

Step 4: Choosing the Type of Separation That's Right for You

Jeff: Can we talk about this?

Sandy: What is there to talk about? (*with a raised and angry voice*) Do you have any idea what you've done?

Jeff: (*also with an angry voice*) Sandy, I know I've hurt you.

Sandy: (*starts to cry, then gets angry and paces the room*) Maybe you should have thought about that before you got involved with that whore from work.

Jeff: (*in a loud voice*) C'mon, Sandy, is that necessary?

Sandy: (*yelling out of control*) What, are you protecting her now? You really don't give a shit about me and the kids, do you?

Jeff: I love you and the kids and don't want to hurt anybody.

Sandy: It's a little late for that.

Sara: (*suddenly yelling from another room*) What's wrong mom?

Sandy: Ask your father.

Jeff: (*stumbling for words and giving Sandy an angry look for involving Sara*) Your mother and I can handle this.

Sandy: What's the matter, Jeff, afraid to tell her the truth?

Jeff. leaves the room and begins packing some things to spend the night away from the house. The next day he arranges to move in with a male friend from work for a little while. He occasionally stops by the house to get his things when no one is home. He has had phone contact only with his children. Sandy refuses to talk to him. The children have been told that Mom and Dad are not getting along and that Dad is living with a friend for now. Both children are very upset and keep asking when Dad is coming home. The children can see that Sandy is stressed, not sleeping, and very irritable, which multiplies their fears.

On urging from his male friend, Jeff. decides to contact a counselor. At their .rst session, he tells the counselor the whole story to date. The counselor acknowledges that Jeff. seems pretty confused as to what he wants (Level 3, confused–ambivalent).