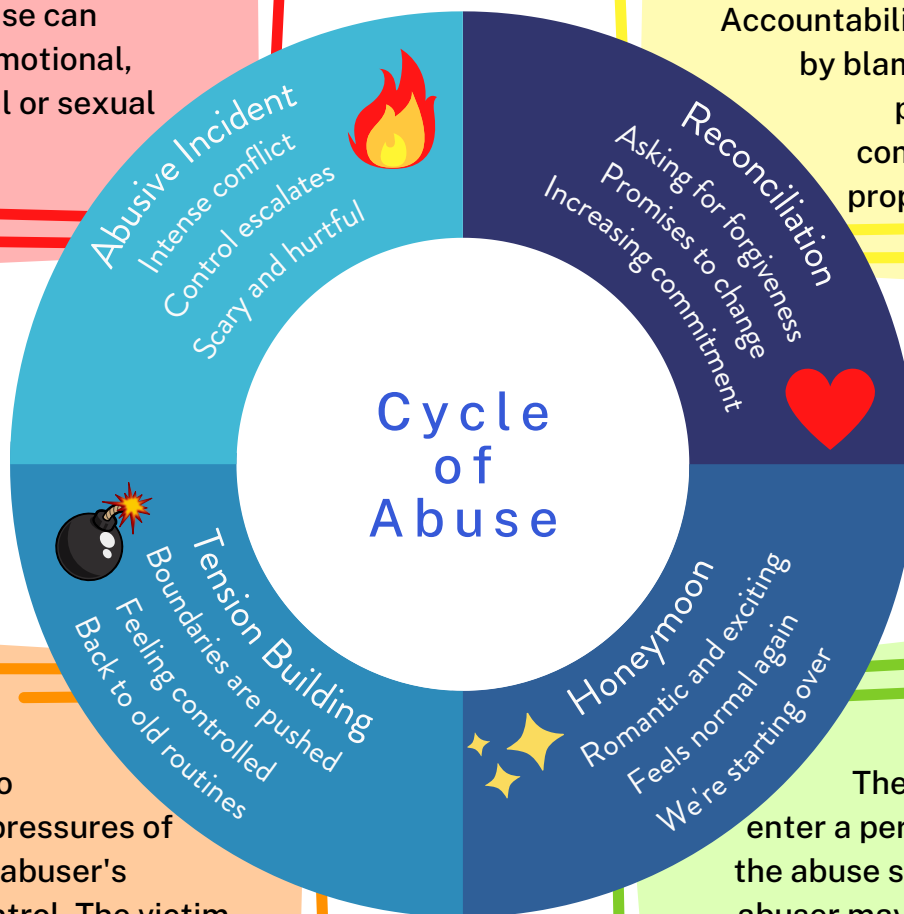


Cycle of Abuse Guide

The cycle of abuse is a pattern that occurs in abusive relationships that shows the dynamics of abuse in four phases. Tension builds from crossed boundaries and life stressors, leading to an abusive incident. In the aftermath of the incident, the abusive partner apologizes and is forgiven without changing. The length and timing of phases may vary.

The victim resists or does not comply with an attempt of the abuser to control. This often creates a heightened conflict where the abuser escalates their control. Abuse can include verbal, emotional, financial, physical or sexual harm.

The abuser may apologize, show remorse and may beg for forgiveness. They may shower the victim with gifts and affection, and make promises to never hurt again. Accountability is often missing by blaming stress or other people. Increases in commitment are often proposed as a solution.



Stress begins to grow from the pressures of daily life or the abuser's attempts to control. The victim may attempt to reduce tension by complying with the abuser out of fear of their response. Verbal and emotional abuse can be common.

The relationship may enter a period of calm where the abuse stops or slows. The abuser may give reassurance or make positive gestures, but these tend to reduce in sincerity over time. This phase can disappear after multiple cycles of abuse.

How do you leave?

You've met someone in your English class and really like them. After weeks of talking and flirting in class, you both decide to meet one day after school and hang out. They are really easy to talk to and you have a lot of fun. When you get dropped off, you already can't wait to hang out again.

Later that night, you get a notification on your phone that you were tagged in a photo. You open it up to find that they posted a status update of you both getting food together. You are uncomfortable with a picture like that so soon on social media, so you text them that you'd rather not be on social media. They say it's not a big deal. You still feel uncomfortable with being on social media, but you decide to just deal with it because you don't want to stop hanging out with them.

They log into your social media and change your relationship status to "in a relationship." They say they are sorry if they made you feel uncomfortable, but that it's for the relationship. They promise to check in next time before putting something on your social media. They make it up to you by having you over for lunch the next school day and giving you a present.

After hanging out for a couple weeks, you say you love each other and decide to introduce yourselves to others as a couple. While at work, you get a text from your partner that you haven't changed your relationship status on your social media. You respond saying you'll do it after work even though you don't like putting personal information on social media. They request that you give them your password to do it themselves. When you politely refuse, they accuse you of not really loving them and say that you can prove your love by sharing your password. You comply.

The next day, they are texting you about coming over for lunch and you are very excited. When you arrive, they are very affectionate and loving. They made you lunch and you enjoyed it. You feel amazing about your relationship and think things are going great.

Because lunch is short and you need to get back to class, you ask for your present. But your partner says you'll only get the present if you stay longer. You repeat that you don't want to miss class and they respond by saying that class shouldn't be more important; you can make up whatever you miss and that you have a good enough grade that missing class won't really impact you. You stay with them a bit longer and they give you the "present" of making out.

You are both exhausted after arguing for several hours. They admit they are scared of losing you and ask you to promise to never leave them. You feel weird about promising that but think it's the right thing to say at the moment. You promise they are the only person you'll ever love and apologize for upsetting them. You both then become more physically intimate. They say you are the most amazing person that they know and they'll love you forever too.

You go over to their house the next day and they promise to give you another present if you stay through your 5th period; they say it'll show them that you really love them. You say you can't because an assignment is due in 5th period. They repeat that your grade is good enough. When you insist you must go, they accuse you of not loving them and say that if you leave them, you'll be just like everyone else. You get into a big argument and miss the rest of school.

Abusive relationships are hard to leave because the abusive partner uses their **power** to exert **control** over the relationship. People leave abusive relationships when they are supported and **empowered** to make the **choice** to leave when they are ready.

For immediate assistance,
please call Lumina Alliance
24-hours a day.


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