

## **VIII: COMMUNITY SECURITY**

### **A. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS**

#### **POLICY VIII.A.1:**

The UUCville Board of Trustees shall assure that written procedures are in place to assure that persons demonstrating disruptive behaviors are dealt with quickly and respectfully for the security of the entire church community.

The UUCville Board of Trustees shall assure that these written procedures are available to the entire UUCville staff and the congregation.

Said procedures shall be reviewed at least every five years.

#### **Rationale:**

While honoring the worth and dignity of every individual is one of the central tenets held by UUCville and is expressed in the Unitarian Universalist Purposes and Principles, we believe our congregation must maintain a respectful atmosphere in which openness can exist. Our church strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in belief, opinions, and life experiences.

Concern for the physical safety and emotional well-being of our congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of a particular individual. To the degree the disruption compromises the health and well being of this congregation, our actions as a church must reflect this emphasis on respectful relationships. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs is threatened, the sources of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly. To the degree possible and appropriate, confidentiality will be maintained. (If a staff member is involved the resolution may fall under the Personnel Policy Manual.)

#### **Definition:**

For purpose of this policy, disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to:

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child, such as physical or verbal abuse, threats of bodily harm, or sexually inappropriate behavior.
2. Disruption of church activities; and
3. Diminishment of the appeal of the church to its existing and potential membership through unwanted advances, harassment, and abusive or inappropriate language.

#### **Establishment of the Conflict Resolution Committee**

The Conflict Resolution Committee called to address a situation, or series of situations should be led by a trained, licensed therapist. (We hope a member of the congregation will volunteer for this task.) The members should include a Minister, a member of the Emotional Wellness Committee, a member of the Pastoral Visitors committee, and a member of the Community Life Council. If any staff or members/friends have been engaged in the conflict, they shall not be on the Conflict Resolution committee.

## **Procedures:**

### **I. In those instances in which an immediate response is required,**

- A. The offending person (s) may be asked to leave the premises.
- B. A meeting or activity in progress may be suspended until such time as it can safely be resumed.
- C. After every effort of de-escalation is attempted, the Police Department may be called if further assistance is required.
- D. The Minister, the Director of Administration and Finance, and the Board President must be notified if these interventions are undertaken in their absence. A written report of the incident, all follow up communication, and all responses will be kept in the church's confidential file by the Director of Administration and Finance. Only the Ministers and Board President have access to this file.
- E. An official letter to the offending person(s) describing the concerns and detailing what steps must be taken before returning to church activities may be sent by a Minister and Board President.
- F. Follow-up communication to the individuals or groups involved will be provided as appropriate and necessary.
- G. When a matter of safety is concerned, the Director of Administration and Finance is the staff member responsible for the safety and security of the building and the Congregation.

### **II. In those instances in which an immediate response is not required,**

- A. The Conflict Resolution Committee will be asked to resolve the situation.
  1. The committee will refer to the Principles of the UUA in determining what is acceptable and what is deemed disruptive behavior.
  2. The committee will collect all relevant information.
  3. The committee will determine an appropriate response on a case-by-case basis.
  4. The committee will evaluate the problem considering:
    - a. SAFETY—Is the person(s) a threat or perceived threat to another person(s) or property?
    - b. DISRUPTION—How much interference with church functions has occurred?
    - c. OFFENSIVENESS—How likely is it that existing or prospective members will be driven away?
  5. The committee will determine a response considering:
    - a. CAUSES—Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the person(s) and others in the church? Is it due to a professional diagnosed condition?
    - b. HISTORY—What has been the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?
    - c. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE—How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

B. Committee Response and Official Action Taken: Every level of response will include a written report kept in the confidential files of the church.

LEVEL ONE: (Communicate)—The Conflict Resolution Committee will inform the Minister and the Board President of its assessment of the problem. The Minister (if available) and a member of the committee will meet with the offending person(s) to communicate the concern and discuss ways to modify the disruptive behavior.

LEVEL TWO: After investigation the committee deems no action is required. The Committee will notify those directly involved of its findings in writing.

LEVEL THREE (Suspension)—The Committee will recommend to the Board and the Board will decide. The offending person(s) is suspended from the premises and activities of the church for a limited period of time, with reasons and conditions of return communicated in writing by the Lead Minister and Board President.

LEVEL FOUR (Expulsion)—After hearing the recommendation of the Conflict Resolution Committee, the Board will decide whether to expel the offending person(s). Expulsion from the church means that the individual is no longer a member of the congregation, and the individual is directed not to participate in church activities or come onto church property. If expulsion is to be implemented, a letter will be sent by the Lead Minister and the Board President explaining the expulsion. In addition, the Membership Committee will be notified of the expulsion in order for the person's name to be removed from the official membership roll.

C. Members of the church whose personal security have been threatened by disruptive behavior will be kept informed in a timely manner of the steps being taken to deal with the person(s), i.e., the source of the problem. In addition, the Minister may offer or recommend to a church member(s)/friend(s) who has been adversely affected by the disruptive behavior a qualified professional individual for additional help.

Draft by the Conflict Resolution Committee,  
1/14/2010

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