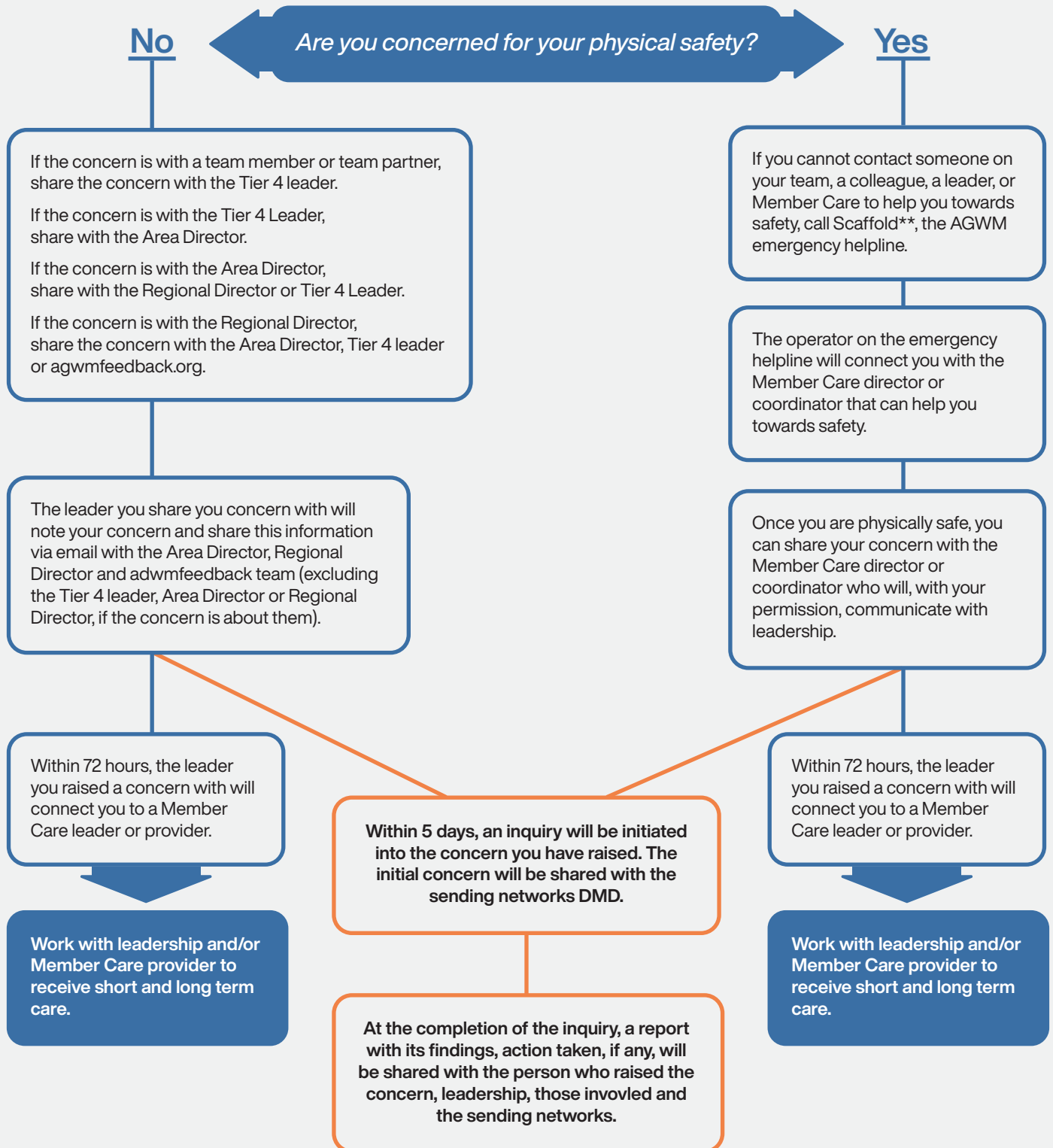


Misuse of Spiritual Authority

You or someone you care about is experiencing the use of spiritual authority (a position of authority, a community, Scripture, etc.) to control* an individual. Spiritual abuse (1) occurs in a spiritual context, (2) is exemplified by a desire to lord one's authority over others (Matthew 20:25–26, 1 Peter 5:3), (3) is often marked by persistent behavior, and (4) causes harm whether intended or not. (Assemblies of God, 2025)



* See list of terms at the end of this document.

** The Scaffold phone line is AGWM's emergency helpline. The operator will receive your call and then connect you with a U.S.-based Member Care representative.

Sharing a Concern

Reporting Person's Name: _____

Reporting for Self or Other: _____

Relationship to person: _____

Did the other person give permission to report: YES / NO

Details of Your Concern

Answer the following questions. Provide specific, factual information.

What happened – Describe the actions or behaviors.

When it happened – Include dates and timeframes.

Where it occurred – Physical setting or online context.

Who was involved – Names and roles of people present.

Steps Taken: _____

Type of Abuse Observed

Spiritual abuse can take many forms. Indicate what applies:

- Manipulation or control using religious language
- Shaming, fear, or threats of divine punishment
- Misuse of scripture to justify harm or control
- Isolation from family, friends, or outside counsel
- Suppression of dissent or questioning leadership
- Sexual, emotional, financial, or physical abuse tied to religious authority