

A top-down photograph of two hands holding white ceramic cups filled with dark coffee. The hands are positioned on a dark, textured wooden surface. The person on the left is wearing a light-colored sweater with a patterned cuff, and the person on the right is wearing a plain light-colored sweater. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the wood and the liquid in the cups.

**Abuse is a hard  
thing to talk about.**

**Altadena Valley  
Presbyterian Church**



## **Marriage always brings conflict.**

That's part of living in a broken world. Sometimes, though, the sin pattern of a spouse rises to the level of abuse. Abuse is a pattern of oppressive behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. It may be psychological, spiritual, economic, sexual, or physical. It may extend to children and other family members.

Maybe you are experiencing abuse in your marriage, and you don't know what to do about it. You doubt that anyone would believe your word against your spouse's. You feel hopeless, scared and alone.

If so, please know that the pastors, elders and other shepherds of Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church desire to support you. Psalm 103:6 says, "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed." As a community called to reflect Christ's coming kingdom, we believe in protecting those who are vulnerable through unconditional love and Biblical justice.

If you share your struggles with us, we will listen in confidence, offer protection, and minister to your needs with the help of a trained care team. If you choose to pursue church discipline against your spouse, we will provide you with a trusted advocate (a female if you're a woman) to walk with you through the process.

Please contact Women's Ministry Director Heather Sommer (443-603-5050, [heather@avpc.org](mailto:heather@avpc.org)), Pastor Kyle Parker (251-200-8778, [kyle@avpc.org](mailto:kyle@avpc.org)) or Associate Pastor Michael MacCaughelty (205-706-6042, [michael@avpc.org](mailto:michael@avpc.org)) if you are experiencing abuse, or if you'd like more information about how our church can help. If you know of someone in this situation, encourage them to reach out.



**“The Lord works righteousness and justice for  
all who are oppressed.”**

***Psalm 103:6***

# What does abuse look like?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of oppressive behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. There are at least five types of domestic abuse.

**1. Psychological abuse** - Controlling through nonphysical behavior such as degradation, humiliation, or fear. It includes such behaviors as domination, emotional blackmail, unreasonable expectations, constant criticism or blaming, outbursts of anger, and seeking to isolate the abused.

**2. Spiritual abuse** - Using a person's faith to manipulate and control them. Examples include questioning a spouse's salvation, demanding submission, and misusing Scripture to control through guilt.

**3. Economic abuse** - Dominating and controlling a person financially. The abuser keeps the spouse in the dark about financial matters and demands a strict accounting of everything that they spend. The abuser may threaten to withdraw financial support if the spouse doesn't meet their demands.

**4. Sexual abuse** - Making unwanted contact or initiating interactions for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.

**5. Physical abuse** - Dominating a person through physical force or violence. This may include grabbing, pushing, hitting, kicking or pulling hair.



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