

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

In most abusive relationships violence is not a one time incident. The abuse usually happens again and again. While not all victims experience the same thing, many find that the abuse occurs in a repeating cycle.

What Do I Need to Know?

The cycle that most abusive relationships take is called the Cycle of Violence and it has three phases: tension building, explosion, and honeymoon. Each phase can be as short as a few seconds, or as long as several years. Over time, the explosions can become more violent and dangerous.

Tension Building

Things start to get tense between you and the person you're with. Often:

- The person you are with starts fights with you and yells at you for no reason.
- You feel like you can't do anything right and that things could blow up at any moment.

Honeymoon

The abuser will apologize, try to make up with you, and try to shift the blame for the explosion to someone or something else.

The abuser often:

- Says "I love you."
- Apologizes and promises that it will never happen again.
- Buys you flowers or other gifts.
- Says that you did something to cause the abuse or blames it on other things, like being drunk or stressed out.



Explosion

There is an outburst of violence that can include intense emotional, verbal, sexual and/or physical abuse.

The abuser may:

- Physically abuse you by hitting, kicking, slamming you against the wall, etc.
- Scream and yell in a way that scares or humiliates you.
- Rape or force you to go further sexually than you want to.
- Threaten to hurt you.

What Can I Do?

If your relationship looks like this, you may be in an abusive relationship. Break the Cycle can help. Break the Cycle provides legal information, support and advocacy to young people, ages 12 to 24, and can help you learn about your options and legal rights. ***Our services are always free and confidential.***

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship...
free from violence and free from fear.