

The Cycle of Violence

Adapted from *The Battered Woman* by Lenore Walker

STAGE 2 Explosion / Acute

Batterer's Behavior

- wants to teach his partner a lesson
- feels out of control, but is actually in control
- wrongly blames her for his violence
- wants to control her, put her down or punish her for not making him feel better

Victim's Behavior

- terrified
- blames herself for his violence
- possibly injured
- ashamed, humiliated, shocked, degraded, angry
- in denial/disbelief
- may call police
- may flee the situation



STAGE 1 Tension Building

arguments, threats

Batterer's Behavior

- denies that he is feeling hurt, frustrated, insecure, or disappointed
- jealous and distrustful
- feels powerless
- blames partner
- thinks partner should make him feel better
- makes unreasonable demands
- small outbursts
- hovers impatiently

Victim's Behavior

- tries to calm batterer
- believes it is possible to control partner's anger if she can "do things right"
- feels angry that partner is not keeping his promises OR denies her own anger
- blames partner's outbursts on external situations, like work
- tries to control external forces (ex: keeping children away from abuser)



STAGE 3 "Honeymoon"

promises of change, apologies

Batterer's Behavior

- feels in control
- shame and guilt
- wants forgiveness
- promises it won't happen again
- frightened by his own behavior
- turns back into the person his partner fell in love with
- may give gifts
- believes battering won't happen again

Victim's Behavior

- wants to believe his promises are sincere
- depressed, hopeless
- feels trapped
- chooses to believe this side of her partner is the "real" person
- dealizes relationship
- minimizes or denies battering incident
- if she leaves, feels guilty for leaving
- defends partner to others