

Partner Impact Letter

In this letter you will have the opportunity to explain to your sex addict partner how much pain his or her addiction has caused you. In this letter you need to be specific and offer personal examples of your experiences. You will share your feelings of betrayal, grief, anger and loss, without shaming or berating the addict. If you need help with that, please review your letter with your therapist, group or sponsor prior to sharing it with the addict.

Section one:

In this first section you will describe how the discovery/ disclosure process impacted you. Describe how you felt when the information about the addiction came to light. Describe how this impacted your emotional stability. Was it a traumatic event for you? Please share about specific incidences that were particularly difficult.

Section two:

In this second section, identify ways that the addict was intentionally deceptive and manipulative. Describe specific examples of this crazy making behavior. How did this make you feel? Did this behavior cause you to doubt your reality? What were your feelings about the deception after you discovered the truth?

Section three:

In this section, you will identify your thoughts and feelings about the addict's sexual behaviors. When you discovered that he or she was --- (seeing prostitutes, or had an affair with someone in your bed, or was exhibiting him or herself etc), what feelings come up for you? Is there a particular behavior that is troubling for you? What has it been like for you to learn about this aspect of your partner's sexuality?

Section four:

Many partners feel shame and embarrassment about the addict's behavior. What fears do you have about others judging you, or judging the addict? Now that you know about this behavior, do you have feelings of worthlessness, or not feeling good enough? Share those feelings with

the addict now. When you think about other people that know about the addiction, or that might find out, what thoughts come to your mind?

Section five:

How has your partner's sex addiction impacted your sexuality? How do you feel this has changed your sexual relationship with the addict? How about your individual sexuality? Do you feel concerns about your body or your sexual functioning? Do you have feelings of obligation to be sexual with the addict? Has this impaired your sexual functioning? (It may be helpful to take the partners sexuality survey or read Chapter 6 in *Mending a Shattered Heart*, or Chapter X in *Facing Heartbreak* before responding to this question.)

Section six:

How has your knowledge of this addiction impacted your ability to trust in this relationship? Recall promises or vows that the addict made to you that are now broken. How do you feel about trusting the addict going forward? Do you feel the trust can be restored? If so, what do you think you will need in order to do this?

Section seven:

Finally, in light of all of this information, what will you do to take care of yourself? Identify specific boundaries that you need to put in place for self-protection. What behaviors will you engage in going forward to take care of yourself? Inform the addict of what s/he can expect from you at this point in time.

Section eight:

Close your impact letter acknowledging that this was likely a hard letter for him or her to read or listen to. Encourage them to utilize their support system to share the letter and to talk over any questions he/she may have about it. Let them know that the purpose of this letter was to share your feelings at this time. Thank them for reading/hearing the letter and leave off endearing closings like "Love Amy". Just your name is appropriate.