

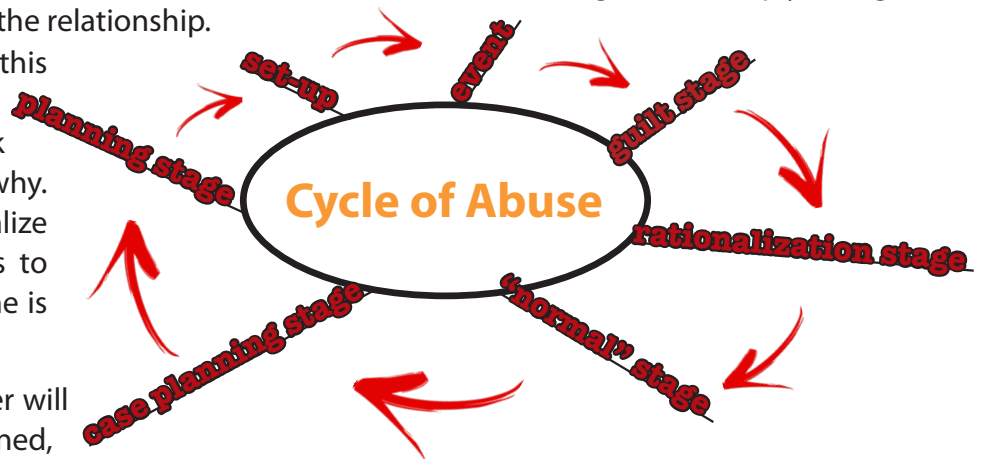
It is common to think that someone has an anger or substance abuse issue when really it is domestic abuse. It is a choice someone makes to gain power and control over their intimate partner. Anger is an emotion but *abuse is a choice*. The choice to abuse repeats over and over, like a cycle.

## Patterns and Cycles

We all have cycles or patterns of behavior in life. You probably have a specific pattern of what you do each morning. Patterns or cycles can be good for us if they *create order and a sense of security*. When negative patterns continue to repeat in our lives, we need to address them.

## The Cycle of Abuse

- The **Event** - This can be any or multiple forms of abuse. During the event, the abuser gains control. This is the time when a victim is **most willing** to step out of the abuse and get help.
- The **Guilt stage** - This stage comes quickly after the event. The abuser might apologize and say things such as, "*it will never happen again.*" These actions do not mean the abuser has changed. He's simply changed his behavior to bring her back into the relationship.
- The **Rationalization stage** - At this time, the abuser will start to rationalize his behavior. He might think it wasn't his fault and give reasons why. Once an abuser starts to rationalize the situation, he no longer wants to change because he doesn't think he is responsible for what happened.
- The **"Normal" stage** - The abuser will act like the abuse never happened, leaving the victim to pretend that everything is normal in order to keep the peace.
- The **Case Planning stage** - The abuser will think of all the negative things about his partner and begin justifying past and future abuse. He's making a case against the victim and she will feel the tension rising. There doesn't have to be a good reason for an abuser to plan an argument.
- The **Planning stage** - This is a continuation of self-talk. The abuser is making a plan for an argument.
- The **Set-up** - The abuser creates a no-win situation for his partner.



## When raised with abuse

If you grew up in a home where abuse was present, you might see this same cycle playing out regardless of which parent was abusive. If we don't address the cycle, *it will be passed down from one generation to another.*