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## Domestic Violence: Abusive Behavior

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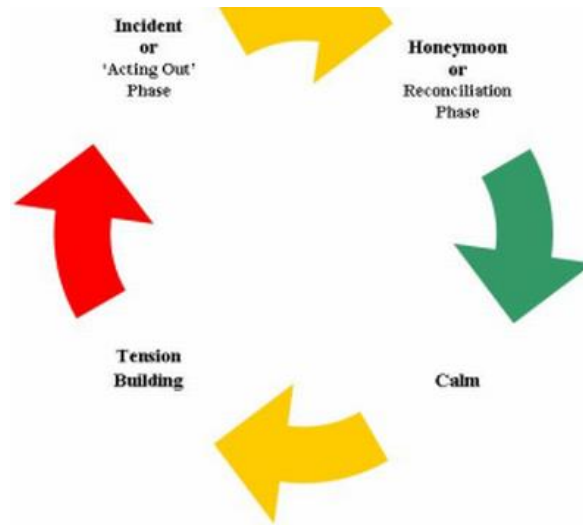
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## Domestic Violence: Abusive Behavior

### The Cycle of Abuse



The domestic violence cycle of abuse diagram helps us to understand the different phases which typically occur in abusive relationships before, during and after an abusive episode.

Not all relationships follow the same cycle, and individual experiences vary, some stages – especially the honeymoon or calm periods, may shorten or be left out completely, especially as the abuse intensifies over a period of time.

Each stage of the cycle can last from a few minutes to a number of months, but within an abusive relationship, the following stages can often be pin-pointed:

### **TENSION BUILDING**

- Tension starts and steadily builds
- Abuser starts to get angry
- Communication breaks down
- Victim feels the need to concede to the abuser
- Tension becomes too much
- Victim feels uneasy and a need to watch every move

### **HONEYMOON or Reconciliation phase**

- Any type of abuse occurs
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Or other forms of abuse as found in the power and control wheel.

### **INCIDENT or "Acting Out" phase**

- Abuser apologizes for abuse, some beg forgiveness or show sorrows
- Abuser may promise it will never happen again
- Blames victim for provoking the abuse or denies abuse occurred
- Minimizing, denying or claiming the abuse wasn't as bad as victim claims

### **CALM before the tension starts again.**

- Abuses slow or stop
- Abuser acts like the abuse never happened
- Promises made during honeymoon stage may be met



(Often the cycle of violence is portrayed as 3 steps: tension, acting out and honeymoon phases, where the Honeymoon and Calm phase are seen as one.)

## Power and Control Wheel in Abusive Relationships

Abusers believe they have a right to control their partners in the abusive relationships by utilizing the tactics found in the power and control wheel, by:

- Telling them what to do and expecting obedience
- Using force to maintain power and control over partners
- Feeling their partners have no right to challenge their desire for power and control
- Feeling justified making the victim comply
- Blaming the abuse on the partner and not accepting responsibility for wrongful acts.

The characteristics shown in the power and control wheel are examples of how this power and control are demonstrated and enacted against the victim.



### Isolation

- limiting outside involvement
- making another avoid people/friends/family by deliberately embarrassing or humiliating them in front of others
- expecting another to report every move and activity
- restricting use of the car
- moving residences

### Emotional and Mental Abuse

- putting another down/name-calling
- ignoring or discounting activities and accomplishments
- withholding approval or affection
- making another feel as if they are crazy in public or through private humiliation
- unreasonable jealousy and suspicion
- playing mind games

### Economic and Financial Abuse

- preventing another from getting or keeping a job
- withholding funds
- spending family income without consent and/or making the partner struggle to pay bills



## Intimidation

- driving recklessly to make another feel threatened or endangered
- destroying property or cherished possessions
- making another afraid by using looks/actions/gestures
- throwing objects as an expression of anger to make another feel threatened
- displaying weapons

## Using Children or Pets

- threatening to take the children away
- making the partner feel guilty about the children
- abusing children or pets to punish the partner
- using the children to relay messages

## Using Privileges (perceived or cultural)

- treating another like a servant
- making all the big decisions
- being the one to define male and female roles
- acting like the master or queen of the castle

## Sexual Abuse

- sex on demand or sexual withholding
- physical assaults during sexual intercourse
- spousal rapes or non-consensual sex
- sexually degrading language
- denying reproductive freedom

## Threats

- threats of violence against significant third parties
- threats to commit physical or sexual harm
- threats to commit property destruction
- threats to commit suicide or murder

## Physical Abuse

- biting/scratching
- slapping/punching
- kicking/stomping
- throwing objects at another
- locking another in a closet or utilizing other confinement
- sleep interference and/or deliberately exhausting the partner with unreasonable demands and lack of rest
- deprivation of heat or food
- shoving another down steps or into objects
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