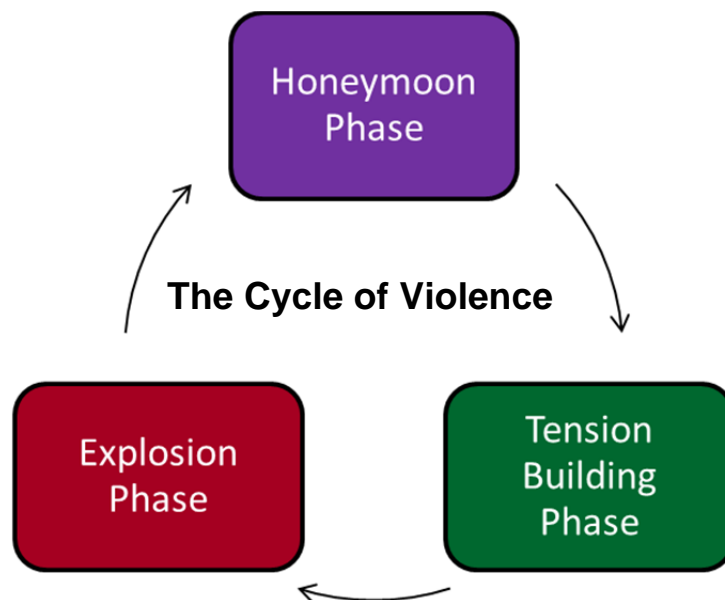


The Cycle of Violence

The cycle of violence is a pattern or process that occurs in relationships where there is violence or abuse. In most cases, the perpetrator is an intimate partner. However, the cycle of violence can sometimes occur in relationships with family members, employers, peers and others. The phases are:

1. Honeymoon phase;
2. Tension building phase; and,
3. Explosion phase.



At the beginning of the cycle of violence, during the **honeymoon phase**, the perpetrator is caring, loving and helpful, and there is the sense that all is well. This phase may also be known as the “hearts and flowers” period of the relationship.

Eventually, however, conflict begins to build within the relationship. During the **tension building** phase, tension rises at an uneven rate. At this stage, one may feel as if they are walking on eggshells for fear of upsetting the other person in the relationship.

The situation worsens until it finally results in the **explosion phase** where the perpetrator commits violence or abuse. This may be in the form of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual or cultural violence as well as verbal or financial abuse or neglect.

Following the explosion phase, the **honeymoon or reconciliation phase** begins again. The perpetrator may express remorse and apologize for what happened. They may promise that they will never commit violence in the relationship ever again.

Despite the seemingly hopeful behaviour, however, the cycle of violence usually repeats itself. In some cases, the honeymoon phase completely disappears over time, and the cycle is reduced to no more than the tension build-up and explosion phases.