

# Relationship Abuse

“Relationship abuse is the use of violent and controlling behaviour by one person in a relationship to create an environment of isolation, danger or intimidation for another.”

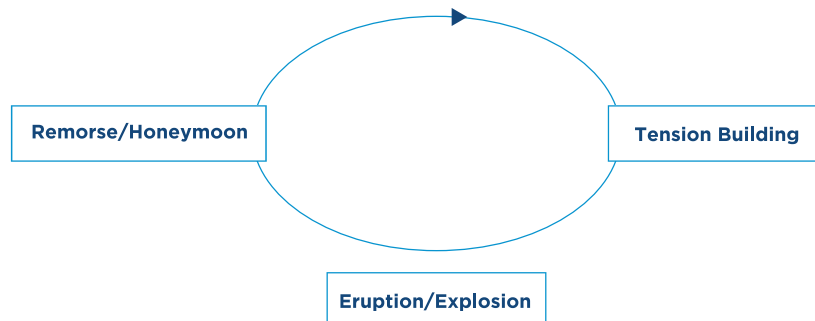
## What forms can abuse take?

- Verbal abuse - Your partner uses abusive language towards you
- Emotional abuse - Your partner continuously makes you feel guilty and worthless
- Physical abuse - Your partner is physically harming you
- Economic abuse - Your partner is using money to control you
- Sexual abuse - Your partner is insisting on sexual acts against your will

## Fact File

- Both men and women can become victims of abuse
- Abuse rarely occurs only once
- Abusers seldomly change spontaneously and without help
- Survivors of abuse often internalize the perspectives of the abuser particularly negative views about the self

## The Abuse Cycle



Abuse often happens in a cycle. A peaceful period in the relationship is increasingly undermined by tension that is developing. This tension then intensifies and eventually erupts in an act of abuse. The abuse is then typically followed by a honeymoon phase where the abuser shows remorse and the couple is hopeful for change. Unfortunately, this pattern keeps repeating with the explosions and eruptions often worsening over time.

## What are the Warning Signs?

Your partner	You
Acts controlling and often puts you down	Are scared of your partner
Looses his/her temper violently	Become quiet and withdrawn when your partner is around
Is extremely jealous	Are always “getting it wrong”
Acts differently in public and in private	Are feeling more and more isolated

Controls your finances, behaviour and dress	Often find yourself apologising for your partner
Isolates you from friends and family	Experience emotional numbness, lowered self-esteem, lost confidence, and are unsure what to think
Attacks you physically	Often have injuries you need to hide and explain

### What you need to know

- The abuse is not your fault!
- You don't deserve to be abused!
- You often cannot change someone who is abusive!
- Staying in the relationship and trying harder will not stop the abuse!
- With time the abuse tends to get worse!
- If you decide to stay, develop a plan to keep yourself safe when the abuse happens again!

### Protecting yourself

- Keep evidence of the abuse - doctor's reports, photos, written notes
- Find out where you can find help nearby - shelters, your wellness centre, police, organisations that support and assist abused people
- Tell someone you trust
- Seek medical help and tell your doctor
- Speak to your children
- Keep a journal of all assaults
- Set up a separate bank account for yourself
- Make a safety plan for yourself and your children

### Making a Safety Plan

- Find out about resources in your community
- Leave some extra money, keys, documents and clothes with someone you trust
- Make a list of important information - medical aid details, telephone numbers, etc.
- Plan your escape route and transport
- Work out a signal system with someone you trust
- Do not tell your partner that you are leaving
- Avoid arguments in dangerous places - near harmful objects, where you are alone
- Be aware!

***If you or your loved one needs support during this time, reach out to your ICAS EHWP via your toll-free number or the ICAS On-the-Go App to seek counselling support.***

Call your **Toll-free Line** (from land and mobile phones).  
 Or request a call back: **\*134\*905#**  
 Download the **ICAS On-the-Go APP**.  
 Applicable to you and those who live under your roof.

