

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The Cycle of Violence defines patterns of abuse. It is not intended as a roadmap or definitive account of all abusive relationships.

“I’m Sorry”

- Abuser apologizes for explosion
- Promises of change are made
- Blame is placed on the victim
- Abuser gives gifts to reconcile

Lengths of the cycle and types of abuse may vary, but eventually the cycle becomes shorter and shorter and the abuse is intensified.

“Calm”

No acute incidents of violence. However, ongoing emotional and verbal abuse may still occur.

Explosion

Acute episode of abuse: Possibly physical or sexual, but could also include severe verbal and emotional abuse.

Tension Building

- Abuse intensifies
- Victim may feel like they are ‘walking on egg shells’
- Fear begins to build up

*Adapted from *The Battered Woman*, Harper and Row, 1979

