



Pre-Workshop Homework Packet for the Wounding Partner





Disclaimer

The materials and services provided by Mend Infidelity and Rebuilding Trust workshops are intended for educational purposes only and are in no way meant to substitute for individualized mental health or coaching services provided by trained professionals.

Our goal during Rebuilding Trust workshops is to assist people in understanding how to go about rebuilding trust in the face of infidelity.

Our services and materials **IN NO WAY** substitute for individualized therapy or coaching. We make no claim to cure, treat, diagnose, or otherwise provide mental or behavioral healthcare, and it is no way implied by our services and materials.

It is important to understand that Matt and Laura Burton are certified and trained professional coaches and are not licensed counselors. If you have continued problems in your partnership or are not sure how to handle difficult situations, please contact a mental health professional or sign up for an individualized intensive from Mend Infidelity.

If there is an **IMMEDIATE CRISIS** such as abuse, suicidal or homicidal thoughts or actions, or any other mental health emergency, please **DIAL 911**. Mend Infidelity is not equipped to handle mental health crises.



We are so excited that you have made the commitment to attend a Rebuilding Trust workshop or are considering coming to one! We look forward to giving you the tools and information you need to help rebuild your relationship after the devastation of infidelity.

This pre-workshop homework packet has been specially designed just for you as the wounding partner. If you are still considering investment in a workshop, this will help give you an idea of the type of work you would be doing should you attend.

Before you begin, there are a few simple **RULES** to understand prior to completing the pre-workshop homework packet:

1. Print off 1 copy of this packet for yourself.

2. Set aside a time for yourself where you can thoughtfully answer each question.

3. Most of these exercises are marked as “INDIVIDUAL,” which means that the answers are not to be shared with your partner. However, if an exercise is marked as “PARTNERS,” you will complete these with your partner. A few of the “PARTNERS” exercises do require that you share information from “INDIVIDUAL” exercises.

4. It is okay to take several days to complete the homework packet. However, it will need to be completed prior to attending your Rebuilding Trust workshop.



You as the Wounding Partner

The path of the wounding partner is unique and looks entirely different than that of the wounded partner. If reconciliation is to take place, you must take responsibility for all of your infidelity-related behavior and commit to do what is necessary to help your wounded partner heal. This means stopping whatever behavior caused the injuries in the first place. This includes things like:

- Ending the physical affair if you haven't already.
- Cutting contact with anyone that you are emotionally entangled with.
- Dealing with issues related to addiction.
- Committing to stop blaming your partner or the relationship for choices that you have made.

Your part of the process of rebuilding trust starts with rigorous honesty. If you can't get honest with your behavior and the pain that it has caused, you will fail to do what is necessary to repair the relationship. You must not only be honest with your partner, but you must be brutally honest with yourself. It is the only way that you can ever hope to get to the core issues that caused the infidelity in the first place. Additionally, you must learn how to empathetically listen.

You will need to work hard in the coming days and months if you are to help repair the damage that your actions have caused to your partner and to the relationship as a whole. You will likely need to:

- Develop and adhere to a recovery plan.
- Develop appropriate boundaries around risky situations.
- Become part of an accountability group.



- Develop empathy.
- Forgive your partner for ways they have wounded you in the relationship.
- Stop blaming others for your choices.
- Let go of shame and forgive yourself.
- Stop defending yourself during discussions with your partner.
- Learn to express remorse without making excuses.
- Take a polygraph (if your partner needs it) to help establish truth.
- Stop minimizing or discounting your partner's pain.
- Show patience to your partner, even when they question you repeatedly.
- Evaluate yourself to try and understand why you betrayed your partner.
- Learn to ask others for help.



A) Individual

List 2-3 items from the above list that you may have already achieved or feel that you can achieve in the near future.

B) Individual

List 2-3 items from the above list that you feel may be the most difficult for you to achieve. Why?

C) Individual

List 3 strengths that you possess that you think will help you achieve the things listed in Part B.



D) Partners

From the above list, ask your partner to point out at least 3 things you can do that they feel would help them heal. Write them here.



Disclosure

This section has been designed to help **PREPARE** you for the disclosure process. Please **DO NOT** have a disclosure conversation until ALL of the exercises in this section have been completed. **DISCLOSURE WITH A TRAINED COUNSELOR OR COACH IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.** Keep in mind that Rebuilding Trust workshops are not adequately staffed to handle disclosures.

Other than you stopping your infidelity-related behaviors, how disclosure is handled is the most crucial part of rebuilding trust. In fact, getting honest in disclosure is the basis upon which all other steps in the process are built. Without complete disclosure, it is very difficult (if not impossible) for couples to make progress in the rebuilding trust process.

Some of you may already be through the disclosure process. For you, we would suggest still doing the work in this section because you may find that you still learn something. For those of you who haven't made it through the process, please read through this section carefully so that you can avoid the most common mistakes made during disclosure.

It may seem counterintuitive, but research shows that your willingness to completely disclose infidelity-related behaviors and answer your partner's questions with defense actually facilitates recovery. One of the biggest barriers to complete disclosure is the need for the wounding partner to "control" the information. This leads us to common mistake #1:

Common Mistake #1: Dribble Disclosure

The term "dribble disclosure" is used to describe a situation in which the truth about infidelity-related behavior is "dribbled" out over time. This is usually because the wounding partner fears the wounded partner's reaction to the information. Therefore, the temptation is for the wounding partner to withhold information and release it in smaller chunks. Many times, this is a misguided attempt to make it somehow easier for the wounded partner to handle. Also, if the wounding partner is being honest with themselves, they are often doing it in an attempt to lessen their own consequences. For example, many wounding partners realize that what they have done is a mistake and have an intense fear that disclosing information will lose them the relationship.

Although these fears are understandable, attempts to control the flow of information on the wounding partner's part are misguided. A research study done by well-known author and infidelity expert Peggy Vaughn found that 72% of betrayed woman and



70% of betrayed men actually found the deception harder to get over than the actual infidelity.

The implications of this study are that, even though details of the infidelity will be hurtful to the wounded partner, the deception around infidelity and disclosure is far more damaging. This is why dribble disclosure is so harmful to the recovery process.

Each time the wounding partner holds back critical information, they are deceiving their partner yet again. Each time this is done, it lessens the chances that the wounded partner will recover in time to be able to participate in the process of rebuilding trust because each experience amounts to a new deception and betrayal to them.

The other issue with dribble disclosure is that it communicates the message that the wounding partner is still being disloyal to their wounded partner. When information is withheld, it is usually because the wounding partner is being more loyal to themselves or their infidelity partner(s) than they are to their wounded partner. This is like pouring salt into a cut. The truth can serve to realign loyalty in the relationship. Dribble disclosure undermines this.

A) Individual

What reservations do you have about providing the facts to your partner for complete disclosure?



B) Individual

Be honest with yourself. Are you willing to provide your partner with all of the information regarding your infidelity-related behaviors? Why or why not?

C) Partners

Share your fears regarding answering questions with your partner.



Common Mistake #2: Believing that disclosure will make things worse

Although it may seem futile to disclose information and answer questions because it only ends up in a fight, anger, or tears, nothing could be further from the truth. Withholding information from your partner regarding something that has deeply affected their life is not only controlling, but also unfair and even cruel. Without the necessary information, the wounded partner will likely deal with one or more of the following:

- An inability to trust again because they couldn't make sense of the information in order to help them recover
- Constant triggers from unresolved trauma
- A feeling that the entire history of the relationship has been tainted because they don't understand the extent of the infidelity
- An inability to trust their own judgment because they don't know how they have been deceived
- Hyper-arousal from constant worry and fear of danger
- A feeling of being robbed of having an authentic relationship
- A feeling of foolishness for staying with the wounding partner
- A feeling of being doubly wounded. First, by the betrayal and second, by the withholding of information
- A feeling of needing to protect themselves, ensuring that the wounded and wounding partners will never be on the same page

Additionally, you as the wounding partner is likely to experience one or more of the following:



- A sense that your partner would never love you if they really knew what you have done
- Repeated infidelity-related behavior because the first behavior was kept in the dark and never dealt with
- Anxiety over the wounded partner finding out what happened

Failure to completely disclose infidelity-related behavior will also likely have one or more of the following effects on you as a family or couple:

- A marked increase in recovery time
- Prolonged emotional instability in the relationship
- Additional trauma
- A failure to create safety
- The possible destruction of the parts of the relationship that were good
- Decreased possibility of the relationship being able to recover
- Increased risk of relapse
- Increased potential of children being hurt in the process



A) Individual

List at least 3 reasons why complete disclosure is important to your own personal recovery.

B) Individual

List at least 3 reasons why complete disclosure is important to your partner's personal recovery.

C) Partners

List at least 3 reasons why complete disclosure is important to the recovery of your relationship overall.



Common Mistake #3: Giving too many or too few details

It is important to note that the disclosure process should be driven by what the wounded partner needs to know. You must be willing to submit to this idea if rebuilding trust is going to be possible. Answering your partner's questions plays a vital role in the recovery process. Without answers, your partner is likely to think on the subject night and day. Their mind is likely to run wild with possible scenarios that never happened.

It is not uncommon for wounded partners to ask an extraordinary amount of questions. For most, asking more and more details is their way of trying to get a handle on their situation. However, with patience and honesty on your part, the intensity of question-asking should lessen over time.

A) Individual (Wounding Partner)

It is important for you to understand that it is not up to you to decide what your partner does and doesn't get to know regarding your infidelity-related behavior. Are you holding back information? If so, reflect on your reasons for doing so. For each piece of information that you are withholding, ask yourself if you are protecting yourself or your affair partner(s) in some way or your wounded partner? If you are protecting yourself, your addictive behavior, or your affair partner(s), reconsider what you are doing and commit to honesty with your partner instead. If you are misguided and believe you are protecting your wounded partner by withholding information, please understand that this is a major mistake.

It is important to note that the disclosure process must be led by your partner and not by you. If they ask for information, give it freely, wholly, and without defense or minimization.

In an effort to get honest with your partner (if you haven't already), please prepare a document containing the facts of your infidelity-related behavior. Although the disclosure process should be driven by what your partner needs to know in order to heal, here is a rough outline as well as some examples of information typically included.

Nature of Betrayal



Type of betrayal



Frequency of contact

Types of contact

Approximate money spent

Lies told

Timeline:

From _____ to _____, I engage in _____
approximately _____ per week/ month.

From _____ to _____, I engage in _____
approximately _____ per week/ month.

From _____ to _____, I engage in _____
approximately _____ per week/ month.

Examples:

From January – April of 2021, I engaged in a texting relationship with a co-worker. We texted approximately four times per day during this time. We discussed our relationships with our spouses.

From April of 2021 to December of 2021, I engaged in a sexual relationship with a coworker. We met twice per week and her house and had sex.

From December of 2017 to January of 2020, I engaged in a sexual relationship with an escort that I found online. We met once per week at a hotel. The approximate money I spent on this was _____.



Clarifications

Please also make a list of what your harmful behavior did/did not involve:

- Involve unprotected sexual intercourse.
- Impact our family's safety (e.g., texting while driving, giving out personal identifying information, having people in our home).
- Occur in our home.
- Involve individuals that you know.
- Risk a loss of job or legal consequences.
- Exposure of the infidelity to our children.

Devices, apps, and websites used

To pave the way for accountability in the future, you should make a list of the following:

- Website name
- App name
- Laptop.
- Cell phone
- Work computer



*If you used other means to engage in infidelity-related behavior, please list it here. Just because the option doesn't appear in this document doesn't mean you can leave it off. Remember, a lie by omission is still a lie.

Manipulation, Lying, and Gaslighting:

You will need to become willing to take full ownership for the unfair and painful ways you have tried to manipulate the situation so that your infidelity-related behavior would not be discovered or called into question. For many wounded partners, the lies told by the wounding partner are even more painful than the betrayal itself because it made them doubt their ability to read situations correctly. This often leads to an erosion of confidence as well as a diminished capacity for trusting themselves.

These Include:

- Outright lying
- Becoming defensive and angry when questioned
- Playing the victim and acting like they had done you wrong for asking you questions or being suspicious
- Omitting crucial information and details about your whereabouts and activities
- Acting like they were crazy or were imagining things that were actually true
- Initiating fights or arguments to avoid having to talk about it
- Deleting browser histories, using separate devices, and the like to cover your tracks
- Blaming the relationship or your partner for your distance from them and/or the family
- Fault finding as a way to detract from the real issue



In order to help your partner heal, not only do you need to own up to the above-listed behaviors, but you will also need to commit to eliminating lying, blaming, shaming, rage, and manipulation from your relationship in the future.

Safety Guidelines for Conversations Around Disclosure:

If you need to have a conversation around disclosure prior to coming to the Rebuilding Trust workshop, please keep the following safety guidelines in mind:

- Be considerate to one another.
- Do not minimize behavior.
- Do not defend behavior.
- Do not attempt to manipulate your partner's responses.
- Be completely honest in your answers.
- Don't shame your partner.
- Don't act like a victim in order to throw off your partner.
- Take responsibility for your actions and words.
- Don't make quick decisions about the relationship based on the information you find out.
- Keep your emotions in check and take responsibility for them.
- Don't lash out.



- Don't tell your partner what they're thinking or feeling.
- Don't assume you know the motivations of your partner.
- Agree to no abuse including emotional and physical.
- Don't talk when tired (past 11pm).
- Stop the conversation if it starts escalating.
- If you are seeing a counselor or coach, consider having them participate in your disclosure process.
- Take a 20-minute time out if one or both partners become emotionally overwhelmed.

A) Partners (Needing Disclosure)

From the above guidelines, identify those you feel will be the most helpful to you during your disclosure conversation.



B) Partners (Needing Disclosure)

Make a list of agreed upon guidelines for your discussion(s).

C) Partners (Already Through Disclosure)

Each partner list at least one thing they have done that has not been helpful during the disclosure process.



D) Partners (Already Through Disclosure)

Each partner list at least two things they could do to improve your interactions when asking and answering questions.

A large, empty, light yellow rectangular area intended for participants to write their responses.

THANK YOU

Thank you for completing the pre-workshop homework packet for couples. We hope it has been helpful and has better prepared you to be part of your Rebuilding Trust workshop. We look forward to seeing you soon and are honored to be a part of your recovery journey. If you haven't signed up for the workshop yet and are considering it, please know that space is limited.

[Visit our website at https://www.becomingwellinstitute.com/ads-workshop/ to sign up today.](https://www.becomingwellinstitute.com/ads-workshop/)

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Book a Calendly Call:

[Book an appointment with us today!](#)