

The Cycle of Violence

Many people who encounter domestic violence notice a cycle in the abuser's behavior. Below are the key elements of each phase to help you identify them.

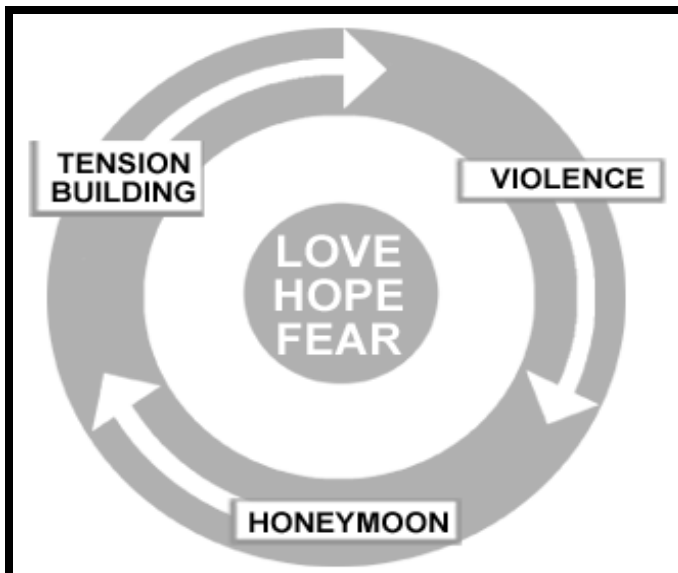
Phase 1:

“Tension Building Phase”

The Abuser: often angry and uses yelling, criticism, swearing and angry gestures. Sometimes coercion.

The Environment: Threats or minor fights occur. There is frequent and constant tension in the home.

The Victim: often feels anxious about the situation and building tension, as though she/he is walking on eggshells.



Phase 2:

“The Violence (Explosion) Phase”

The Abuser: “explodes” into anger and responds with violence.

The Environment: Major act of violence occurs, the home is chaotic, frightening and unstable.

The Victim: Abuse to the victim could include physical and/or sexual attack and threats to harm as well as extensive verbal abuse.

Phase 3:

“The Honeymoon Phase”

The Abuser: Feels sorry for the explosion, and acts apologetic and loving, often making promises to change.

The Environment: Calm and peaceful, welcoming, loving and often soothing.

The Victim: Showered with love, affection and gifts. Often attempts to convince herself/himself that it was a ‘one time occurrence’ and it will ‘never happen again.’ Although, emotionally and physically scarred, they are often either afraid or unable to leave the relationship, convinced it will get better.

