



The Cycle Of Relational Trauma: How Romantic Betrayal Influences Subsequent Relationship Dynamics And Perpetuates Patterns Of Victimization

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Abstract

Romantic betrayal is a critical relational stressor that produces long-lasting psychological and behavioral consequences in subsequent partnerships. This paper examines gender-specific coping strategies and their implications for future relationships, focusing on how men and women respond differently to betrayal trauma. Drawing from evolutionary psychology, attachment theory, and betrayal trauma theory, the review synthesizes evidence from empirical studies highlighting men's tendency toward punitive, control-oriented, and avoidance behaviors versus women's inclination toward relational repair, emotional overinvestment, and compliance. Findings reveal that men often externalize distress through aggression, dominance, and casual sexual encounters, while women internalize it through self-blame, hyper-commitment, and excessive nurturing behaviors. These divergent strategies are rooted in distinct evolutionary pressures—paternity certainty for men and resource security for women—and shaped by cultural gender norms. Although these coping patterns may offer short-term adaptation, they frequently perpetuate maladaptive relational cycles, increasing the risk of future dissatisfaction, trust deficits, and partner victimization. The review concludes by addressing the need for therapeutic interventions that promote balanced emotional regulation, secure attachment restoration, and gender-sensitive approaches to post-betrayal recovery.

Keywords: romantic betrayal, gender differences, coping strategies, trust restoration, future relationships, betrayal trauma, emotional regulation, evolutionary psychology

Introduction

Romantic relationships serve as a cornerstone for emotional well-being, intimacy, and identity development (Finkel et al., 2017). However, the breach of trust through betrayal—such as infidelity or deception—can induce profound psychological distress and disrupt attachment systems (Gordon et al., 2004). Betrayal trauma theory posits that violations by trusted partners not only cause emotional pain but also compromise cognitive schemas related to safety, trust, and self-worth (Freyd, 1996).

The aftermath of romantic betrayal is marked by complex gendered responses. Research suggests that men often exhibit externalizing behaviors, including aggression and punitive tendencies, whereas women demonstrate internalizing patterns characterized by self-reflection and efforts to improve future relational outcomes (Martínez-León et al., 2019; Barelds & Dijkstra, 2006). Such divergent coping mechanisms may shape the trajectory of subsequent romantic relationships, influencing trust, intimacy, and emotional regulation.

Emerging evidence indicates that unresolved betrayal-related trauma can perpetuate cycles of harm, wherein individuals unconsciously project past hurt onto new partners, leading to victimization or relational sabotage (Slotter et al., 2010). These maladaptive patterns raise critical questions regarding how betrayal experiences contribute to relational instability, gender-specific coping, and the perpetuation of negative interaction cycles in future relationships.

. Men and women exhibit markedly different behavioral responses after experiencing romantic betrayal, which significantly impacts the dynamics of their subsequent relationships. Men tend to display punitive or defensive strategies, often characterized by emotional withdrawal, increased control, and retaliatory infidelity as a means to reassert dominance and mitigate vulnerability (Shackelford, Buss, & Bennett, 2002). These behaviors are strongly associated with masculine identity concerns, ego threat, and heightened anger, which contribute to mate-guarding and distrust in future romantic engagements (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). In contrast, women commonly respond by increasing their emotional investment and engaging in overcompensatory behaviors such as heightened affection and accommodation, largely driven by fear of abandonment, self-blame, and a desire to maintain relational harmony (Hall & Fincham, 2006). Such tendencies reflect broader gendered socialization patterns that influence coping mechanisms following relational trauma (VanderDrift et al., 2012). Further evidence suggests that unresolved betrayal-related distress may result in maladaptive relational strategies, including hypervigilance or transferred aggression, where individuals unconsciously project previous hurt onto new partners, perpetuating cycles of distrust and victimization (Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010; Fitness, 2001). Collectively, these findings highlight the necessity of understanding gender-specific recovery patterns to prevent relational instability and break cycles of harm in subsequent romantic relationships.

Gender plays a crucial role in shaping psychological responses and coping strategies following romantic betrayal. Men often react with anger and ego-driven strategies aimed at restoring dominance or preventing perceived vulnerability, reflecting underlying concerns with status and control (Buss, Shackelford, & McKibbin, 1999). These strategies frequently manifest as punitive behaviors, emotional withdrawal, or retaliatory infidelity, reinforcing traditional masculine norms around autonomy and power (Shackelford, Buss, & Bennett, 2002). Conversely, women tend to exhibit heightened nurturing and compliance behaviors, driven by an increased need for security and a desire to maintain relational harmony. This dynamic is often rooted in fear of abandonment and internalized self-blame, which motivates efforts toward relational repair (Hall & Fincham, 2006). Research indicates that men report higher tendencies toward physical aggression and punitive responses after betrayal, whereas women display greater emotional distress and increased attempts at reconciliation (Buss et al., 1999). Attachment theory offers further insight into these patterns: post-betrayal, women often exhibit anxious attachment behaviors—such as overcompensation and intensified affection—while men are more likely to display avoidant or controlling tendencies, reducing emotional disclosure and intimacy (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; VanderDrift et al., 2012). Collectively, these findings underscore the influence of gendered socialization and attachment dynamics in shaping the trajectory of romantic relationships after betrayal, often perpetuating maladaptive cycles of distrust and victimization in future partnerships (Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010).

Romantic betrayal does not end with the dissolution of the initial relationship; rather, its psychological repercussions often spill over into subsequent romantic engagements, creating a pattern of maladaptive behaviors that jeopardize relational health. Individuals who experience betrayal may enter new relationships carrying unresolved emotional distress, distorted cognitive schemas about trust, and heightened sensitivity to perceived threats (Freyd, 1996; Slotter et al., 2010). These residual effects can manifest in two primary ways: hypervigilance and overcompensation **or** punitive projection and control.

Men, for instance, frequently adopt defensive or retaliatory strategies such as emotional withdrawal, possessiveness, or even retaliatory infidelity in future relationships, as a means of regaining perceived lost power and preventing vulnerability (Shackelford et al., 2002; Buss et al., 1999). Such behaviors often victimize new partners, who become targets of displaced anger and punitive expectations unrelated to their own actions. Conversely, women are more likely to exhibit anxious attachment behaviors, including overinvestment and compliance, in an effort to maintain relationship stability and avoid abandonment (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). However, these compensatory tendencies may create imbalanced relational dynamics, fostering dependency and emotional strain on the new partner.

Research further suggests that betrayal experiences can trigger **jealousy-driven mate guarding** and controlling behaviors that escalate into psychological aggression, coercive tactics, or distrust, ultimately destabilizing the new relationship (Shackelford et al., 2002; Fitness, 2001). In severe cases, betrayal trauma is linked to relational sabotage, in which individuals unconsciously recreate betrayal scenarios or test partners' loyalty, perpetuating cycles of harm (VanderDrift et al., 2012). These patterns exemplify **betrayal**

trauma theory, which posits that violations by trusted partners disrupt fundamental trust schemas, leading to maladaptive coping strategies that often harm future attachments (Freyd, 1996). Collectively, these findings underscore that unprocessed betrayal not only undermines individual well-being but also contributes to the victimization of subsequent partners, highlighting the urgent need for interventions targeting relational trauma and trust restoration.

Patterns of forgiveness and emotional regulation following romantic betrayal demonstrate notable gender differences. Women are generally more inclined toward forgiveness and reconciliation, often motivated by relational maintenance goals and a desire to preserve emotional security (Miller & Worthington, 2003). In contrast, men typically demonstrate lower forgiveness motivation and are more likely to respond with relationship termination or retaliatory behaviors, reflecting an emphasis on autonomy and ego restoration (Shackelford, Buss, & Bennett, 2002; Buss, Shackelford, & McKibbin, 1999). A meta-analysis by Fehr et al. (2010) supports this trend, finding that women are significantly more likely than men to engage in forgiveness across relational contexts, largely due to stronger communal orientations and relational interdependence.

Emotional regulation strategies further diverge across gender lines. Men tend to externalize distress, employing aggression, dominance, or avoidance as coping mechanisms, while women are more likely to internalize negative affect through self-blame and increased caretaking behaviors aimed at re-securing attachment bonds (Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998; Hall & Fincham, 2006). These patterns align with gendered socialization norms and attachment dynamics: women often adopt hyperactivating strategies associated with anxious attachment, whereas men display deactivating responses linked to avoidant attachment orientations (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Importantly, maladaptive emotional regulation post-betrayal not only influences reconciliation or dissolution but also carries implications for future relational health. Individuals who fail to process betrayal effectively may perpetuate cycles of mistrust and control, fostering relational instability and potential victimization in subsequent partnerships (Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010; Fitness, 2001).

Gender differences in cognitive appraisals of betrayal significantly influence post-infidelity coping strategies. Men often interpret betrayal as an affront to status or ego, triggering punitive behaviors or avoidant strategies, while women perceive betrayal as a threat to relational security, leading to compensatory expressions of love and increased caregiving (Harris & Christenfeld, 1996). These divergent appraisals align with evolutionary and gender-role theories, which posit that men prioritize sexual exclusivity for paternity certainty, whereas women prioritize emotional exclusivity for resource stability (Buss et al., 1999). Consequently, men are more likely to experience distress over sexual infidelity and respond with behaviors aimed at restoring power, including casual sexual encounters, retaliatory affairs, or emotional numbing (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2005; Shackelford et al., 2002). Empirical evidence indicates that these strategies serve as ego-restorative mechanisms rather than adaptive emotional regulation, often exacerbating

relational dysfunction (Mark et al., 2011). Women, by contrast, demonstrate reconciliation-oriented coping, engaging in relational repair behaviors, emotional openness, and increased intimacy with new partners to restore perceived security (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). Notably, casual sex following betrayal—more prevalent among men—has been associated with short-term boosts in self-esteem but poorer long-term relational outcomes, highlighting its maladaptive nature as a coping response (Vrangalova & Ong, 2014). These findings underscore that gendered cognitive appraisals of betrayal not only shape immediate emotional reactions but also predict subsequent relational trajectories and vulnerability to maladaptive coping patterns.

Romantic betrayal often leaves enduring psychological imprints, shaping subsequent relationship behaviors through heightened relational anxiety and hypervigilance. Women, for instance, commonly exhibit increased reassurance-seeking and emotional overinvestment following betrayal, driven by a need to prevent perceived threats of abandonment (Hall & Fincham, 2006). These behaviors reflect anxious attachment strategies aimed at restoring relational security but can lead to dependency and emotional exhaustion. Men, by contrast, tend to respond to betrayal with distrust and exert greater control or dominance in subsequent relationships, often employing behaviors consistent with mate-guarding to reduce perceived infidelity risk (Kaighobadi, Shackelford, & Goetz, 2010). From an evolutionary perspective, such strategies are designed to secure sexual exclusivity and minimize paternity uncertainty but may escalate into coercive tactics or psychological aggression when fueled by unresolved betrayal trauma (Buss et al., 1999; Shackelford et al., 2002). These patterns underscore how betrayal not only affects the betrayed partner's emotional landscape but also perpetuates maladaptive dynamics, contributing to cycles of relational instability and victimization in future partnerships (Slotter et al., 2010).

Romantic betrayal profoundly disrupts an individual's self-concept, eliciting gender-specific strategies to restore self-worth and relational equilibrium. Men, whose self-esteem is often closely tied to perceptions of dominance and control, tend to externalize anger and reassert power through dominance-oriented behaviors or increased mate-guarding in subsequent relationships (Finkel et al., 2002; Barta & Kiene, 2005). Such strategies aim to mitigate vulnerability but can manifest as coercive control or autonomy restriction toward future partners, creating dynamics of psychological victimization (Kaighobadi et al., 2010; Shackelford et al., 2002). In contrast, women are more likely to internalize betrayal-related distress, compensating through behaviors that enhance perceived relational value—such as heightened loyalty, affection, and caregiving (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). This accommodative approach aligns with anxious attachment patterns and relational interdependence motives, emphasizing the restoration of intimacy and trust (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

These patterns are not only informed by individual coping mechanisms but are also reinforced by gender socialization norms, which valorize male control and female nurturance (Cross & Madson, 1997). While men may engage in retaliatory casual sex or dominance behaviors as self-esteem repair strategies (Atkins et al., 2005; Mark et al., 2011), women prioritize maintaining closeness, even at personal cost, often tolerating

inequitable dynamics to avoid abandonment (Miller & Worthington, 2003). Both trajectories, however, risk perpetuating maladaptive relational cycles, including hypervigilance, coercive dynamics, and dependency, particularly when betrayal trauma remains unresolved (Freyd, 1996; Slotter et al., 2010).

Experiences of romantic betrayal not only disrupt immediate relational stability but also influence the development of emotional intelligence (EI) and coping strategies in subsequent relationships. Gendered patterns emerge in post-betrayal emotional processing: women often enhance empathic abilities and emotional skills as a proactive measure to prevent relational failure, reflecting an adaptive orientation toward maintaining intimacy (Stanton, Kirk, Cameron, & Danoff-Burg, 2013). This aligns with research demonstrating that women tend to utilize emotion-focused coping strategies, such as emotional approach coping and empathy-driven behaviors, more frequently than men following relational distress (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011). Conversely, men are more likely to adopt emotional suppression or avoidance strategies, driven by masculine norms emphasizing self-reliance and emotional control (Gross & John, 2003). While suppression may serve short-term self-protection, it has been linked to decreased relational satisfaction, lower emotional attunement, and reduced capacity for conflict resolution in future partnerships (John & Gross, 2004). Enhanced emotional intelligence among women post-betrayal may serve as a resilience factor, facilitating adaptive emotion regulation and communication, whereas men's reliance on suppression can perpetuate relational dysfunction, increasing vulnerability to repeated cycles of mistrust and disengagement (Brackett et al., 2006).

The restoration of trust following romantic betrayal is a complex process characterized by notable gender differences in both pace and strategy. Men often exhibit greater difficulty re-establishing trust with future partners, frequently engaging in restrictive or controlling behaviors or avoiding deep commitment altogether as a protective response (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1998). This defensive posture is rooted in the heightened salience of sexual exclusivity for men, aligning with evolutionary perspectives on paternity certainty and status preservation (Buss et al., 1999; Shackelford et al., 2002). In contrast, women are more inclined toward hyper-commitment—excessive relational investment and reassurance-seeking behaviors—as a mechanism to safeguard relational stability and mitigate abandonment risk (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). Empirical evidence suggests that forgiveness and trust restoration occur more readily among women, who prioritize emotional repair and harmony, whereas men display a stronger inclination toward punitive or avoidant coping (Miller & Worthington, 2003; Kaighobadi et al., 2010). While these strategies may temporarily reduce perceived vulnerability, they often perpetuate maladaptive dynamics, leading to cycles of coercive control or dependency in future partnerships (Slotter et al., 2010).

Betrayal also influences long-term mating strategies, with men and women adopting divergent post-infidelity behavioral patterns. Men frequently respond by increasing short-term mating efforts, such as pursuing casual sexual encounters, to restore perceived dominance and self-esteem—a response consistent with a sociosexual orientation favoring opportunistic mating (Greiling & Buss, 2000; Mark, Janssen, & Milhausen, 2011). This behavior functions as an ego-restorative mechanism but correlates with heightened relational instability and

diminished emotional intimacy in subsequent relationships (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2005). Conversely, women typically amplify mate-retention behaviors following betrayal, engaging in hyper-commitment, increased nurturing, and emotional investment toward new partners as an adaptive strategy to secure relationship continuity (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; Hall & Fincham, 2006). These patterns reflect deep-rooted evolutionary pressures wherein women prioritize relational security and men prioritize sexual access and status reinforcement, underscoring the gendered trajectories of coping in the aftermath of betrayal (Buss et al., 1999).

Romantic betrayal significantly disrupts emotional regulation, eliciting gender-specific coping mechanisms that shape subsequent relational behaviors. Men often respond through emotional numbing, avoidance, or overt aggression—strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability and reasserting control (Gordon & Chen, 2013; Gross & John, 2003). These responses align with cultural norms of masculine stoicism and evolutionary imperatives for dominance in mating contexts (Shackelford & Buss, 1997). Conversely, women display heightened self-blame, compliance, and partner-focused repair strategies, motivated by a strong relational orientation and fear of abandonment (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). Such emotion-focused coping, while intended to restore relational harmony, often increases psychological burden and perpetuates patterns of dependency (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011). These divergent strategies illustrate how gender norms intersect with attachment processes, amplifying the risk of maladaptive relational cycles post-betrayal (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Gendered reactions to betrayal are deeply rooted in evolutionary adaptive problems. Men's punitive and controlling responses—such as heightened jealousy, mate-guarding, and retaliatory aggression—are theorized to mitigate risks of cuckoldry and paternity uncertainty (Shackelford & Buss, 1997; Buss et al., 1999). These behaviors, while adaptive in ancestral environments, manifest today as coercive dynamics that undermine relational stability (Kaighobadi et al., 2010). Women, in contrast, exhibit strategies that increase emotional investment and hyper-commitment, reinforcing pair-bond maintenance to secure partner-provided resources and offspring support (Greiling & Buss, 2000; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). This evolutionary lens offers explanatory power for persistent gender differences in post-betrayal behaviors despite sociocultural changes, highlighting the interplay of evolved mechanisms and modern relational contexts (Trivers, 1972; Shackelford et al., 2002).

Following romantic betrayal, gendered differences in emotional investment strategies become evident, often shaped by attachment orientations and relational motives. Women typically respond by increasing emotional investment in future partners, employing heightened caregiving and accommodation to secure emotional stability and prevent abandonment (Simpson & Rholes, 2017; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). This response reflects the activation of anxious attachment systems, which prioritize relational closeness under threat (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Conversely, men tend to emotionally detach or reduce vulnerability in subsequent relationships, a strategy aligned with avoidant coping and self-protection mechanisms (Gordon

& Chen, 2013; Gross & John, 2003). While increased emotional investment may facilitate relationship maintenance for women, excessive accommodation can foster dependency and self-silencing, whereas male emotional withdrawal undermines intimacy and commitment (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011).

Men's post-betrayal responses often include heightened mate-guarding, possessiveness, and even coercive control strategies, rooted in evolved mechanisms to reduce the risk of future infidelity (Goetz et al., 2008; Shackelford & Buss, 1997). Such behaviors, while historically adaptive for ensuring paternity certainty, manifest in modern contexts as psychological or physical aggression aimed at deterring partner autonomy (Kaighobadi et al., 2010). Empirical evidence indicates that these control-oriented behaviors frequently co-occur with emotional withdrawal, producing volatile relational dynamics characterized by both dominance and detachment (Shackelford et al., 2002; Buss et al., 1999). Although these strategies may temporarily reduce perceived risk, they predict long-term relational dissatisfaction and increased likelihood of conflict escalation (Goetz et al., 2008).

Gender also predicts differences in forgiveness and reconciliation trajectories following betrayal. Women exhibit a greater propensity to forgive and reconcile with new partners, motivated by relational maintenance goals and investment in long-term pair-bonding (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; Miller & Worthington, 2003). This orientation aligns with evolutionary pressures favoring relationship preservation for resource security and offspring welfare (Trivers, 1972). Men, in contrast, demonstrate stronger tendencies toward punitive responses, conditional forgiveness, or termination of relationships—reflecting both status concerns and masculine role expectations regarding sexual exclusivity (Shackelford et al., 2002). These gendered forgiveness patterns have implications for post-betrayal emotional recovery, relational trust-building, and the likelihood of maladaptive cycles in future partnerships.

Gender significantly shapes post-betrayal cognitive appraisals and emotional coping patterns. Men commonly exhibit anger-driven cognitions and retaliatory intentions, often externalizing distress through aggression, dominance behaviors, or casual sexual encounters as a means to restore self-concept (Easton, Schipper, & Shackelford, 2007; Atkins et al., 2005). These patterns align with evolutionary motives to deter future infidelity and preserve status (Buss et al., 1999; Goetz et al., 2008). In contrast, women demonstrate higher tendencies toward internalization, including rumination, self-blame, and a focus on self-improvement aimed at relationship security (Fitness, 2001; Hall & Fincham, 2006). Such introspective coping, while adaptive for relational repair, is associated with heightened psychological burden and vulnerability to depressive symptoms (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011). These gendered trajectories underscore a broader divide between externalized, control-oriented strategies in men and internalized, harmony-oriented strategies in women (Simpson & Rholes, 2017).

The process of trust restoration in future relationships also diverges by gender. Men, following betrayal, often exhibit avoidance of deep commitment and reluctance toward vulnerability as a defensive adaptation (Fitness, 2001; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1998). This pattern reflects both masculine role

expectations and avoidance-based attachment tendencies. Women, by contrast, tend to engage in hyper-loyalty and heightened relational investment as compensatory strategies to secure emotional stability and prevent abandonment (Simpson & Rholes, 2017; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). While these behaviors may promote short-term relational cohesion, they also risk reinforcing maladaptive dependence and power imbalances in partnerships (Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). These findings highlight the gendered negotiation between autonomy, control, and emotional security in the aftermath of betrayal, shaped by both evolutionary imperatives and socialized gender norms (Trivers, 1972; Shackelford et al., 2002).

Gendered coping responses after romantic betrayal often diverge along dominance versus nurturance pathways. Men, driven by threats to sexual exclusivity and ego integrity, frequently resort to punitive strategies, including mate-guarding, surveillance, and coercive control (Shackelford & Goetz, 2004; Goetz et al., 2008). These behaviors are underpinned by evolved mechanisms to reduce cuckoldry risk and restore perceived dominance (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Women, conversely, typically respond with increased emotional availability and care-based behaviors in subsequent relationships, reflecting a relational maintenance orientation and heightened attachment security needs (Hall & Fincham, 2006; Simpson & Rholes, 2017). While these gendered strategies may have short-term adaptive value, they often perpetuate maladaptive cycles—control escalating conflict in men's relationships, and over-accommodation leading to self-silencing in women (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011).

Evolutionary psychology offers a compelling framework for understanding these patterns. Men's punitive and control-oriented strategies following betrayal are theorized to safeguard paternity certainty—a historically critical determinant of reproductive success (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Shackelford & Buss, 1997). Conversely, women's increased nurturing and hyper-commitment strategies align with the adaptive goal of maintaining long-term pair bonds for resource security and offspring care (Trivers, 1972; Greiling & Buss, 2000). These evolved mechanisms manifest today as persistent sex differences in post-betrayal behaviors despite cultural changes, illustrating the interplay of biological imperatives and socio-cognitive processes (Kaighobadi et al., 2010).

The long-term implications of these coping patterns for relationship satisfaction and stability are profound. Men who adopt avoidance or control behaviors post-betrayal often report diminished trust, reduced intimacy, and lower commitment in subsequent relationships (Fincham & May, 2017; Shackelford et al., 2002). Women's strategy of heightened emotional investment can sometimes facilitate relational repair but may also engender dependency and emotional exhaustion when overcompensation becomes chronic (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). These trajectories highlight how gendered coping not only shapes immediate relational outcomes but also influences psychological well-being and satisfaction in the long run (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Conclusion

Romantic betrayal disrupts the fundamental psychological and emotional foundations of intimate relationships, leaving enduring effects on future relational patterns. This review underscores consistent gender differences in post-betrayal coping mechanisms: men exhibit punitive, controlling, and avoidance strategies, while women display relationally oriented behaviors such as heightened emotional investment and compliance. These responses, shaped by evolutionary imperatives and sociocultural gender norms, influence not only the recovery process but also the trajectory of subsequent partnerships, often perpetuating cycles of mistrust and emotional imbalance. While men's strategies aim to reassert dominance and minimize vulnerability, they frequently result in relational dissatisfaction and control dynamics. Conversely, women's strategies of overcompensation and self-silencing, though intended to secure relational stability, can foster dependency and psychological distress. Addressing these maladaptive patterns requires integrative interventions that enhance emotional intelligence, promote secure attachment, and challenge rigid gender role expectations. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of betrayal responses across diverse cultures and examine the efficacy of gender-sensitive therapeutic approaches to rebuilding trust and relationship health.

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