



Psychological  
Health  
Roanoke<sub>PC</sub>

# Advantage EAP

## Employee Assistance Program

April 2010

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- Three reasons why people cheat.

### Advantage EAP expands hours in the New River Valley!!

As of May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Advantage EAP will have additional hours in Radford at 22 Montgomery Street. Call 1-800-699-9396

*"We are excited about this opportunity which will make it easier for our Pulaski clients to obtain services. The additional hours will also make our services more accessible for all of our clients in the New River Valley. It is our plan to continue to grow and provide additional services in the near future.", said J. Steve Strosnider, LPC, President of Psychological Health Roanoke/Advantage EAP.*

## Understanding and Overcoming Infidelity

J. Steve Strosnider, LPC



Statistics suggest that 30 to 60% of all married people will at one time or another cheat on their spouses. The transgressions of Tiger Woods and other celebrities are well documented. The problem is discussed in the Bible, and infidelity was a problem for Moses as his flock wandered in the desert. It is felt that infidelity in the United States increased dramatically after the Arab oil embargo of 1973 which had the effect of forcing more families to rely on two incomes, thus putting more men and women directly in the work place.

### There are essentially three reasons why people cheat.

#### Serial cheaters

A serial cheater is someone who has such a strong need for contact with multiple partners that they spend a great deal of time searching for others and has difficulty being faithful to anyone with whom they are involved regardless of how good the relationship may be. Serial cheaters basically focus on their own needs and disregard the possible consequences of cheating, including pain and anguish which their cheating may cause the spouse and/or family.

#### Unmet needs cheaters

Unmet needs cheaters are people who have strong psychological needs for affection, validation, youth, conquest, affirmation, attention, etc. These individuals have such strong needs that they seek others to meet these needs outside their relationship. These people desperately do not want to hurt others but can never get enough of whatever the unmet need may be. While these individuals may have multiple outside indiscretions, they are different from the

Online Resources may be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

## Contact Us

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30-5:00pm. Evening hours are available on a limited basis.

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Nights and weekends call RESPOND:

(540) 776-1100 or 800-541-9992

serial cheater in that they find themselves quite conflicted between being faithful and unfaithful. They do not want to hurt their spouse, but often times the urge to meet this need trumps their sense of conscience or guilt.

### Problem relationship cheating

Some spouses cheat because of problems in the marital relationship as something is “missing”, passion has gone, and partners feel lonely and/or find someone who treats them better or who appreciates them more than the current spouse.

Simply stated, these individuals are not happy in their relationship so they look for love and affection elsewhere. Essentially, the affair becomes a symptom of something awry in their primary relationship.

Relationship cheaters usually do not seek outside affection. When placed in the wrong situation, one’s emotions can prompt people to act in ways which are counter to their beliefs and morals. While this rationale for an affair does not justify the action, it is essentially a maladaptive way of dealing with things that are not good at home.

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## Dealing with the discovery of cheating-



- The pain, hurt, shock and anger of discovering a partner’s infidelity is deemed to be one of life’s most traumatic events. It therefore comes as little surprise that it often takes several years for couples to effectively repair a relationship after infidelity. The intensity of the discovery of an affair can often lead to violence. It is estimated that between 3 and 8 people every day are killed directly or indirectly as a result of infidelity. While this is an emotionally laden event, many couples are able to recover from infidelity and develop a stronger relationship in the future.
- Several factors influence how successful a couple may be at saving their relationship. These include the quality of the relationship prior to the discovery and the extent of commitment that both partners have to make the relationship work. Effective communication skills and often counseling can be critical to recovery.
- When cheating is revealed and assuming that both parties want the relationship to continue, it is first of all imperative to understand why the cheating occurred. Which of the three types of affairs mentioned before apply?
- If there is a serial cheater, the affronted spouse must decide whether or not he or she wants to stay with an individual who has such a propensity for this activity. The serial cheater must show true remorse and be committed to long term counseling in order for this particular marriage to continue.
- In terms of the unmet needs cheater, the person cheating must also show true remorse and be willing to work long term or changing and or modifying these strong needs through counseling. The cheater must also be willing to do everything possible to re-instill trust in his or her spouses’ eyes. In terms of the problem relationship affair, the couple must fully



## Locations:

2727 Electric Road, Ste 100  
Roanoke, VA 24018

200 Professional Park Drive  
Unit 1  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Alleghany Regional Hospital  
1 ARH Lane, Room 529  
Low Moor, VA 24457

22 Montgomery Street  
Radford, VA 24141

## Resources

Intimacy after Infidelity-  
Steven D. Solomon, Ph.D.  
Lori J. Teagno, Ph.D.

Infidelity  
D.D. Lusterman, Ph.D.

understand the dynamics within the relationship that contributed to the affair. Efforts through counseling and communication should focus on how these problems manifested themselves, how they can be solved, and why the couple was unable to solve these problems prior to the affair. The couple must look to the future and ensure old patterns that contributed to the affair do not reoccur.

In any affair however, the offending party must be exceedingly patient and realize that the re-establishment of trust is a long-term process. This person must do everything within his or her grasp to help their partner trust them and to reaffirm their commitment and desire to move forward with a healthy relationship. Eventually, the hurt party will once again need to take the risk of trusting again. This is a slow process which could take up to a couple of years.

Often times the most hurtful thing about an affair is not what their spouse did with the other person per se but the deception, lies, and deceit that may have been employed to disguise the affair. These issues must be discussed thoroughly because if ignored, the offended spouse will always have memories of the deception and anxiety about whether or not the partner is truthful in the future.

As a part of this, the offending party must be apologetic and share the details of what happened. By concealing details of the affair, this can lead to lingering questions which, if not addressed, are unlikely to go away on their own. If questions and ambivalences linger, it is very difficult for the offended spouse to not dwell on the incident. Revealing the truth can be painful, but it is very necessary to successfully moving on. That said, after all details about the affair and deception are revealed, it is recommended that the couple focus on the future and not rehash details.

**Advantage EAP is a benefit provided by your employer. There are counselors with Advantage EAP who have the training and experience to deal with this type of problem. Don't hesitate to call us at 1-800-699-9396 or 540-989-6605 for help.**

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[www.psychhealthroanoke.com](http://www.psychhealthroanoke.com)**

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<http://psychhealthroanoke.blogspot.com/>**