

Stages of Violence

Tension Building

- Abuser starts to get angry
- There is a breakdown of communication
- Victim feels the need to keep the abuser calm
- Tension becomes too much
- Victim feels like they are “walking on eggshells”

Incident

- Any type of abuse occurs (physical/sexual/emotional)

Making Up

- Abuser may apologize for abuse
- Abuser may promise it will never happen again
- Abuser may blame the victim for causing the abuse
- Abuser may deny abuse took place or say it was not as bad as the victim claims

Calm

- Abuser acts like the abuse never happened
- Physical abuse may not be taking place
- Promises made during ‘making up’ may be met
- Victim may hope that the abuse is over
- Abuser may give gifts to victim

The cycle can happen hundreds of times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in a relationship. The total cycle can take anywhere from a few hours to a year or more to complete.

It is important to remember that not all domestic violence relationships fit the cycle. Often, as times goes on, the ‘making up’ and ‘calm’ stages disappear.