

## **Stages of Leaving**

### **DENIAL**

The Abused:

- Does not admit there is a problem
- Will excuse the abuser's violent behavior
- Believes that each incident is the last

### **GUILT**

The Abused:

- Begins to know that there is a problem but believes it is their fault
- Believes they deserve to be beaten
- Thinks if they had done this or that, their partner wouldn't have had to hit them
- Believes something is wrong with them... not the abuser or the relationship

### **ENLIGHTENMENT**

The Abused:

- No longer assumes responsibility for the violence
- Realizes no one deserves to be beaten
- Is still committed to the relationship
- Believes if they stay, they can work things out

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Abused:

- Accepts that the abuser will not change
- Accepts that the violence will not stop
- Decides not to "Put up" with the abuse
- Leaves the relationship to start a new life

Some victims may go back and forth between stages. A victim cannot be pushed from one stage to the next. They will, through their own experience, move on to each stage when they can.

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