

## FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF INDIANA PA LEVEL 2: DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR PROCEDURE

### Rationale:

This procedure is intended to provide due process, transparency, and fairness to formal interventions in conflicts that have not been resolved by the Level 1 Interpersonal Conflict Procedure, or have escalated in intensity. As such, it is more judicial in nature, with formal reviews of evidence and multiple opportunities for appeal.

### History:

This procedure was originally part of the template document for the Covenant Restoration Policy that the Ad Hoc Policy Development Committee adopted in May 2016. However, as revisions progressed, the committee agreed that the resulting document would be much too long, particularly since the Level 1 Procedure was to be part of it as well. The solution was to break out the Level 1 and 2 interventions into procedures separate from the overall Covenant Restoration Policy.

In October 2016, the Ad Hoc committee reviewed the draft and suggested minor revisions. In November 2016 First UU standing committees reviewed and commented, and the Board of Trustees accepted the resulting draft for a period of one year.

### Procedure:

This procedure, based on recommendations from the UUA, describes a series of formal responses to conflicts between individuals or among groups that have begun to disrupt relationships or events. It can also be used when the provisions of the Level 1 Interpersonal Conflict Procedure have been tried and failed. Under the guidelines of the Covenant Restoration Policy, the procedures below shall be followed in this order:

- I. **Step 1:** The Committee on Ministries (COM) will be the first formal body to implement the Disruptive Behavior Procedure, as follows:
  - A. The COM will meet with all parties involved in order to gain a full understanding of the incident. COM members should include the following questions in its investigations:
    1. **Causes:** Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a physical health, behavioral health, or substance use condition?
    2. **History:** What is the frequency and degree of disruption in the past?
    3. **Probability of change:** How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
    4. **Severity:** To what degree does the incident adversely affect the larger congregation?
  - B. In the event that any member of COM has a conflict of interest, he or she shall recuse him or herself from any further involvement.
  - C. At any stage of the process, the offending individual(s) may choose someone to provide moral support and serve as an informal advisor. This person may accompany the party during interviews, but may not interfere with the investigation.
  - D. The COM and the offending individual(s) may agree on a resolution that restores covenant with

the path of return to covenant made clear in writing and agreed to by all parties involved.

- E. If the COM and the individual(s) cannot agree on a resolution that restores covenant, the COM shall refer the incident and all documentation to the Board of Trustees.
- F. Any documentation should include direct statements from the parties involved and strive to be as factual as possible.

**II. Step 2:** If the COM determines that the offending actions of the individual(s) need to be referred to the Board of Trustees, the following procedure shall be implemented:

- A. The Board will read the COM's report and any other pertinent documents in order to gain a full understanding of the incident and the steps taken so far to resolve the issue.
- B. In the event that any Board member has a conflict of interest, he or she will recuse him or herself from any further involvement.
- C. The Board will meet with all parties involved in order to gain a full understanding of the incident.
- D. At any stage of the process, the offending individual(s) may choose someone to provide moral support and serve as an informal advisor. This person may accompany the party during interviews, but may not interfere with the investigation.
- E. The Board may come to an agreement with the offending individual(s) that restores covenant with the path of return to covenant made clear in writing and agreed to by all parties involved.
- F. The Board may determine that the offending individual(s) needs to be temporarily excluded from the church and/or specific church activities for a limited period of time, with the reasons for such action and the conditions of return made clear in a written notification.
- G. The Board may determine that the offending individual(s) should be removed from membership and, if appropriate, excluded from the church premises and all church activities. Notification of such a decision shall be made in writing and will explain the individual's rights and possible recourse.

**III. Step 3: Appeal Of Decision:** Any action taken under Step 2 may be appealed, in writing, by the individual(s) affected to the Board of Trustees within thirty days of the letter of notification.

- A. In the event that the action taken under Step Two is appealed, an Ad Hoc Appeal Committee may be formed by the Board of Trustees drawn from the following:
  - 1. Two members of the Board of Trustees
  - 2. Two members selected by the Committee on Ministries who are not members of the Board of Trustees
  - 3. An active member of the church chosen by the removed person.

**Note:** In a case where the individual does not have a member to propose, the fifth member would be selected by the other four members of this Ad Hoc Appeal Committee. The majority decision of the Appeal Committee shall be final and not subject to further appeal under this policy.

**IV. Appropriate Disclosure:** The removal of an individual from membership in the church or participation in church activities, or of a friend or other non-member, will be disclosed on a need to know basis including but not limited to:

- A. Those persons (and/or their guardians if minor children/adolescents) who have been negatively impacted by the individual(s)

- B. Chair persons of committees those individual(s) were involved in
- C. Church staff
  1. Notifying parties will make every effort to encourage those persons receiving this information to be discreet and respectful.
  2. If it is determined that a larger group of people may have been impacted or remain at risk for harm, an announcement will be made in the church newsletter with the statement:

“In accordance with the Disruptive Behavior Policy a member has been removed from membership. Any church member who wishes to know the identity of the removed member may ask the Minister or any member of the Board of Trustees.”

3. A list of individuals who have been removed from church membership shall be maintained in a secure location in the church office.

- V. Possible Reinstatement of Removed Individual:** Any request for reinstatement must be made by the member who was removed from membership. The request shall go to the Board of Trustees.
- A. A reinstatement request may be made no sooner than one year following the date of removal.
  - B. The request must contain information concerning the rationale for the reinstatement:
    1. A statement of understanding of the reasons for which s/he was removed from membership.
    2. An explanation in detail how circumstances and conditions have changed, such that a reinstatement would be justified.
  - C. The Board shall review the request and respond within sixty days as to whether or not to reinstate the removed member. The decision of the Board shall be final and not subject to further appeal.
  - D. In the event that this reinstatement request is not granted, any subsequent reinstatement requests may be made no sooner than one year following the member being informed of a negative decision on the previous request.

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#### **Sources Consulted:**

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<http://www.uua.org/safe/disruptive-behavior-policies>. Consulted May 2016.