

Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Policy on Disruptive Behavior

2011

A person engaging in disruptive behavior at an ALUUC activity in the church building, on the grounds, or at another location may be subject to censure and asked to leave the Congregation for a limited or indefinite period of time.

Disruptive behavior is defined as: (a) behavior which is perceived to be a threat to the safety of an adult or child; (b) offensive language or behavior that unduly undermines the inherent worth and dignity of an individual or group; (c) behavior that disrupts church activities.

Behavior that can be defined child abuse, sexual abuse, clergy misconduct, sexual misconduct or sexual harassment shall be governed by the Safe Congregation Policy adopted May 7, 2000, and any subsequent amendments to that Policy.

A Dispute Resolution Committee, hereinafter referred to as the "Committee", shall be appointed by the President of the Board at the beginning of the church year and shall consist of three members of the Congregation, one of whom shall be a member of the Board. The Committee will investigate allegations of disruptive behavior referred to it and determine an appropriate response.

If an immediate response is required, it may be made by the Minister or member(s) of the Committee present or leader of activity involved. Action might include asking the offending person to leave or suspending the activity until such time that it can be safely resumed. If further assistance is necessary, the Police may be called. Any time any of these responses are undertaken in the absence of the Minister, the Minister and Board President must be notified. The minister will send a follow-up letter to the offending person detailing the steps which must be taken by the offending person or persons.

Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to the Committee. The Committee will respond as determined by its judgment and observe the following:

- 1) The committee will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable behavior" in advance.
- 2) Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals; stereotypes will be avoided.
- 3) The Committee will collect all pertinent information.

- 4) To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:
 - a) Dangerousness -- Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
 - b) Disruptiveness — How much interference with church functions is occurring?
 - c) Offensiveness — How likely is it that prospective or existing members or friends will be driven away or discouraged from participating in church activities by said behavior?
- 5) To determine the appropriate response, the following points will be considered:
 - a) Causes — Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between individuals, between an individual and others? Is the disruption due to illness?
 - b) History — What are the frequency and the degree of disruption involving said individual or group in the past?
 - c) Probability of Change — How likely is it that the problem behavior will reoccur?
- 6) The Committee will decide on a case by case basis what response is appropriate. The three levels of response indicated are recommended.
 - a) Level One -- The Committee shall inform the Minister of the results of its investigation and analysis and the Minister alone or with one or more of the committee members will meet with the offending individual or group to discuss the situation and attempt to negotiate a method of resolving the conflict and eliminating further disruptive behavior.
 - b) Level Two —The offending individual is informed by the Minister and the Committee that he/she is excluded from specific church activities for a limited period of time with reasons given and the conditions of return clearly indicated.
 - c) Level Three — The offender is notified by the Minister and the Committee that he/she is permanently excluded from church activities and the church premises.
- 7) A Level One or Level Two response may be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Board. The Board of Trustees may institute a Level Three response only following a majority vote.