

EVENT AGENDA

2025 S.A. Lifeline Virtual Conference

Friday November 7, 2025

9:00-9:10 AM

Conference Welcome w/ Tara McCausland

Welcome by Tara McCausland, S.A. Lifeline Executive Director

9:10-10:00 AM

From Reaction to Revelation: Finding and Using Your Empowered Voice After Betrayal

Michelle Mays, LPC-S, CSAT-S

In the aftermath of betrayal, many partners struggle to communicate their pain and needs in ways that lead to actual change. Despite intense efforts—through endless talking, pleading, yelling, and threat-making—betrayed partners often remain stuck in reactive patterns that stem from trauma symptoms rather than clarity. This presentation explores the critical distinction between speaking from trauma reactions and speaking from grounded connection to the core authentic self. Helping partners make this shift can transform both their healing process and their relationship dynamics.

Drawing from attachment-focused betrayal trauma theory, the session will unpack how trauma activates the brain's fight-flight-freeze system, leading to emotionally charged reactions that may feel powerful but lack clarity. These reactions, while understandable, often undermine trust and accountability, making it easy for the unfaithful partner to dismiss the betrayed partner's voice as irrational or inconsequential.

Attendees will leave with a clear framework for helping betrayed partners shift from reactive communication that maintains the status quo to grounded, empowered communication that opens the door to transformation.

10:00-10:50 AM

Moving Beyond Survival: The Path to Post Traumatic Growth

Sherie Christensen, LMFT

Betrayal trauma can leave you in survival mode—numb, hypervigilant, overwhelmed, or simply trying to get through the day. But survival is not the destination. In this session, Sherie Christensen, LMFT, explores what comes next: healing, growth, and the possibility of a life that feels whole again.

Participants will examine the role of trauma responses, coping tools, and strong boundaries in early recovery, then move into deeper healing—identifying past wounds, negative core beliefs, and patterns that affect relationships. Sherie will introduce practical tools such as reframes, affirmations, and Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) to support the process of post-traumatic growth.

This session offers validation, insight, and hopeful next steps for anyone ready to move beyond survival with clarity and compassion.

11:00-11:30 AM **Live Q&A - Betrayal Trauma Presenters**
Sherie Christensen, Michelle Mays

This live Q&A session offers a unique opportunity to connect directly with the betrayal trauma experts featured in this year's conference. Bring your questions—big or small—and join an open, supportive conversation exploring the realities of healing after betrayal.

Whether you're looking for clarity on specific concepts, seeking guidance for your personal journey, or wanting to better support someone you love, this session is designed to meet you where you are. Presenters will respond to live questions with insight, compassion, and a trauma-informed lens, creating a space for learning, connection, and hope.

All are welcome. Come as you are.

11:45-12:30 PM **SAL 12-Step Women's Panel - Recovery Puzzle & Circle Models**

12:30-1:00 PM **Break - Ask questions, respond to polls on Whova**

1:00-1:50 PM **From Shame to Resilience: A Journey to Relational Healing**
Duane Osterlind, LMFT, CSAT-S

For individuals grappling with sex and porn addiction and its impact on relationships, shame often becomes a powerful barrier to connection and healing.

This talk delves into how shame hinders vulnerability, perpetuates cycles of addiction, and blocks intimacy and trust. Using some of the 12-step principles and the 'Shame Compass,' participants will explore common shame responses—withdrawal, self-attack, avoidance, and other-attack—and how these reactions keep men emotionally distant.

The session offers practical strategies to interrupt shame spirals, build resilience, and develop emotional intelligence.

By addressing shame, we can foster self-compassion, show up authentically for their partners, and create deeper, more meaningful

connections, paving the way for true healing and relational renewal.

2:00-2:50 PM

Coming to the Fence: The Power of Partner-Sensitive Recovery

Jeanne Vattuone, LCSW, CSPS-S, CSAT-S, CPTT-S, EMDR, BSP

Stay On Your Side of the Street? No way! Come to the Fence instead! This presentation introduces a sex addiction sobriety and recovery methodology that integrates a partner-sensitive approach. By increasing awareness of the betrayed's experience, this model enhances both the addict's sobriety and long-term recovery. Grounded in over a decade of clinical program development, this approach draws from advanced training in individual and couples treatment, recent research on betrayal trauma, and evolving best practices in relational healing after sexual betrayal.

3:00-3:30 PM

Live Q&A - Sexual Addiction Presenters

Duane Osterlind, Jeanne Vattuone

3:45-4:30 PM

SAL 12-Step Men's Panel - SAL Recovery Puzzle & Circle Models

4:45-5:00 PM

Day 1 Wrap-Up

Tara McCausland, S.A. Lifeline Executive Director

Saturday November 8, 2025

9:00-9:10 AM

Day 2 Welcome w/ Tara McCausland

Welcome by Tara McCausland, S.A. Lifeline Executive Director

9:10-10:00 AM

The Healing Couples Framework: Rebuilding Trust Through Everyday Recovery

Geoff Steurer, LMFT, CCPS, ART-MC

When betrayal trauma shatters a relationship, couples are often told to stay in their separate lanes: "Do your own work first, then reconnect later." But this approach can leave partners feeling isolated, discouraged, and unsure how to rebuild. In this session, Geoff Steurer, LMFT offers a transformative, trauma-informed framework that reframes early individual recovery as a powerful opportunity for relational healing.

Drawing on over two decades of clinical experience, Geoff outlines how everyday recovery actions, when approached with relational awareness, can rebuild safety, connection, and trust from the very start. Attendees will learn how to disrupt reactive patterns, make attuned repairs, and

demonstrate emotional presence even in the midst of deep pain. This session provides a hopeful, structured path for couples who want to learn how to heal together.

- 10:00-10:50 AM **Restoring Healthy Sexual Intimacy After Betrayal**
Matthew Raabsmith, PCC, CPC & Joanna Raabsmith, LMFT, CCPS, CPTT, EMDR
- In this powerful session, Matthew and Joanna Raabsmith introduce the Intimacy Pyramid™, a transformative framework for couples rebuilding sexual and emotional connection after betrayal. Drawing from clinical insights and personal experience, they walk participants through the five essential levels—honesty, safety, trust, vulnerability, and intimacy—exploring how each stage lays the groundwork for the next. With particular focus on the challenges of reestablishing healthy sexuality, this talk unpacks the myths, missteps, and hope-filled practices that shape true healing. Whether you're a practitioner or a couple navigating this journey, you'll walk away with tools to support real, lasting intimacy that honors both story and soul.
- 11:00-11:50 AM **Creating Safety! The Missing Link In Healing Intimacy-Disordered Family Systems**
Culle Vande Guard, LCSW-S, CPTT-S, CSAT-S, PIT
- This presentation explores how intimacy-disordered family systems - marked by sex addiction and betrayal trauma - transmit intergenerational wounds of abuse, abandonment, enmeshment and neglect. Drawing on the work of Jennifer Freyd, Pia Mellody, and Omar Minwalla, it explains how children develop betrayal blindness, and are shaped by the dysfunction around them. Healing requires truth-telling, emotional accountability, and restoring developmentally appropriate roles. Both the sex addict and the betrayed partner must take responsibility for their impact on the family. Through long-term commitment, support systems, and relational repair, families can break the cycle and build a new legacy of safety, connection, and authentic healing.
- 12:00-12:35 PM **LIVE Q&A - Healing Couples and Families**
- 1:00-1:35 PM **Live Q&A - Recovery Panel w/ SAL 12-Step members**
- 1:45-2:00 PM **Conference Wrap-Up**
Tara McCausland, S.A. Lifeline Executive Director