

There are nine different stages to the toxic circular dance of deception. In this dance, the pressure builds, the volcano blows, and the dance starts all over again.

The Nine Stages of Deception

- **Stage 1: Suspicion**

You get a sinking feeling inside—something does not “feel” right.

- **Stage 2: Confrontation**

You confront your partner with an accusation.

- **Stage 3: Denial of Reality**

The addict lies about his or her sexual behavior either overtly or covertly (not telling you about it or hiding it).

- **Stage 4: Investigation**

As suspicion persists, you may begin snooping, following the addict, going through pockets, checking email, searching through paperwork, interviewing friends, reviewing text messages, and other probing behaviors.

- **Stage 5: Accusation**

A hostile confrontation happens involving yelling, tears, and threats of terminating the relationship if the whole truth is not revealed immediately.

- **Stage 6: Staggered Disclosure**

The addict admits to a small bit of the truth, often padded in elaborate details, but denies any other sexual secrets while withholding information.

- **Stage 7: Deception/Bullying**

The addict lies, bullies, and gets angry as a way of controlling you.

- **Stage 8: Ultimatum/Bargaining**

The addict or the partner strikes a bargain through ultimatums for the addict to change once and for all.

- **Stage 9: Promises**

The addict makes false promises to stop the dance and the addictive behavior.