**TYPES OF INFIDELITY**

**“CONFLICT AVOIDANCE”  
 or “I’ll Make You Pay Attention to me”**

* **Marriage of 12 years or less**
* **Couple is in their 20s or 30s**
* **Either spouse may have the affair**
* **Poor communication is main issue**
* **Neither spouse can deal with conflict or discuss dissatisfaction within the marriage**
* **Affair is brief without emotional attachment**
* **Couples’ counseling can restore marriage, but often does not resolve underlying issue**
* **In divorce, will seek attorneys to do the fighting for them.**

**“INTIMACY AVOIDANCE”  
or “Using Anger as Emotional Distancer”**

* **Marriage of less than 6 years**
* **Couple is their 20s and 30s**
* **Either spouse may have the affair**
* **Affair is brief without emotional attachment**
* **They fear emotional dependency and intimacy**
* **Usually both professionals**
* **Partners connect and substitute intimacy by fighting about everything**
* **Can engage the attorneys and Team in the fights**
* **Couples’ counseling can restore the marriage, but fear of emotional dependency can interfere , especially if no children are involved.**

**“SEXUAL ADDICTION”  
or “Power, Politics and Winning”**

* **Marriage of any length**
* **Mostly men of any age, anytime during the marriage**
* **Compulsive sexual behavior**
* **Affairs are brief without emotional component**
* **Straying partner is without remorse or excuse**
* **Betrayed spouse may deny, overlook, or ignore affairs**
* **Damaged family and/or public humiliation**

**“SPLIT SELF”  
or “Conflicted between Needs and Obligations”**

* **“I love my family but I’m in love with someone else”**
* **Both husband and wife present as depressed**
* **Mid-life crisis – marriage feels empty**
* **Functional marriage but emotional needs not met for years**
* **Affair is 2 or more years duration**
* **Affair has strong emotional component**
* **Usually, male aged 40 + in a long-term marriage**
* **Straying spouse is guilty but conflicted**
* **Betrayed spouse is often shocked, angry, hurt**

**“EXIT AFFAIR”  
or “Help me get out of this Marriage”**

* **Male or female of any age in marriage of less than 15 years**
* **Straying partner is already emotionally out of the marriage**
* **Betrayed spouse is very angry**
* **Duration of affair is 6 months to 2 years with some emotional attachment**
* **Affair serves 2 functions – validates the desirability of the straying spouse and counts on the anger of the betrayed spouse to end the marriage**
* **Lots of anger and fury, guilt, and blame**

A picture containing clipart

Description automatically generated**A picture containing text, clipart

Description automatically generated**

Adapted from**:** Brown, Emily M. (2001). *Patterns of Infidelity and their Treatment* (2nd ed.).Philadelphia, PA: Brunner-Routledge.

A picture containing indoor, toy

Description automatically generated

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Different types of Infidelity and their effect on the ATTORNEYS, THE FINANCIAL NEUTRAL AND THE MHP/FACILITATOR**

* Does the type of Infidelity affect the role of the attorneys, the NFP and the facilitator relating to the scope of work?
* Consider direction from the clients
* Lack of trust concerning all financial and other types of information
* Handling of dissipation of assets
* Professional judgement of the Team
* Awareness of emotional impact on the couple and the Team
* Level of guilt, remorse, responsibility and how it effects settlement
* Reaction of professionals’ personal bias, transference / countertransference
* Use of the Debrief to explore our own personal bias and values