

# UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

## Abuser may:

- Criticize, nitpick
- Become moody or sullen
- Withdraw affection
- Threaten
- Destroy property
- Control access to social resources
- Control access to financial resources
- Control access to mental health or medical resources
- Gas lighting (psychological manipulation designed to make survivor question their sanity)

## Survivor may:

- Try to calm abuser by following “rules” or trying to do special things
- Feel like walking on eggshells
- Feel that the tension is too much and try to provoke an argument to get the explosion over with

## Abuser may:

- Act like abuse never occurred
- Give gifts
- Meet promises made during honeymoon/make-up period

## Survivor may:

- Hope that the abuse is over

**TENSION BUILDING**

**ACUTE EXPLOSION**

Abuse occurs (physical, emotional, sexual)  
Survivor protects self in any way possible, including trying to calm abuser, reasoning, fighting back, etc.

**HONEYMOON/  
MAKING UP**

## Abuser may:

- Apologize for abuse
- Promise it will never happen again
- Blame victim for causing the abuse
- Deny or minimize abuse

## Survivor may:

- Agree to stay
- Feel hopeful
- Attempt to stop legal proceedings

**DENIAL**

Minimizing abuse or pretending it never happened; perpetuates the cycle of violence

**CALM**