

# Ep\_50\_Betrayed\_Families\_with\_Jessica\_Eidens\_2\_of\_2

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

betrayed families, problematic behavior, emotional burden, treatment recommendations, secret keeping, polygraph use, emergency disclosure, therapy necessity, objectification thoughts, corrective behaviors, healthy recovery, authenticity, accountability, sexual education, safe boundaries

## SPEAKERS

Bonny, Jessica Eidens

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00:00

Music. Hi. I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace, and I'm Lachelle Burkett with hope redefined.

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Bonny 00:09

And I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us. Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. You may remember that last week we stopped mid conversation with Jessica Eidens, a betrayed family specialist. So today we're going to rejoin that conversation. So let's listen in now. So I would like to shift conversation just and this is kind of a radical shift, and this is a question that comes up. It's not an easy question. Um, I'm just going to say that, but I don't think that our listeners will hear this question on many other podcasts. So what if the situation includes the person with the problematic behavior has not physically acted? Okay, I'm not that's not the point of this question, but with the brain has objectified his or her own child, yeah. How do you navigate that? And and since our audience is typically the betrayed wives, you can answer to them part of it, yeah,

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Jessica Eidens 01:21

first and foremost, want to not normalize it, but as a partner, some of the this is not a pretty word, but like some of the achiness of problematic sexual behavior that moms and wives tolerate, like the fears that you never even occurred to you. So it's similar to the guys who act out watching underage porn or child pornography like that. It's a different dynamic to this that makes you sick to your stomach, like that physically ill moment. And so I've seen some partners hyper fixate on it, of like, I can't let this go. I'm in alarm mode. Oh my gosh. What do I do? Tell me all the things, tell me all the hoops to jump through. And then sometimes it's too much for the brain. And so there's a certain level of denial, like, Oh, she didn't really mean that, or it wasn't really that bad. And I want to speak to those women, because that's a really hard place to be. I get it. You are trying to protect and nobody wants to look at this and try and come up with a solution or face the reality of the situation. So I see you. I My heart is hugging you from afar that this is a no win situation once, once, there's awareness around any time of acting out or thoughts around your own children, it's governing. But what I tell clients is like, that's never going to go away, like you're really living with this reality of this happen. It happened. Once he had an inappropriate thought, once he objectified once. That's all it really takes, though, that women carry that burden, that emotional burden, and that fear. And what do I do? How do I fix this? What do I need to do? And so getting really clear on treatment recommendations, so that's what I'll do next. But I

just want to validate the heaviness of what this means, like all of the implications that's scary, and it's really scary to talk about, and oftentimes wives will be secret keepers, not knowing what to do with it, not knowing who to share it with. What if CPS becomes involved? What if? What if they get taken away? What if all of these things and so I just want to validate any moms out there that are holding space for this. This is not your shame. This is not your stuff to take, and I really want you to be gentle and graceful about it, like this, that it's emotionally evocative, there's rage, there's pain, there's grief with it. I encourage you, if you haven't already, you don't even have to say the words, but just saying, I've been holding a secret, and I don't want to tell my therapist or my coach, but I just really encourage you to process through because I don't. I've seen what it does if women hold this secret for a long time. So that's my TED Talk. On you this sending love and hugs. I. From afar, because this is really difficult, and it feels like you're alone, and you're not as alone as you think. Yeah. So what do you do? What? What's? What are the tangibles? So first and foremost, if I'm working with a mom or a couple where this has happened, it's flushing out like, do we have all the information? Is there anything that we're worried about, or did we hear this and we're now concerned that there might have been acting or I can't shake this feeling that something more is there. I just want to validate that follow your gut. You will never be upset if you follow your gut, and even if you don't find anything, even if everything's fine, don't, don't ever squash it. Polygraphs are really helpful. I use them in a different way, because they are not 100% valid. I use them as a way to kind of encourage thought, encourage disclosure. And so that would be the first and foremost. Are you concerned? Is there any any weird memories, anything that's sitting with you that didn't quite sit right, because your mama brain and your mama gut is on on board with what's going on. So flushing it out. Do I have any other evidence or any other concerns that I need explored? Then we need to make sure that we find out all the information. This is a non sense. We are disclosing. This is all or nothing. Emergency disclosure. If your husband is not in therapy, let's get in therapy now. That's 100% if I were to project my values on you and my clinical opinions, that's a non negotiable. You're in therapy. This is concerning. This is not normal. This is not appropriate. Ever you need treatment. We gotta, we gotta flush this out. Whatever this is treatment, polygraph, even if you don't go through with the polygraph, the idea that it's there, the idea that you need to be thinking, if there's anything else that will come up, you need to be fleshing this out to feel safe. You need to feel safe that he's looked in all the crevices, and that there is no acting out. There is no probability that this is going to move forward in any way. Ideally, you can have an evaluation done if your mama heart is worried. If you're like, yeah, there's been some weird instances where I came in and he looked guilty, or my child is acting weird with them. Do not shove those down. That's intuition. That's your gut feeling. So there's sex offender treatment providers all across the nation. There are people that do evaluations for this purpose, where they're asking those questions and helping these people uncover it. So that's that's full bore of like we're looking at a therapist, we are looking at a polygraph. We're looking at perhaps an evaluation. We're really flushing out where's, where is, let's define this, what happened, what was going on, then understanding what is he committing to to help correct this behavior or rectify it? That's incredibly important, Mom, you are not in charge of his behavior. He needs to take ownership, and he needs to create safety in his own family. If someone is not doing that, then they are not a safe person that could look like consequences in the meantime and boundaries. I don't feel safe with you being alone. I need to understand what you're doing, how you're course correcting, what preventative measures are in place that I know, are there, that you know, were there that will not allow anything to happen, it's really important to set those boundaries and let them earn earn it back, or do what they need to do. So a healthy recovery plan, to me, would be like, this is how I'm correcting it. This is if I have an inappropriate thought or an objectifying thought that's intrusive. These are three skills that I use. This is the repercussion, with my repercussion, not as In consequence, but what's going to happen next. I call my sponsor, or I call my therapist, or I call my accountability buddy, and these are the ways that I'm i. Directing this behavior or ensuring that there is no place for it.

## J Jessica Eidens 10:06

If someone is constantly or currently objectifying and struggling, there's a time out period you need to go. This is where impatient can be super helpful remove them from the situation, because it's not fair. What you are teaching a child. If a child is being objectified, they pick up on this again. They're learning

what what am I getting, and what do I strive for? So if their parent is objectifying them, or if they're in a highly sexualized environment, they're going to be attracted to that, they're going to look for people that are objectifying them, or they're going to feel comfortable in a sexual environment. And I don't think anybody wants their kid to feel comfortable in a sexual environment as a child like this is not appropriate, and so being really clear and concise and swift you've objectified. I need to know five tools. I need to know what you're doing to make sure that this will not continue, because it's the slippery slope. There's a difference, to me too, between that intrusive objectification thought like one or two times. It's the thoughts that we get when you're driving on a windy road and you're like, Oh, what if I just swerve off the side, like I'm not suicidal. But that was like an intrusive thought and so defining the problem. Are we looking at, oh my gosh, I just did that and I'm freaking out and disgusted with myself, or is this constantly going on because we need to suss out if there's another diagnosis happening, if there's other problematic behaviors that are woven within. Always, always, always protect the kid. Always, always run as much interference as you can. There's really never a time, and I'm sure there's a caveat, there's like a point 5% caveat, but there's never really a time to articulate that a parent has objected, like sexually objectified a child. That's not helpful for the child, that's icky. That is, we don't want that. That taints the relationship. We want the corrective behaviors loud and proud we don't need to articulate. Yeah, your dad was objectifying you. You can have your feelings. You absolutely have your feelings as a mom about that, and you talk to your therapist, but this is where you're protecting and you're really keeping that separate that can look like transparent boundaries for a little while, Dad's not going to be home alone because he's he needs to focus on his therapy, or I'm just going to take you to soccer for now, because I want to, or because Dad's going to therapy. Like it really you're communicating what the kids are seeing so that they can make sense again, make the narrative, but you don't ever need to communicate your dad objectified you as a child. That's such a violation. Where we

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Bonny 13:29

so and as child, you're talking the whole age range.

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Jessica Eidens 13:33

I'm talking the whole age range till you have an adult child who wants to hear that. It's really it with love and adoration. I always say, What's your point? If you want to tell somebody something, or if you want to have a disclosure, the very first question I ask is, what's your point? Now, what's what's the benefit for the child? The benefit needs to be it will help them articulate a clear and authentic narrative. If it's not, then that's your stuff. We have to really separate that, because a lot of times partners are like, No, I want everybody to know he's not safe. I want everybody to know that this is not okay, and validate that. But for children, they never need to be sucked into this. This is an area where you can protect and you should protect.

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Bonny 14:29

Well, thank you so much. I know that was not an easy question and that, but all that information is so valuable, and we need to answer the hard questions too. Yeah, let's shift. Do a 180 Now, let's talk. Let's go from really hard. Yeah, let's swing. Let's do a swing, pendulum, bipolar. Okay, so if we don't know what the goal looks like, it's hard to get there. So let's. So let's talk about, what does a healthy family in recovery look like?

J

Jessica Eidens 15:06

Again? That's the other answer to the what's the point? Why am I telling my kid this? Why? Why should I

do a disclosure? And so I really go through the pillars of a healthy family. And this is, this is a Jessica ism. This is based on my experience in this field of like, what are these families that struggle with problematic sexual behavior? What's different than other families? Number one, and the most important one that we've been talking about this whole time is authenticity, giving your children a real example of what it looks like to live in this world today, it is not helpful to pretend like we don't fail, that we don't struggle, that we don't mess up. Everyone messes up. Everyone has struggles. The families that are different are the ones that embrace it and expect it. So expect the ruptures to happen. Expect that families are gonna fight. Families aren't we're gonna I'm gonna yell at my poor four year old because I'm over stimulated. Like that's gonna happen. The difference is the authenticity of it, of like, ooh, that wasn't me. And I actually need to say something. This is not what I want for you. Even though I can't model or I can't be what I want for you, you still need to say it. You still need to articulate it, because if you can't, you still want better for your kids. I've never met a parent who was like, I want my kids to have exactly what I have. We all want our kids to be healthier, happier, more successful, however you kind of calculate happiness. We all want better for our kids. And so the authenticity is key here. Dan Siegel talks about like the the kids that are healthiest or the kids that are securely attached. We now have all of this research that says attachment theory is not a theory. This is a thing, the kids that are healthy or securely attached are healthier. They're able to be congruent. They're more successful. Their brains are online. They're developmentally appropriate. They're doing the things required of them at a pace that is healthy. We see that those are the kids that are healthy and wholly and securely attached. Those parents are the ones. They can articulate their own narratives. They can articulate what's happened in their lives. They see themselves clearly, and that's really the the foundation of authenticity. I know what's my stuff, and I know what's your stuff, or I'm able to articulate what's going on for me, my emotional expression, my emotional intelligence. I can emotionally identify what's going on for myself. This is what's going on for me, what's going on for you. That is the authenticity that we're talking about, and so being transparent, taking ownership, that's the second one, is accountability. I did something wrong. I did something not within my value system or not. I didn't handle that in the way that I wanted to. I'm sorry I yelled at you, we have to start normalizing apologizing to kids. How can we expect them to learn how to authentically apologize if we don't model it? I don't know about you, but like kids are fighting, and you're like, say sorry to each other and shake hands. That is the most pathetic apology ever. No kid learns that way. They learn begrudgingly, like I have to shove my feelings down and fake handshake. That's not an apology. That's not authentic repair parents modeling what repair looks like, taking that accountability, apologizing and doing a reparative strategy, that's it follows kind of the similar outline to a family disclosure of acknowledgement. This is what I've done. I'm sorry, I care about you, and this is what I'm going to do to make amends. This is what I'm going to do to help this along, so families that demonstrate accountability and apologies are 10 times healthier than the ones that just ignore it or shove it down or only have children apologize because they never learn. How can they see? That's that's really the thing. The last one that I'll kind of talk about is. Sex, especially in the families that we work with, we have got to be more comfortable talking about sex, because if you don't communicate to your children what sex is, or even body parts, they are going to go to the loudest person they know or the most easily accessible. How many kids Google sex? How many kids Google questions that they have and then are inundated with porn because they're not being given just factual information? I think that's another really eye opening experience that I've had working in a high school is just the amount of misinformation around sex and and healthy sexuality, what it's supposed to look like saying no, what their values are. When I'm saying, talk about sex, I'm not saying, let's get super graphic and go into all of this. No. Sex is everywhere in our society. It's such a bigger conversation. What are your values around sex? As a mom, what's your value around sex and all that entails. We are not taught to question this or to even become a aware of what we think about. It's like it doesn't even occur to you. You just you're raised you have sex when you're married. That's what you know about sex. Cool done now. It's different, and so it ranges from purity culture to body parts to birth control to like, there's so many layers to sex that it really boils down to defining for yourself what you know and what are your values. So first and foremost, I always say, like, find resources, find like, science back sexual information. Come as you are. Is an amazing book about female sexuality, the mechanisms that go on in our bodies. I don't know about you, but that wasn't Todd. I didn't I didn't learn any of this. And so in order to have values around sex, I think we really need to get comfortable exploring what is sex. Because when your kid comes to you and is like, hey, I want to

have sex, and you as the parent are freaking out, that's not helpful, but being prepared and saying, Okay, what are your values around sex, and being able to ask questions, what needs? What needs to happen in order for you to feel safe to have sex? Well, this is what we believe as a family, or this is what I believe. This is what our church believes. This is what the Bible tells us, like, use, use what's important to you, and communicate those things living in that value system, you can't project your sexual values on your child. You really need to invite them into the conversation and educate them enough so that they can make the decision themselves, because in the moment when they are alone in the back seat of a car or at a party or wherever. They need to have truth within themselves of what does this mean, and what does this mean for me, they need to have permission to say, No, you have to have the conversation like I've literally had okay. How are you going to tell me you don't want to have sex with kids like we have to practice that. If you're a mom out there, your kids are dying. I know they are. I know they don't want to talk to you about this, but you just acknowledge the awkwardness and say, this matters to me, though. I want you to have the tools to know what you want in the moment, so that you don't look back and say, oh my gosh, I messed up big. There's another so much better. No,

**B** Bonny 24:03

there's another book called before the sex talk. And again, I can't remember the authors, either, but it is very much for the younger children. And it's really just anatomy and talking about some ethics that aren't necessarily ethics around sex, it's ethics in general. So then, yeah, so it's exactly great little book. I'll put that in the show notes

**J** Jessica Eidens 24:28

too, I think too, just a PSA from a therapist like a child mental health specialist. Please, please, please teach your children the right names. It's so difficult to get help or do appropriate reporting when a kid is using euphemisms like that, so painful to not be able to understand what they're trying to communicate and and safe body areas. And unsafe body areas, giving kids those boundaries, you're absolutely right. Like this ranges a life. Sex ranges a lifetime. It really does. And so having the conversation and being clear about what your values are, there's nothing wrong in having different values than your children, but it's important that you understand where they're coming from, because it could be just a lack of understanding, like you could just need to communicate a little bit more or educate them. So I am a fan of the conversation. And again, this is not a one and done sex conversation. It's should be like a yearly thing where you're like, Yep, here we go. Awkwardness. We're going to get Sundays. And we are talking about this, like Sundays and sex, like there can be, you can make this normalized, where then they're coming to you with questions, instead of going to the internet or going to their friends, you want to be the source of information you want to have that open communication, just saying no or getting flustered, that's not helpful. If that does happen, you can always repair, remember, you can go back and say, Hey,


**B** Bonny 26:17

totally, absolutely so before we we end, we usually end with a little hope for our listeners. But before we end, Jessica, can you tell our audience where they can find you? Yes.

**J** Jessica Eidens 26:32

So I love answering questions. I love doing consultations, too. So if you are like, Yeah, my situation's really specific, or I have this really random question, or this big question, I welcome it. You can email me at Jessica at items therapy.com and or you can visit our website, items therapy.com my husband


and I run our private practice in Washington. So love it happy, but so happy to connect with the community, because I know so many moms are just feeling alone right now. Thank

 **Bonny 27:10**

you so much that that's very thoughtful and kind, and yeah, caring for the community. Appreciate that. And listeners, just for your information, items is spelled e, i, d, e, n, s, but I'll put all of those links in the show notes too. So Jessica, what hope would you leave our listeners today?

 **Jessica Eidens 27:34**

Well, the people that are listening, I say, Go, girl, I'm it's so amazing. This is one of the things that I love about working with partners and families, is it's so incredible to me, the capacity and the drive to learn, the fact that you are listening to this, the fact that you are engaging in this process, gives me so much hope for the kids that are coming up for the next generation. It is a pleasure to be a child mental health specialist right now, because the pendulum is swinging so much towards emotional health for children, and so I just want to praise you. Like, give you a little boost. Of you are doing great, mom. Like, even if you feel like you're failing, you are trying, and that's beautiful. Give yourself credit. It's going to be okay. You've listened to this. You now know kind of the red flags to look for. You know, you have ideas and you have a direction of, why are we doing this? Okay, I'm going to start apologizing. I'm going to start being congruent or oops. I need to read a book about sex soon, like whatever you take away from this. I'm just so proud of you and so thankful that you're taking the time to make life better for your kids. I joke with my clients sometimes that you get a therapy. Gold star, so everyone listening you get a therapy. Gold Star, good job. Stars

 **Bonny 29:05**

for everyone. And my hope would be, don't have to do this perfect. You just have to try. And with each try, you get better and better, because it's practice, yeah, yeah. So lots of grace and compassion, just like Jessica said. So we're going to wrap up, and we're going to 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 use the contact button on our website, which is hope for wives.com and that's hope for F, O, R, wives.com and also, if this podcast has helped you, please consider donating toward the cost of publication. Thanks, and we'll talk soon. Bye. You.

 **30:00**

Awesome. You.