

Episode 3 Acronyms for Early Recovery from Sexual Betrayal T...

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SPEAKERS

Pam B., Lyschel, Bonny

P Pam B. 00:03
Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from Recovered Peace.

L Lyschel 00:06
And I'm Lichele Burket with Hope Redefined

B Bonny 00:08
And I'm Bonnie Burns of Strong Wives. We're so glad you're joining us. Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. Today, we're going to talk through all the acronyms surrounding the topics of betrayal, addiction and recovery, we will specifically focus on the early stages of discovery and healing. In future episodes, we will share acronyms that are common in the mid and late stages of healing. So to get started, Michelle, can you begin to share some of the acronyms connected with the betrayed person?

L Lyschel 00:44
Absolutely, if I'm honest, I'm really honored that I get to talk about the betrayed person, because I think as we were talking about this, before we hit record, we don't often get to start with the betrayed person. And so I love that we get to give some terminologies and clarity around what a woman might be hearing, maybe she's joined a facebook group page, maybe she's starting to reach out for support through her church or professionals. And so that was kind of the heart behind us wanting to give this podcast episode was because we wanted to give you some words and things that we wanted you to make sure you're looking for when it

comes to your personal care and personal support and recovery. So one of the first terms that I love to make sure that women understand is the term betrayal trauma. The reason that this term is so important is because there are some professionals who will work with a woman who's experienced infidelity in a relationship, and they work from a codependent model. So there are two, I would say, two standard models out there. There's others there's variances, but I'm just going to bucket it into there's the codependency model. And then there's the betrayal trauma model, what that means is for for for what we traditionally do, and I think for the three of us, we move from a trauma model, which means that when we're working with an individual, we believe this person has experienced trauma. So the way that we do healing and recovery, the steps, the encouragement is all going to come through a lens of trauma versus a lens of codependency. So betrayal trauma is something that I think is important for you to know that and as you're starting to Google, that's a word that can be a really good word to help explain what's going on for you. The next one is D Day, D Day is a slang term that can be kind of used interchangeably for discovery day, or even Disclosure Day, which means this is the day that everything kind of hit the fan out another way to say this is not necessarily therapeutic Disclosure Day, I think, Bonnie, you're going to talk about couple shifts. And that might be in that terminology there. But this is not something that's associated with that. It's definitely your personal experience on the day that you kind of discovered or found out partial truth or the truth that you that really kind of derailed things. The next word we have on the list is safety. You're going to hear safety a lot even in our podcast, the way we talk about supporting women, I put this on the list because I think that even in my own personal journey, when people would ask me the question will do you feel safe? Or are you safe safety for me was directly associated to physical safety. And so I would be like, was not hitting me? No, I'm gonna Yeah, I'm safe. But really, when you hear the word safety in this context, what we're really referring to is physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and spiritual. We're looking to see if there's safety and all those different facets. So I really wanted to kind of just capitalize on that word that term.

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Bonny 03:35

Could I add that I also struggled with understanding safety. And for me, it boiled down to when I felt uncomfortable about something that my that discomfort with, say he he said a phrase to me that triggered me, you know, that made me feel uncomfortable. That wasn't safe. So I just wanted to share that if she has a hard time identifying what is safety, it's when you don't feel right. When it's uncomfortable. You don't like it

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Lyschel 04:04

when you kind of transition to the next word that I had on the list, which was triggers. You know, triggers are something that we experience and they're involuntary. So I think it's important one for us to know that the triggers are involuntary they happen. But triggers is another word that we'll use a lot in recovery language, I was triggered by that or I'm creating boundaries to help me with triggers. I'm looking to put something in place to keep me safe, so I am not triggered. That's the type of way that you're going to hear that word used in this arena. And then the other one I have on here was codependency which I just kind of I already kind of put in there together with the betrayal trauma and that it's an opposite. I feel like it's an opposite. Here's what I will say. I do believe that partners can be codependent. I do not believe that infidelity makes them codependent. It's a very clear distinction there. So I would tell you that I was codependent that was already a part of some of my coping skills, I would call it a

coping skill. For me prior to any of this happening in my story, some of my responses probably landed in a codependent type of behavior, but a large portion of it landed in trauma. Even as you're looking to work with someone, it's really important that they do understand a little bit of how both of those can interweave with themselves, as you're trying to look for support for yourself to help you go is this codependent? Or is this trauma and help you kind of sift that out? So as you're starting to step into your own healing and recovery, you can work on it in a healthy way?

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Bonny 05:34

And can I just add about betrayal trauma, it is a true biophysical experience. It's not just an emotional thing your brain does alter from from the trust being murdered. I mean, we can get more into that later. But it is truly a physical, a physical event where codependency isn't necessarily. So that's the distinction.

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Lyschel 06:01

Yeah, you know, the the first group of Deaf acronyms or definitions words, I guess, terms I just gave were more around a person themselves like a a woman navigating betrayal, there's support types, and I thought I would kind of describe a bit of those. So you kind of have a good understanding of, if I'm stepping out, and I'm starting to look for professional support. There are acronyms associated with that that are good for you to know. So the first one I have on my list is AP SATs. It stands for the Association of partners of sex addicts, trauma specialists, that's what it stands for. It's a long one, but AP s, a t s.org, is their website. And so these individuals have been, they have completed a training. And they are certified to work in the arena with those who are experiencing betrayal trauma as a result of sexual addiction. So that's a really great acronym to make sure that you know and understand if you're looking for somebody who understands betrayal, trauma, go to their website, they have a great map on there that you can find a specialist potentially in your state or in your area that's going to have that specialty. So upsets is one of those other things I would encourage you to consider is looking for someone who's trauma informed and has some form of specialty with trauma. A lot of times I've had clients who and these are women who are in groups and coaching clients, they come in and they're a part of they've been doing counseling with someone who doesn't really necessarily have a specialty or an education or understanding and trauma. And so they oftentimes will lean towards that codependent model. They're trying to get her to change her ways versus trying to help her seek safety, it's important for you to be able to know the trauma informed specialties. And then the other word that I put in there, a support type is called intensives. And intensives can have a real variety of definitions. There's intensives out there for individuals, there are trauma intensives for women to go for themselves, they may be hosted with the most appropriate, I would say intensives are those that are hosted by trained professionals, whatever that train, it looks like training looks like but you can do individual intensives you can do couples intensive, so on and so forth. So those are some support types.

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Pam B. 08:11

Thank you, Lyschel, those were descriptions that I wish I had known from day one. If I had understood all those words, I think I would have gotten myself help a lot sooner, I wouldn't have struggled as long trying to find my own help without even really knowing. It's you know, it's

kind of like when you go to a dictionary, you have to know how to spell a word look it up. I didn't even know what to what to Google or what to look up in the phonebook. So thank you for sharing that. So we talked about AP SATs and how they use the term sex addicts. That's kind of a term that covers a lot of different types of behaviors. Often we'll hear rather than using labels like sex addict, we could say a sexually addicted person or a person person with problematic sexual behavior. That could be porn use masturbation, excessive masturbation, it can cover a variety of behaviors. So APSATS are trained to help you if you've been wounded by your partner sexual behavior. Some of the other terms that apply more to the addicted person you may hear acting out acting out refers to the specifically also the sexual behavior, whether that's pornography, physical affairs, online affairs, and we say acting out because they are literally acting out their traumas or whatever it is that they're medicating with that behavior whatever they're trying to avoid. Whatever the root behavior is, that is that the root because really sex addiction isn't about sex. It really isn't. It's about medicating on unwanted thoughts and feelings and emotions and trying to escape or it's an unhealthy coping mechanism for those behaviors. And so that's why we say acting out and acting out can also include gaslighting and the lying and the lack of emotional sobriety because they are still acting out some of those feelings and thoughts rather than processing through them in a healthy way. Also we talk about sobriety and recovery. And sobriety specifically means let's talk about addiction. In a general spectrum, someone who drinks or does drugs or has a process addiction, like a food addiction or gambling or sex addiction, sobriety simply means not using not using sex to medicate, it is very different than recovery. Sobriety is necessary for recovery recovery is the actual work of digging into what is it that I'm medicating? What are the thoughts and feelings? What are the roots of these beliefs or thoughts and feelings that I want to use this unhealthy coping mechanism for? And digging into childhood things or family of origin things? Sometimes it's just digging into what are the current thoughts and beliefs that are causing these behaviors or triggering out these behaviors? And so sobriety is great surprise, sobriety is necessary to bring about a healthier brain working neural pathways, but recovery is really doing the work of digging into what is at the root of these behaviors. And so for me, sobriety is not enough, I need my partner to also be in recovery. Michelle talked about triggers, and triggers are those moments of fear and panic, we kind of feel out of control. Those are our trauma triggers. You're also going to hear about triggers regarding the person with problematic sexual behavior. What are those thoughts? What are those beliefs or maybe it will be something visual, it could be being in a physical place where they've acted out before that could trigger things off in their brain that they may want to act out. Another term that you're going to hear is intimacy anorexia, this addiction is also called, it's called a lot of things. It's also called an intimacy disorder. Anybody with an addiction tends to turn inward, really their relationship, their primary relationship becomes with the addiction. And so all the other relationships around them tend to suffer because they don't want people coming close to them, there may be attempts to push other people away. They don't want people to come close, there also may be attachment disorders that cause this behavior. So you may hear the term intimacy anorexia, and basically we the betrayed spouse experienced that as my partner's inability to share his own emotions, his own feelings, and he may not be able to tolerate my emotions, I may want to share with him at a very deep level something very painful, maybe about him may may not be about him may be about something completely unrelated. He may not have the capacity or the skills to tolerate any kind of emotions he can't tolerate his own emotions is not going to be able to tolerate mine. So that's a term that we hear out there. Intimacy anorexia, you may also hear about sexual anorexia and sexual anorexia is way, way too common for betrayed spouses. It's the experience of us not being sexual with our partner, our partner doesn't want to be sexually intimate with us. And again, this is not about sex. It's about intimacy. It's about being close, it's about being vulnerable. There may be all kinds of reasons porn soaked mind, pornified, mine may be so conditioned to react to only porn type images that they can't be relationally

emotionally intimate and emotionally sexual with us. Those are things that can be addressed in therapy. And speaking of therapy, you may hear the term CSAT. And what that stands for is certified sex addiction therapist. And these are people who have been trained, they're regular therapists, they're licensed therapists, who go and get into additional training and certification to deal specifically with sex addiction in a compassionate, non judgmental way to work with the person with the problematic sexual behavior to do an assessment to find out if it truly is an addiction. They work with the person to get again get to that root of what is the root cause of these behaviors? Is it trauma, is it some other kind of attachment or wounding just really works with them to work through finding the root of the problem of the behavior and teaching them new skills, new way to process through their emotions, new ways to communicate their emotions, expanding their capacity to withstand those emotions for themselves, and ultimately, through their recovery with you, the betrayed partner, there's also men support groups.

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Bonny 15:18

Can I just add real quick that there is a big difference between a certified sex addiction therapist and a regular sex therapist?

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Pam B. 15:30

Oh, absolutely. So, so important. So a CSAT

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Bonny 15:35

understands that a sex addiction is not about sex. It's about that dopamine hit of climax as used as medication as Pam is just wonderfully, you did such a great job, Pam explained there. But but a sex therapist doesn't come from that perspective, they come from that the problem is the sexual performance. So they haven't been trained to deal with the addiction piece. And sure your your marriage may need to have a sex therapist down the road, once everyone's in recovery to work through. Maybe who knows what there can be abused within marriage, there can be past sexual abuse, you know, the sex therapist can help you through that. But at this point, a CSAT is imperative.

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Pam B. 16:25

Thank you so much for mentioning that because here's another term that we learn in our training with AP SATs. And this is so common, I have experienced this multiple times in my recovery. And it's a term called treatment induced trauma. What that is, is somebody's treating you as if you're part of the problem you the betrayed partner, as if you somehow contributed to your wounding, or, as Bonnie said, somebody who treats your husband, your partner as if Well, this is just normal sexuality, and you just needs to express it in a different way or as a high sex drive, that can be an incredibly enabling to the person with the problematic sexual behavior. That's kind of like the green light for really unhealthy behavior, if they do not understand what is the root cause and what it really does. It really dismisses the pain and the trauma that we authentically experience, not because we're not sexual enough, not because we're not open minded enough, but and not because we're neurotic or broken or codependent. But because we

have suffered a very real authentic attachment wound, we're wood, we're not broken. There's nothing wrong with us. But we have been wounded. And so it is so important for the person with the problematic sexual behavior or the sexually addicted person to get the right kind of therapy, and help and assistance, compassionate therapy from somebody who has certified in sexual addiction therapy, because they have that trauma piece too. Now, just a caveat here, not all see SATs have the partner piece training. This is you know, we're on the cusp of all of this research and education and training for the professionals out there. So the original C sets that were trained, they had that codependent training to treat us that way. But thankfully, thanks to organizations like app SATs, they're bringing training to the person who's treating our partner to help us understand what do we need to feel safe, like Bonnie said, and Michelle said, we need to feel safe. In addition to that one on one therapy, a really powerful piece for the person's recovery is a support group, getting out of isolation, seeing examples of other recovery, people who are even one or two steps ahead of them, finding experience and strength and hope a place for these guys to go and feel normal and feel like they're not broken horrible people to be in a positive recovery environment. And there's lots of different types of support groups just like for us there can, they can be faith based, they can be 12 step that can be therapist led that can be peer led, but the power of the group should not be dismissed. It's so important for recovery. And also there are intensives for for men, there's places that men can go for short intensives week long or month long intensives to get very specific, personalized help for the wounding that they have that is causing their behavior.

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Lyschel 19:52

That's great, Pam, that's great. Thanks for sharing all those support types and those acronyms connected to this Honey, could you share some of the acronyms or terms that are associated with a couple ship?

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Bonny 20:05

Well, thank you. Yes, I would love to talk about the couples Pam has already mentioned and described so beautifully the attachment wound, which there is an attachment, rock rupture, when we find that there's a whole reality we didn't know about, that our our spouse was participating in. And that rupture is real and true. And as part of the the trauma, so with that wound, some wives and this isn't necessarily an acronym, it's an experience. Some newly betrayed wives feel polar emotions at the same time. And that's part of the the attachment. And that's part of the rupture. So the attachment is, I really want a hug from you. And the rupture says, but don't touch me, that is completely normal. That's how to explain an attachment rupture. So how do you fix that, in early couples recovery work, the buzz word is empathy. Empathy is not sympathy, and it's not compassion, it's feeling with someone, it's getting into some someone's experience. And it's usually through thinking of an experience you had in the past. So you can really put yourself in their shoes. The problem with a person with an addiction, problematic behavior compulsion is that to two or three things. The first is they probably weren't modeled empathy, much in their formative years, definitely. So they didn't experience it in that way. The second is if they really put themselves in your shoes, and feel your pain, and then realize they're the ones that caused it, they will spiral into shame and humiliation and worthlessness until they're in good recovery. And the third reason is just the emotional disorder that they have. It's just not being in tune with emotions. To begin with. However, I say all of that for you to know he can learn empathy. Empathy is imperative, for

trust to be rebuilt, for you to feel safer, and for that attachment rupture, to begin to heal. Empathy is him taking complete ownership. I did this to you, and I am so sorry. It's it's also I don't know what to do. But I'm going to sit with you here and hear your anger so that I can help you through it. Empathy is just pivotal for moving forward as a couple ship. And this doesn't have to be early in couple ship. But there is an acronym that, frankly, I just learned. And that's SB GTX, which is the soon to be x. As since I'm talking couple ship. That's not really the goal. But we will acknowledge some marriages, some relationships do not survive. It's unfortunate, but it's a reality. So the upsets model we have there's three phases, there's the safety and stability, then grief and mourning, and then you finally move into post traumatic growth. And you can bounce back and forth between all of those. But to kind of move from the safety and stability to grief and mourning. Something called a therapeutic full disclosure is the next stepping stone. That is where the husband or the person with the addiction writes a complete account of their acting out behaviors. And but however, the betrayed partner has a lot of input into this because ultimately, this will give her her reality, she will finally see the pieces of her entire life. This helps her find safety and stability and finally knowing the truth, and with that full therapeutic disclosure that can be a polygraph. And a polygraph is a simple truth telling device. I guess. It assesses by skin sensitivity and heart rate and some other things whether the person is having a stress reaction when they state their answer to a question. So if they're lying, the stress reaction goes high, and the device picks up that they're lying. So a polygraph goes along with the full disclosure because it will either prove or disprove the truthfulness of it or the completeness of it. If there's been an omission. Can I

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Pam B. 24:49

just add my own experience with empathy? I think we as a culture don't really understand what empathy is. I'm just going to go on record You're insane, I didn't know how to do empathy the right way in a healthy way. I thought before all of this, I was an empathetic person, I was a good listener, I could feel other people's pain and some of those things are true. But I myself had to learn how to really hold space for my husband's difficult feelings. I just the reason I say this is because I just It's I don't think it's specific just to sexually addicted people. I think that because I was able to dig in and learn more about empathy, and how to really hold space for another person's feelings and how to really own like, for example, with my son, my teenage son, where I may have contributed to some of his disappointments, to really be able to own that and stand in that space. If I can learn it, they can learn it, anybody can learn it. So I used to think it was a skill that you either had, or you didn't have, or that it was a feeling an emotion you had or didn't have. And I just want to say I was wrong, it was a skill that I had to learn a little bit better, I just want to give that hope to women who think because I hear this a lot, my husband has no empathy. He has no empathy for my pain. And that may look true, I just want you to know that it is possible. It's a skill that you can learn. Absolutely.

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Bonny 26:32

And, and you're right, it is important for for the wives, even though we are in our trauma, if as things are revealed, possibly about your husband's childhood, to be able to empathize with him empathize with his inner child, it goes a long way towards that attachment repair. And I did want to add that the full therapeutic disclosure is done with support people, it's not something you do on your own, it's with the CSAT for the person with the problematic behavior and an asset to support the betrayed wife. And then the last thing I wanted to mention is a therapeutic

separation. And this is a very intentional process. It's not, I can't believe you did this get out. It's, and that may happen. But a therapeutic separation is where you sit down and you work through several important milestones. You decide who is leaving and where they're going. And if you want them to relinquish their keys, or if they can come and go as they want. You talk about who's going to take care of finances, you talk about how long it's going to be. And so typically, it's 90 days, the betrayed partner comes up with her boundaries, and what milestones she needs to see happen in order to re-integrate. And then she also comes up with her, her needs and boundaries for what needs to continue to happen to stay integrated. And I think those are really important because it's, it's well thought out. It's not from a place of intense emotion is from a place of helping recovery stick.

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Pam B. 28:21

Can I just say that therapeutic separations saved my sanity, and it saved our relationship. And I know, personally, it felt so counterintuitive to take space from my husband, because the very act of betrayal was the acknowledgment that he wasn't all in the relationship, and it felt like he was moving away. And so my impulse was to No, come closer, come back, come back, come back, come closer to me. And we were just both in such a heightened state of anxiety over discovery, therapeutic separation allowed me the space to walk around my house and cry and sob without that triggering him because that would definitely trigger my husband. It allowed him to spend some alone time and my husband would say to sit in his swell he needed to sit in in the devastation and the acknowledgement and get out of denial about what his behavior had done to our family into our marriage. He needed to sit with that and take responsibility for that and begin to do the homework that his therapist had given him without the distraction of my tears and my sadness, and quite honestly a few swear words, we needed that separation. I needed to pull my heart back, pull my identity back to be able to process through my stuff without him being a distraction. Without me looking at his every move and every facial expression and you know, what's he doing? What's he thinking? I needed that separation for my own sanity.

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Bonny 30:02

Do you think that separation helped you to surrender him to God more?

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Pam B. 30:06

Oh, absolutely. Because I that and again, it gave me time to sit in prayer to sit in conversation with Jesus and and to be able to really focus in like, Okay, what am I supposed to be doing? What's the healthy thing for me to do? Everybody kept telling me surrender him to God's surrender to God. Well, you know, easier said than done. Had he been around me constantly, I would have been so hyper vigilant focused on him, making him my idol making him my God. I mean, that had been part of the problem to be able to reestablish my complete and utter dependence on God, to get me through this incredible pain that I had never experienced before. So absolutely,

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Bonny 30:54

there is one more acronym I want to mention revolving around the couple ship, and that's LMFT, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, when you're in the beginning stages of recovery. It's not recommended that you see an LM ft, because if there's gaslighting and DARVO and manipulation that can be taken into the therapists office, and if they're not sex addiction savvy, they won't quite understand what's going on. And there are some LM F T's that also carry the CSAT credential. That's where you need to go if you want to get couples therapy right away.

P Pam B. 31:34

And we can probably put some links in our podcasts to some really great resources for couples ship intensives.

B Bonny 31:43

Good deal. Yeah, we'll have some links, and pertinent resources for you in the shownotes.

L Lyschel 31:50

Yeah. And in addition to that, we're going to put a link to Pam Blizzards website, she has a great list of other acronyms that we may or may not have actually covered today, that may be a little bit more specific to your particular story, and journey. So please look for that in the show notes as well. I think the hope that I would love the listeners to have as they step away from this particular episode, is that knowledge is power, knowledge is going to help strengthen you, it's going to help empower you, it's going to be able to help you to ask for what you need. And so that was one of the heart desires behind doing this episode was to help educate in these acronyms, terms, things like that. The other side of this, though, is that it's also the empowering part is is that it lets us also go back and start to surrender a lot of these things to the Lord, if I'm really honest, I didn't know a lot of these acronyms will know started. But I know that I have had women who have come to me and said I was praying for someone who understood betrayal, trauma, and then I was Google searching, and I found your website, or I was praying for this. And it's like, I think for us, that's even a you know, a more specific way for us to continue to use prayer in our journey of healing is to be able to have this understanding and knowledge or I understand what's happening with me right now. And what I'm actually experiencing is gaslighting and abuse in my marriage, and I need professionals to support me in that, but I also need a savior who's going to come in and do change, because that's what he does. So that's my hope for you is that as you take this information in, you get an opportunity to kind of sit with it for a little bit. And then just turn around and start doing what you feel like you need to do but also that you can surrender a lot of this back to the Lord asking him to help you find the right resources. So thank you for joining us today. We hope to be a bright spot on your recovery journey. If you'd like to leave us a question or comment please go through the contact button on our website. Also help a friend by leaving a five star review on iTunes so others can find us.

P Pam B. 33:51

Bye!

 Bonny 33:52
Goodbye!