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## Why can't I move on?

- Common questions:
  - Why can't I get over this?
  - What's wrong with me?
  - Why am I stuck?

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# What hinders partner recovery?

- Recovery of person with problematic behaviors
- Relational dynamics
- Partner dependency
- Help providers/institutions
- Partner prior trauma or co-occurring conditions

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# Barriers

- Recovery progress of intimate partner with problematic behavior
  - Lacks consistent recovery
    - Frequent slips/relapse
    - Inconsistent attendance at group/meeting/therapy
    - No interest in recovery process
  - Partner lacks information on recovery process
    - Little to no information shared by person in recovery
    - Little to no information from treatment team
    - Little to no information on partner recovery process and available supports

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# Barriers

Relational dynamics

- Gas-lighting
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse

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# Barriers

- Dependency, Not "co"-dependency!
- **Real** relational, financial, family, life stage issues
  - Isolation
  - Unemployed outside of home or under-employed
  - Young children, dependents (older family member)
  - Aging/health issues
  - Values, religious beliefs

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## Barriers

### Institutional Betrayal Trauma

- When the place/institution adds to the harm experienced by the trauma survivor (Smith & Freyd, 2013)

“At the very least, abuse experienced within institutional environments seems to carry the same ill effects as interpersonal abuse” (p. 120).

“Consistent with betrayal trauma theory, sexually assaulted women who also experienced institutional betrayal experienced higher levels of several posttraumatic symptoms” (p. 122).

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## More on Institutional Betrayal

- What does this look like?
  - Not recognizing discovery/disclosure and impact of SA on partner as the **primary trauma** to deal with in treatment
  - Not offering adequate supports or programming for partners
  - Stating the clinician is trauma-focused and then treating “co-dependency” through the treatment model
  - Stating clinician is a partner specialist with no specialized training or experience
  - Gas-lighting the partner (you’re as sick as your husband, partners are “borderline”, etc.)
  - Giving messages that communicate partner is responsible for what’s happened to her

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## “Should I stay or should I go?”

- Help the partner determine what they need- what are the essentials- for a safe and healthy life.
- Is it possible to achieve this in the current relationship?
- How long are you willing/able to wait for this?
- How can you adapt if the current relationship doesn't support this?

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## How do I start to feel safe?

- What do you need?
- Where do you NOT feel safe?
- What boundaries do you need? (A boundary is a line that if someone crosses, you take action to take care of yourself)
- Tell others who may be pressuring you to do/not do something that you are in process and need time to make wise decisions. (“thank you for caring about me; this is a difficult season and I need time to heal. It helps if you just listen, not give me advice right now. If I want your opinion, I will ask for it.”)

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# Create a vision for yourself


- Who am I?
- Who did I “used” to be?
- What will it look like if I am fully me?
- What do I need to get there?
- For me, recovery (healing) looks like:

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## Association of Partners of Sex Addicts Trauma Specialists

[www.APSATS.org](http://www.APSATS.org)



- First organization to train Partner Specialists
- Training therapists, coaches and other helping professionals offer effective care to betrayed partners
- Advocates for the needs of this special, underserved population

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