

The Cycle of Domestic Violence

Within a Domestic Violence relationship there is a cycle that both the victim and the perpetrator find themselves in. This cycle is called the Cycle of Violence. The cycle contains six phases:

1. Build Up Phase - During this phase, tension begins to increase, often described by victims as feeling as though they are walking on egg shells.
2. Stand Over Phase - The perpetrator begins to get angry and dominates the victim.
3. Explosion Phase - The perpetrator abuses the victim. This may be physical violence, verbal abuse or any other form of abuse.
4. Sorry Phase - During this Phase the perpetrator realises that he did wrong, but will blame the victim for his actions saying things like "I'm sorry that I hit you, but you shouldn't have done ..."
5. Buy Back Phase - The perpetrator tries to win back his partner. During this phase he may try to make the victim feel sorry for him.
6. Honeymoon Phase - The relationship continues and they try to pretend everything is good again. There is usually underlying tension during this phase as the victim is afraid that it will happen again.

The Cycle of Violence continues and over time the victim will find themselves feeling isolated, fearful and having feelings of low self-worth. As the cycle continues, the abuse in the explosion phase will escalate and the cycle will go faster. Eventually parts of the cycle may disappear altogether, these are usually the honeymoon phase and the buy back phase. When the cycle becomes more frequent with abuse escalating and phases missing, the victim is at a high risk of serious harm.

