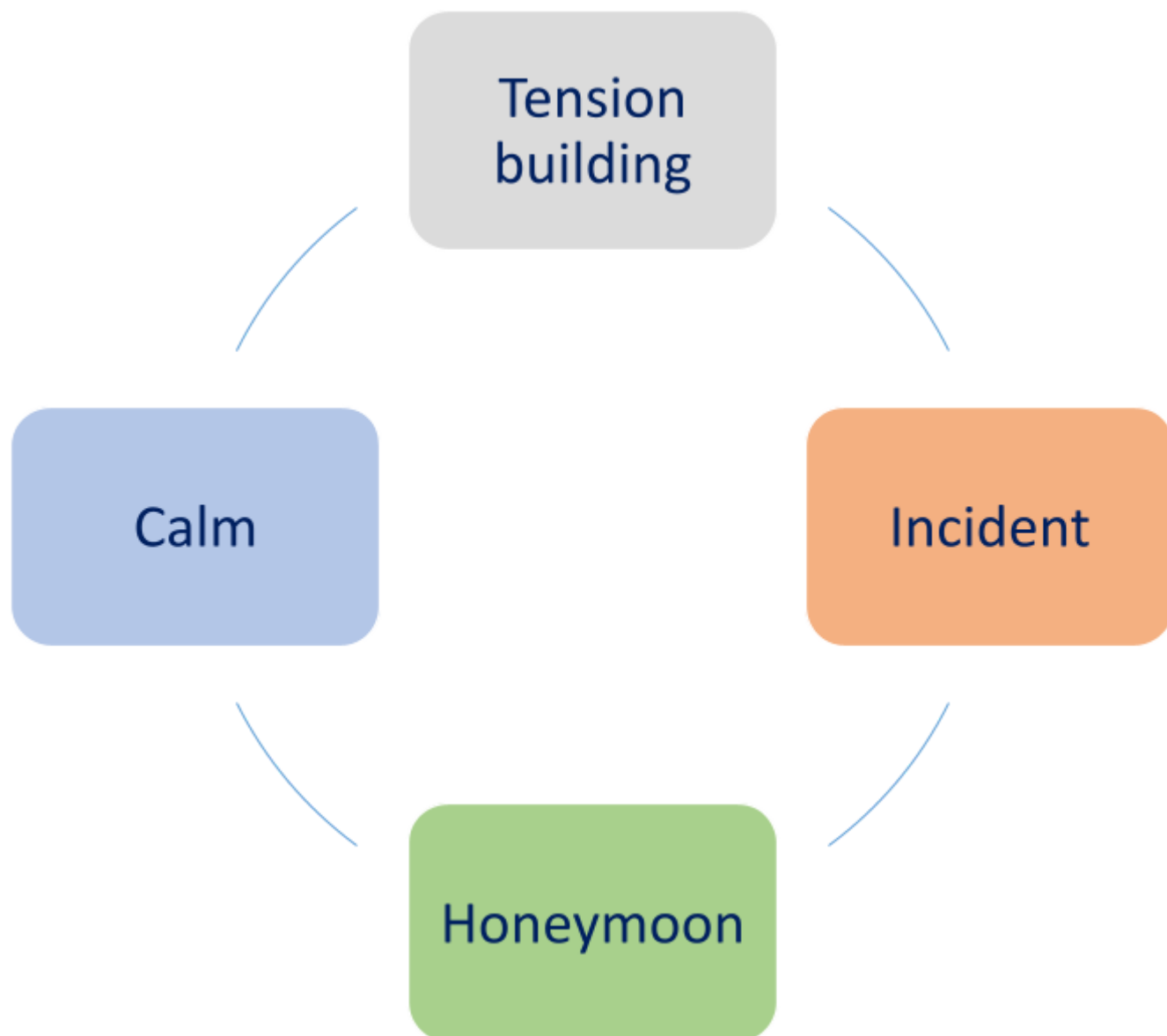
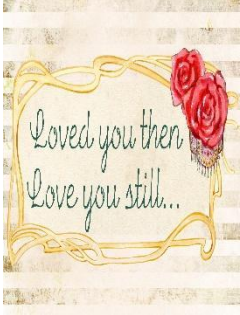


Cycle of abuse –

For the professional:

After completing the blank version of the cycle of abuse, use this resource with the information below with the young person to explore further.





Tension building

This is the start of the cycle, they lash out in response to external stressors, for example: family issues, physical illness, stress at work, fatigue.

They start to create arguments, put you down, and make you feel worthless, you may feel anxious, on your guard, feel like you are walking on eggshells.

This tension building leads to an incident.

Incident

The tension has been building from previous stage, this tension may have been building for a matter of minutes, hours or days, they eventually release this tension onto you, attempting to regain power by establishing control.

The abuse may involve:

- Insults or name calling
- Threats of harm and / or property destruction
- Attempts to control your behaviour
- Sexual or physical violence
- Emotional manipulation
- They may accuse you of making them mad or blame you for the relationship "problems"

Remember that people choose to abuse others, any tension that they experience may explain the abuse, but never excuses it.

Honeymoon

During this stage, they may become apologetic about the incident that has happened, they may promise you that they will change, promise to get help or tell you that it will not happen again, tension begins to fade, they often use kindness, gifts and loving gestures.

Their devoted behaviour, makes you feel good, it can trigger the release of dopamine and oxytocin, (happy endorphins) which will help you to feel more closely bonded, leading you to believe that they will change and that you have your “real” relationship back.

Calm

So that peace and harmony are maintained, both parties generally will come up with an explanation for the abuse, they may:

- Apologise while blaming others
- Minimise the abuse or deny it happened
- Accuse you of provoking them
- Point to outside factors to justify their behaviour

They may seem more attuned to your needs than usual, you may begin to accept their excuses, you may doubt your recollection of the incident and you may minimise the abuse “maybe it was nothing, like they said”

This cycle then repeats over time, it will happen over and over within abusive relationships, the length of time between each stage/ repetition can vary