

Treatment Protocol for Internet Infidelity

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- a. Assessment of what infidelity was – intensity x frequency x duration
 - i. Remember subjective nature of perception of infidelity: both/and, not either/or – both have truths that are real
 - ii. Get the story:
 - iii. What happened
 - iv. What role did technology play?
 - v. Who did what
 - vi. Who found what
 - vii. What happened when they found out – immediately afterwards and since
- b. Assessment of individual and mutual understanding of the transgression
 - i. Assess the meaning of the infidelity for **both** parties
 1. what need did it meet
 2. what did it cost/steal/take
 - ii. Track relationship and sexual history before and during the transgression: assess if significant losses were present at same time as infidelity occurred
 - iii. Come to a mutual understanding of the narrative – willingness to accept even if don't agree with partner's point of view
- c. Assessment of regret
 - i. For infidelity or for pain inflicted, or both?
 - ii. For partner's contribution to dynamic?
- d. Assessment of commitment, willingness to work in therapy
 - i. If they don't know, it's okay – can they do Doherty's "decision whether or not to do marital therapy" therapy first?
 - ii. I suggest 6 months without mentioning divorce, then re-evaluate
 - iii. Always time to divorce, not always time to save marriage if that's what they want
- e. Discuss and decide upon goals for the future
 - i. Transparency
 - ii. Trust
 - iii. Sexual intimacy
 - iv. 3rd option: neither going back or staying here, but moving forward in a new way
- f. Beware of premature forgiveness; wanting to "just move on"
- g. Moving forward:
 - i. Plan for new commitment to connection and communication – time together
 1. Frequently
 2. Face-to-face

3. As a top priority
 4. Technology-free
 - ii. Plan for how to bring up and discuss fears, concerns, resentments, building on therapy gains
 - iii. Plan for boundaries around technology - AUP
 1. Times used
 2. No secret computers
 3. Open passwords
- h. Possibility for using technology to become closer, make partner an obvious priority:
 - i. Secret email accounts to build sexual tension, desire (Perel)
 - ii. PAIRS app – daily temperature reading
 - iii. Texts for daily, quick, intimate communication
 - iv. FB: changing status, complimenting partner to FB audience, defriending certain people
 - v. Online marriage support sites: Power of Two
- i. At close of therapy, plan for “check-up” session in 6 months