

BIIN02

(BIIN02A) PROFILE OF THE BATTERER

- 1. Jealousy – often imagines partner is having affairs**
- 2. Tries to isolate partner**
- 3. Tries to control partner**
- 4. Jekyll and Hyde personalities**
- 5. May have other problems with the law – or may not**
- 6. Explosive temper; flies into rage without provocation**
- 7. Tells partner it is all his/her fault; projects own faults onto partner**
- 8. Verbal abuse in addition to physical abuse (insults, put-downs, name-calling)**
- 9. Comes from family where violence was practiced**
- 10. May be more violent when partner is pregnant or soon after giving birth**
- 11. Denies the beatings, or minimizes their severity; seems not to remember**
- 12. Will do whatever it takes to drive partner away, then whatever it takes to get him/her back: grab the kids; apologize profusely; send him/her flowers; cry real tears; promise anything (I'll go to church, or I'll go to counseling, I'll stop drinking, I'll never hit you again, etc.)**
- 13. Once partner returns, performance is repeated: whatever it takes to drive him/her away, followed by whatever it takes to get him/her back...**

(BIIN02B) THE STAGES IN THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

PHASE 1- TENSION BUILDING

This phase is composed of many minor incidents of abuse that gradually increases in severity. The tension builds and builds until it becomes unbearable and all control is lost. Quite often the event that will trigger the second phase is a power struggle set up by the male. He issues an ultimatum which cannot be met by the woman and rather than losing face he reacts violently and explosively.

PHASE 2- ACUTE BATTERING INCIDENT

This phase is characterized by explosive and uncontrollable rage. The lack of control and the element of overkill distinguish the acute incidents from the minor incidents. Although he may start out by justifying his behavior to himself, the batterer ends up in a blind rage. His original intent is to teach the woman a lesson and emphasize his power, but he winds up seriously and severely beating her. Afterwards he has a great tendency to rationalize the event. Phase 2 is a brief period and it is impossible to predict the type of violence, when and where it will occur, or its severity. The attack is followed by shock, denial, and disbelief. Batterers will rationalize the seriousness of the incident and will minimize its effect.

PHASE 3- REMORSEFUL, CONTRITE STAGE

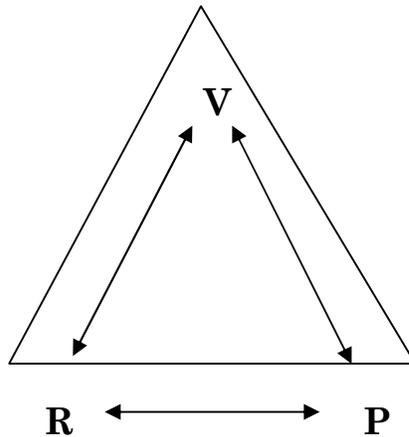
This phase is characterized as calm with the batterer exhibiting kind, loving behavior toward his mate. He knows he has overreacted, he is very sorry and he wishes to redeem himself. Since the tension is gone, he asks for forgiveness. Although he honestly believes he will not do it again his reason is that she has “learned her lesson” and there will be no more need to exert his power. All his actions are for reconciliation and he will extend his efforts at this time, if necessary to involve himself in therapy (though it’s possible he will drop out of therapy when and if he resumes Phase 1).

At the completion of Phase 3, Phase 1 begins again, and the cycle continues:
Tension- beating- remorse, over and over.

There is a way out, however. Since violence is learned behavior, it can be unlearned. Counseling can teach the batterer appropriate responses to anger and frustration. Treatment can make possible a peaceful and loving family life for the batterer as well as for the abused woman and the children.

(This information draws upon the work of Dr. Lenore Walker, including *The Battered Woman*, Harper & Row, 1980.)

(BIIN02C) The Victim ▲ Persecutor ▲ Rescuer Game



The Victim-Persecutor-Rescuer Game is a triangle and the players scramble for a corner.

The roles can change but usually a person falls into one role most of the time.

Battered women are classic Victims. Batterers or abusive men are classic Persecutors.

Here's a typical scene:

The abuser (persecutor) beats the woman (victim). She (victim) calls the police (rescuers) who come and stop him.

Suddenly everyone scrambles for new corners! Now the man perceives the police as persecutors. He's in jail and he's the victim! When he's in jail he may re-interpret the scene and believe that the woman is the persecutor because she called the police. The woman decides to drop the charges, so she becomes the rescuer.

Sometimes the children try to stop the abuse and get hit (victims). Other times they distract the abuser effectively and become the rescuers). Children learn abusive behavior from their abusive parent and may also abuse the victim and become persecutors.

To get healthy again

YOU NEED TO STOP PLAYING THE GAME.

(Adapted from what is often called the “Drama triangle”. It was developed by American psychotherapist Stephen Karpman and was originally published in the Transactional Analysis Bulletin, Vol. 7, 1968 under the title “Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis”.)