

The Warning Signs Of A Cyberaffair

Written by Dr. Kimberly Young

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Cyberaffairs are more common than people realize. It is not unusual for someone having a cyberaffair to spend at least four hours a day chatting online. To help partners determine if their loved one is cheating, Dr. Young's [Infidelity Online Workbook](#) describes seven Tell-Tale Signs of a Cyberaffair that you should look out for.

1. Change in sleep patterns - Chat rooms and meeting places for cybersex don't heat up until late at night, so the cheating partner tends to stay up later and later to be part of the action. Often, the partner suddenly begins coming to bed in the early-morning hours, may leap out of bed an hour or two earlier and bolt to the computer for a pre-work e-mail exchange with a new romantic partner may explain things.

2. A demand for privacy - If someone begins cheating on their spouse, whether on-line or in real life, they'll often go to great lengths to hide the truth from their wife or husband. With a cyberaffair, this attempt usually leads to the search for greater privacy and secrecy surrounding their computer usage. The computer may be moved from the visible den to a secluded corner of his locked study, the spouse may change the password, or cloak all his or her online activities in secrecy. If disturbed or interrupted when online, the cheating spouse may react with anger or defensiveness.

3. Household chores ignored - When any Internet user increases his time on-line, household chores often go undone. That's not automatically a sign of a cyberaffair, but in a marriage those dirty dishes, piles of laundry, and un-mowed lawns might indicate that someone else is competing for the suspected person's attention. In an intimate relationship, sharing chores often is regarded as an integral part of a basic commitment. So when a spouse begins to invest more time and energy on-line and fails to keep up his or her end of the household bargain, it could signal a lesser commitment to the relationship itself - because another relationship has come between your marriage.

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4. Evidence of lying - The cheating spouse may hide credit-card bills for on-line services, telephone bills to calls made to a cyberlover, and lie about the reason for such extensive net use. Most spouses lie to protect their on-line habit, but those engaging in a cyberaffair have a higher stake in concealing the truth, which often triggers bigger and bolder lies - including telling you they will quit.

5. Personality changes - A spouse is often surprised and confused to see how much their partner's moods and behaviors changed since the Internet engulfed them. A once warm and sensitive wife becomes cold and withdrawn. A formerly jovial husband turns quiet and serious. If questioned about these changes in connection with their Internet habit, the spouse engaging in a cyberaffair responds with heated denials, blaming, and rationalization. Often times, the blame is shifted to the spouse. For a partner once willing to communicate about contentious matters, this could be a smokescreen for a cyberaffair.

6. Loss of interest in sex - Some cyberaffairs evolve into phone sex or an actual rendezvous, but cybersex alone often includes mutual masturbation from the confines of each person's computer room. When a spouse suddenly shows a lesser interest in sex, it may be an indicator that he or she has found another sexual outlet. If sexual relations continue in the relationship at all, the cheating partner may be less enthusiastic, energetic, and responsive to you and your lovemaking.

7. Declining investment in your relationship - Those engaged in a cyberaffair no longer want to participate in the marital relationship - even when their busy Internet schedule allows. They shun those familiar rituals like a shared bath, talking over the dishes after dinner, or renting a video on Saturday night. They don't get as excited about taking vacations together and they avoid talk about long-range plans in the family or relationship. Often, they are having their fun with someone else, and their thoughts of the future revolve around fantasies of running off with their cyberpartner - not building intimacy with a spouse.