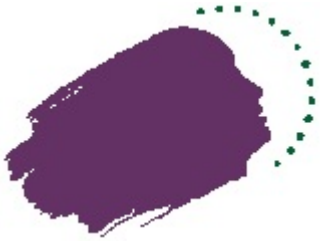


## *Women Helping Women and Their Families*



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### **Overcoming Infidelity**

Experts tell WebMD how to overcome infidelity in a relationship and how to know when it's time to call it quits, according to Heather Hatfield.

#### **WebMD Feature reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD**

Infidelity can shatter even the strongest relationship, leaving behind feelings of betrayal, guilt, and anger. For the one-quarter of married couples who have suffered this breach of loyalty, according to the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, overcoming those feelings can be extremely difficult.

#### **Cause and Effect**

"There are many different reasons why someone might have an affair," says Michele Weiner-Davis, MSW, a marriage and family therapist in Illinois. "Sometimes it is purely a case of bad judgment --a person may feel satisfied with their marriage, but a late night at the office with a co-worker and a couple of glasses of wine can lead to lack of impulse control. More commonly, it's a search for an emotional connection . wanting someone to pay attention to you, flatter you, be attracted to you."

#### **Nine Steps**

When the initial shock of an affair is over, then it is time for both people in the relationship to examine what role they played in letting the relationship slide down such a slippery slope:

"You have to stop the affair, first and foremost," says Jamie Turndorf, PhD, a couples therapist in New York. "You can't reinvest in the marriage if you have one foot out the door."

Remember that there will be ups and downs after an affair. "The road to recovery after an affair is jagged, and that is completely normal," says Weiner-Davis.

"The person who had the affair needs to be willing to discuss what happened openly if the betrayed spouse wants to do that," says Weiner-Davis.

"The person who had an affair has to be willing to be accountable for his or her whereabouts, even though he or she thinks that may be unfair," says Weiner-Davis.

“There needs to be a willingness to make promises and commitments about the future, that an affair will not happen again,” says Weiner-Davis.

The betrayed person should set the timetable for recovery. “So often the person who cheated is eager to put the past in the past, but he or she really has to honor the other person’s timetable,” says Weiner-Davis.

“The person who had the affair should examine the personal reasons for straying and what needs to change to avoid the temptation in the future,” says Weiner-Davis.

As for moving forward, both people in the relationship should take responsibility for building a new foundation. “Both people in the relationship should ask the other what he or she can do to rebuild the connection and what actions should be avoided because they are breaking it,” says Turndorf, author of *Till Death Do Us Part (Unless I Kill You First)*. “Even the person who was cheated on should say to herself, ‘What role did I play in driving you away and what can I do to make you more connected to me in the future?’”

Try marriage therapy or take a marriage education class. “You really need to find a counselor or therapist who is pro-marriage, and can help get your relationship back on track,” say Weiner-Davis. “Steer clear of therapists who see infidelity as a marital death sentence—it isn’t.”

Taken from [www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/features/overcoming-infidelity](http://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/features/overcoming-infidelity)