from your partner or when you want to see a therapist

Goals of Impact Statement

The impact statement helps you as the partner communicate your experience and expectations in a way that allows you time and space to think things through. It's your chance to tell your story and be heard, and ask for what you need in a safe and comfortable setting.

It is also a way to convey to your partner that you want to continue and repair your relationship but have reasonable boundaries and expectations of their behavior going forward.

The impact statement is an essential healing tool for both of you.

How We Can Help

At The Begin Again Institute, we offer a unique 10-hour [Partner Support Program](#) because we understand that you have to heal both halves of a relationship to make it whole again.

If you or your loved one are coping with sex addiction, porn addiction, and betrayal trauma, we're here to help you through the healing process.