

<b>First Unitarian Universalist Church Columbus, Ohio</b>		<b>Policies and Procedures</b>
<b>Chapter:</b> II. Congregational Responsibilities		<b>Source:</b> Modeled after UUA policy and examples from West Shore UU, Cleveland, Ohio
<b>Title:</b> Disruptive Behavior		
<b>Approved by:</b> Board of Trustees; Revised Policy approved by Coordinating Team 01-25-17		<b>Date of passage of policy by Board of Trustees:</b> November 22, 2004
<b>Effective Date:</b> August 22, 2005		<b>Date of Last Review:</b> 01-25-17

### A. Background and Purpose:

While the creation of a beloved community open to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our Association's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons. Actions to address disruptive behavior are undertaken with compassion and the hope of reconciliation.

There have been times when the disruptive behavior of an individual within the church building has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

- Perceived threats to the safety of an adult or child;
- Disruption of church activities;
- Diminishment of the appeal of the church to existing and potential members.

First Unitarian Universalist Church strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. In some cases, however, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of an individual. To the degree that disruptive behavior compromises the health of this congregation, our actions, as people of faith, must reflect our commitment to maintaining an inclusive and yet safe community.

### B. Responsibility, Authority, and Accountability:

Under our Governance Policy, the Coordinating Team has responsibility and authority to attend to the safety of the congregation and is accountable to the Board of Trustees. The Response Team and the Respectful Relationships Team are accountable to the Coordinating Team.

1. **Immediate Response.** If an immediate response is required, the person with responsibility for responding (the Responsible Person) is the minister present; in the absence of a minister, responsibility falls to the Director of Administration, if present; and next to the sponsor or leader of the activity or event.
  - (a) The Responsible Person has the discretion to determine the response but is expected first to attempt to de-escalate the situation.
  - (b) The response may include engaging the person in conversation; asking that person to leave; suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed; calling the police; or immediately directing evacuation or lockdown, as appropriate.

2. **Follow-Up.** After a disruptive behavior incident (whether or not there was an immediate response), follow-up is required.
  - (a) **Incident Report.** In the case of an incident where there was an immediate response, the Responsible Person must submit an incident report in accordance with the Safety Policy. If there was not an immediate response, any person who witnessed the behavior is expected either to submit an incident report or to contact a minister, who will submit an incident report based on information of witnesses.
  - (b) **Referral of Member Behavior.** If the behavior in question was by a member of the First UU community, the Associate Minister will refer the incident to the Response Team under the Safety Policy for follow-up with the person.
    - (i) Exception. If, in the judgment of the Associate Minister, the behavior appears to have emerged from an interpersonal conflict, and there does not appear to be an ongoing risk to the safety of others, the Associate Minister is authorized to ask the parties to the conflict to work with a member of the Respectful Relationships Team (RRT) to resolve their conflict and seek to return to covenant with one another.
    - (ii) If one of the parties refuses to work with the RRT to resolve the conflict, or if resolution is not accomplished, the RRT member must report the situation to the Associate Minister, who is required to refer the behavior to the Response Team.
  - (c) **Referral of Non-Member Behavior.** If the behavior was by a person not a member of the First UU community, the Associate Minister must refer the incident to the Coordinating Team for review of the incident and determination of appropriate follow-up.

### C. Principles for Evaluating Behavior

1. This policy does not attempt to define either “disruptive” or "acceptable" behavior in advance. Members and friends are expected to honor the Covenant of Respectful Relations.
  - (a) The Responsible Person, the Response Team, the Right Relations Team, and the Coordinating Team are to treat the individual whose behavior was disruptive with respect.
  - (b) In follow-up, these questions are part of the evaluation of the behavior.
    - (i) Dangerousness. Is the person the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
    - (ii) Disruptiveness. How much interference with church functions is occurred or is likely to be ongoing?
    - (iii) Offensiveness. How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
    - (iv) Causes. Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between an individual and others in the church? Is it likely due to a condition of mental illness?
    - (v) History. Is there a recurring history of disruptive behavior?
    - (vi) Probability of change. How likely is it that the disruptive behavior will diminish in the future?

#### **D. Recordkeeping.**

1. To preserve institutional memory and consistent application of this policy over time, the Director of Administration is required to maintain a record of each incident under this policy, kept in a locked file in the Church Office.
2. Access to this record is restricted to the Coordinating Team and the Response Team, who have the authority to share this information as required to carry out their responsibilities.
3. The record includes the initial incident report, the identity of the offending individual, all communications between the individual and the church relating to the invoking of the policy, supporting documentation, and a statement summarizing the follow-up and any determination or resolution regarding the incident.

#### **Revision History:**

First adopted: November 22, 2004

First revisions: June 20, 2005

Second revision: August 22, 2005

Third revision: January 25, 2017 (as part of a comprehensive review of governance documents following adoption of a new Governance Policy in June 2015)