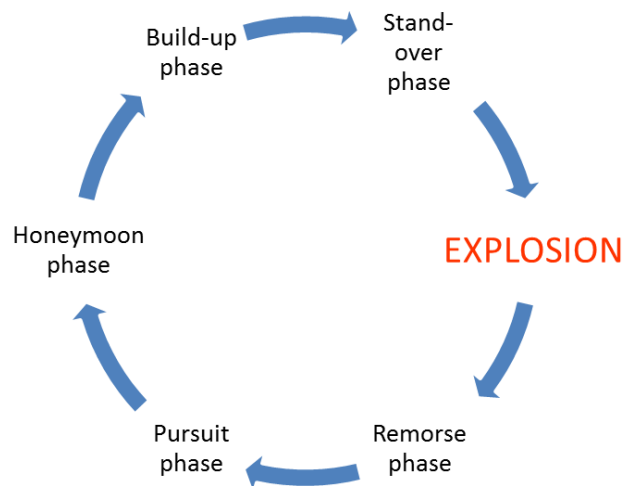


Cycle of Violence

A pattern that has been called the 'cycle of violence' operates in many abusive relationships.



Build-up Phase: Increased tension

This phase may begin with normal relations between people however involves escalating tension marked by increased verbal, social, emotional or financial abuse.

Stand-over Phase: Control and Fear

This phase can be extremely frightening for people. The behaviour of the person who uses abuse in relationships escalates to the point that a release of tension is inevitable. The person affected may feel that they are 'walking on eggshells' and fear that anything that they do will cause the situation to worsen and feels very controlled.

Explosion: Violence

The explosion stage marks the peak of violence in the relationship. It is the height of abuse by the person who uses' abuse to control and power over others. The person who commits domestic and family violence experiences a release of tension during this phase, which may become addictive. They may be unable to deal with their anger any other way.

Remorse Phase: Justification/Excuses - Minimisation - Guilt

At this stage, the person who uses domestic and family violence in their relationship is ashamed of their behaviour. They may retreat and become withdrawn, and then they try to justify their actions to themselves and to others' by denying or minimizing his actions. "You know I get mad when you do that", "It was only a shove".

Pursuit Phase: Promises

This stage can refer to the 'buy back'. It's when the violent person promises never to be abusive again. They may try to make up for the abusive behaviour saying, 'I have been stressed from work, family, financial issues or I was drunk or taking drugs'. The abusive person may purchase gifts, look after the children, help around the house and appear to be different. The person affected by the violence will feel hurt, betrayed, confused and relieved.

Honeymoon Phase: Denial - Increased intimacy

This phase of the cycle both people in the relationship may be in denial to how bad the abuse and violence was. Often this can be a time of intense intimacy, feelings of happiness and ignoring the possibility that the violence could occur again. The cycle inevitably continues as the relationship still holds the original problems.