The abuser will create and control situations in which the victim has no choice but to react in a way that will, in the abuser’s mind, justify the abuse.

The abuser begins thinking of reasons to commit the next attack. His negative self-talk leads him into planning what he must do or what must happen in order for the situation to be set up for the next abusive act.

Between incidents of abuse, the abuser often behaves normally or especially well. He may act as if nothing has happened. Typically the victim is forced to participate in the cover-up. But things are not normal because the victim knows she can’t talk about certain subjects.

When the time and the planned circumstances are right, the abuser begins the abuse. The attack is a display of power and control over his victim and by extension everyone else in the household.

The abuser begins building his case about past and future abuse. To help justify the next attack, the abuser starts to use excuses and negative self-talk he made in the rationalization stage.

After the abuse, the abuser may have feelings of guilt but not true repentance because no change occurs. The motive is usually fear of getting caught or losing his partner.

The abuser moves on to telling himself and the victim that the one really at fault for the abuse is the victim. He justifies his behavior which gives himself permission to continue it.

Power and Control

Violence is any act that violates another human being.
The Cycle of Abuse

Write down what your thoughts, feelings and actions are in each phase of the abuse cycle. Use extra sheets of paper if needed.

Violence is any act that violates another human being.