Dear Alice,

My boyfriend and I have been going out for more than four years; we decided to break up at the beginning of college. He started to go out with another girl where he goes to college. He went out with her for a month and broke up with her. Two months later, we got back together again and everything was great. But then he told me that they had sex a few times and he told her he loved her. He tells me it was just a rebound relationship and that he was confused and didn't know what he was doing.

Ever since then, I've felt very insecure. I know he has not done anything wrong since we were not going out at the time, but I feel so insecure that I have to know what he is doing every single minute of the day. I get very jealous. I wish I could trust him more. He would never do anything to hurt me. He loves me so much he even wants to marry me. I wish I could put it all behind me. What bothers me most is that they had sex and that he told her he loved her. I don't know how to forget about it and go on.

Sincerely,
Insecure

Answer

Dear Insecure,

It can be devastating to feel betrayed or abandoned by someone you love. Even though you and your boyfriend were broken up at the time he slept with someone else, it might not take the sting out of him having shared physical and emotional intimacy with another person. You have every right to feel jealous and shaken up. At the same time, if you want to move forward in your relationship with him, there are some steps you can consider taking to heal the hurt and the loss of trust you feel.

The power of expressing emotions is great. Whether to a trusted person in your life, in a journal, or on your own, it can be helpful to let your feelings flow. Allow yourself to cry, laugh, curse, get angry, or any/all of the above. Expressing your feelings can also help you clarify what might be at the root of your jealousy and insecurity. Check out the related questions below to read more about how to deal with this and other difficult relationship scenarios.

If you'd like to work your feelings out with someone other than your boyfriend first, you could share your feelings with people in your life who you trust and who support you like family,
friends, or a counselor. You could get a counseling referral from your primary health care provider for both individual and couples counseling.

In order to build up your own self-confidence it’s important to take really good care of yourself and to provide a sense of safety, acceptance, and care. Try paying extra attention to eating a balanced diet, getting plenty of sleep and exercise, and seeking out activities you enjoy. When you feel more centered and happy within yourself, you may be a more confident and happy partner in your relationship.

It takes time to recover from sadness and a sense of loss. The trick here is not necessarily to "forget about it and move on." Could you possibly use this experience to make your relationship deeper and stronger? What can you do to build confidence and trust in your current relationship? What can your boyfriend do, say, show you, that will help you to trust and feel comfortable, safe, and able to be vulnerable again? You can also check out related questions below to see how others have dealt with jealousy and trust in relationships. While the future is always uncertain, it is possible to feel confident about and comfortable with the present, and at peace with the past.

Alice!

Category:
Relationships [2]
Relationship Stuff [3]
Relating & Communicating [4]

Related questions

Healthy versus unhealthy relationships [5]
Girlfriend gets scared every time I say, "I love you" [6]
Dealing with jealousy in a relationship [7]
How do I learn to love? [8]
Should we have an open relationship? [9]

Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [10]
Mental Health Service (CUMC) [11]

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