



THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

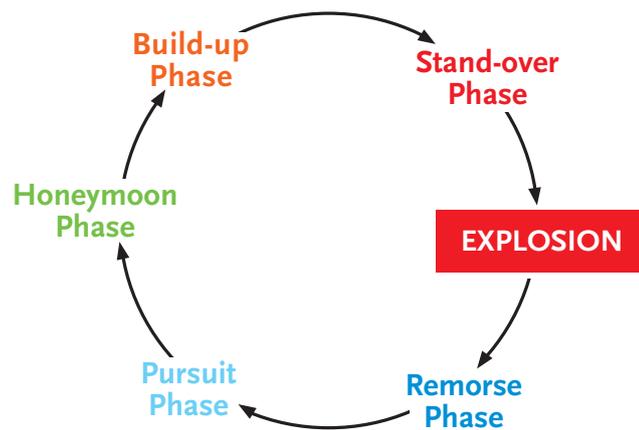
The theory that domestic violence occurs in a cycle was developed in 1979 by Lenore Walker as a result of a study conducted in the United States.

The **cycle of violence** theory explains how and why the behaviour of a person who commits domestic and family violence may change so dramatically over time.

The **cycle of violence** theory also provides an understanding to why the person affected by domestic and family violence continues to face a violent situation.

The cycle goes through a number of stages.

However, it is acknowledged that it is **not the same for everyone** and some people may experience only some stages of the cycle (or not relate to it at all).



Source: Dr Lenore Walker, 1979, USA

The build-up phase

This phase may begin with normal relations between the people in the relationship, but involves escalating tension marked by increased verbal, emotional or financial abuse.

In non-violent relationships these issues can normally be resolved between the people in the relationship.

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The stand over phase

This phase can be extremely frightening for people affected by domestic and family violence.

The behaviour of the person who uses violence in relationships escalates to the point that a release of tension is inevitable.

The person affected may feel that they are 'walking on egg shells' and fear that anything they do will cause the situation to deteriorate further.

Explosion

The explosion stage marks the peak of violence in the relationship. It is the height of abuse by the person who uses violence to control and have power over others.

The person who commits domestic and family violence experiences a release of tension during an explosion phase, which may become addictive. They may be unable to deal with their anger any other way.

The remorse phase

At the remorse stage, the person who uses domestic and family violence in their relationship feels ashamed of their behaviour.

They retreat and become withdrawn from the relationship.

They try and justify their actions to themselves and to others, unaware they are actually addicted to the release they have just experienced.

The pursuit phase

At this stage, the person who uses domestic and family violence in relationships promises to the other person affected, never to be violent again.

They may try to make up for their past behaviour during this period and say that other factors have caused them to be violent, for example, work stress, drugs, or alcohol.

The violent offender may purchase gifts, and give the person affected attention.

Also, the violent offender may go through a dramatic personality change.

The person affected by the violence will feel hurt, but possibly relieved that the violence is over.

The honeymoon phase

During the honeymoon phase of the **cycle of violence**, both people in the relationship may be in denial as to how bad the abuse and violence was.

Both people do not want the relationship to end, so are happy to ignore the possibility that the violence could occur again.

After some time, this stage will fade and the cycle may begin again.