

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC), it is my honor and great pleasure to welcome you to our conference for our Korean American faith-based leaders entitled, “Healthy Families: A Pastoral Approach.” Family violence, which includes domestic violence and child abuse, continues to plague our Korean American community and interfere with our children’s happiness and bright futures. Korean Americans comprise an estimated 50% of Asian domestic violence cases in the Los Angeles courts (Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office), despite the fact that Koreans are much less likely than other Asians to report DV incidents to the authorities. Children exposed to such violence, face serious consequences including higher rates of school drop-out, depression, and suicide. In addition, they are more likely to become batterers or victims themselves as they become older, in what is called the *Cycle of Violence*.

The Korean church and you, its leaders, play a pivotal role in the lives of our Korean families, with 70%-80% of Korean Americans stating they attend church on a regular basis. We come to you not only for spiritual guidance, but often for emotional, psychological, social and physical support. Church is where our immigrant community turns to for resources, information, and social services. You are the first and often only place Korean Americans will go to when they are experiencing family violence and need help.

We hope that this conference provides an opportunity for you to learn more about family violence from our esteemed speakers who are amongst the leaders on this topic in our community. Also, we hope you can engage in open and honest discussion with your peers about your experiences dealing with family violence amongst your congregants. You are on the front lines dealing with individuals every day facing these problems and we want to learn from you. We at KAFSC want to learn from you about what works in addressing family violence as well as what tools and support you need from us to better serve our families.

Most importantly, we want this to be the start of a new partnership between community and faith leaders to collaborate and coordinate to end domestic violence for our next generation of children. Whether it is through our 24-hour crisis hotline, clinical counseling, parenting education classes, or referrals to legal services and shelters, we hope that KAFSC can be a resource and support source to you when working with congregants experiencing family violence.

Thank you again for joining us at the special event and showing your commitment to end family violence for our children.

Sincerely,

Connie Chung Joe
Executive Director
Korean American Family Service Center

CLERGY RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AMONG KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

I. WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH BE INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Church is often the first point of contact for someone experiencing domestic violence and abuse. What should be your response to domestic violence you encounter within your congregation?

According to a recent doctoral dissertation on Korean American clergy response to domestic violence,¹ Korean women who experience domestic violence turn to pastors in desperation, but get responses such as “faith is formed through hardship” and “keep praying, forgive your husband, endure the pain and be long-suffering.” Such advice only reinforces the victims’ belief that she should continue to tolerate the abuse.

Domestic violence survivors interviewed for this research found the advice and guidance from pastors and church staff to be generally unhelpful and impractical. Korean clergy and pastoral workers also failed to adequately consider the safety of the victims, despite it being the most immediate and critical need. He cited the Korean clergy’s lack of adequate knowledge about domestic violence issues and available resources as the primary reason for their failure to provide appropriate assistance and care for affected families. They also tend to minimize domestic violence, treating it as a private family problem. They also lack an adequate understanding of the cyclical nature of domestic violence and how it affects children living with family violence.

Moreover, the crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed, both for victims and for those in the family who abuse them. Approached from either a secular or religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded. The treatment and competent care of families experiencing violence and abuse require integrating the multiple needs of the person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and cooperation between faith and community sectors in dealing with family violence in our midst cannot be emphasized too strongly.

As leaders of Korean churches and ministries, which claim nearly 80% of Korean immigrants as members, Korean clergy and pastoral workers are uniquely positioned to respond helpfully in situations of domestic abuse. For many Korean immigrants, church is a safe haven; it can provide a primary support system for individuals and families experiencing family violence. Church is often the first place Korean immigrant victims turn to, rather than professional counseling services or community agencies. Moreover, under California law clergy are mandated reports of child abuse so they have a legal responsibility to respond when children are being harmed. It is, therefore, important for churches to understand, recognize and know how to respond appropriately to domestic violence.

¹ Chang, Peter, “*Pastoral Care for Korean Immigrant Male Batterers and Domestic Violence Victims*,” (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Claremont School of theology, 2007)

It is our hope that this handbook will serve as a useful guide for the clergy and pastoral workers in understanding the problem of family violence among Korean American families so that they are better equipped to help affected families. They can also help break the cycle of domestic violence that not only traumatizes direct victims of violence and abuse, but has devastating, lifetime impact on children's social and emotional development. Please refer to the community directory in the back of the handbook and use these resources to connect victims and affected families to immediate assistance and competent care so that they can move towards safety, recovery, and wellness.

II. INTRODUCTION TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

1. Domestic Violence (or Intimate Partner Violence)

■ *What is 'Domestic Violence?'*

“Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another.” (*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2011*)

DV is a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior used by an intimate partner during a relationship or after separation. Domestic violence and abuse take many forms. Some are physical and others are more difficult to recognize. In whatever form, domestic violence always involves fear, control and power.

Domestic violence is a crime and a violation of basic human rights. 95% of reported domestic violence victims in the U.S. are women. It is a gender issue with roots in unequal power relations between men and women.

Domestic violence has far-reaching financial, social and health-related consequences not only for direct victims, but has detrimental, lifetime effects on the development of children and young people who grow up witnessing domestic violence and abuse.

DV is very prevalent in the Korean community. Koreans comprise 50% of Asian DV (domestic violence) cases in the Los Angeles courts, despite the fact that they are much less likely than other Asians to report DV incidents. 60% of Korean immigrant women surveyed reported having experienced physical abuse by their partners within the past two years²

- It is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background.
- Issues of power and control are at the core of such relationship. Abusers believe they have the right to maintain power and control over their partners for them to stay in the relationship.
- It results in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes death.
- Consequences can cross generations and truly last a lifetime.

² “Domestic Violence and Risk Factors among Korean Immigrant Women in the U.S.,” *Journal of Domestic Violence*, 2007

■ ***Types of Domestic Violence***
(Adapted from Enns & Black, 1997)

Physical abuse

- Throwing objects at the survivor
- Pushing or shoving the survivor
- Threatening the survivor with weapons
- Hitting, punching or kicking the survivor
- Choking or throwing the survivor

Emotional abuse

Threats, Intimidating and “Mind Games”

- Making threats, stalking, or acting or speaking in ways which are frightening or intimidating
- Yelling and screaming at the survivor
- Insulting the survivor repeatedly
- Blaming the survivor for everything
- Threatening to hurt/kill the survivor and or the children

Social abuse

Insulting the survivor publicly and putting down the survivor’s capabilities as a spouse, parent, lover or worker

- Demanding all of the survivor’s attention and resenting any focus on others
- Isolating the survivor from friends or activities

Sexual abuse

- Forcing or coercing the woman into sexual acts against her will, physically attacking the sexual parts of her body, demanding sex, raping her, treating her as a sexual object and not as a person.

Economic & Legal Abuse?

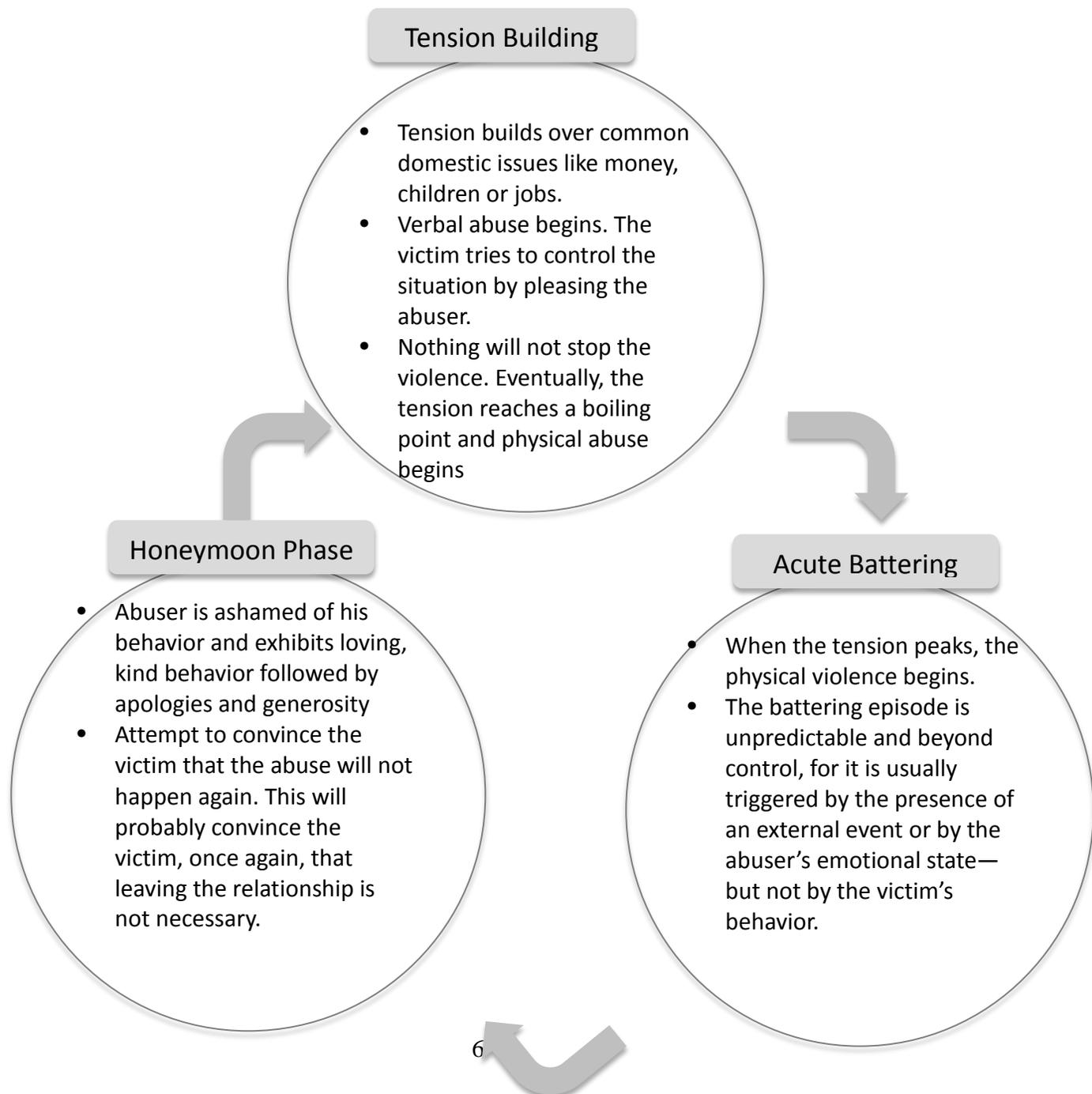
- Keeping the victim financially dependent
- Spending money without first meeting basic financial obligations
- Threatening the victim with court or legal action, such as losing her children, getting deported, or breaking legal agreements

The emotional effects of these abusive behaviors are feelings of fear, shame, helplessness, hopelessness, guilt, anger, depression, anxiety, a sense of entrapment, low self-esteem, loneliness and a sense of failure.

Cycle of Domestic Violence (Lenore Walker)

The cycle charted below provides a useful way of understanding what is happening in a domestic violence situation.

- Many violent relationships follow a common pattern or cycle. The entire cycle may happen in one day or it may take weeks or months.
- This cycle continues over and over. Although the abuse may be terrible, the promises and generosity of the honeymoon phase give the victim the false belief that everything will be all right.



Who are the Abusers?

(adapted from Cook, 2005; *The Clergy Committee, York County Task Force on Domestic Violence, 2009*)

No one can pick abusers out of a crowd.

- Most abusers are quite ordinary and seem like normal everyday people
- About 95% are men
- They come from all levels of education, income brackets, vocations, and religious affiliations.
- They may have a positive public image and reputation
- They do not typically fit the ‘angry, scary, or monster’ stereotypes
- They may be our brothers, fathers, sons, and friends

Although there is no simple way of identifying who is a batterer or who might become abusive, there are behavioral characteristics that are common to most abusive men.

The behavior profile of an abuser/batterer

- Controlling
- Sense of entitlement
- Self-centered with narcissistic tendencies
- Believes he is the victim
- Manipulative
- Maintains good public image
- Good early in a relationship
- Skillfully dishonest
- Disrespectful, superior
- Objectifies and depersonalizes
- Externalizes responsibility
- Rule maker
- Punishes, retaliates
- Abuses serially (repeatedly and in subsequent relationships)
- Danger increases during and after separation

■ ***Who are the victims?***

Approximately 95% of reported domestic violence cases list women as victims. Battered women also come from all socioeconomic status, educational level, and religious affiliations. The abused also share some common characteristics, including:

- Low self esteem
- Being blamed for the domestic violence incidents
- Isolation
- Feeling powerless over their lives
- Have mental health issues (depression, PTSD, eating disorder, etc.)

- Have substance abuse problems
- Physical complaints
- Stress-related symptoms
- Denial of feeling
- The belief that no one can help

■ ***Why do victims stay with abusers?***

Many falsely believe that victim can leave abusers whenever they want. The victims have difficulty in leaving them because of the following reasons:

Love

Many victims remember the person they fell in love with and want to believe the abuse will end.

Terror

Abusers may severely injure or murder their partners when their partners are trying to leave them.

Financial issues

Abusers may destroy the victim's credit history or maintain control of the household income.

Isolation

Abusers may physically isolate the victim in the house by locking and taking the telephone when leaving.

Shame

Although abuse is never the victim's fault, many victims feel ashamed that someone is hurting them.

Cultural stigma

Korean culture places stigma on divorce and also on exposing private family problems to the outside.

Fear of the unknown

Will the abuser continue to stalk and terrorize me after I leave? Will I be alone the rest of my life? Will the children and I end up homeless?

Ongoing abuse

Due to ongoing verbal and/or physical abuse, victims may believe the abuse is their fault.

Abuser's fame

The abuser may be a community or religious leader, a high-ranking law enforcement officer, a doctor, or a well-known politician.

Immigration Status

Fear of deportation or loss of legal residency is a barrier to seeking safety for many immigrant survivors.

Religious Beliefs

Some victims believe that divorce is a sin and that violence will stop someday, leading to victims remaining in violent or abusive situations.

Language barriers and lack of social information

Victim lacks access to appropriate information on getting assistance because of language limitation.

Most victims of domestic violence do not want to leave their partners and their homes; they simply want the violence and abuse to end.

■ ***Signs of Domestic Violence***

(adapted from webMD, 2008)

◆ ***Signs of being abused***

Do you have a church member who you think may be in an abusive relationship? Warning signs that may indicate that a person is a victim of domestic abuse include:

- Bruises or injuries that look like they came from choking, punching, or being thrown down.
- Black eyes, red or purple marks at the neck, and sprained wrists are common injuries sustained in violent relationships.
- Attempting to hide bruises with makeup or clothing.
- Making excuses like tripping or being accident-prone or clumsy.
- Having low self-esteem; being extremely apologetic and meek.
- Referring to the partner's temper but not disclosing extent of abuse.
- Having few close friends and being isolated from relatives and coworkers and kept from making friends.
- Having little money available; may not have credit cards or even a car.
- Having a drug or alcohol abuse problem.
- Having symptoms of depression, such as sadness or hopelessness, or loss of interest in daily activities.
- Talking about suicide or attempting suicide.

◆ ***Signs of abusive partner***

Domestic violence deviates from common marital discord in the following ways; it starts with threats, name-calling, and slamming doors, and escalates to pushing, slapping, and other violent acts.

Does the partner....

- Embarrass, belittle or put victim down?
- Say hurtful things to victim?
- Dislike victim's friends and family and discourage victim's relationships with others?
- Make all the decisions in the relationship?
- Chastise victim after social functions for talking with other people?
- Act jealous of people victim talk to?
- Blame victim for his or her mistakes?
- Try to make victim feel worthless or helpless?
- Forbid victim from working or going to school?
- Keep money, credit cards, and checks away from victim?
- Control access to victim's medicines or medical devices?
- Threaten to have victim deported?
- Throw dishes or other objects?
- Abuse victim's children or pet when mad at victim?
- Push, slap, kick, or otherwise assault victim?
- Demand sex, make victim perform sexual acts victim are not comfortable with, or sexually assault victim?

Victims need to have not only spiritual and emotional support from the church, but also outside professional intervention. Those who exhibit abusive behaviors also need to be encouraged to get professional help.

■ *The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children*

◆ *Direct Effects (Carter, 2000)*

- Studies have shown that children from families with a history of spouse abuse are at increased risk of direct physical abuse, physical punishment and verbal abuse.
- Since domestic violence is a pattern of behavior, not a single event, episodes may become more severe and more frequent over time, resulting in an increased likelihood that the children eventually become victims
- Based on a national survey, 50% of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently assaulted their children

◆ *Indirect Effects (CWIG, 2009)*

- Children who are living in a home where one parent is abusing the other are victims of child abuse even if they aren't physically being hurt
- Exposed children are more likely to show: aggression, antisocial behavior, depression, anxiety, fear, withdrawal, poor relationship, and low self-esteem
- They are more like to experience: difficulties in school, lower score in overall development, limited problem-solving skills, and pro-violence attitude
- When they are grown up, males are more likely to engage in domestic violence and females are more likely to be victims. Adult depression and trauma symptoms are also evident.
- Family violence affects every member of the family. Even witnessing domestic violence can have serious consequences for the child's emotional health and development and may be considered a form of child abuse itself.

Q: Is domestic violence child abuse? A: Yes. Children living in homes where one parent is abusing the other are victims of child abuse even though they aren't direct victims of violence. Even witnessing domestic violence can have serious consequences for the child's emotional health and development and therefore may be considered a form of child abuse itself.

2. Child Abuse

■ What is Child Abuse?

Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines child abuse and neglect as:

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

California Penal Code defines child abuse as:

“a physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person.” It also includes emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or abuse in out-of-home care.

Child abuse does not include spanking that is reasonable and age appropriate and does not expose the child to risk of serious injury. (P.C. 11165.6, Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 300.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD ABUSE CASES AMONG KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

(From “The characteristics and patterns of child abuse among immigrant Korean families in Los Angeles County”, a 2006 study by Siyon Rhee (Cal State Univ. LA) and Janet Chang (Cal State Univ. San Bernardino))

The pattern of Korean child maltreatment differs from other groups. They are more likely to be charged with physical abuse (49.4%) and less with neglect (20.6%) – compared to 13.2% and 27.1%, respectively, for the general population.

The study found that child abuse among immigrant Korean families occurs most often in two contexts: 1) **physical abuse** resulting from corporal punishment used to discipline their children; 2) **emotional abuse** from witnessing domestic violence.

Other studies have shown that Korean mothers in the US don’t view corporal punishment as child abuse and accept some level of aggressive behavior toward their children.

Physical punishment actually increases the risk of physical abuse.

Studies have shown that children from families with a history of spouse abuse are at increased risk of physical abuse, physical punishment and verbal abuse.

■ **Types of child abuse**

(Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2008)

<i>Types of Child Abuse</i>	<i>Detailed behaviors</i>
<i>Physical Abuse</i>	<i>Punching, hitting, kicking, shaking, choking, burning or harming, etc.</i>
<i>Emotional Abuse</i>	<i>Constant criticism, threats, or rejection, etc.</i>
<i>Sexual Abuse</i>	<i>Fondling a child’s genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent expose, and exploitation through or the production of pornographic materials, etc.</i>
<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Failure to provide food shelter, lack of medical and mental health treatment. Failure to provide psychological care or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drug, etc.</i>

■ **Child Abuse: indicators in the child**

(Office of Child Abuse Prevention, CA Dept. of Social Services, 2003)

The following tables are only partial lists. People may become aware of these factors through interview, observation, or third-party reporting. The presence of any of these indicators does not prove the child is being abused, but should serve as a warning signal to look further.

Physical Indicators		
Physical abuses	Neglects	Sexual Abuses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fractures, lacerations, bruises that cannot be explained.</i> • <i>Burns</i> • <i>Facial injuries nonexistent explanations.</i> • <i>Pattern of bruising or</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Failure to thrive medical or psychosocial problems, or physical development because of improper care.</i> • <i>Dirty, unkempt</i> • <i>Unattended medical conditions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bruising around genital area.</i> • <i>Swelling or discharge from vagina/penis.</i> • <i>Tearing around genital area, including rectum.</i> • <i>Visible lesions around</i>

bruises in different stages of discoloration, indicating repeated trauma over time

- mouth or genitals.*
- *Complaint of lower abdominal pain.*
 - *Painful urination, defecation.*

Behavioral Indicators

Physical abuses	Neglects/ Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hostile or aggressive behavior toward others.</i> • <i>Extreme fear or withdrawn behavior around others.</i> • <i>Destructiveness (breaks windows, sets fires, etc.).</i> • <i>Verbal abusiveness.</i> • <i>Out-of-control behavior (angry, panics, easily agitated)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clingy or indiscriminate attachment</i> • <i>Self-imposed isolation</i> • <i>Depression or passivity</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Emotional Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lacks self-esteem; puts self down constantly.</i> • <i>Seeks approval to an extreme. Unable to be autonomous (e.g., makes few choices, fears rejection).</i> • <i>Hostile, verbally abusive,</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sexualized behavior (has precocious knowledge of explicit sexual behavior and engages self or others in overt or repetitive sexual behavior)</i> • <i>Hostility or aggression</i> • <i>Fearfulness or withdrawn.</i> • <i>Self-destructiveness (self-mutilates).</i> • <i>Pseudo-maturity (seems mature beyond chronological age)</i> • <i>Eating disorders.</i> • <i>Alcoholism/drug abuse.</i> • <i>Running away.</i> • <i>Promiscuity</i>

■ **Long term consequences of child abuse**

(Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2008)

Incidents of abuse have negative effects on physical, psychological, and behavioral development in children. Some children experience long-term consequences, which are outlined below:

Physical Health Consequences			
Impaired Brain Syndrome		Poor Physical Health	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>May cause important regions of the brain to fail to form or grow properly, resulting in impaired development.</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suffer from physical ailments such as allergies, arthritis, asthma, bronchitis, high blood pressure, and ulcers.</i> 	
Psychological Consequences			
Difficulties during Infancy	Poor Mental and Emotional Health	Cognitive Difficulties	Social Difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depression and withdrawal symptoms</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>depression, eating disorders, dissociative disorders, ADHD, anger, PTSD, reactive attachment disorder</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>low academic achievement language development, and academic achievement</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>antisocial traits as they grow up</i>
Behavioral Consequences			
Difficulties during Adolescence	Juvenile Delinquency & Adult Criminality	Alcohol and other Drug Abuse	Abusive Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>delinquency, teen pregnancy, low academic achievement, drug use, and mental health problems.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>criminal behavior as a juvenile, violent and criminal behavior as an adult</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol, or take illicit drugs during their lifetime</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>children will eventually victimize their own children</i>

■ ***Characteristics of abusive parents or caregiver***

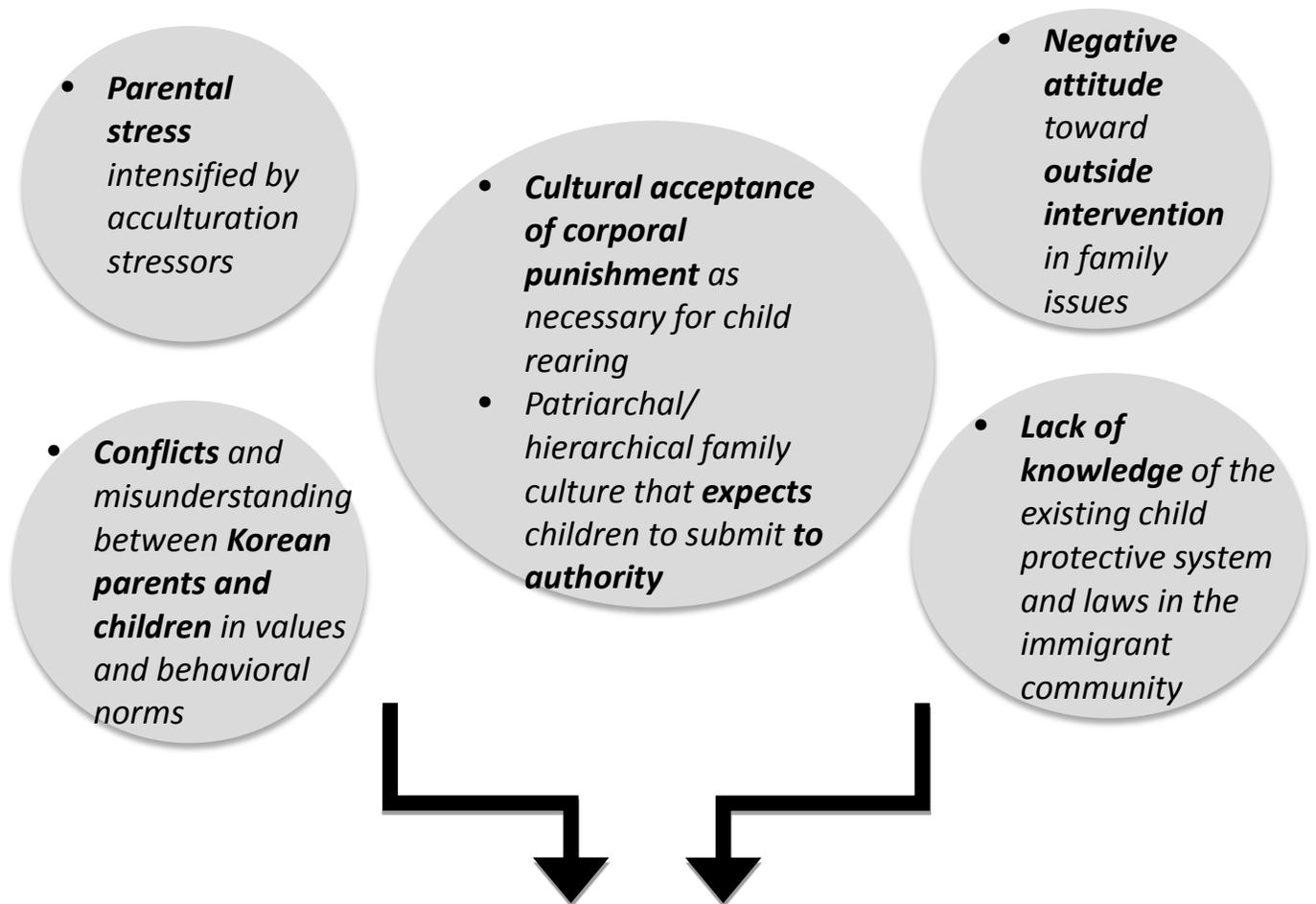
(Adapted from CA Dept. of Health Services, 2009)

These characteristics should be seen as clues or "red flags" in the deliberation of suspected cases of abuse or maltreatment:

- Past history of having been abused or neglected themselves
- Lack of friendships or emotional support
- Community isolation
- Inability to ask for and receive necessary help and support
- Lack of trust of people
- Lack of self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- Physical or mental health problems, irrational behavior
- Life crises such as financial problems, unemployment, low wages, homelessness
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Gives different explanations for the same injury
- Disciplines the child too harshly considering their age or what they did wrong
- Conceals the child's injury, or takes the child to a different doctor or hospital for each injury
- Has poor impulse control
- Has a disorganized, upsetting home life
- Is apathetic, feels nothing will change
- Treats children in the family unequally, or inconsistently
- May seem not to care about the child's problems, or may be very protective or jealous of the child
- Blames or belittles the child, appears to be cold or rejecting
- Unrealistic expectations of child to meet caretaker's emotional needs
- Absence of nurturing child-rearing skills
- Violent/corporal punishment methods of discipline accepted within the caretaker's culture of child-rearing
- Delay or failure in seeking health care for child's regular immunizations, illness, or injury

■ ***Korean Immigrants: Lack of Understanding about Child Abuse***

(Adapted from Jang, Rhee & Weaver, 2006; Park, 2001; Rhee, Chang & Youn, 2003)



- ***Child abuse has been overlooked as unimportant in the Korean immigrant community.***
- ***Only extremely harmful physical punishment such as skull fractures and severe burn cases is commonly understood to be 'child abuse' among Koreans and Korean immigrants.***

■ *What is “Mandated Reporting?”*

- ◆ **Mandated reporting** refers to California’s Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA), which mandates that people in certain employment categories must report suspected child abuse and neglect to a child protective agency. For people in designated employment categories, failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect constitutes a crime. The primary intent of the reporting law is to **protect the child**.

Under the California Child Abuse Reporting Law, the following types of abuse must be reported by all legally mandated reporters:

- A **physical injury** inflicted by other than accidental means on a child
- Child **sexual abuse** including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation
- **Willful cruelty or unjustified punishment**, including inflicting or permitting unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or the endangerment of the child’s person or health
- **Unlawful corporal punishment** or injury, willfully inflicted, resulting in a traumatic condition
- **Neglect of a child**, whether “severe” or “general,” must also be reported if the perpetrator is a person responsible for the child’s welfare. It includes acts or omissions harming or threatening to harm the child’s health or welfare
- Any of the above types of abuse or neglect occurring in **out-of-home care**

◆ **Who are the mandatory child abuse reporters?**

Mandated reporter means a person who is mandated by law to report instances of child abuse and neglect. According to California Penal Code § 11165.7, the term “mandated reporter” includes:

- School personnel, including teachers, instructional aides and others authorized to oversee a child’s welfare at school
 - Administrators or employees of child and youth programs and organizations, including child care facilities
 - Health care personnel
 - **Clergy members**, which means a priest, minister, rabbi, religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized denomination or organization.
- ◆ If child abuse is suspected, mandated reporters must immediately contact a designated county child protective agency to discuss concerns or to file a report. Please see the back of the handbook for a list of local offices and contact information. **Please call KAFSC for more information.**

III. Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in the Church and a Pastoral Response

■ *Common myths on domestic violence in church congregations*

- 1) *There are no abused women in my congregation.*
 - Usually results from denial on the part of clergy
 - Fear due to lack of training or unwillingness to confront the issue
 - Lack of disclosure does not indicate lack of abuse
 - Silence on the subject of domestic violence will prevent victims from coming forth
- 2) *Christian survivors need only faith and prayer, and dependence on God will free them from domestic violence.*
 - Very dangerous for the victim
 - This belief can lead abuse victims to remain in dangerous situations
 - Victims can be given the impression that they are to blame for their abuse if they are told to pray harder, submit more to their husbands, or have more faith
 - The message is that victims are responsible for keeping their families together at all costs
- 3) *Domestic violence occurs in certain cultural, racial and socioeconomic group.*
 - DV occurs in any social group
 - Affects people of all races, ethnicities, faiths, socioeconomic status, rich and poor
 - Koreans are overly represented amongst Asian Pacific Islanders in DV cases in the LA court system.

■ *What to know as pastors*

- 1) Confronting domestic violence is a difficult experience for the clergy and pastoral workers. As figures of spiritual authority and guidance, they carry a great burden to provide appropriate care and counseling for affected families, both victims and offenders.
- 2) Providing competent care requires:
 - Thorough understanding of the complex issues involved in domestic violence
 - Understanding of Scripture to give proper spiritual counsel to victims and families and to nurture healthy families and relationships
 - Familiarity with available professional resources and willingness to utilize their expertise to render necessary assistance that clergy may not be equipped to provide
- 3) It is critical to remember that domestic violence is an ongoing and persistent problem. The complex issues involved require professional training and resources to effectively manage and resolve situations of abuse. The clergy, while trusted and well-meaning, can do more harm than good if they attempt to intervene without proper training.
- 4) Clergy will often be the first to find out about a situation of domestic violence, placing great burden on them to take the appropriate next steps.

What to do for Domestic Violence Victims

◆ *Common Mistakes Clergy Make When Dealing with Abuse Victims*

Clergy are in a unique position to give comfort and healing to abuse victims in their congregations. However, lack of understanding of the issues victims face can lead to mistakes that can further endanger them.

- Reacting with disbelief to victims' stories
- Not bringing in trained professionals to intervene
- Trying to confront abusers or handle the abusive situation directly

◆ *Things To DO*

1. Listen with compassion and concern
2. Believe the victim's story. Approaching the abuser to "determine the truth" may endanger the victim. It is not your job to determine veracity or severity, only to provide support for the victim
3. Emphasize how the abuse is not the victim's fault
4. Discuss safety planning for the victim and her children
5. Be willing to reach out and engage outside resources to help manage the situation
6. Be consistent and proactive about outreach efforts to help victims step forward
7. Do NOT allow a victim to return to the abuser without engaging the tools required to begin treatment and without a safe haven to turn to
8. Consult with colleagues in the community to create a network of support for victims and mutual support in providing help to victims
9. Rely on professionals and professional help to ameliorate the abusive situation.

◆ *Things Not to Say*

1. Stop feeling sorry for yourself
2. Leave the past in the past and thank God for your blessings
3. God will never give you more than you can bear
4. All Christians have crosses to bear
5. A bad husband/father is better than no husband/father
6. Although the abuse is terrible, it will make you a better Christian
7. Submit yourself totally to the will of your husband and the abuse will stop
8. Go back to your husband and pray for a miracle
9. God calls us to be a living sacrifice
10. You have to work harder at being a good wife/mother
11. Your faith in God will turn this negative experience into a positive outcome. It will save your marriage
12. Confess your sins and pray harder

■ *What To Do for abusers*

It is not easy to counsel abusers. You may feel embarrassed, confused, even fearful. in the conversation with them. So, you can consider the following suggestions.

Remember that you may be important role in them. You can pray for them and should always encourage them to get professional assistance.

◆ *Things to do*

- Do refer to professionals and law enforcement to manage the situation
- Do make sure to put the responsibility for the violence on the abuser, not the victim
- Do carefully assess the abuser for hints of suicidal or homicidal threats. If there are threats, warn the victim and get the appropriate resources involved (police, etc.)
- Do pray with the abuser and provide spiritual support geared towards recovery
- Do listen with compassion, respect, and concern
- Do collaborate with community agencies and law enforcement to hold him accountable

◆ *Things NOT to Do*

- Don't alert the abuser that you are aware of the abusive situation unless with the victim's consent
- Don't provide religious justification or rationalization for the abuse
- Don't attempt to provide couples' or marriage counseling
- Don't place any blame on the victim
- Don't go the abuser to "confirm" the victim's story
- Don't be swayed by denial or claims that the abuser has improved and will no longer be abusive
- Don't seek to resolve the abusive situation yourself
- Don't allow the abuser to avoid legal or spiritual accountability
- Don't try to reconcile the couple immediately or rush to get the victim to "forgive" the abuser
- Don't try to resolve the situation alone
- Don't allow the abuser to escape legal ramifications or help from professionals through declarations of remorse or renewed faith
- Don't allow religious justification for the abuser's actions
- Don't drop the issue without thorough evaluation and help from outside professionals

◆ **Domestic Violence Safety Planning**

When the clergy or pastoral workers counsel victims or suspected victims of domestic violence, it is important to speak to her/him about immediate and future safety. The severity of the current injuries or the abuse is not always an accurate predictor of future violence. Assisting the victim in making a safety plan can help her or him think through various options.

The following check-list will help you initiate these important discussions.

<p><i>If she is planning to leave:</i></p> <p>___ Does the victim have a friend, or supportive family member who lives nearby and with whom they can stay?</p> <p>___ Does the victim have a friend or church member who will stay with them to minimize the violence?</p> <p>___ Does the victim want to go to a battered woman’s shelter, or use other housing assistance services such as hotel vouchers from social services or advocacy programs?</p> <p>___ Does the victim want to call the police, obtain an order of protection or an emergency protective order?</p>	<p><i>If the perpetrator has been removed from the home:</i></p> <p>___ Discuss safety measures such as changing the locks on the doors and windows, installing a security system, purchasing rope ladders, outdoor lighting sensitive to movement, smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher, if affordable.</p> <p>___ It is important to teach children how to use the Phone to call 911 or make collect calls in case the perpetrator kidnaps them. Make arrangements with schools and daycare centers to release children to designated persons only.</p> <p>___ Encourage the victim to tell her or his church members, neighbors, family, and friends that the perpetrator has left and to call 911 if they are seen around the home.</p>
<p><i>If she is NOT planning to leave:</i></p> <p>___ Would the victim call the police if the perpetrator becomes violence? If the victim couldn’t get to the phone, could she or he work out a signal with a neighbor to call the police or teach the children to call 911?</p> <p>___ What kind of strategies have worked in the past to minimize injuries? Does the victim think these strategies could continue to work?</p> <p>___ Can the victim anticipate an escalation of violence and take any precautions?</p> <p>___ Does the victim have a support network or friends or church member family that live nearby who could help when she or he needs assistance?</p> <p>___ Are there weapons in the home? Can they be removed or placed in a safer area separate from the ammunition?</p>	<p><i>Being prepared to get away:</i></p> <p>Discuss the following component of a safety plan with the victim:</p> <p>Encourage the victim to keep in a safe place:</p> <p>___ house and car keys</p> <p>___ important papers: social security cards, birth certificates, driver’s license, etc.</p> <p>___ cash, food stamps, credit cards, etc.</p> <p>___ medication for parent and children, children’s immunization records</p> <p>___ important phone numbers and addresses</p> <p>___ loose change or pre-paid calling card</p> <p>___ change of clothes and personal care items</p> <p>___ Have the victim plan with the children. Identify a safe place for the children.</p> <p>___ Contact local domestic violence program to find out about laws and community resources before they are needed</p>

Adapted from 2011 Family Violence Prevention Fund (www.endabuse.org)

■ ***The Pastor's role in dealing with child abuse: how to manage a situation concerning child abuse in your church***

The goals of any effective response to suspected child abuse and neglect are (1) to protect the child from further abuse and (2) to stop the offender's abuse. It is critical to correctly handle the situation in order to prevent further harm to the child.

1) Be vigilant in monitoring and listen with compassion and genuine concern

Abused children may be reluctant and fearful to approach anyone about their situation. It is important for clergy to watch their congregations carefully for any sign that abuse may be occurring. If you suspect abuse, be very sensitive in approaching the child to determine if further steps need to be taken. Do not allow the child to evade questioning and provide reassurance that no harm will come to the child or his family as a result of the child speaking out to you.

2) When approached by a child facing abuse, listen with compassion, respect, and concern

Should a child approach you, be respectful and careful. Listen fully and with concern. The child may already be fearful of repercussions so provide reassurance. Do not minimize the child's concerns or fail to follow up with further inquiry. Mobilize outside resources to provide support. Do not reprimand the child or cause the child to feel blame or shame.

3) Be careful about contacting the parent or suspected abuser directly.

Confronting the parent or suspected abuser could make the situation worse for the child.

4) Report the abuse immediately to your local child protective services agency.

As a mandatory reporter of child abuse under California law, it is your responsibility to report to local child protective services agency (CPS) like Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services (1-800-540-4000) or Orange County Child Protective Services (1-800-207-4464) immediately if you learn that your church children are exposed to abuse. It is a difficult and uncomfortable decision to make especially within the Korean culture. Please remember that this action will allow the child and family opportunity for needed intervention and proper care by professionals. Also, failure to report child abuse can have serious consequences.

5) Clergy are in a special position to provide healing support for abused children and their families

Spiritual guidance can be great assistance in helping children and their families overcome abusive situations. Providing a neutral and loving place for families to confront the abusive situations can be invaluable. However, spiritual support is not a substitute for professional assistance and legal intervention.

IV. Ten Recommendations for Effective Church Response to Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Among Korean American Families

1. Church leaders need to be sensitive to the needs of domestic violence or child abuse victims.
2. Church leaders should get trainings related to domestic violence and child abuse. They also need up-to-date information on current resources and community programs in order to assist victims quickly and appropriately. Also, churches can develop educational programs that will improve knowledge concerning domestic violence and child abuse among their congregations.
3. Churches should make Korean-language information on local community resources on domestic violence and child abuse available for congregational members.
4. Churches should network and work collaboratively with community resources, including domestic violence programs, mental health services and legal aid to quickly and competently assist domestic violence and child abuse victims and offer appropriate intervention for domestic violence offenders.
5. Churches should engage domestic violence professionals to properly train church staff and leadership as well as educate the congregation on domestic violence and child abuse. Many Korean immigrants are not familiar with US laws on domestic violence and child abuse, which differs significantly from that of Korea. Also, cultural differences help perpetuate the minimization of the problem of family violence among Korean immigrant families and the low utilization of community resources for affected families. Effective, culturally-embedded education can help prevent future family violence in the Korean American community.
6. Churches need to re-examine theological beliefs which may be justifying or condoning domestic violence. For example, the suffering one experiences in domestic violence situations may be interpreted as a way to mature or punishment from past sin. Scripture may also be used to justify hitting as an acceptable form of disciplining.
7. Churches should regularly hold skills-training workshops and seminars on building healthy families and healthy relationships. These workshops can teach congregational members on positive and effective communication and anger management so they are equipped to handle marital conflicts without resorting to violence or abuse and model healthy relationships for their children.
8. Sunday Schools should teach children and teens anger management, communication and conflict resolution techniques to build and maintain healthy relationships with

their peers, parents, and other authority figures. Children learn from what they see and hear. Therefore, if they learn proper relationship skills when they're young, those children will grow up as adults who can maintain healthy and positive relationships.

9. Churches should recommend premarital counseling to couples who are preparing for marriage so they can be educated on building healthy families and nurturing healthy gender relationships.
10. Churches should be prepared to go outside the church for help. Women and children affected by violence should be evaluated and treated by a trained professional. And state laws require clergy to report suspected child abuse to local authorities.

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VI. Community Resources/Korean-language Services

Legal Services

Legal Aid Foundation of LA (LAFLA)*	323-801-7987/7914	1102 Crenshaw Blvd. LA CA90019	Broad range of free legal services for low-income, including family, housing, and immigration laws
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)*	213-977-7500	1145 Wilshire Blvd. 2 nd FL LA CA90017	Legal, housing and support services for immigrant survivors of domestic violence
Olympic Community Police Station	213-382-9102	1130 South Vermont Los Angeles, CA 90006	provide restraining order information and help domestic violence victim
Rampart Community Police Station	213-484-3400	1401 W. Sixth Street Los Angeles, CA 90017	To provide restraining order information and help domestic violence victim

*LAFLA and APALC conduct free Family Law Clinic at Korean American Family Service Center on the following days: 1st & 3rd Wed. of each month, 2-4pm; 2nd Wed., 1:30-3:30pm. By appointment only.

Shelter Services

The Center for the Pacific Asian Family	800-339-3940	1102 Crenshaw Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90019	24-Hour Hotline, emergency and transitional shelter and case management services for domestic violence victims and their children
Home on the Green Pastures	714-532-2787	P.O. Box 1755, Tustin, CA 92781	Emergency shelter, victim counseling and case management services
Asian Pacific Women's Shelter	213-250-2977	1145 Wilshire Blvd. 1st Floor, Suite 102 Los Angeles, CA 90017	Transitional shelter and case management for victims and children
Esther's Home	909-860-1304	P.O. Box 4844, Diamond Bar, CA91765	Emergency shelter, counseling, and support services for women and children

Sharon's Home	626-321-6255	3755 Beverly Blvd #302 LA CA 90004	Emergency shelter and support services for women and children
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Counseling Services

Korean American Family Service Center	213-389-6755	3727 W. 6 th St. #320, Los Angeles, CA 90020	Mental health counseling for adults and children, including trauma recovery for victims of domestic violence, group counseling for DV offenders, and Child Abuse Prevention & Intervention (CAPIT) services for victims and those at-risk of child abuse and neglect
Korean Community Services	714-449-1125	7212 Orangethorpe Ave., #8, Buena Park, CA 90621	Mental health counseling and domestic violence prevention group counseling for OC Asian Pacific communities
Korean Youth Community Center	213-365-7400	680 Wilton Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90005	Child Abuse Prevention & Intervention (CAPIT) and mental health services for individuals and families
Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Center	213-252-2199	502 S. Lafayette Park, #300, Los Angeles, CA 90057	Comprehensive mental health services for Medi-Cal eligible individuals with mental illness
Hollywood Mental Health Center	323-759-6100	1224 Vine St., Los Angeles, CA 90038	Mental health and social services, free walk-in outpatient care services
Hanmi Family Counseling Center	714-892-9910	12362 Beach Blvd., #1, Stanton, CA 90680	Family and marriage counseling
Family Saver Center	714-484-0033	1150 N. Knollwood Circle, Anaheim, CA	Family, marriage and mental health counseling and education
Pacific Asian Counseling Services	310-337-1550	8616 La Tijera Blvd., # 200, Los Angeles, CA 90045	Counseling and social services for families and individuals, co-occurring substance abuse issues

Domestic Violence/Child Abuse Hotline Services

Korean American Family Service Center	1-888-979-3800	www.kafscla.org	24-Hour DV Hotline, counseling for adults and child related to family violence and crisis intervention and referrals to shelters and legal/social services
LA County/OC County Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-978-3600	http://da.lacounty.org http://egov.ocgov.com	Information and referrals on shelters and counseling for DV victims
LA County Dept. of Child and Family Services (DCFS)	1-800-540-4000	http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us	Investigates child abuse and neglect cases
Orange County Child Protective Services	714-940-1000 or 800-207-4464 (24-hour hotline)	http://egov.ocgov.com	Investigates child abuse and neglect cases
National Domestic Violence Hotline	800-799-SAFE(7233)	www.ndvh.org	Crisis intervention, referrals to local services providers (including shelters) for victims of family violence

Substance Abuse /Addiction

Asian American Drug Abuse Program	323-295-0262	2900 S. Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90016	Comprehensive substance abuse and other social services for Asian Pacific Islander communities
Korean Community Services	323-668-9007(LA) 714-449-1125(OC)	7212Orangethorpe Ave., #8, Buena Park, CA 90621	Comprehensive substance abuse services, including treatment and prevention programs
Korean American Mission Center For Addiction	909-595-1114	19763 E. Valley Blvd., Walnut, CA 91789	Substance abuse and gambling addiction recovery services
Gilgal Recovery Ministry	562-862-2200	1520 James Wood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015	Substance abuse services

Child Welfare Services Agencies in Southern California
(Emergency Response/Child Abuse Reporting Telephone Numbers)

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles County CWS Agency
425 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, CA 90020
800-540-4000 within CA
800-272-6699 TDD
www.lacounty.info

ORANGE

Orange County CWS Agency
888 North Main Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
714-940-1000
800-207-4464
www.oc.ca.gov

RIVERSIDE

Riverside County CWS Agency
4060 County Circle Drive
Riverside, CA 92503
800-442-4918
www.co.riverside.ca.us

SAN BERNARDINO

San Bernardino County CWS Agency
150 S Lena Road
San Bernardino, CA 92415
909-384-9233
800-827-8724
outside the county
www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us

VENTURA

Ventura County Children and Family Services
855 Partridge Drive
Ventura, CA 93003
805-654-3200
www.countyofventura.org