

# Four Stages of Intimate Partner Violence

While each relationship is unique, intimate partner violence tends to follow an identifiable pattern. This pattern is described below.

1. **Tension Building Period** – Abuser begins acting out, conflict increases without resolution, victim begins to feel uneasy and as if “walking on eggshells,” victim feels urges to concede. Small conflicts begin and victims may attempt to appease the abuser or take active steps to avoid conflict.



2. **Acting Out Period** – Smaller conflicts escalate and reach a tipping point. Identifiable abuse is now present (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial, technological, etc.). The victim may enter into a state of shock, fear, and/or hopelessness.



3. **Honeymoon Period** – Abuser acknowledges abuse by apologizing, promising to stop, providing positive attention, may blame victim for abuse or justify abuse etc. Abusers may express remorse and make promises to change. Victim may find themselves wanting to believe abuser, which will reinforce this pattern and may feel some hope – making it even more difficult to end the relationship.



4. **Calm Period** – Abuse will temporarily stop; abusers may buy gifts and follow through on promises made in the honeymoon phase. The victim may want to believe the abuser, despite a history of continued abuse.



Individuals who find themselves in this pattern can contact:

**National Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)**

**1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**

**Text: "START" to 88788**

**Chat: [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)**