

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF PENSACOLA BEHAVIOR POLICY

The following GUIDELINES/GROUND RULES for the Behavior Policy have been adopted by the UUPC Governing Board. The Right Relations Team of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola (UUCP) has been designated as the primary group to address situations that may involve the policy.

1. The UUCP Governing Board is the convening authority for the Right Relations Team.
2. The Church President or the President's designee shall refer behavior policy matters to the RRT for consideration.
3. These Guidelines are based upon the Governing Board's written policy titled: "Unacceptable Behavior Policy Update" passed December 15, 1998 and published in the June 1999 issue of THE LIGHT. This policy has since been renamed BEHAVIOR POLICY.
4. The Right Relations Team shall endeavor to meet together with all parties to any mediation or dispute. In the event that this is not possible, the Right Relations Team shall strive to meet with the parties separately with the objective of getting the disputants to meet face to face with the Right Relations Team as soon as feasible. (In the event that the Right Relations Team deems it inadvisable to bring the parties together face to face, the Right Relations Team shall determine the most appropriate way to handle the situation in order to preserve the safety and dignity of all parties in an ethical and equitable manner.)
5. All meetings of the Right Relations Team are confidential with the exception that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in the event of disclosure of information indicating imminent danger to self or others or serious violation of felony laws of Escambia County, the State of Florida, or the United States.
6. In the event that the Right Relations Team cannot affect satisfactory resolution of conflict, the Right Relations Team shall refer the matter to the church Governing Board along with a proposed solution.
7. During the Right Relations Team's mediation sessions and other work, threats of violence, physical or verbal attacks, or emotional abuse will not be allowed.

8. Right Relations Team members will not take sides with any disputant, but will remain as objective as possible and will respect the opinions of all disputants.
9. The Right Relations Team will conduct mediation sessions in a manner that affords every disputant the right to be heard and to hear the opinions of persons on all sides of the question or situation being mediated.
10. The work of the Right Relations Team shall be conducted in the spirit of love and respect for the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.
11. The Right Relations Team shall address all situations referred to it in a timely manner.
(The rationale for handling such situations with dispatch is to reduce the debilitating effects of rumors, innuendos, and ruminations on the part of the disputants and among congregation members.)

The Behavior Policy was adopted by the UUCP Governing Board at the September 21, 1999 Board meeting.

The Behavior Policy was revised by the Board on April 14, 2014 to reflect the new name of Right Relations Team, (adopted by bylaws revision on May 22, 2011) in the place of the former name of Conflict Resolution Team.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR POLICY UPDATE

The following statement of policy was passed by the UUCP Governing Board Dec. 15, 1998: *Standards of Behavior of the Members and Officials of the UU Church of Pensacola, FL.*

In the spirit of love and respect for the principals of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations which calls us to the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and for our bylaws which mandate the use of Robert's Rules of Order in the conduct of this corporations business; the Governing Board stands firm in its expectations and belief that we shall treat each within our midst with justice, equity and compassion. While recognizing that each of us fails from time to time to live up to our highest standards we continue to support each other in this quest.

Confident that the principles of parliamentary law which are constructed to balance the rights of the majority, the minority and of individual members both those present at a time certain and those unable to be present, the Board urges all members and leaders to be familiar with and practice these regularly. Copies of Robert's shall be available in our library. Furthermore, within this business year we shall arrange a workshop led by a competent person to make those interested aware of common practices for good leadership and responsible membership.

Our fundamental belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person mandates the highest standards of acceptance for the beliefs, well being and integrity of all within the walls of our church home and in any activities organized by and for our community at any place.

Whenever a person believes they have been injured, threatened or harassed we urge such persons to act affirmatively on their own behalf whenever possible. Whenever persons are not able to deal successfully with harassing, disruptive or other unaccept-

able behaviors they are requested to bring this matter to the attention of a person in leadership capacity including but not limited to Ministers, Officers and Members of the Governing Board. Leaders shall try within their capacity and ability to resolve such situations promptly, with tact and respect for the dignity and rights of all.

In the event that the leader handling such event feels that the matter has passed their ability to reach a successful resolution of the conflict, the president or the president's designee shall refer the matter to a conflict resolution team.

Each year the Governing Board at its first meeting shall designate a Conflict Resolution Team consisting of at least two members of the congregation whom it deems to have the necessary skills and congregational regard to resolve conflict as speedily, privately and successfully as possible. They shall search for the truth and ascertain each party's perception of the situation and then seek a solution acceptable to all. When this is not possible they shall make every effort to understand all aspects of the situation and then present to the parties their recommendation as to how justice for all may be attained.

In the event that this process does not resolve the conflict, the team shall refer the matter to the Governing Board along with a proposed solution. All such matters shall be handled in confidence.

When a recommendation contains a provision which would end or limit one party's participation in this community, that person shall have the right to present his views of the matter to the Governing Board using a spokes person of their own choosing, if so desired.

The Governing Board wishes to underscore its adherence to the laws and statutes of Escambia County and the state of Florida. Should any behavior within the community be deemed contrary to such laws, particularly actions which threaten the safety of others, law enforcement personnel shall be informed.

Right Relations Tips

The Congregational Covenant that we recite together during each New Member Ceremony and during other services includes details for building healthy congregational relations. The covenant states, in part, "We value honesty, direct speaking and courtesy in our conflict, courage in our speech, and integrity in our action." Covenants such as this are aspirational — meaning we aspire to fulfill all the promises we make in the covenant but often fall short since we are human. Still, we are encouraged to affirm and reaffirm our promises and to continue working at relationships. This document provides helpful tips for improving relationships among church Members, Friends, and/or Staff.

Centered on our UUCP Mission Statement, committed to our Congregational Covenant, and focused on the vision of our church, our congregational relations mostly proceed congenially. However, conflicts are inevitable from time to time. Our expectation is that conflicts are resolved at the lowest level possible, e.g. through mutual and respectful interaction between persons involved. However, sometimes conflicts between Members, Friends, and/or Staff bubble over to others. When this happens, the results can be debilitating to the congregation unless the conflicts are handled properly.

In the event that one or more person(s) approach you to express a conflict or disagreement, the following responses are recommended and are listed in order of preference:

1. Ask the person(s) approaching you if they have spoken with the person(s) with whom there is conflict or disagreement in order to resolve the issue with honesty, direct speaking, and courtesy. Many conflicts are easily resolved through open communication. Encourage the person(s) to communicate with the person(s) with whom there is conflict, if they have not already. If the person(s) approaching you is not sure with whom to speak – such as if the concern is related to some aspect of church life like Sunday Services, Fun & Fellowship, or the budget – provide the person(s) with the name(s) of the Ministry Team Leader, Board Member, etc., who is a decisionmaker in that area and/or offer to help the person(s) identify who is the right person to approach. For example, refer to the latest issue of The Light or church website for a list of Board Members and Ministry Team Leaders and to the church directory on Simple Church for the decisionmaker's contact information.

2. Offer to practice or role play with the person(s) approaching you what they might say to the other person(s). This approach allows the person(s) approaching you to think through their concerns, clarify what they believe needs to happen to resolve the conflict, and increase their courage and confidence in using honesty, direct speaking, and courtesy to resolve the conflict directly with the other person(s).
3. Offer to accompany the person(s) approaching you to meet or talk with the other person(s). This approach enables you to be supportive without getting directly involved in the conflict.
4. If all of the above are not fruitful and the person(s) continues to ask you to resolve the conflict for them, tell the person(s) that you will go to the person(s) with whom there is conflict but that you will attribute the concern to the person(s) approaching you rather than attributing the concern to "someone" or "some people" or presenting the concern anonymously.

If a disagreement or conflict between or among UUCP Members, Friends, and/or Staff cannot be resolved with the above steps, the Governing Board may be asked to convene the Right Relations Team to help resolve the issue. The Board also may convene the Right Relations Team independent of a request if the Board notices an unresolved conflict affecting the congregation.

A general goal of the Right Relations process is to adequately address the conflict and restore right relations without resulting in anyone involved choosing to leave the congregation, yet this is not always possible. The current UUCP Behavior Policy outlines policy for the Right Relations Team.

Helpful References:

Congregational Covenant
UUCP Bylaws
Behavior Policy