

# Cycle of Violence

## Phase I TENSION BUILDING PHASE

(This phase can last days, weeks, months and sometimes even years)

The initial infatuation of the relationship fades, and the women attempts to stop this by pleasing, placating or staying out of his way. She thinks she can change his behavior through her actions. When this doesn't change or stop his abuse, she withdraws. The man feels rejected and tries harder to control her activities. At this point, a woman who has experienced violence/abuse before knows that an abusive incident will inevitably happen.



## Phase II EXPLOSIVE/VIOLENCE STAGE

(This phase can last anywhere from a few moments to a few days)

Some from abusive incident occurs. This is often a physical attack, but can be psychological, verbal and/or emotional. This discharges the stress and tension for abuser. After the abusive incident, the man feels instant relief The woman often experiences shock, denial and/or disbelief that the assault occurred. It is during this phase that the police are usually called, and a majority of women seek safe shelter.

## Phase III "HONEYMOON" PHASE

(This immediately follows phase II and typically lasts longer, but is shorter than phase I)

The abuser becomes tender and apologetic, and often sends flowers or gifts, cries, begs her forgiveness and promises to never do it again (he truly believes he won't). He will take action to demonstrate his sincere desire to change, however his prime motivation is to get her back, not to get help for himself.

Research shows that any recovery/counseling program he enters must be actively worked at for 2 years to see any changes in behavior. It is this phase that keeps the woman in the relationship because she is finally getting the love and attention she wants from him. Women often say that he is back to the man they fell in love with.

Adapted from the book The Battered Woman by Lenore Walker. Ms. Walker emphasizes that in most abusive relationships, violence or any form of assault does not happen randomly, it follows this very predictable 3-phase cycle.

**For additional information contact the CSS Women's Commission at 704-336-3210.**