The Cycle of Violence

The following diagram illustrates the cycle of a domestic violence relationship, starting with verbal and emotional abuse and may escalate through physical and/or sexual abuse. These examples do not happen to everyone who is a survivor but these are actions that might be used over a period of time.

**TENSION BUILDING**
- Abuser starts to get angry
- Abuse may begin
- There is a breakdown of communication
- Victim feels the need to keep the abuser calm
- Tension becomes too much
- Victim feels like they are ‘walking on egg shells’

**INCIDENT**
- Any type of abuse occurs (physical/sexual/emotional)

**CALM**
- Abuse acts like abuse never happened
- Physical abuse may not be taking place
- Promises made during ‘making up’ may be met
- Victim may hope that the abuse is over
- Abuser may give gifts to victim

**MAKING UP**
- Abuse may apologize for abuse
- Abuser may promise it will never happen again
- Abuser may blame the victim for causing the abuse
- Abuser may deny abuse too place or say it was not as bad as the victim claims