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Intimate Partner Violence

What is Intimate Partner Violence?

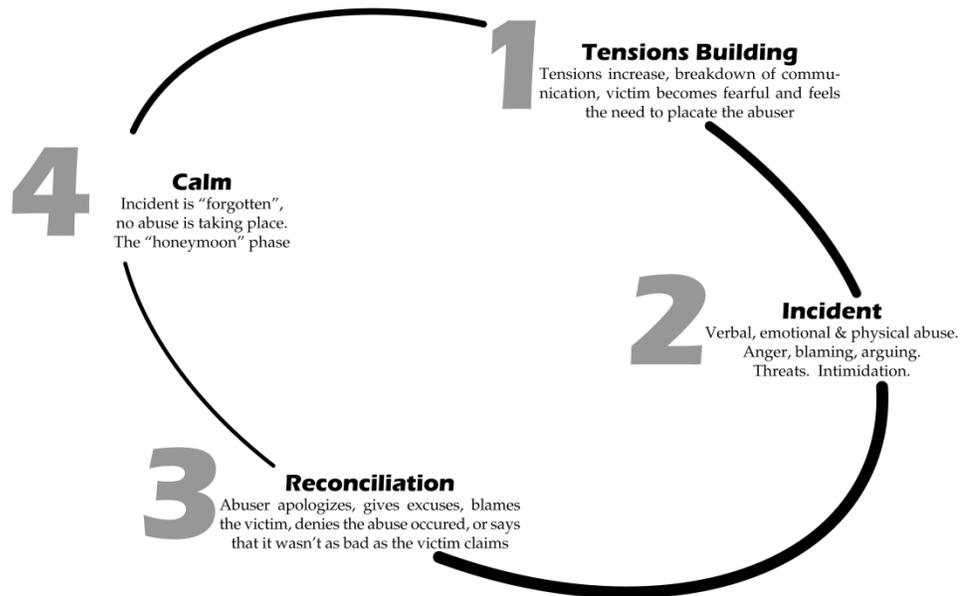
Intimate partner violence, also known as domestic violence, is the use of abusive behavior by one person in an intimate relationship as a means of gaining control and power over the other. It is a global issue that affects women and men of all backgrounds. It happens in all types of intimate relationships (including sibling relationships, roommates, etc.) and to all types of individuals.

Important Facts about Abusers and Survivors

- Abusers frequently use some combination of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and/or economic abuse.
- Abusers may use violence to demonstrate power, but not all abuse is violent.
- Abusive relationships are not abusive all the time; no one enters a relationship knowing it will be violent.
- Emotional abuse can be harder to heal than physical abuse; it erodes self-worth, making the abused person feel worthless, stupid, weak, and incapable of surviving alone.
- Leaving a violent relationship is difficult. It can involve depression, economic factors, lack of support, and fear of reprisals, including threats to hurt or kill children.
- Abused people leave and return to an abusive relationship an average of seven times before they leave for good.

Abusive behavior is cyclical:

Cycle of Abuse



Red Flags

- Unusually early and strong commitment to the relationship
- Ignoring or minimizing a partner's attempts to set boundaries
- Insistence on knowing partner's whereabouts at all times; excessive contact
- "Gaslighting," distorting a partner's reality
- Quick temper, including breaking or throwing objects
- Excessive jealousy
- Exerting control over money, activities, friends, participation in conversations
- Cruelty to animals
- Infidelity
- History of abuse
- Drug/alcohol abuse (not all abusers abuse substances and not all substance abusers are abusive to their partners, but there is significant overlap in both directions)
- Isolating a partner from others

Important Issues for the Defender

- We can use the Five Fingers of Self-Defense in intimate relationships
- Everyone is worthy of healthy relationships free of emotional/physical abuse
- No one is immune from unhealthy patterns that potentially lead to violence. Practicing strong, direct, and compassionate communication and expecting the same from our partners is our best defense against intimate partner violence
- Relationship conflict is inevitable
 - We have rights and responsibilities in how we deal with it (see below)
 - It must be actively managed by both partners
- The earlier we deal with unhealthy patterns, the easier it is to:
 - Change them
 - Manage them
 - Leave.
- It is better to be alone than to be in a violent relationship
- We can intervene for others
 - Abused people often feel invisible
 - Intervening can shatter the normalcy of the abuse

Relationship Rights & Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
Be verbally assertive: use our voice to set limits and enforce personal boundaries Be angry; express anger Stop an interaction when it becomes violent Use physical techniques to stop or disable an attacker Initiate friendships and intimate relationships based on self-interest	Avoid passivity & aggression—Practice limit setting Monitor our own speech to prevent violent words and tones Recognize the cycle of violence within ourselves and others (red flags) Do what we can to solve conflicts non-violently Use appropriate physical response (meet with like energy) Cease friendships and intimate relationships based on self-interest