

Cyber Infidelity: A Treatment Model for the Great Challenge to Contemporary Relationships

Peter Kanaris, Ph.D.

There are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

The Evolution and Growth of Technology and Communications

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/46217767@N03/4246879380>

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Three Key Developments:

- The Internet
- Social Media
- The Smart Phone



http://www.keywordsuggests.com/z*hblhpbOvfg8gpBbSQYcE24yTxEzURUlcJP%7CODYOrE/

Growth of the Internet

- 1995- 16 million users worldwide
- 2000- 361 million
- 2004- 817 million
- 2004- Facebook
- 2007- The iPhone
- **2017- 3,732 million users**



<http://www.neogaf.com/forum/showthread.php?t=449015>

Instagram

- Born in 2010
- 2017- 700 million monthly users
- 95 million uploads a day of pictures and videos
- 80% outside of the United States
- 1 million active advertisers
- Bought by Facebook for \$1 billion in 2013



<https://clipartfest.com/categories/view/088383e3a30df1b12d8923a36a3ce3aacc85e57/transparent-instagram-clipart.html>

Source: PBS News Hour

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/46217767@N03/4246879380>

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The Next Technological Phase

- Virtual Reality
- Robotics
- Artificial intelligence

Online Pornography

- **91,980,225,000 video views**
- That's 12.5 videos viewed for every person on earth

Source: PornHub

Total Visits to PornHub

- 23 Billion
- 729 per second



<https://www.pornhub.com/press>

Hours of Porn Watched in 2016

4,599,000,000 hours

5,246 centuries

Top 10 Countries with Per Capita Page Views

1. USA- 221
2. Iceland- 202
3. United Kingdom- 189
4. Canada- 186
5. New Zealand- 173
6. Ireland- 171
7. Norway- 156
8. Australia- 154
9. Sweden- 152
10. Netherlands- 144



<https://pixabay.com/en/photos/internet/>

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The Mechanisms in Support of Cyber Infidelity

- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Anonymity
- Portability

Pre-Technology Affairs

- The threat might be in a bar or in the workplace.
- Now the threat is in your living room.

Common Case Presentation

- Discovery of cyber affair
- Treatment as the last hope for the relationship
- Possible accusation of “sex addiction”
- Broken trust
- Deep wound of partner
- **Pervasive digital threat**
- Underlying relationship issues
- Underlying sexual issues
- Underlying individual issues

Collaborative Model for the Treatment of and Recovery from Cyber Affairs

Four session assessment approach

- Facilitate the narrative: the couple's story
- Address the offender's shame and guilt
- Address the partner's hurt, anger and insecurity
- A new model for trust
- Externalization of the problem
 - the problem is the enemy, not each other
- The solution is collaboration

Collaborative Model for the Treatment of and Recovery from Cyber Affairs

Addressing triggers for each

- Gradual restoration of intimacy, affection, sexuality
- **Collaborative technology management**
- Relapse prevention
- Fading of treatment

Case Illustration: John (age 49) and Mary (age 52)

John

- Referred by his therapist
- The perfect power couple
- Cyber infidelity over a six year period
- A text discovered by daughter (age 19)
- Together since 1984- 2 kids- son (16) and daughter (19)
- History of medically managed bipolar disorder
- Shame and guilt
- Presented as a customer

Case Illustration: John (age 49) and Mary (age 52)

Mary

- Emotionally devastated by the lies
- “I would have done anything he wanted”
- History of broken trust- parents, past relationships
- Bad relationship with father- went for the wrong guys
- Had successful individual treatment
- High degree of self-discipline and control
- Shattered reality
- Done in her absence and her presence!
- Dire need to know “why?”
- Serious doubts about chances of recovery

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The “Why?”

- Need to be found attractive by women
- Sense of inferiority
- Sex life “lacking”-cause or result?
- Tends to show off

Mary

- Strong need to preserve the perfect image
- Shattered reality- how do I know what I think I know?
- Discovered sexting on her birthday
- Business and family on the line
- “Why wasn’t I enough for him?”
- “How can I ever be safe?”

Treatment

- Treatment as a process
- Recognition of his efforts
- Taught importance of tolerance of her emotional process
- Grieving the lost relationship- death of the perfect relationship
- Loss of heaven
- End of a blind faith trust
- New model of trust: evidence based trust
- Collaborative reassurance and a limited use of technology
- Elimination of secrecy and restriction of privacy

Treatment

- Support and tolerance for anger and emotional dysregulation
- How much to share of the gory details?
- Coping with triggers
- The difference that makes a difference- new behaviors
- Acceptance of distance
- Gradual increase of affection and growing intimacy
- Dealing with triggers:
 - trips
 - friends
 - daughter had similar betrayal

Treatment

- **Radical change in the use of iPhone and social media**
- Back in bed
- Great sex
- Kissing
- Relapse prevention/speed bumps

Thank you!

Peter Kanaris, Ph.D.

Psychologist and Diplomate of Sex Therapy

496 Smithtown Bypass, Suite 304

Smithtown, NY 11787

(631) 979-2640

drpit1@aol.com

Kanaris Psychological Services, P.C.