Affair Recovery

7 Reasons Partners Cheat



There are many reasons an extramarital sexual event can occur–even more than the seven reasons we explore below.

Knowing the type of issues you may be grappling with enables you to determine what topics to discuss, what therapy to seek, and whether you can ultimately repair the relationship.

Remember, only your partner is responsible for their choices, even if both parties have issues in the relationship that lead to disconnect and distance.

In this worksheet, take time to think about each reason a partner may engage in an extramarital sexual event or betrayal.

Is this an area you believe is a concern?

Circle the best answer and jot down a thought or two to explain.

Next, try to imagine how your partner would answer. You won't truly know unless you inquire or invite them to complete a copy for discussion. Some couples can discuss these issues to understand the cause of the emotional injury. Don't feel disheartened if you're unable to have this dialogue, or if it doesn't go well.

Often, couples require the assistance of a specialist to facilitate these crucial conversations as part of healing and making amends. While understanding the underlying reasons offers no guarantees against recurrence, it is crucial for building a more solid future for you and your partner.

Barta & Kiene, 2005.

1. The Classic "I love you but I am not in love with you"

What does this signify? It often means, "I don't feel your love for me, and there's no special connection or pull." This can happen for various reasons: detrimental communication patterns between couples can pull you apart, or life distractions like work, kids, and activities might be to blame. A surprising number of mature couples fail to realize that staying in love requires concerted effort. Affairs sometimes occur because one partner doesn't feel wanted, or intimacy is no longer initiated.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

2. Disconnect and Boredom

Couples build routine and structure into their lives. If not careful, they risk living parallel lives, gradually losing special ways of connecting, and even the most intimate aspects of their lives becoming predictable and lifeless. This can alienate partners and push them further apart, both emotionally and physically.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

3. Opportunity

Opportunity is a significant factor that puts people at risk of "accidentally falling in love" with someone else. Casual interactions may afford others too much access to becoming emotionally or physically close. Flirting and being overly playful in social situations like clubs and venues that serve alcohol can also lead to risky one-night stands.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

4. Sexual Adventure

Some partners crave varied sexual experiences to the extent that one partner can't, or perhaps doesn't want to, meet such desires. Pursuing this without an agreed-upon understanding usually constitutes betrayal.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

5. External Validation

The demands of a mature relationship often leave little time for admiration and praise. Partners are expected to self-validate to some extent. Some people are easily swayed when outsiders offer more validation than their steady mate.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

6. Struggling with compulsive sexual behaviors

Behaviors that have spiraled out of control may suggest that both partners could benefit from specialized assistance. There are ways to manage out-of-control sexual behaviors before they ruin relationships.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-

7. Secret Emotional Online Behavior

These behaviors often start as games and Facebook interactions but gradually gain meaning and importance to your partner. A telltale sign is secrecy or hushed conversations; however, don't be fooled. Many partners aren't shy when confronted about their emotional involvement.

Do you feel like this applies to your relationship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain:
My thoughts-

My partner's thoughts-