

Unit 10: Domestic Violence



Time Required: 2.5 hours

Resources Needed

- OVC *Listen and Learn* DVD (clip: Domestic Violence/Rebel)
- *Participant Workbook* (pages 63–72)
- TV and DVD player
- Chalkboard or tearsheets

Prior to the Session

- Consider gathering local and state statistics and newspaper or article clippings for the discussion about domestic violence trends.
- Research your state's statutes related to domestic violence; be prepared to provide information to participants about these statutes.
- On separate index cards, write down the healthy and unhealthy statements and behaviors listed in activity E at the end of this unit.

Objectives

- Define **domestic violence**.
- Provide examples of domestic violence.
- Describe current trends for domestic violence crimes.
- Explain the impact of domestic violence on victims.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings about being held accountable for domestic violence crimes.



Facilitator Tip

- Avoid justifications of any type of violence, physical or nonphysical.
- Be prepared for participants to try to focus on why the victim stays in the relationship or what the victim does to create the violence. Keep the focus on the impact of domestic violence on the victim.
- Participants may rationalize that they grew up “okay” in an abusive household.

What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive (controlling) behaviors people use against their intimate partners. These behaviors may include physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, and financial abuse. Partners may be married or unmarried; heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; or living together, separated, or dating.

It may begin with threats, acts of violence witnessed by another person (such as punching a fist through a wall), and/or damage to objects or pets. Domestic violence may escalate to physical behaviors such as restraining, pushing, slapping, and pinching. It may escalate further to include punching, kicking, biting, sexual assault, tripping, and throwing. Finally, the violence may become life threatening and cause serious injury or death.



Have participants read the “Words To Know” aloud.

Delivery options include reading words aloud yourself, writing the words on a chalkboard or tearsheet, selecting participants to read words aloud, or dividing participants into small groups or pairs and having them discuss the terms among themselves. For all delivery options, survey participants to ensure that they understand the terms before moving on.



Words To Know

Battering: Repeated physical abuse.

Coercive: Forcing a person to do something against his or her will.

Control: Having emotional or physical power over someone.

Cycle of violence: A pattern of domestic violence consisting of three phases: the tension-building phase, the acute battering incident, and the calm, loving, apologetic, “it will never happen again” phase.

Denial: Refusing to admit thoughts or behaviors to oneself or to others.

Escalation: An increase in either threats or level of violence.

Intimate: Emotional or physical relationship usually involving affectionate, romantic, or passionate feelings.

Intimidation: The act of making others do what one wants through fear.

Psychological: Related to the mind or the will (in this context, an example might be using mind games to control others).

Obstacle: A barrier that prevents something from occurring.

Tactic: A method or plan for accomplishing a goal.



In the News: Domestic Violence Trends

This section offers recent statistics about domestic violence. If you have gathered local and state statistics, integrate them into your discussion. If you have found relevant newspaper or magazine articles, read them out loud or assign participants into groups of three to discuss and then present the information to the larger group.

When discussing domestic violence trends—

- Select participants to read aloud the trends.
- Use local news articles, reviewing them carefully to avoid overly complex issues. Make sure that the articles do not identify offenders in your facility or victims in your community.
- Ask participants “How do these trends make you feel?”
- Come up with additional questions, if desired.

The Cycle of Violence

Those who have studied domestic violence believe that it usually occurs in three stages—referred to as the “cycle of violence.” First, the abuser uses words or threats, perhaps humiliation or ridicule. Next, the abuser explodes at some perceived “mistake” by the other person, and the abuser becomes physically violent. Finally, the abuser “cools off,” asks forgiveness, and promises that the violence will never occur again. At this point, the victim often gives up on leaving the violent situation or having charges brought against the abuser. Typically, the abuser’s rage begins to build again after the reconciliation, and the violent cycle may be repeated.

The Violence Wheel illustrates the relationship of physical abuse to other forms of abuse. The wheel was developed after victims described common control tactics abusers used. The center of the wheel represents the intention of all violence tactics: to establish power and control. Each spoke of the wheel represents a particular tactic. The rim of the wheel—which gives it strength and holds it together—is physical abuse. The wheel model is important because it demonstrates how domestic violence behaviors are cyclical and recurring, rather than linear.



Created by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 206 West Fourth Street, Duluth, MN 55806; phone: 218-722-4134.



Group Discussion

Have participants read aloud the tactics contained within the spokes of the Violence Wheel and then ask them to share their thoughts about the cycle of violence. How do they think the cycle can be interrupted?

Examples of Domestic Violence

The *Participant Workbook*, pages 65–67, offers a definition of domestic violence and personal stories; consider having participants substitute the names of their family members or friends in the scenarios. You can also share any state-specific statutes related to domestic violence with participants in this section. Remember to use varied delivery options when discussing the examples of domestic violence.



Triad Sessions

Have participants write their answers to the questions under each type of domestic violence. Then, in groups of three, have participants share their responses with one another and offer feedback. Finally, bring the larger group back together to review and discuss participants' responses.

Reasons Victims Stay

“Why do victims stay?” This is the most common question asked of domestic violence victims and is a key point in understanding the impact of domestic violence. Many obstacles can prevent a victim from leaving an abusive relationship. Most victims of domestic violence repeatedly attempt to leave the relationship, but return when they cannot overcome the obstacles.



Group Discussion

As a group, review the reasons why victims stay. Ask participants if they can think of any other reason why a victim of domestic violence might stay.

What Is the Impact of Domestic Violence?

Acts of domestic violence create a ripple effect throughout several areas in victims' lives: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual.



Chalkboard Exercise

Have participants take turns reading from the areas of impact lists. Solicit additional examples from the group, looking for the following:

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost wages • Medical bills • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy-related problems • Sexually transmitted diseases • Chronic pain • Dehydration • Eating disorders • Drug/alcohol dependence • Malnutrition • Repeated self-injury • Self-neglect • Sexual problems
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Anger • Insecurity • Sadness • Guilt • Shame • Embarrassment • Depression • Revenge • Loss of confidence • Anxiety • Emotional overreactions • Emotional numbness 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the goodness of others • Questioning faith • “Why would my ‘higher power’ let this happen?” • _____



Facilitator Note

If participants say they have never committed acts of domestic violence, ask them whether they or someone they know was ever a victim of domestic violence and what the impact of that violence was.



OVC Listen and Learn DVD

Rebel is a victim of domestic violence perpetrated by her ex-husband.

Consider stopping and starting the video to reinforce key points and then initiate discussion at the end. Possible discussion questions and answers follow:

- **What was the emotional and physical impact of domestic violence on Rebel?**

- She felt her husband was constantly controlling her.
 - He isolated her from her family, friends, and church.
 - He told her that she, and everything she did, was stupid, which made her constantly try to “fix it.”
 - She had panic attacks when she went home.
 - She is afraid to get into a relationship with any man.
 - She is afraid “it will happen again.”
- **Domestic violence is a crime that escalates in severity and frequency of violence. What did Rebel feel was the turning point in the relationship when she knew she had to leave?**
 - Her husband threatened to have her killed.
 - He had isolated her from her family and friends, so she had nowhere to turn.
 - **How did domestic violence affect Rebel’s relationship with her family and friends?**
 - She was isolated from them by her batterer.
 - Friends and family members were uncomfortable and unsure about discussing the problem with her.

Being Accountable for Your Crimes

Domestic violence often comes from a person the victim trusts. The victim’s sense of control and trust has been harmed, leaving her or him feeling very vulnerable. The experience of violence makes it difficult for victims to have healthy relationships with others. In addition, many victims are financially dependent on their abusive partners, and if they leave, sometimes with children, they have little financial support. **Remind participants that no one, regardless of the circumstances, has the right to use violence or abuse to control, intimidate, or harm another person.**



Group Discussion

Have participants read the accountability statements and share their thoughts with the group. How do participants think these offenders can specifically demonstrate accountability?



Additional Activities

If time permits after covering the material in this unit, you may conduct the additional activities listed on the next few pages before debriefing participants. You may also want to schedule a guest victim/survivor speaker.

Activity A

Objective: Participants understand the harmful effects of emotional and psychological abuse.

Refer participants to one of the examples on pp. 65–67 of their workbooks. In small or large groups, have participants read the scenario and the examples of abusive behavior listed below it. Ask participants to identify behaviors that are more difficult to recognize as examples of domestic violence.

Activity B

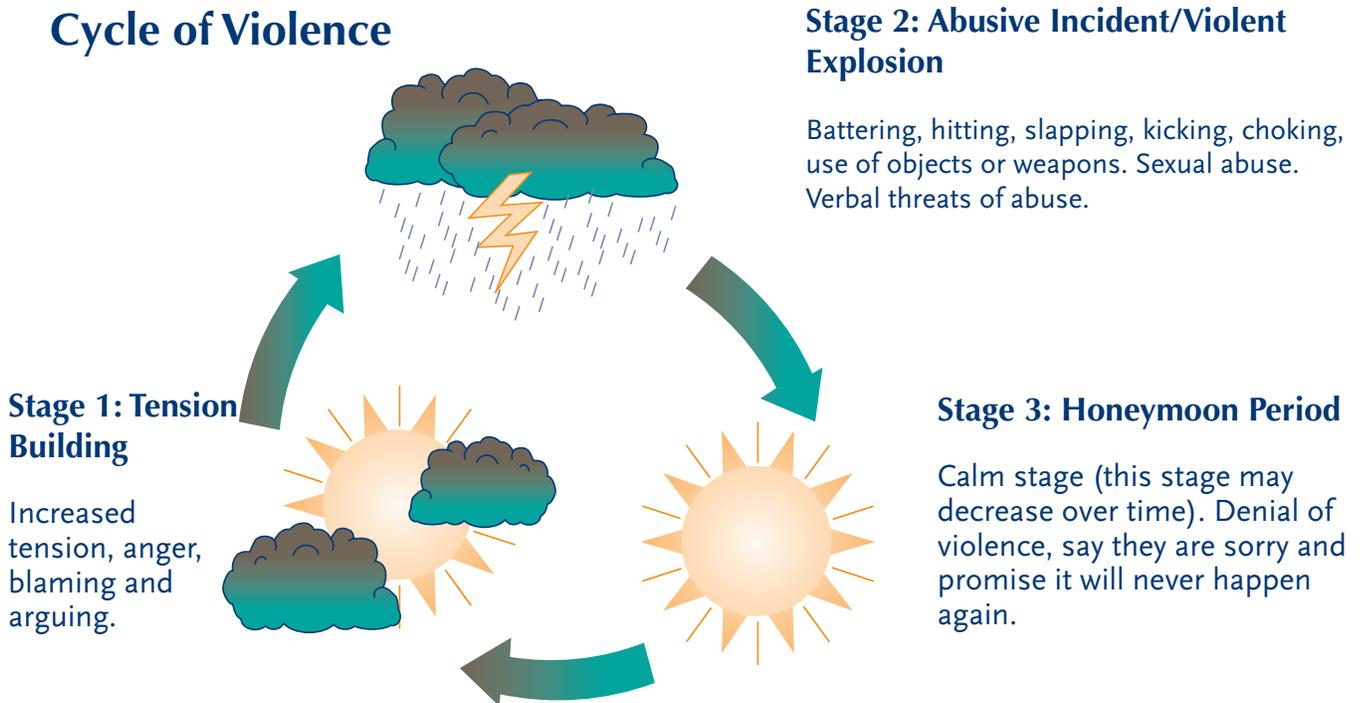
Objective: Participants apply their knowledge about the Violence Wheel.

Have participants complete the “Violence Wheel” worksheet in their workbooks.

Activity C

Objective: Participants understand the impact of the cycle of violence on the victim and his or her children.

Discuss the cycle of violence below and then, in small groups, have participants complete the "Cycle of Violence" worksheet in their workbooks.



With time, the cycle will occur more frequently and the abuse during the violent episodes will become more severe. The cycle stops only if the perpetrator gets counseling and learns alternatives to being violent, if the victim leaves the relationship, or if the victim is killed.

Activity D

Objective: Reinforce learning about the types of domestic violence.

Assign participants to small groups and ask them to make presentations on the types of domestic violence: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, and financial/economic abuse. (Guidelines might include providing the definition of domestic violence, specific examples, the impact on the victim and children, and a role play.)

Activity E

Objective: Participants understand the harm caused by controlling, abusive behavior.

Pass out the index cards listing healthy and unhealthy statements and behaviors that you prepared before this unit began. Have each participant read a statement or behavior out loud and then decide if it is a "healthy" or "unhealthy" statement. Ask participants to tape the statements or behaviors on a wall underneath a "healthy" or "unhealthy" heading. Once all the statements are taped to the wall, ask participants how they would feel if someone important to them behaved in an "unhealthy" way with them.



Healthy Behaviors/Statements	Unhealthy Behaviors/Statements
“You’re a good friend.”	Expecting you to be perfect
“What’s wrong? You look upset.”	“You’re getting fat, you need to lose weight.”
Spending time with other friends	Telling you what you have to wear
Communicating	Hitting
“I’d like to talk to you about something that is upsetting me.”	Kicking
“Where were you, I was worried about you. I’m glad you’re okay.”	“Don’t make me hit you.”
“Do you need some money?”	“Stop making me mad.”
“You might want to take another look at what you’re wearing.”	“Where were you? You’re supposed to tell me where you are.”
“Let’s talk. I don’t understand why you want to get a job.”	“Here’s your bus fare. If I feel like you need more money, I might give you more.”
Sharing feelings	“Who were you just talking to on the phone?”
“I’m surprised you went to lunch with friends. How was it?”	“You don’t need a job. I want you at home.”
“Sure, I’m okay with you going to your sister’s place.”	“I didn’t really mean to hurt you, I was just playing rough.”
“You look good. I don’t want someone who looks like a fake model in a magazine.”	“I wouldn’t have to hurt you if you would do what I tell you to do.”
“Let’s exercise together, we both need to get healthy.”	“Keep embarrassing me in front of my friends and I’ll keep putting you in check.”
“I’m sorry.”	“I like your hair except for when you wear it like that. It makes you look stupid.”

Recommended Speaker

Have an appropriate speaker address the class on the topic of domestic violence. Listening to victim/survivor speakers may be uncomfortable for offenders. Make sure to instruct participants beforehand about appropriate behavior during the speaker’s presentation. (See pages 17–22 in “Implementing the Curriculum” for information about recruiting, selecting, and screening speakers and on how to prepare both speakers and participants for the experience.)



Discussion/Wrap-Up

Discuss what participants learned in the Domestic Violence unit. Address any questions they may have.

Unit 10 Participant Worksheets

Activity B – Violence Wheel

Refer to the Violence Wheel on page 64 of your workbooks. Write one or two sentences that demonstrate a specific example of each of the power and control tactics illustrated on the wheel. Also, write about how a victim might feel when the tactic is used.

Sample

Tactic: Using Isolation

Example: The victim is dropped off at work and picked up every day. She is not allowed to drive herself to work or ride with anyone.

Victim's Feelings: Powerless, alone

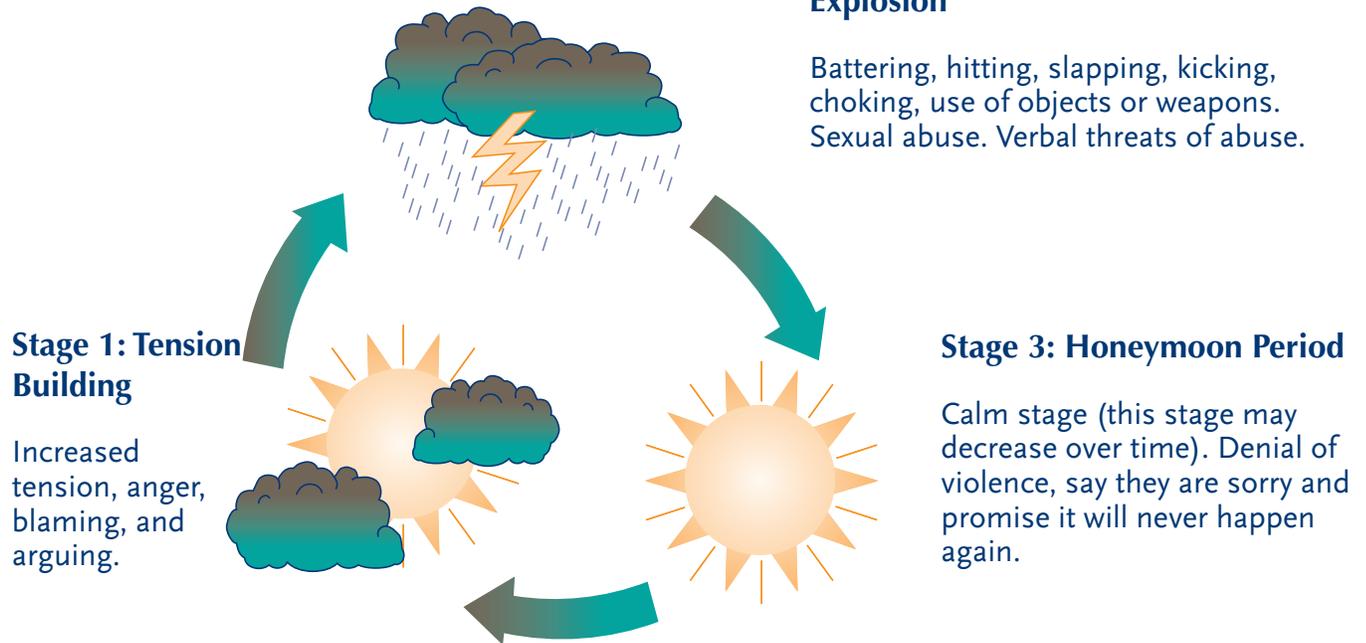
Tactic: _____

Example: _____

Victim's Feelings: _____

Activity C - Cycle of Violence

Cycle of Violence



With time, the cycle will occur more frequently and the abuse during the violent episodes will become more severe. The cycle stops only if the perpetrator gets counseling and learns alternatives to being violent, if the victim leaves the relationship, or if the victim is killed.

What are some examples of how the batterer acts during each of the three stages?

What is the victim going through physically and emotionally during each stage?

If any children are present in the home, what are they going through physically and emotionally during each stage?
