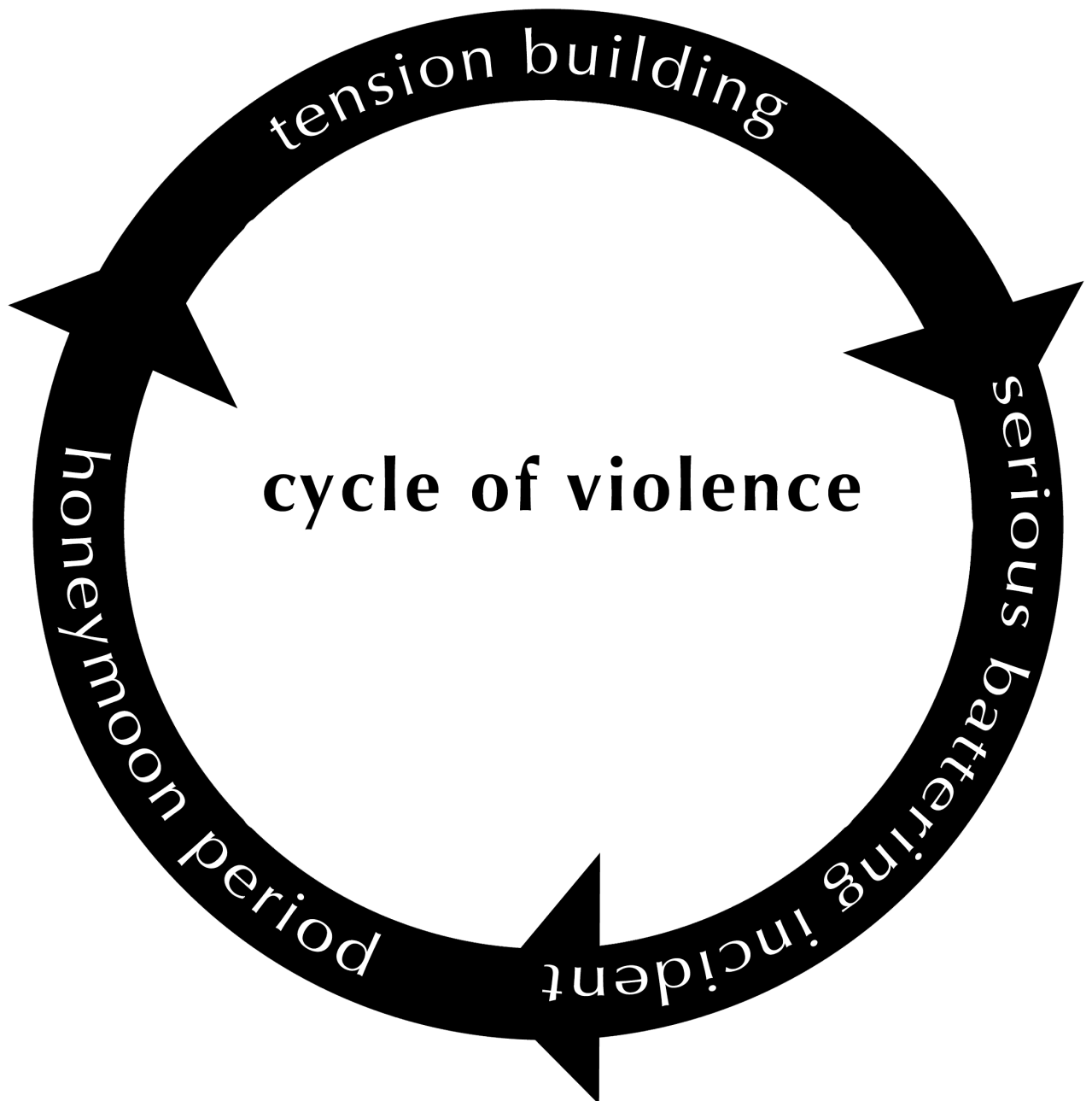


THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



The cycle of violence is the three stages in which abuse generally occurs; it is characterized by the following stages:

Tension Building

-For the abuser, the tension building stage is about a lack of control. Minor abuse incidents will occur, including verbal and psychological abuse. The abuser may be aware of this negative behavior, but does not accept responsibility. Jealousy can escalate as fear that the victim may leave; the abuser often believes that more brutality will keep the victim from leaving. Often will misinterpret the victim's withdrawal from the relationship as rejection, causing further violence.

-For the victim, the tension building stage is about denial. The victim will often deny that the abuser is responsible for the abuse, instead blaming oneself, or other external factors. This involves a rationalization process that requires the victim to look at events that have occurred in abuser's life to cause abuse. The victim will also become more nurturing and compliant, in an attempt to appease abuser. The victim sometimes accepts the abuse as being directed against them; but doesn't believe they should be abused but does believe that what they do can prevent the abuser's anger from escalating. Will attempt to alter the abuser's behavior as a way of providing safety. Towards the end of this stage, the tension will become unbearable; the victim can develop stress induced illnesses, and suffer from anxiousness, depression, sleeplessness, over/under eating, fatigue, and tension headaches.

Serious Battering Incident

-For the abuser, the serious battering incident is the event where the batterer inflicts serious harm to the victim. It is often characterized by the abuser becoming overwhelmed with rage, making forced sexual contact with the victim, and privately abuses the victim. The abuser will often try to justify the event, blaming the victim, or minimizing the event to make it seem less severe. The police are often called as a result of this incident, and often the batterer will deny the incident occurred.

-For the victim, the serious battering incident is about controlling the severity of the violence. The victim begs, pleads, bargains for safety, and may try to maintain nurturing, compliant behavior even during attack. The victim also may both call the police and/or seek treatment, depending on the severity of the situation. As a result of the attack, the victim commonly feels shame and disbelief that the incident occurred, often feeling guilty that they let the situation go so long without doing anything.

Honeymoon

-For the abuser, the honeymoon stage is when the abuser "changes their ways", and begs for forgiveness. The abuser pleads with and attempts to blame the victim and encourages family to do the same. The abuser will often be a loving partner again, promising the domestic violence will not again occur. If drugs or alcohol were involved in previous incidents, the abuser will promise to give those up. In some cases, the abuser believes that the abuse has taught the victim a lesson, and the victim will never act up again, so it's okay to reenter the once healthy relationship.

-For the victim, the honeymoon stage is when the victim feels delusional about the relationship's potential, and her necessity to protect it. The victim will often renew their belief in the original dream, in how happy they could be together. Believes that this calm, loving phase is what her partner is "really" like. The victim will often interpret the abuser's abuse, depression, and need for the victim as proof that they are in love.