

# **Cycles of domestic violence abuse**

## **The Three-Phase Cycle of Violence**

Many individuals that experience domestic violence describe living through a repeated cycle of abuse. It often follows a recognizable pattern:

### **Phase I: The “Honeymoon”**

In this phase, the abuser may repeatedly express what appear to be genuine feelings of remorse and may shower his partner with attention or gifts. The abuser may promise to “never do it again” or to get counseling. The individual who experienced the violence may feel relieved that the abuse is over and may be tempted to forgive the abuser. At this time the individual experiencing violence needs support and information to help identify manipulative behavior. It is important to remain focused on safety.

### **Phase II: Tension Building**

In this phase the abuser may be extremely critical, bullying, moody and demanding. The individual experiencing violence still feels some control over the situation and may attempt to pacify the abuser in order to postpone or stop the next battering phase. With the increase in tension, these attempts become less effective. The abuser’s negative behavior escalates and may begin to include direct or implied threats of violence. This may be a time when the abused individual seeks outside help and professional assistance.

### **Phase III: Explosive**

In this phase, the abuser’s behavior escalates to physical or extreme emotional violence and the individual may feel completely helpless in controlling the escalation. Some individuals experiencing violence may even precipitate the battering incident in order to “get it over with” and regain some sense of control. At this stage, appropriate interventions for the abused individual may include medical attention, arranging for safety and/or shelter and crisis intervention.

**\*You may experience some or all of the above but even if you experience a portion of the phases please still call our 24-hour hotline if you have any questions.\***