



## Episode 09

### Discovery: Managing the Crisis

#### **HCH Narrator 1:17**

Welcome to the Helping Couples Heal podcast, a place for healing and hope for couples impacted by betrayal resulting from infidelity and/or sex addiction. Your hosts are Marnie Breecker and Duane Osterlind, licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, certified sex addiction therapists and founders of respected treatment centers in Long Beach and Los Angeles. Marnie and Duane co-created Helping Couples Heal, the most comprehensive in person and online resource for couples recovering from betrayal, and this podcast series is the first component of the program. Thank you for listening. Marnie and Duane are committed to helping you recover from the devastating impact of betrayal trauma, and are excited to support you wherever you may be in your healing. If you've lost hope, you've come to the right place. Now, take a slow, deep breath. And let's begin with the Helping Couples Heal podcast.

#### **Marnie Breecker 2:12**

Welcome back, everyone, we are excited to have you with us again at the Helping Couples Heal Podcast. I'm here with Duane.

#### **Duane Osterlind 2:20**

It's great to be here. I'm excited we're doing another episode.

#### **Marnie Breecker 2:23**

Me too. And before we jump into the topic today, which is about managing the crisis of discovery of betrayal, I just want to let you guys know that we really welcome your suggestions for future topics. So if you have comments or ideas for future topics, please feel free to contact us via our website. And really, we are doing this to provide you with the content and information and resources that you are needing. And so while we have ideas for future episodes, of course, we would not hesitate to address other concerns that you might have. Please let us know how we can support you.

**Duane Osterlind 2:57**

Right. And also, I want to say if you guys are enjoying the Helping Couples Heal Podcast, please go to iTunes, rate and review us. That really does help us get this information out to other people so that they can find it on iTunes.

**Marnie Breecker 3:10**

Yeah, you know, Duane and I were just talking a little while ago about the fact that our next Helping Couples Heal workshop, which is the end of next month, it got filled pretty quickly. So we're now starting to register people for the next two later and later in the year. So if you think that this information is helpful, and that you might benefit from the in person workshop, please feel free to either reach out to us to talk about it, or to go to the website and sign up there.

**Duane Osterlind 3:35**

Yes, through the website, [helpingcouplesheal.com](http://helpingcouplesheal.com) and sign up. Alright, let's go into this topic.

**Marnie Breecker 3:42**

Okay. So today we're going to be conceptualizing the discovery of betrayal as a crisis that doesn't just impact the person who has been the one who's been betraying, but it also impacts the entire family and the family system. And so I think a lot of times when we talk about betrayal, this aspect gets ignored in favor of talking about getting the person treatment and then supporting the partner and all of that, but not actually looking at it as really a system problem.

**Duane Osterlind 4:10**

Right. I think it's incredibly validating to them too, that some other people can see this crisis experience and can know it and define it and validate it.

**Marnie Breecker 4:22**

Yeah, absolutely. And it's not just like, for instance, a psychological or an emotional crisis. This is a crisis that impacts people in terms of their finances, in terms of child care, right, in terms of their physical health. There are other things that need to be looked at that, as I said, are often ignored. So why don't we jump in and talk about some of these things?

**Duane Osterlind 4:41**

All right. So let's talk about the first moment, the moment of discovery. This is the point that a partner stumbles upon some new information that they weren't expecting. This might be an email that's out of place and then that opens the floodgates to all the stuff that they didn't even know was there.

**Marnie Breecker 5:07**

Right? Absolutely. So the discovery is typically a shock, right? It's typically something that someone's not expecting. And it happens usually in a moment, or in a second, I should say, you know, just one second. And somebody's reality goes from one thing to a completely different thing. And so we describe this really as a shattering of one experience than one's reality.

**Duane Osterlind 5:26**

Right. And that comes through, you know, I've heard so many different stories of how this happens. Like I said earlier, sometimes it's an email, sometimes they're doing their finances, and they see this weird charge on the credit card, and they type it in and all of a sudden, something like a massage parlor comes up. I think for the partner at that moment it's this sinking feeling that something's not right.

**Marnie Breecker 5:50**

Yeah, and so that's like the very beginning, I think, of what often happens to a partner's intuition. Because typically, at that stage, what I hear often is that that happens, the partner sees something that seems like it's not right. And then she confronts her husband or her partner. And initially, he'll deny it, or he'll admit something very, very, very small, a tiny little piece, but then deny everything else. So her intuition really gets shut down, or gets challenged, I should say, you know, her intuition is challenged, and then she starts questioning herself. "Well, okay, wait, why am I being so paranoid? Or why? Why am I being so insecure?" I think that that's also a part of the whole crisis is that a partner's intuition gets really negatively impacted by this whole thing. And part of the recovery journey for her is to rebuild and redefine and reconnect to her own intuition.

**Duane Osterlind 6:42**

Yeah, I think that's so true. I think it can happen in many different ways as well. Sometimes it's like what you describe, like, they find a little piece of evidence, and they're feeling that unsureness. And then the partner denies it or minimizes it. And then they stop trusting their own intuition. They go, "Oh, maybe I'm just crazy. This is insane." But then there's also partners who can be blindsided where their partner gets arrested for prostitution, and it's in their face. I mean, it's so like, they cannot deny it. And I think it can happen in different ways. Sometimes it can kind of be kind of slow. And then other times it can be this blatant, overwhelming tidal wave.

**Marnie Breecker 7:24**

Yeah. And then think about the crisis there. Typically, when there is an arrest or something like that, oftentimes, that could be public. So suddenly, the partner might not be the only person learning about this, right? Sometimes, if it's public, it could be out there in the news, children, that might be how children find out about it, or, you know, when kids go to school, and people make comments, I will say that those are not as often as I think the less public discovery.

**Duane Osterlind 7:52**

Right. Yeah, I think that's true.

**Marnie Breecker 7:53**

They do happen. And for those partners and those families, I mean, that really is quite a crisis.

**Duane Osterlind 7:57**

Yeah, it's just overwhelming. And I think going into how the nervous system responds to that, it becomes overwhelmed with this new information. The whole idea of what your life was, is completely devastated. Destroyed.

**Marnie Breecker 8:15**

Destroyed. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's like a tornado, right? It starts in minutes. It just keeps going. And it shatters everything in its wake.

**Duane Osterlind 8:23**

Right? Can we talk a little bit about what this does to the nervous system when this discovery happens? Can you comment about that?

**Marnie Breecker 8:30**

Yeah, I was actually gonna say that I think we should talk since we just mentioned intuition, which might be one of the first things that kind of gets shattered when there's a discovery. I think the other thing is about the psychological response, the trauma response, which is all about the nervous system and how the nervous system is responding to very overwhelming, distressing traumatic experiences. So for partners, oftentimes, the shock of discovery leads to all sorts of psychobiological symptoms and physiological symptoms. So things like shaking and throwing up, or sweating or being forgetful, sometimes passing out, and definitely things like sleep disturbances. That's a big one that I hear about. Sometimes I hear about partners who have their hair falling out, which we do hear about from other trauma survivors; people that have survived all sorts of other traumas will report hair loss.

**Duane Osterlind 9:22**

Right? And I think it's so important to say this, because a lot of times people minimize that response or almost invalidate that response, like, "you're overreacting, you're over responding. You shouldn't feel that way," or, "you're not strong enough, get it together." And it's really understanding that when your reality is shattered in this way, the body reacts in this very physical modality, this physical way that causes all these symptoms.

**Marnie Breecker 9:54**

Right? It's not a question of the partner saying, "I'm going to be really strong right now. And I'm not going to be somebody who lets this get me," or someone else saying, "Oh, I really want to curl up into a fetal position and just let this destroy me." It is a physiological, biological response. Just like if I were riding a bike, and I got into a bike accident and my leg broke, I couldn't really control that by saying, "I don't want my leg to break." It's a physical response. Right? And I don't think people understand that. And I really appreciate you making that comment that it's not about you know, that they're not strong. Or they're overreacting.

**Duane Osterlind 10:28**

Yeah, and I think this kind of goes into what we were talking a little bit about earlier, as we were discussing this topic for the podcast, is that this trauma is so significant. But what I want to say is, if you're an addict out there listening to this podcast, and you're struggling with sex addiction, and your partner doesn't know yet, you could make it different by you disclosing, that you're struggling with this, instead of there being a very accidental, painful discovery. I just think that's important. And I encourage people who are struggling with this to really consult with a professional and think about that as an option.

**Marnie Breecker 11:07**

Yeah, you know, research does support the fact that the nature of how a partner discovers the infidelity or the betrayal is important. So, not to say that if somebody is told the information, they're not upset, obviously, there's still going to be trauma-

**Duane Osterlind 11:21**

Of course.

**Marnie Breecker 11:21**

But it's going to be different than somebody who, like you said, accidentally discovers something. Because then the feeling is, "if I didn't discover this myself, he never would have told me. I would still not know."

**Duane Osterlind 11:33**

Right. So if you're out there struggling with this, I would just encourage you to really think about that, maybe do some professional consultation with somebody who understands these issues, and get some help for that.

**Marnie Breecker 11:44**

So let's continue to talk about the crisis and what that might look like. We addressed the intuition piece, we talked a little bit about the trauma responses, like the physiological trauma responses, and then there's the psychological or emotional responses. So when a partner discovers this, there's often fear for their own safety, and often for the safety of their family. So even though she's likely experiencing something like shock, or fear, or anger, overwhelm, she might be experiencing all of those at the same time, some combination of all of them. And so you know, you've got somebody who is physically now experiencing all these symptoms, as well as psychologically experiencing all of this overwhelm. And that in itself is a crisis for the partner and likely for the family. Because oftentimes, right, these partners are moms too, and have children to take care of. And they have, oftentimes jobs and careers and other areas of their life that they need to keep going. And when they discover the betrayal, again, there's like a shattering of all of that. And now they have to try to find a way to keep it all together, and manage all of their responsibilities, while dealing with this shock and devastation and trauma of the betrayal.

**Duane Osterlind 12:53**

And that gets into managing this whole crisis. "Now that I'm right here in this moment, how do I handle this?"

**Marnie Breecker 13:01**

Right? And who do I plow? And do I confront my husband? And if I confront him, how do I confront him? And where do I go for help? And where does he go for help? And should I get a divorce and all of these, the barrage of questions, and uncertainty, is incredibly overwhelming for a partner in that situation.

**Duane Osterlind 13:21**

Yeah. And I think that's why I think one of the first things they have to do is go and reach for support, build a support network, so that they can process through some of these issues with someone who understands trauma, betrayal trauma and relational trauma, because yeah, it's overwhelming. And you got to build a support network.

**Marnie Breecker 13:40**

Absolutely. Especially when she has children or pets, or maybe aging or ill family members or other responsibilities. And she literally needs help from other loved ones, other people in her community, but they have to be safe people too, you know, the reality is a sex addiction. There's a lot of shame involved and a lot of embarrassment and not wanting other people to know. And yet, it's imperative that some people are informed so that they can support the partner and the family during this time of crisis.

**Duane Osterlind 14:10**

Right. And those are hard decisions to do. I mean, who do you tell, who do you talk to? And I think that's incredibly difficult. And I would also add that's why getting professional help is almost critical.

**Marnie Breecker 14:24**

Yeah, I agree. Because most of the time, your loved ones who might be absolutely supportive and want desperately to do whatever they can to help, literally don't know how to help. They don't know what to do, you know, they wouldn't be able to say, "okay, come on, we have this crisis, and we have to help you manage the crisis. And you know, we're going to lay out all the ways that we're going to do that for you." And that is where I think it's so important to have the help of not just professionals, but specialized professionals that work in the area of betrayal.

**Duane Osterlind 14:51**

Yeah, I would agree with that, too. And family members, although they may mean well, they have their own stuff too. And they bring that to the table. And they might not be the right decisions for you at that time. And so you need that professional perspective that can kind of help you walk through that, and maybe slow it all down. And also, you know, I think this is really critical. Sometimes this crisis can be so overwhelming, that a person can feel like they can't go on, or that they're so angry they want to hurt somebody, or hurt themselves. And I encourage you, go get help if you have those feelings, you can get through this. But that's also why you need to reach out for support, because you can be there too. And that can be really scary.

**Marnie Breecker 15:39**

And you know, for a lot of these partners, the person to whom they would normally go in a time of crisis, the person that they would normally go to, if they felt hopeless, or in despair, or like they might want to hurt themselves, when they don't see how they can go on, that person to whom they go to for safety and comfort? That's the cause of this trauma. And so they can't turn to the person that they would normally go to. And that in itself is so devastating, and can really exacerbate these already complicated and complex symptoms.

**Duane Osterlind 16:10**

And so then you're in this crisis, and you have to manage all these complex symptoms.

**Marnie Breecker 16:16**

Yes, so now we've talked about intuition, we've talked about the way the body responds and the nervous system and the emotions that are triggered, right? And then things like, where do I go for help? How do I manage? How do I figure out who's going to help my husband, who's gonna help me, all of these things? And then you've got issues like, "Okay, well, now we've found people to help us, but who's gonna watch the kids?" So childcare issues come up. And then financial issues. You know, therapy is incredibly expensive, especially the way that we, as specialists, encourage people to get help in this field. You know, we encourage individual therapy for both partners, we encourage group therapy for both partners, we encourage couples therapy, you know, people often do adjunct support things like our workshop, for instance, or couples intensives. And it's incredibly expensive. And so that's an additional crisis. And then for a lot of families, when the acting out has cost a lot of money, that can also put the family again, in an even bigger crisis, because now maybe the funds that could have been used for help and support are not even there.

**Duane Osterlind 17:24**

And I've seen that happen. And it's devastating.

**Marnie Breecker 17:27**

Yeah. And also, many times when couples are going through the impact of betrayal in their relationship, we encourage a therapeutic separation. And so that might then entail having to have a second residence, which again, is more money, and all that comes with having a second residence. And then sometimes there's even the larger implications of divorce if that is the direction that things are moving in.

**Duane Osterlind 17:52**

As we're kind of talking about all this, it does feel so overwhelming, and we want to validate it, it is overwhelming. But at the same time, there's hope, you can walk through this. There's a lot more resources out there now, such as this podcast, that can help you walk through this process. It's not hopeless.



**Marnie Breecker 18:13**

Yeah, I'm glad you said that, because as we're talking about it, essentially what we're saying is that the discovery of betrayal does impact essentially every aspect of a person's life. And so what could be more overwhelming than that? And at the same time, as we, I think, say quite often, the reason that we do this work, and that we believe in healing is because we see it happen. And so if you are listening to this and feeling overwhelmed by the extent of the trauma, just know that many, many, many people before you have healed. They've healed themselves, many relationships heal, and not all. But you know, but it's very possible to heal a relationship after betrayal. But I think that there's a few other areas that maybe we should address in terms of crisis that we haven't covered so far. One, I think, is to discuss immediately whether a medical plan with the medical doctors, you know, is necessary when someone discovers sexual betrayal; there's the issue of potential diseases or harm to oneself.

**Duane Osterlind 19:14**

Yeah, they have to look at that.

**Marnie Breecker 19:15**

And that can be really, really difficult. I've talked with many partners who have felt absolutely humiliated having to go to doctors who they've known for years, and to share the reality of what they're dealing with. And actually, I'm thinking of one particular client that was so embarrassed that she didn't want to go to her own doctor and she drove all over town. I don't remember the details but ended up going to some small little clinic and feeling mortified, but that was all to avoid having to share what was going on because she felt so much shame.

**Duane Osterlind 19:44**

Yeah, and that's tragic too. Because you have your general practitioner that you might know with your whole family, knows your whole family, and you can't go there because of the shame.

**Marnie Breecker 19:57**

Right? And then if the results of blood test are positive, then partners have to deal with medical concerns. And that can also obviously really impede the relational healing piece. Because now there's an additional element here, which is, "you jeopardize my health, you jeopardize my well being, and my safety."

**Duane Osterlind 20:17**

Yeah, I mean you've got medical, you've got a spiritual crisis. So sometimes, a lot of people, when they have this discovery, there's a moment of feeling lost in their faith, because they feel so betrayed. And for a lot of partners, they've done everything right, so to speak, they've taken care of the kids or their work or employment, house, whatever it is, they've done all the things they're supposed to do. And all of a sudden, this huge betrayal comes along and you can feel abandoned by God.

**Marnie Breecker 20:51**

I hear that so often. A crisis of faith, and also sometimes feeling really isolated from a faith community that was once very much a source of comfort, especially with certain communities that would be giving advice like, "well, you know, you need to stay," right, you know, "you can't leave a relationship" and, or "you have to leave this relationship," or judging the particular behaviors that instead occurred. So that's a really difficult one, again, it sort of goes back to the partner who is now is losing the ability to get the support from the person that would normally be there, which is, you know, her husband or her significant other. And then oftentimes, again, those support communities, that would be the next place she would go for help can often be another source of either judgment, or shame, or alienation. And so oftentimes, she's really alone. Which is why support groups are so important, and finding help and other people to talk to you that you can trust and feel safe with.

**Duane Osterlind 21:51**

Yeah, if I was to give any piece of advice, I guess, or what is the next step, it was like, I know the shame is overwhelming. I know it can feel so scary. But reach out to people you can trust. I've seen so many partners come to me. And they really tried to do it all on their own without letting anybody else know. And when they come to me, they're just so overwhelmed. And they finally realize, you know, "I need help."

**Marnie Breecker 22:22**

Yeah, and the relief that many partners experience when they come in and finally tell somebody and say, “I need help.” I think that’s often a really great start of the recovery journey. So okay, so before we move into the area of “how do we actually manage the crisis?” Right? How do we provide help and interventions and all of that? I think we need to address the relational crisis, that is essentially the outcome of all of this discovery trauma. And so we can spend, obviously, an entire podcast series just talking about the impact on the relationship. And that’s really why we created this podcast, that’s why we created the workshop that we do. Obviously, if you have a traumatized partner, you are going to end up with a traumatized relationship, you can’t have one part of a relationship traumatized without there being unnecessary impact on the whole system, the whole relationship. And so we see so many traumatized couples come into our office after the discovery of betrayal, and they have no idea where to go, what to do, how to talk to one another, what to say, what not to say. And that in itself, that relational crisis is a huge, huge, I don’t know what the word is, I’m trying to think, it’s like a huge boulder. You know, and you started with the folder at the bottom, and you have to- And therapy, I really feel like you can look at therapy as the process of pushing that boulder up a really steep mountain.

**Duane Osterlind 23:48**

Right? You can’t have this betrayal without that relationship damage.

**Marnie Breecker 23:51**

Exactly, exactly. So we realized that this probably sounds very overwhelming, because even as we’re talking about it, we’re like, Whoa, this is overwhelming. We’re talking about something that impacts every area of one’s life and one’s family. And it seems, yeah, it seems like a huge, huge overwhelm. So what we want to tell you now is that there are lots of ways to to help and intervene and support and heal relationships and individuals after the trauma of betrayal.

**Duane Osterlind 24:21**

Right, you know, I’m feeling overwhelmed just talking about it. And so I think going into “Okay, what do we do next?” Or “how do we help?”

**Marnie Breecker 24:28**

Yeah, and like we said earlier, partners that are dealing with this, their nervous systems have been impacted, and their nervous system is on overload. And as a result, even the smallest of tasks seems daunting. So trying to manage this huge crisis would obviously be really overwhelming. And what we want to promise you is that with help and support, you can survive the crisis by developing new coping skills, boundaries, and safety plans. And we can share a little bit about that now. And we encourage you to continue to look at how these things can be implemented in your life.

**Duane Osterlind 25:06**

So let's break them down into some steps they can do. So the first is getting an assessment, get someone who understands this trauma, and help you look at this situation. That in of itself can be the starting point of managing this crisis.

**Marnie Breecker 25:23**

Right. And sometimes that assessment might lead to even an appointment with a psychiatrist or medical doctor, because if your psychobiological symptoms or your psychological symptoms are so acute that it's really getting in the way of you been able to manage the rest of your life or function, you know, in your daily life. Sometimes a medication evaluation would be helpful to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or depression, or anxiety, or any of the other psychological issues that might arise.

**Duane Osterlind 25:54**

Then what's the next step they can do?

**Marnie Breecker 25:56**

Well, I think a really big part of the initial crisis is that partners have a ton of questions. And they don't have a lot of answers. And before they really have help, they're usually throwing out all of those questions to the person who has done the betrayal. And that person has no idea what to say, and they keep lying or denying or minimizing. And so one of the first things that we like to do when people come in for help is to stop that process of having the story fill out slowly and over time in drips and drabs, because that can be more traumatic. And we start to prepare for what we call a Formal Disclosure. And that is really like the formal process of giving the partner all the information at one time, so that she has all that information, and she can move forward and make informed decisions about the relationship and that there won't be further discoveries along the way. And each time she thinks she knows everything- You know, this is what happens when there's not a formal disclosure: a partner might think, okay, he's told me everything, he's promising me there's nothing else. And then two weeks later, or a month later, there's a new discovery. And that makes later healing for the couple very, very difficult, because she keeps thinking, "Well, why would I trust now when in the past, he kept telling me I know everything, and then I would find something else?"

**Duane Osterlind 27:10**

Right, and we call that a staggered disclosure. And each time they have one of these staggered disclosures, a little bit more information, a little bit more information, the body goes back into this crisis state and re-traumatizes them. So containing that, slowing that process down, allows the partner to get support. But what it also allows is that it allows the partner who's done the betrayal to gather all their thoughts and gather their information in a way that can be helpful to the partner. A lot of times for the addict, they've been acting out for years, and some of the stuff they don't even remember they did. And the partner will discover it. And the addict wasn't necessarily keeping a secret, they just didn't remember, but it feels like another betrayal, it feels like you should have known all this information. So this also gives an opportunity for the addict to really do their job of repairing this relationship by preparing this formal disclosure under the guidance of a good professional who understands how to do this, and can really help them and it's also a gift to the addict as well, because it gives them a place to start and do this in a way that is filled with integrity.

**Marnie Breecker 28:20**

Yeah. And I think it's also important to say that if there's somebody listening, who is an addict and is not in a relationship, does not have a partner, I actually really still believe that going through the process of disclosure, it's very, very healing and therapeutic because it's still important for the addict to have the experience of being completely truthful, and sharing all of the secrets in order to release that and move forward.

**Duane Osterlind 28:45**

And a lot of times when I say this, a lot of partners feel like we're siding with the addict and trying to keep the information from them or trying to not let them have the information that I believe, that I know you believe, they deserve to have, they deserve to have the truth. And so it can feel really disconcerting when we say, okay, don't share any more, let's do it in a formal therapeutic way.

**Marnie Breecker 29:08**

That can be very triggering and upsetting to partners. Absolutely. Because what I always try to emphasize is that we are asking them to stop asking questions outside of a therapeutic setting, specifically, because the reaction or answers that they get might be more traumatizing or even abusive to them. Right? So I think it's important to let partners know why we are making that request, that they wait to get the answers to the questions for a formal disclosure. And it's never about trying to prevent a client from getting the answers. It's never about trying to control her. It is about trying to make sure that she has the greatest possible way of getting all of her answers and for it to be done in a safe and supportive environment. And I think it's important for us to also acknowledge that the very process of having to wait for a formal disclosure can be really anxiety provoking for a partner and can be really difficult. So one of our jobs as therapists, then, is to make sure that a partner has the support that she needs in order to manage that anxiety, the anxiety that comes from having to wait for the formal disclosure.

**Duane Osterlind 30:13**

Right, definitely. And to help them through that, you know, one of the other things that we do, too, is starting to create boundaries around the relationship to enable the partner to feel safe in the relationship as it is in this moment. And some of these boundaries could include, "Look, I need you to install Internet filters on your phone and computers, I need access to your phone or computer or your email accounts where you hid this information." Boundaries like that can help or maybe even a boundary is, "You know what, I need you to find another place to stay." But you can develop those boundaries so that you can begin to feel safe in the relationship and create structure in it.

**Marnie Breecker 30:56**

Yeah, and I think that probably more than anything else that I say regularly in sessions with clients, is that these boundaries are not about punishment, they are 100%, around giving the partner a sense of agency over herself, and giving her a sense of safety when she has not been in a safe situation. So when a partner hears in a disclosure, something like her husband has done all of his acting out when he travels for business, because he does a lot of, you know, business travel, a very appropriate boundary then maybe for the partner to say, "I'm not comfortable with you traveling for business without me for now." Or, "I don't want to go. I don't want to have to travel and babysit you so you can't travel at all for business." And that could be a really, that could be a crisis, that in itself can be a crisis, because then what do you do if that's how he makes a living, and that's how he supports his family. And now he's being told he can't travel. That's a big deal. And I've seen that happen. And rather than get into the specifics of that now, I will just say that those things can be negotiated. And they have to be negotiated.

**Duane Osterlind 32:00**

They do. So what else can partners do in this moment of crisis?

**Marnie Breecker 32:05**

Well, I think that, again, coming in and getting out there, talking to a therapist and a specialist and being able to get some of those initial crisis questions answered. So having someone help with deciding, okay, who are the safe people that I can tell, right? Where can I go for help. Starting to read, starting to connect with other people that might be going through the same thing, or people that have gone through it before you, so that they're able to share with you some of the things that they found helpful when they were in the thick of it themselves.

**Duane Osterlind 32:32**

So another thing that they can do in this crisis is educate themselves by reading about betrayal trauma, listening to a podcast like this, reading books about it, there's great resources out there to understand what you are going through on an emotional level as well as a biological level.

**Marnie Breecker 32:52**

Yeah, and there's so much information out, especially online, and so many resources. And I think that another really important thing that partners need to do at that early stage is to learn how to self soothe, they need to either sort of relearn their old coping skills, you know what I mean? Or reboot those old coping skills, because oftentimes, trauma itself obviously impacts their ability to kind of go to those coping skills. And so having somebody help them learn breathing techniques, or various self soothing techniques can be very helpful. Meditation can be very helpful, healthy exercise can be helpful. But I think it's important to say that what's helpful to one person is not necessarily what's going to be helpful to another person. So looking at who you are, and what you need, not at, you know, just kind of this cookie cutter approach to what makes someone feel better, right? I think that's really important.

**Duane Osterlind 33:44**

It's so important.

**Marnie Breecker 33:45**

And we recognize that it might not feel believable to hear from two therapists say that healing is possible. And we get that, we do want you to know that the reason that we do believe that healing is possible is because we see it all the time in our practice. And our last episode that we released was an interview with a couple who have themselves gone through the trauma of betrayal, and they really came to the other side. So we invite you to listen to that if you have not listened to it already called "John and Jane's Recovery Story."

**Duane Osterlind 34:16**

Right? They can go to [helpingcouplesheal.com/8](http://helpingcouplesheal.com/8)

**Marnie Breecker 34:23**

Yeah, and we thank them again for being willing to share their story in order to help other people.

**Duane Osterlind 34:27**

Right. And I think that's so important. I mean, we're talking about all this crisis and it is overwhelming. But we want you to know there is hope, you can get through this. You can walk through it. We've seen it. We've seen people get to the other side. And part of the reasons we created this podcast and the workshop is to help people through this.

**Marnie Breecker 34:49**

And probably the greatest takeaway from this, I imagine, is that if you are new to this discovery, get help and see a specialist and we want you to know that if you are having trouble finding specialists in your area, we would be happy to help. So feel free to reach out to us through our website. And we would be honored to provide you with resources and referrals and kind of help you get started on your recovery journey.

**Duane Osterlind 35:13**

So thank you so much for listening to the Helping Couples Heal Podcast and we're honored to be part of this journey with you.

**Marnie Breecker 35:20**

We'll see you next time.

**Duane Osterlind 35:21**

See you on the next episode.

**HCH Narrator 35:25**

Thank you for listening to the Helping Couples Heal podcast where your healing is the number one priority. If you'd like additional resources about betrayal trauma, or to learn more about the Workshop, please visit [helpingcouplesheal.com](http://helpingcouplesheal.com). If you are finding the podcast helpful, please support Marnie and Duane in continuing to reach others impacted by betrayal trauma by leaving a review on iTunes and sharing this podcast with someone you care about. Once again, thank you for listening. We're grateful for your trust and look forward to continuing to support you on your journey of healing.