



UNDERSTANDING THE INJURY

*What Still Needs to Be
Spoken After Betrayal?*



A gentle guide for couples trying to understand
hurt, impact, responsibility, and repair with more care.



IntimaBalance Counselling

Why This Guide Exists

After betrayal, couples often try to move forward before the injury has been fully understood.

One partner may want answers.

The other may want the pain to calm down.

Both may feel exhausted by the same conversations happening again and again.

This guide is not here to help you interrogate, defend, blame, or rush forgiveness.

It is here to help you slow the conversation down and begin asking:

“What still needs to be spoken so the injury can be understood more clearly?”



What We Mean by “The Injury”

The injury is not only the affair, secret, message, meeting, sexual contact, emotional connection, or broken agreement.

The injury may also include:

- the lying
- the secrecy
- the loss of emotional safety
- the humiliation
- the comparison
- the broken trust
- the feeling of being replaced
- the loss of shared reality
- the damage to self-worth
- the impact on intimacy
- the fear that there is still more truth hidden
- the way disclosure happened
- the way the hurt was responded to afterwards

Sometimes couples argue about the facts because the emotional injury has not yet been understood.

Before You Start This Conversation

This conversation needs enough emotional safety.

Before you begin, ask:

- Are we both calm enough to speak carefully?
- Are we trying to understand, or trying to win?
- Can we pause if one of us becomes overwhelmed?
- Are we willing to avoid insults, threats, mockery, or pressure?
- Do we need a counsellor or support person to help us have this conversation safely?

This is not a conversation to have during rage, panic, intoxication, intimidation, sexual pressure, or fear.

For the Hurt Partner

You may need more than facts.

You may need your partner to understand the emotional impact.

Use these prompts gently:

The part that hurt most was:

What I still feel you do not understand is:

What changed for me after this happened was:

What I need you to stop minimising is:

What I need you to take responsibility for is:

What I am afraid will happen again is:

What would help me feel more emotionally safe in this conversation is:

For the Partner Who Betrayed

Your role is not to rush the hurt partner out of pain.

Your role is to listen, take responsibility, and become more emotionally safe.

Use these prompts honestly:

What I now understand about the pain I caused is:

What I have been defensive about is:

What I need to stop minimising is:

What I need to take responsibility for without blaming my partner is:

What I still find difficult to face is:

One way I can show more care in this conversation is:

What Still Needs to Be Spoken?

Use this page together or separately.

What has been spoken many times already?

What has not been spoken clearly yet?

What keeps getting avoided?

What keeps becoming an argument?

What does the hurt partner need to have witnessed?

What does the betraying partner need to take responsibility for?

What would make the next conversation safer?

What Not to Do in This Conversation

Try not to:

- demand instant forgiveness
- ask the hurt partner to “move on”
- use the conversation to punish
- ask for graphic detail when you are already flooded
- defend every part of the story
- blame the relationship for the betrayal
- pressure the hurt partner to trust quickly
- compare pain
- bring children into the conversation
- use sex or affection to avoid the injury
- keep talking when one person is overwhelmed

A slower conversation is often a safer conversation.

Repair Begins With Being Willing to Understand

Repair does not begin with perfect answers.

It begins with the willingness to understand the injury more honestly.

Some couples will repair.

Some will separate.

Some will need time before they know.

Whatever happens next, the injury deserves to be treated with care, honesty, and emotional responsibility.

When Extra Support May Be Needed

Extra support may be needed if:

- conversations become explosive or unsafe
- one partner shuts down completely
- there is ongoing deception
- there is intimidation, coercion, or fear
- one partner feels pressured to forgive or stay
- there are self-harm thoughts
- children are being pulled into the conflict
- trauma responses are becoming overwhelming
- intimacy feels pressured or unsafe
- the same conversation repeats without progress

This guide can support reflection, but it does not replace counselling, crisis support, legal advice, medical care, or safeguarding intervention.

Gentle Next Step

Choose one question from this guide.

Not ten.

Not the whole story.

One question.

Set a time limit.

Speak slowly.

Pause when needed.

The goal is not to finish the healing today.

The goal is to begin speaking about the injury with more care.

