

# *What is a Victim Experiencing?*



Most victims experience trauma reactions following a violent crime. It is important for anyone intervening with a victim to know this: family, friends, police, counselors and first responders.

# *Trauma Reactions*

- The normal human response to trauma follows a similar pattern called the crisis reaction.
- It occurs in all of us when exposed to traumatic stress (an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and that would be markedly disturbing to anyone).

# *Trauma Reactions*



- Individuals exist in a normal state of equilibrium
- Occasional stressors (chronic or acute) will throw an individual so far out of this range that it is difficult to restore a sense of balance in life.

*Normal Reactions  
To Traumatic Incidents:*

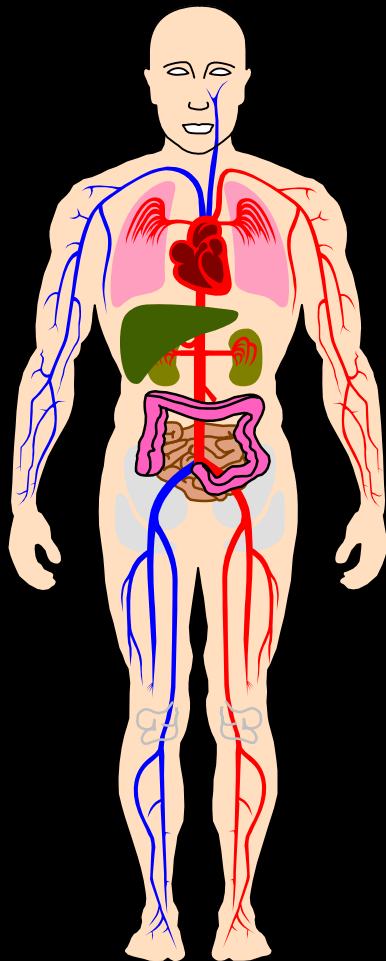
Physical Response is based on  
our animal instincts:

Shock or “Frozen Fright”

“Fight or Flight”

Exhaustion

# *Human Stress Response*



## **Fight or Flight**

adrenaline/ brain chemicals

heart rate

digestive system

breathing

sweating- hyperventilation

sensory perception

tunnel vision/thinking

increased strength

decreased sensitivity to pain

# *The Mind's Response*

**Stage 1: Shock, Disbelief, Denial**

**Stage 2: Cataclysm of Emotions**

anger/rage

fear/terror

grief/sorrow

vulnerability

confusion/frustration

guilt/self-blame

violation

**Stage 3: Reconstruction of Equilibrium**

# *Victim's Response*



- Panic
- Guilt
- Hostility and resentment
- Inability to resume normal activities
- Hope
- Affirming Reality
- Shock
- Emotion
- Depression and Loneliness
- Physical symptoms of distress
  - loss of appetite
  - sleep disturbances
  - lack of concentration

## *Secondary Victimization*

Secondary Victimization occurs when a victim feels “re-victimized in the aftermath of the crime. This can occur from many different sources.



# *Sources of Secondary Victimization*



- The Criminal Justice System
- The Media
- Family, Friends, or Acquaintances
- Clergy
- Hospital and Emergency Room personnel
- Health and Mental Health professionals
- Social Service Workers
- Victim Service Workers
- Schools or educators
- Victims' Compensation System

# *Working with Victims*



As you are discussing the needs of the victim, you may want to remember:

- The best antidote for hurtful actions of one person is the compassionate and helpful actions of others.
- The “bad” action of the criminal can be countered by the “good” action of the responding officers and victim assistance personnel as well as family members, neighbors and community agencies.

# *Domestic Violence Calls*



Domestic violence occurs to people of every culture, age, color, nationality, and educational socio-economic level.

Police officers spend at least one-third of their time responding to domestic violence calls.

Domestic violence calls are the most dangerous for officers.

# *Domestic Violence Statistics*

- Every 9 seconds a woman is physically abused.
- 4,000,000 women are physically abused by their husband or boyfriend every year (7%).
- More than 1 in 3 Americans have witnessed an incident of domestic violence.
- 42% of women who are murdered are killed by their intimate male partners.
- 95% of assaults that occur are men assaulting women.
- 1 in 5 who report being victimized had been assaulted at least 3 times in the last 6 months.
- Only 50% of domestic violence victims contact the police.

# *Domestic Violence Theory*



Current major theories:

- Cycle of Violence
- Continuum of Violence
- Power and Control Wheel

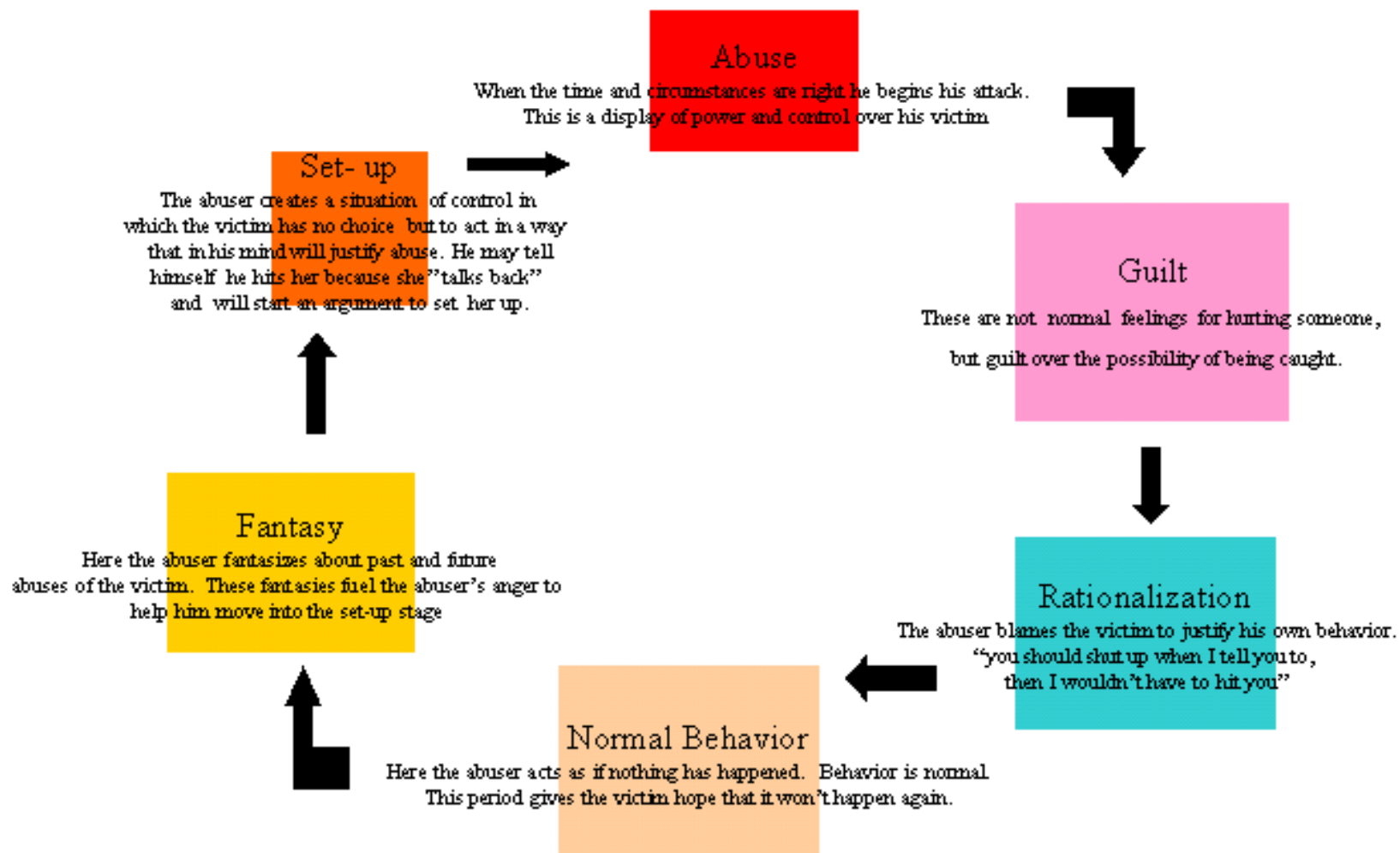
# *Cycle of Violence*

## Three phases:

- Honeymoon
- Tension Building
- Explosive Incident
- It increases in severity over time.
- The cycle usually repeats itself over time.
- It increases in intensity over time.
- It can be intergenerational.



# The Cycle of Violence



# *Power and Control Wheel*

- Intimidation
- Emotional Abuse
- Isolation
- Minimizing, denying, blaming
- Coercion and threats
- Male privilege
- Economic abuse
- Using children





Adapted from:  
[Domestic Abuse](#)  
[Intervention Project](#)

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# *Continuum of Family Violence*



- Physical
- Verbal/Emotional
- Sexual

# *Continuum of Family Violence*

## PHYSICAL

pushing      slapping      throwing objects      using weapons  
punching      kicking      choking      homicide/suicide



# *Continuum of Family Violence*

## VERBAL/EMOTIONAL

name calling

"You're no good"  
criticizing

yelling  
ignoring

humiliation  
isolation



# *Continuum of Family Violence*

**SEXUAL**

unwanted touching

unfaithfulness

forced sex

sexual name calling

false accusations

hurtful sex



**RAPE**

# *Characteristics of the Batterer*



- Excessive jealousy
- Low or Inflated self-esteem
- Blaming others for problems/feelings
- Believes in male supremacy
- Difficulty controlling temper around victim
- Domineering
- Controlling
- Presents differently in public/private
- Socially Isolated
- Rigid sex roles
- Severe mood swings
- Abusive in previous relationships
- Minimizes seriousness
- Does not believe in negative consequences for actions.

# *Characteristics of the Victim*



- Denial
- Guilt
- Fearful
- Timid
- Passive
- Feelings of stress  
& anxiety
- Lack of social support  
networks
- Low self-esteem
- Isolated
- Lacks trust
- Dependant  
(economically & emotionally)
- Feelings of  
powerlessness
- Self blame

# *Safety Planning*

- The most dangerous time for a victim is when they plan to leave the relationship.
- Every victim's safety plan should be individualized to their situation.
- Safety planning does not end once the victim leaves, a victim must continually be aware of their surroundings.