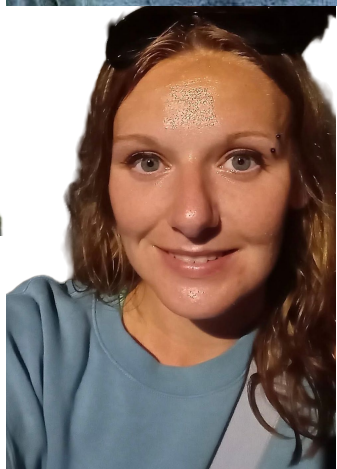


HOPE IN THE MIDST OF BETRAYAL TRAUMA

Kelly Johnston PSAP, APSATS- BTRL

Women's Groups Lead
Pure Desire Ministries









Betrayal trauma occurs when someone who we depend on and are significantly attached to - a spouse, parent, lover, business partner, or friend - betrays our trust and lets us down in a critical way.

Center for Relational Recovery



A third of all U.S. adults (33%) tell Barna they have had a spouse or partner who regularly viewed porn.

Barna Group, [Beyond the Porn Phenomenon: Equipping the Church for a New Conversation about Pornography, Betrayal Trauma and Healing](#), 2024, 51.

When betrayal occurs, your brain begins to operate in a different way. The fear center fires up and stays fired up, creating hyper-vigilance, restlessness, anxiety, and a sense of being perpetually on guard. This alters your ability to regulate your mood, to calm yourself, to think, to reason, and to make intelligent decisions. Your fear center hijacks your normal functioning, and you find yourself in a world where every task feels challenging, your mind will not stop racing, your emotions feel out of control, and your coping skills are stretched to the limit.



My own research revealed that 76% of the 100 betrayed partners surveyed showed clinical symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

Barna Group, *Beyond the Porn Phenomenon: Equipping the Church for a New Conversation about Pornography, Betrayal Trauma and Healing*, Q&A with Dr. Sheri Keffer, 2024, 47.

BETRAYAL TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

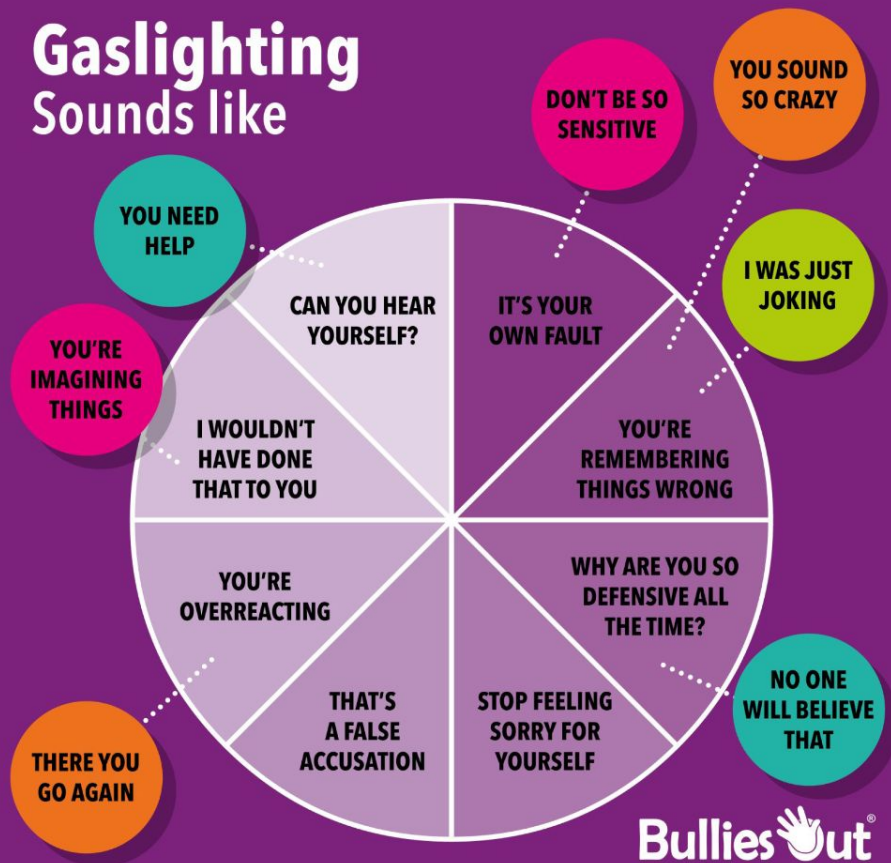
- Intrusive thoughts and images
- Nightmares or flashbacks
- Avoidance of behaviors
- Hypervigilance
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Insomnia
- Fearfulness
- Social withdrawal
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Physical symptoms of tension headaches, migraines, and fatigue

MindWell NYC, *Top Betrayal Trauma Signs, Triggers & Strategies to Recovery* [2022], October 12, 2021, <https://mindwellnyc.com/top-betrayal-trauma-signs-triggers-strategies-to-recovery-2022/>.

BETRAYAL TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

- Shame, guilt, and self-blame
- Depression
- Low-self-esteem and self-worth
- Negative beliefs about self and others, such as *“I am unworthy,”* *“Everyone is dishonest,”* or *“No one can be trusted”*
- Unexpected mood swings
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Inability to trust
- Difficulty maintaining relationships or allowing others to become close to you
- Difficulty with intimacy
- Difficulty believing in your own decision making abilities

Gaslighting Sounds like



A solid teal vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide.

Discovery or Disclosure?

The beginning is messy



THE ADDICT'S REALITY VS. THE SPOUSE'S REALITY

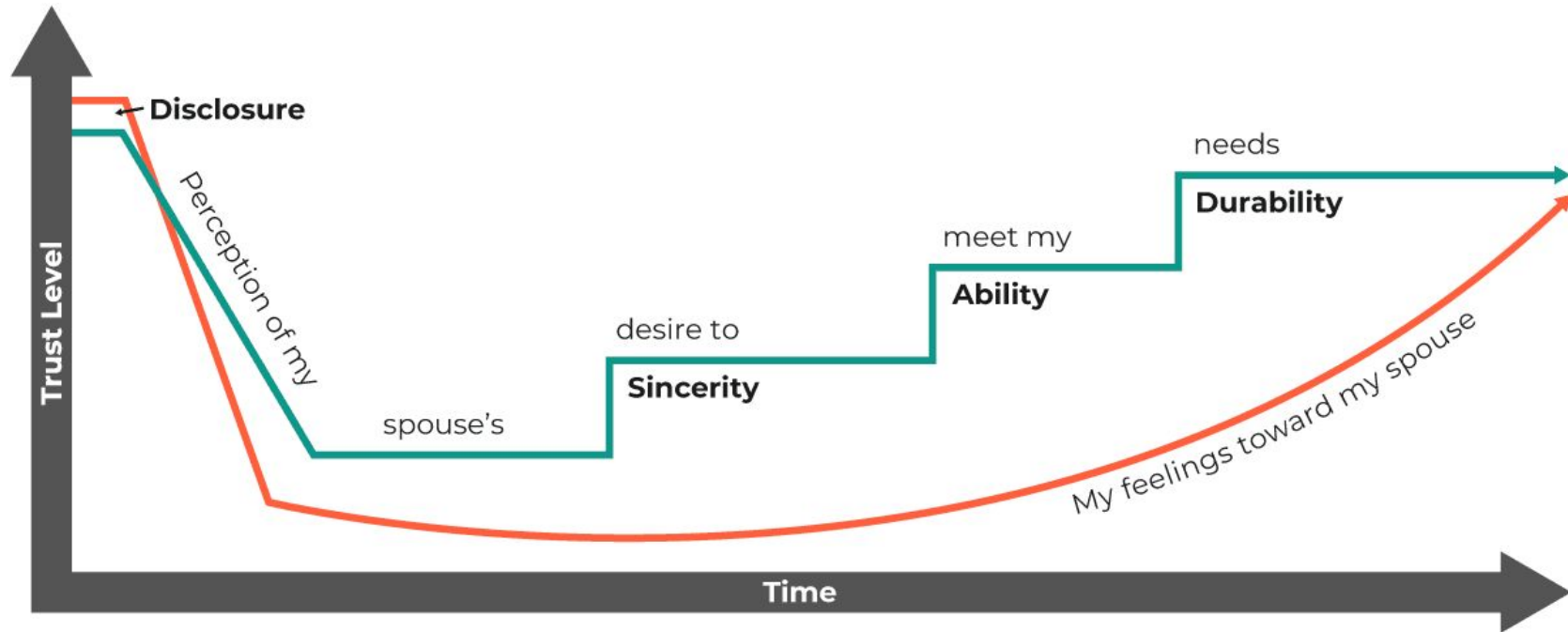
HIS REALITY

- ☐ I'm becoming a man of integrity.
- ☐ I've never loved her more.
- ☐ I'm beginning to see how much I value our marriage.
- ☐ Finally, I'm an honest man.
- ☐ I understand the healing process sometimes takes three to five years. I'm sure I can complete this process in a couple of years.

HER REALITY

- ☐ I've been betrayed.
- ☐ I've never felt less loved or worthy.
- ☐ I've never realized until now how little the marriage meant to him.
- ☐ How could he live a lie like this?
- ☐ Five years seems like a lifetime to deal with this pain.

STEPS TOWARD BUILDING TRUST





Damaging emotions and betrayals can linger and take time to heal. Just under half of women who had a partner or spouse who regularly viewed porn (46%) say they have fully recovered from the effects of this.

Barna Group, [Beyond the Porn Phenomenon: Equipping the Church for a New Conversation about Pornography, Betrayal Trauma and Healing](#), 2024, 54.



We desperately don't want to experience shame, and we're not willing to talk about it, yet the only way to resolve shame is to talk about it.

Brene Brown

Stepping Out in Faith

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.^[a] **6** If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. **7** Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

- Only 10% of U.S. Christians and churched adults say their church offers programming to help.¹
- 67% of pastors have a personal history of porn use, with almost one in five, 18 percent, saying this is a current struggle. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of pastors, 86 percent, feel porn use is common among Christian pastors.²
- 75% of Christian men and 40% of Christian women report that they are viewing pornography at least occasionally.³

¹ Barna Group, *Beyond the Porn Phenomenon: Equipping the Church for a New Conversation about Pornography, Betrayal Trauma and Healing*, 2024, 14.

² Barna Group, *Beyond the Porn Phenomenon*, 14.

³ Barna Group, *Beyond the Porn Phenomenon*, 6.

SAFE PEOPLE

- Admit their weaknesses and faults
- Are spiritual
- Are open to feedback
- Are humble
- Apologize and change behavior
- Deal with the problems
- Earn trust
- Take responsibility
- Tell the truth
- Are growing

UNSAFE PEOPLE

- Think they have it all together
- Are religious
- Are defensive
- Are self-righteous
- Only apologize
- Avoid working on their problems
- Demand trust
- Blame others
- Lie
- Are stagnant

HOW PASTORS CAN PRACTICALLY HELP

- Provide meeting spaces for groups.
- Provide ongoing training for leaders.
- Promote from the main stage—lowers shame.
- Allow groups to have staggered start dates and run all throughout the year.
- Provide childcare.
- Treat PD (recovery/healing) groups as any other small group.

- Talk about both men and women needing support and recovery.
- ALWAYS provide a next step when someone finally decides to come forward—men and women on both sides:
 - Groups in the church
 - Pure Desire Online Groups
 - Pure Desire Counseling
 - Local counseling with a CSAT or APSATS trained professionals

- Provide Safe Responses

- Thank you for being brave and honest enough to share this.
- You are not alone in this struggle/pain.
- There is support available and you can overcome this.
- I'm sorry for what you are going through (betrayed spouse) and I want to help however I can.

- If applicable, “I’ve been through something similar and will help you find the right help.”
- Carol Juergensen Sheets’ AVR
 - Acknowledge (Their Fear/Concern/Issue)
 - Validate (Their Feelings)
 - Reassure



- **Layers of Healing**
- **A Journey of Self-Discovery**
- **Trust the Process**
- **Journey of Identity**



**What has God done
with my story?**





**TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE FROM UNWANTED
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR & BETRAYAL TRAUMA**



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