

Cycle of Violence Bingo

Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Withholds affection	Physical abuse	Victim feels guilty	Relief	Create healthy relationships
Arguing	Confinement	Makes promises	Victim drops charges	Be careful
Yelling	Kicking	FREE	Denying abuse	Recognize warning signs
Threats	Stalking	Cries	Belief in lasting change	Trust yourself
Makes accusations	Restricts movement	Apologizes	Happiness	Seek help

Cycle of Violence Bingo

Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Nitpicks	Use of weapons	Buys gifts	Hope for relationship	Safe house
Isolates victim	Throws objects	Declares love	False sense of security	Address trauma
Increased stress	Humiliates victim	FREE	Victim denies danger	Understand the cycle
Abuser feels powerless	Kicking	Expresses remorse	Victim forgives abuser	Take time to process
Tension becomes unbearable	Sexual abuse	Blames victim for abuse	Cycle begins again	Counselling

Cycle of Violence Bingo

Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Victim tries to calm abuser	Prevents victim from calling police	Victim feels guilty	Victim denies danger	Do not accept abuser
Abuser becomes irritable	Emotional abuse	Blames alcohol or drugs	Becomes shorter over time	Create healthy relationships
Tension becomes unbearable	Stalking	FREE	Victim agrees to stay together	Call police
Increased stress	Beating	Declares love	Hope for relationship	Trust yourself
Abuser isolates victim	Kicking	Makes promises	No abuse	Recognize warning signs

Cycle of Violence Bingo

Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Increased stress	Harassment	Buys gifts	Relief	Be strong
Victim feels afraid	Restricts movement	Downplays abuse	Happiness	Counselling
Abuser becomes irritable	Prevents victim from calling police	FREE	Victim makes changes	Safe house
Threats	Use of weapons	Acts kind	Relationship continues	Seek help
Yelling	Punching	Makes excuses	No abuse	Take time to process

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Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Makes accusations	Humiliates victim	Cries	Belief in lasting change	Seek help
Abuser isolates victim	Hitting	Declares love	Hope for relationship	Be careful
Abuser becomes irritable	Sexual abuse	FREE	Denying abuse	Create healthy relationships
Victim feels helpless	Throws objects	Victim believes abuser	Becomes shorter over time	Understand the cycle
Withholds affection	Emotional abuse	Makes promises	Relief	Trust yourself

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Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Victim tries to calm abuser	Throws objects	Apologizes	Victim drops charges	Do not accept abuser
Abuser becomes demanding	Use of weapons	Downplays abuse	False sense of security	Address trauma
Victim feels helpless	Beating	FREE	Cycle begins again	Be careful
Nitpicks	Humiliates victim	Expresses remorse	Victim makes changes	Take time to process
Yelling	Confinement	Sets up counselling	Relationship continues	Counselling

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Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Makes accusations	Restricts movement	Blames victim for abuse	Denying abuse	Protect yourself
Victim feels afraid	Hitting	Sets up counselling	Becomes shorter over time	Do not dismiss abuse
Abuser isolates victim	Punching	FREE	Victim forgives abuser	Trust yourself
Yelling	Use of weapons	Acts kind	Happiness	Call police
Arguing	Prevents victim from calling police	Blames alcohol or drugs	Victim agrees to stay together	Safe house

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Tension becomes unbearable	Stalking	Victim feels guilty	Relationship continues	Seek help
Victim feels helpless	Harassment	FREE	No abuse	Create healthy relationships
Victim feels afraid	Use of weapons	Self-righteous	False sense of security	Recognize warning signs
Abuser feels powerless	Confinement	Expresses remorse	Cycle begins again	Understand the cycle

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Victim tries to calm abuser	Beating	Buys gifts	Belief in lasting change	Protect yourself
Abuser becomes demanding	Throws objects	Blames alcohol or drugs	Victim denies danger	Do not dismiss abuse
Arguing	Punching	FREE	Victim forgives abuser	Take time to process
Abuser becomes irritable	Sexual abuse	Self-righteous	Happiness	Trust yourself
Threats	Humiliates victim	Victim believes abuser	Victim drops charges	Be strong

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Threats	Emotional abuse	Expresses remorse	Relationship continues	Protect yourself
Makes accusations	Physical abuse	Victim feels guilty	Victim forgives abuser	Seek help
Victim feels helpless	Prevents victim from calling police	FREE	Happiness	Call police
Abuser becomes demanding	Punching	Sets up counselling	False sense of security	Trust yourself
Abuser feels powerless	Harassment	Downplays abuse	Victim denies danger	Be strong

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Tension Building	Incident	Making Up	Calm	Breaking the Cycle
Yelling	Restricts movement	Declares love	No abuse	Call police
Threats	Use of weapons	Blames victim for abuse	Victim agrees to stay together	Do not dismiss abuse
Abuser becomes irritable	Prevents victim from calling police	FREE	False sense of security	Address trauma
Nitpicks	Confinement	Victim feels guilty	Denying abuse	Understand the cycle
Increased stress	Hitting	Self-righteous	Victim drops charges	Protect yourself

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Withholds affection	Punching	Victim believes abuser	Relationship continues	Protect yourself
Victim feels afraid	Hitting	Self-righteous	Victim agrees to stay together	Do not dismiss abuse

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Victim tries to calm abuser	Physical abuse	FREE	Victim drops charges	Protect yourself
Abuser becomes irritable	Stalking	Apologizes	Relief	Understand the cycle
Increased stress	Sexual abuse	Buys gifts	False sense of security	Create healthy relationships

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Arguing	Restricts movement	Declares love	Victim makes changes	Do not accept abuser
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Threats	Use of weapons	Makes excuses	Relationship continues	Safe house

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Nitpicks	Beating	Victim believes abuser	Cycle begins again	Seek help
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Arguing	Hitting	FREE	False sense of security	Be strong
Abuser isolates victim	Confinement	Blames victim for abuse	Hope for relationship	Create healthy relationships
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Increased stress	Prevents victim from calling police	FREE	Cycle begins again	Be strong
Victim feels afraid	Harassment	Expresses remorse	Denying abuse	Understand the cycle
Abuser becomes demanding	Restricts movement	Victim feels guilty	Victim drops charges	Address trauma

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Abuser isolates victim	Kicking	Blames drugs or alcohol	False sense of security	Call police

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Threats	Confinement	FREE	Victim forgives abuser	Do not accept abuser
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Victim feels afraid	Beating	Blames drugs or alcohol	Relationship continues	Address trauma
Threats	Punching	Expresses remorse	False sense of security	Understand the cycle
Abuser isolates victim	Harassment	FREE	Victim believes abuser	Call police
Victim tries to calm abuser	Stalking	Apologizes	Happiness	Do not dismiss abuse
Abuser feels powerless	Hitting	Cries	Hope for relationship	Protect yourself

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Increased stress	Prevents victim from calling police	FREE	Relief	Recognize warning signs
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Tension becomes unbearable	Stalking	Blames alcohol or drugs	Relationship continues	Understand the cycle

Cycle of Violence Bingo

Violence in a relationship tends to follow a cycle. Tension builds, the violent incident occurs, and then there is a “honeymoon phase” where the couple makes up and there is a period of calm before the violence begins again. The cycle of violence is a helpful reference tool for recognizing violence in a relationship but by no means does all violence in a relationship fit into this model.

Phase 1: Tension Building

Tension between the people in the relationship begins to increase in this phase. The abuser’s behaviour intensifies until an explosion is inevitable.

- **Withholds affection** – the abuser does not show any kind of love or care for the victim
- **Arguing** – the abuser frequently starts arguments
- **Yelling** – instead of speaking at a normal volume, the abuser yells as they are constantly angry
- **Threats** – the abuser may threaten to harm the victim or themselves
- **Makes accusations** – the abuser may accuse the victim of making things up about them or cheating on them if they are in an intimate relationship
- **Nitpicks** – everything the victim does is wrong in some way
- **Abuser isolates victim** – this may involve refusing to allow them to visit or speak to family and friends. As the victim becomes isolated, they are more reliant on the abuser and the abuser has more control over them.
- **Abuser becomes irritable** – it seems as if the abuser is always in a bad mood
- **Victim feels helpless** – the victim begins to feel that everything they do will make the abuser angry
- **Victim feels afraid** – as the abuser’s behaviour escalates, the victim begins to fear that anything they say or do will anger the abuser and tries to alter their behaviour accordingly
- **Increased stress** – this could be due to financial stress, emotional stress, or something happening at work or in the family. As the abuser does not know how to deal with the stress, they become increasingly agitated.
- **Abuser feels powerless** – without feeling in control over the stressful situation, the abuser feels powerless and begins to exert control over the victim.
- **Victim tries to calm abuser** – when the abuser becomes agitated, the victim tries to calm them down to prevent yelling or an argument
- **Tension becomes unbearable** – as the tension builds, it eventually becomes too much for the abuser to handle and they lash out at the victim, leading to phase two
- **Abuser becomes demanding** – the abuser begins to demand that the victim do things for them

Phase 2: The Incident

This is when the abuse occurs. It can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. Throughout the cycle of violence, the same incident may reoccur, or it could change to a different type of abuse.

- **Physical abuse** – this is when the abuser harms the victim’s body, causing bruising, broken bones, or bleeding
- **Sexual abuse** – this is when the victim is forced into unwanted sexual activity
- **Emotional abuse** – also called psychological abuse, this is when the victim is repeatedly insulted or humiliated and may lead to them actually believing what their abuser is telling them about themselves
- **Confinement** – the abuser does not allow the victim to leave the home
- **Kicking** – a type of physical abuse
- **Hitting** – a type of physical abuse
- **Harassment** – a type of emotional abuse
- **Stalking** – this could be physically following the victim around or putting tracking devices on their cell phones or car to monitor their movement
- **Humiliates victim** – a type of emotional abuse
- **Beating** – a type of physical abuse
- **Punching** – a type of physical abuse
- **Restricts movement** – this is when the abuser limits the number of places that the victim can go. For example, only allowing them to go to work and the grocery store.
- **Prevents the victim from calling the police** –
- **Throws objects** – this includes throwing something at the victim or at the wall or floor
- **Use of weapons** – anything can be considered a weapon, ranging from hitting somebody with a piece of clothing to using a knife or gun

Phase 3: The Honeymoon Phase

During this phase, the abuser apologizes to the victim and the violence temporarily stops. It is made up of two parts – making up and a period of calm. In making up, the abuser seems to feel remorse for their actions, promises to change, and downplays the abuse that just occurred. Then a period of calm happens where the relationship continues as normal and both people in the relationship ignore the abuse. Eventually, this ends and the cycle of violence begins again.

Making up

- **Apologizes** – the abuser repeatedly apologizes for their violent actions
- **Makes excuses** – the abuser will try to justify their behaviour by blaming outside factors instead of themselves
- **Cries** – the abuser cries to show how much they regret hurting the victim
- **Buys gifts** – the abuser repeatedly buys gifts for the victim to make up for their behaviour
- **Declares love** – after withholding affection in the first phase, the abuser repeatedly tells the victim how much they love them
- **Makes promises** – this can include promises to change behaviour, do more around the house, and spend more time together
- **Sets up counselling** – the victim tends to set up counselling for the abuser to help them change

- **Blames victim for abuse** – the abuser claims that the victim’s actions led to the abuse, making statements including “if you hadn’t done ___ then I wouldn’t have reacted the way I did”. The abuser may also claim that the victim overreacted.
- **Downplays abuse** – the abuser will not label their actions as abuse or violence but as an argument or disagreement. They may also use the excuse “I barely touched you”
- **Blames alcohol or drugs** – the abuser may claim that they only acted that way because they were under the influence of a substance
- **Acts kind** – the abuser acts incredibly nicely to the victim
- **Victim believes abuser** – the victim believes the excuses that the abuser is telling them about what led to the violent incident
- **Victim feels guilty** – the victim has been blamed for the abuse and begins to feel guilty for causing them to act that way
- **Expresses remorse** – the abuser claims that they regret their decisions and acted poorly
- **Self-righteous** – the abuser behaves as though they are perfect and that there is something wrong with the victim instead of themselves

Calm

- **Relief** – the victim feels relieved that the violence has stopped and the abuser has agreed to change their behaviour
- **No abuse** – the violence stops
- **Victim drops charges** – the abuser persuades the victim to drop any charges against them by downplaying the severity of the violent incident and making the victim believe that they overreacted
- **Hope for relationship** – as the abuser promises to change their behaviour, the victim feels hopeful that the relationship will get better
- **Victim agrees to stay together** – the victim agrees to make the relationship work and stay with the abuser
- **False sense of security** – the victim may believe that they are safe and that the violence will not happen again
- **Relationship continues** – the relationship goes on as if the violent incident never happened
- **Denying abuse** – neither the victim or abuser admit that any abuse has taken place
- **Victim denies danger** – the victim believes that the abuser will change and that they will not be victimized again
- **Belief in lasting change** – the victim believes that the abuser is sincere in their promises to change and that the period of calm and happiness will continue
- **Victim makes changes** – the victim changes their behaviour in an attempt to prevent future abuse from happening
- **Victim forgives abuser** – the victim accepts the abuser’s apologies and gifts and forgives them
- **Happiness** – both people in the relationship are happy as there is no violence or tension occurring
- **Becomes shorter over time** – the honeymoon phase becomes shorter over time with instances of abuse happening more and more frequently

- **Cycle begins again** – after this period of calm, the cycle of violence begins again with tension building

Breaking the Cycle

The cycle of violence needs to be broken to stop it from continuing to happen. This is a scary and dangerous process but it is necessary to get out of an abusive relationship.

- **Seek help** – this may be from family or friends, a trusted co-worker or teacher, or a professional
- **Counselling** – a trained counsellor can help you work through the trauma caused by being the victim of violence. It is also helpful for the abuser to go through counselling to understand what led them to become violent.
- **Safe house** – make sure you are somewhere safe where your abuser cannot harm you. This may involve going to a shelter or a family member or friend's house.
- **Call police** – the police can help you charge the abuser or obtain a restraining order or emergency protection order against them to keep you safe.
- **Trust yourself** – often, victims of abuse have low self-esteem due to being constantly told by their abuser that they are worthless. Trust that you know how you should be treated and that you are doing the right thing by leaving the abusive relationship.
- **Take time to process** – after being through a violent situation, it will take months or even years to process everything that happened
- **Recognize warning signs** – recognizing the warning signs of abuse in the tension building phase can help you leave a potentially violent and abusive situation before the incident occurs
- **Do not dismiss abuse** – dismissing or downplaying the abuse does not help anyone. Be honest about the duration and severity of abuse you experienced.
- **Protect yourself** – your safety is the most important when breaking the cycle of violence
- **Do not accept abuser** – when leaving an abusive situation, the abuser will attempt to persuade you to come back to them. Do not accept what they are saying and trust that you are doing what is right for yourself.
- **Be careful** – the most dangerous time for the victim is when they attempt to leave the relationship
- **Create healthy relationships** – this could be with family members, friends, co-workers, or teachers
- **Address trauma** – being the victim of violence is traumatic. As hard as it is to address and relive it, it is important for the healing process moving forward.
- **Be strong** – breaking the cycle of violence is incredibly hard but staying strong and relying on supportive friends, family, or professionals can help you persevere through the process
- **Understand the cycle** – understanding the cycle of violence, which you are all doing by playing this bingo game, helps you recognize it when it is happening and gives you the tools to help yourself or others who may be experiencing violence