



## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood City (UUFRC) strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. Openness to a wide variety of people is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles.

However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must take priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree disruptive behavior compromises the well-being of UUFRC members and friends, our actions as people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security. When physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express beliefs or opinions by UUFRC members or friends is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person(s).

All activities and actions at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood City are to be thought through and accomplished in the spirit of Beloved Community; elected and called congregational leaders agree to always be guided by the congregational mission statement, the UUA Principles and Purposes, and a spirit of mutual care aiming at the goal of community wholeness and reconciliation. We wish to weave a healthy community that is welcoming, compassionate, and joyful.

### **Disruptive Behavior**

Disruptive behavior may include one or more of the following.

- Actual or perceived threats to the physical safety of any individual(s) – adult, youth, or child
- Actual or perceived threats to the emotional and/or intellectual well-being of any individual(s)
- Actual or perceived threats to UUFRC property or the property of UUFRC members or friends
- The disruption of any Fellowship activities on UUFRC's premises, in private homes, on private property, in public places or electronically including the Internet
- Diminishing the appeal of the UUFRC to its existing and potential members and/or friends

In this context, we take the term "threats" to include the following.

- Actions
- Verbal and written statements, including but not limited to traditional and electronic communications
- Gestures including but not limited to images, pictures, audio and video materials



## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Each member of UUFRC has an interest and responsibility in preventing disruptive behavior. However, the UUFRC Minister and Board President hold ultimate authority and responsibility for ensuring that we, as a community, respond effectively, consistently, and in accordance with our values and principles.

### **Urgent Situations**

We consider any situation to be urgent if the disruption is both significant and active presently or likely – e.g., involving a person with a history of behaving disruptively in similar circumstances.

If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister or Board President whenever available. If neither is available, it is preferable for the response to be handled by a Board member or any key staff person. In the absence of the aforementioned parties, the leader of the group involved has authority to act.

Action may include issuing a temporary expulsion – asking the offending person(s) to leave for as little as a day or as long as a month. If the offending person(s) does not leave immediately and by her or his own free will, the police department may be called to issue a criminal trespass warning.

Any time any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister's and Board President's direct involvement, both must be notified. The individual(s) who carried out the response on behalf of UUFRC shall provide a brief report immediately – e.g., confidential email or voicemail – and follow-up with a full, confidential, written report as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days after.

In the case of temporary expulsions exceeding 24 hours, confidential appeals may be made to the Minister and Board President according to the process described below.

In the case of temporary expulsions the Minister and Board President, or their designee, will follow-up with the expelled person(s) and the individual(s) who took the action to confirm whether the situation was handled appropriately and determine whether any further action is merited – corrective or otherwise.

### **Non-Urgent Situations**

Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred confidentially to the Minister and Board President in writing.



## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

The Minister and Board President may, at their discretion, investigate the situation personally or delegate the investigation and the development of a recommended response to an ad hoc advisory committee. Members of this committee will work in strict confidence.

Person(s) identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individual(s); stereotypes will be avoided.

Efforts shall be made to provide the accused person(s) the opportunity to provide their perspective and version of the situation.

### Evaluation

To aid in evaluating the situation, the following points will be considered.

**Dangerousness** – Is the person(s) the source of a threat or perceived threat to other individuals or property at UUFRC?

**Disruptiveness** – How much interference is there with UUFRC functions?

**Offensiveness** – How likely is it that existing or prospective members and friends of UUFRC will reduce participation or be driven away?

To determine the response, the following points will be considered.

**Causes** – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the person(s) and other individuals at UUFRC? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed medical condition and/or mental illness?

**History** – What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

**Probability of Change** – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

Responses shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, the following three categories of response are recommended.

1. **A Warning** – The Minister or his/her appointee shall communicate with the offending person(s) the concerns and the behavioral changes necessary to avoid stronger consequences in the future. The Minister and the offending person(s) may choose to enter into a confidential, written Behavioral Covenant upon which continued participation will be contingent.



## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

2. **Temporary Expulsion** – The offending person(s) is excluded from UUFRC's premises and/or specific activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear in a confidential letter signed by the Board President and Minister.
3. **Permanent Expulsion** – The offending person(s) is excluded permanently from UUFRC's premises and all its activities. Permanent expulsion of a person(s) who is a member of UUFRC will follow the procedures outlined in the UUFRC Bylaws for termination of membership. The individual will be informed in a confidential letter signed by the Board President and Minister.

### Confidentiality

All communication regarding a disruptive behavior action – written and/or verbal – shall be held in strict confidence by the Board President and/or Trustees, Minister, UUFRC staff on a need-to-know-only basis, and the individual(s) who initiated the action with the person(s).

### The Expulsed

Should any expelled person(s) violate the expressed terms of the expulsion; come onto UUFRC's premises; appear at an offsite UUFRC activity; or, make contact in any way with UUFRC including electronically or via the Internet, all members have the duty to report such violations to the Minister and Board President. In circumstances of physical trespass, all UUFRC members also have the authority to immediately contact the police if necessary to have the person(s) removed with all due haste. A criminal trespass warning or criminal trespass citation should be requested from the police.

### Appeals

A confidential appeal of any action taken against a disruptive person(s) must be made in writing to the Minister and Board President.

Any appeal must be made personally by excluded person(s). The request must contain information concerning the rationale for appeal such as the following.

1. A statement of the reasons for which s/he was excluded
2. A detailed explanation how circumstances and/or conditions have changed, such that a reconsideration of the case should be justified

The appeal of a temporary expulsion may be made immediately to the Board of Trustees.

The appeal of a permanent expulsion must be made within 60 days after the initial action is taken. If this deadline cannot be met, an explanation and request for extension should be



## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

made in writing to the Minister and Board President. In the event that appeal is not granted, any subsequent appeals may be made within one year following the person(s) being informed of a negative decision on the previous appeal. There is a limit of two appeals.

As UUFRC operates with policy-based governance, the Board of Trustees will not generally receive or entertain appeals unless a clear violation of UUFRC Board policy or Bylaws has occurred. One can consult Board policy and the Bylaws on the UUFRC website.

### **Criminal and Violent Behavior**

Criminal, violent, and verbally abusive behaviors go beyond the scope of this disruptive behavior policy and UUFRC has zero tolerance for them. In the case of behaviors that pose a physical threat to people or property, or other serious and imminent criminal acts, all UUFRC members have the authority and duty to contact the police immediately.

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