

**Women's Aid in Scotland position statement rejecting the "cycle of violence" theory  
Agreed at Executive February 1997:**

From our 20 years of experience of working with women, children, and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, Women's Aid in Scotland categorically rejects the cycle of violence theory that children and young people who witness or suffer abuse will inevitably grow up to be abusers or to be abused.

**More detailed position statement:**

Women's Aid in Scotland rejects the "cycle of violence" theory which promotes the idea that children and young people who have witnessed or suffered abuse automatically grow up to be abusers or to be abused; in particular that:

- boys go on to become abusive adults
- girls are more likely to be abused as adults by their partner.

Women's Aid in Scotland believes that the cycle of violence theory is damaging and dangerous because it:

- ignores the fact that the majority of abuse is perpetrated by men, against women, children and young people, and that the majority of abusers come from families with no history of abuse. Abuse is about power and control. Men's abuse is a conscious choice. Men have to take responsibility for their abuse. There are no excuses.
- is insulting to the majority of survivors of abuse who choose to completely reject all forms of abusive behaviour.
- wrongly labels children and young people as tomorrow's abusers and abused. It denies respect for children and young people as individuals with their own experiences, needs, and strengths. Children and young people are entitled to support in their own right.

Women's Aid in Scotland fundamental aim is the eradication of all forms of men's abuse towards women and children and the structures which perpetuate them. To achieve this it is necessary NOT to break mythical "cycles" but to challenge

- male power over women
- adult power over children and young people
- attitudes and structures which perpetuate male abuse.