

RIGHT RELATIONS POLICY

OPENING STATEMENT

The ***Right Relations Policy*** provides a foundation for all members of the *UUFBC* to communicate effectively and exhibit healthy inter-personal relations. This policy refers to relationships between the Fellowship, its members, its leaders and the larger community in which it interacts. The intent is to provide a safe, harmonious environment where all feel welcomed and appreciated. This policy is designed to support the *UUFBC* Congregational Covenant.

Creating and sustaining a faith community remains the work of all members in positions of leadership (board, minister, staff, team leaders, volunteers). However, everyone participating within the *UUFBC* community shall be expected to relate to each other with respect and dignity. Each person regardless of his or her role in the Fellowship shall be expected to honor this policy within the context of his or her role.

There will always be areas of differences when dealing with people: varying world views, life experiences, prejudices and sometimes strong contradictory beliefs. Differences and/or misunderstandings can and do result in conflict. Left unresolved, conflict can undermine the social well-being of those involved in the Fellowship. Therefore the management and resolution of any/all conflicts remains vital to all parties.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to foster support for all who attend *UUFBC* to encourage all to work and live in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, and a spirit of cooperation.

It is recognized there may be a need to address disruptive behavior or the potential for it. These include challenges that can/may occur when there are multi-generations involved in congregational life, an influx of new ideas or changing worldviews.

Conflict is a natural part of healthy congregational life. However, situations involving any disruptive behavior shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, minister, staff or team leaders. All such behavior, if not handled on an individual basis, will be referred to the ***Conflict Resolution Committee*** for mediation. Until such a committee is established, the BOD will handle any conflict mediation.

POLICY

We begin with the common sense wisdom that all should adhere to the UU's seven Principles: Being in ***Right Relations*** requires everyone involved with *UUFBC* to exhibit positive behaviors as exhibited in the long-held UU traditions of peace, fellowship and civility.

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- Speak honestly and express sincere appreciation for each other
- Allow for human fallibility.
- Maintain a sense of humor while encouraging creative problem solving
- Refrain from harmful gossip.
- Use direct lines of communication to avoid triangulation.
- Listen actively with respect.
- Respect personal boundaries that may differ from yours

PROCEDURE

The ***Right Relations Policy*** will:

- Be distributed to all individuals attending a new-member orientation .
- Be included in ***Right Relations*** training as part of leadership training.
- Be included in the Policy and Procedure manual displayed on the Web site at uuofbaycounty.com
- Be available in hard copy at the Fellowship's office.
- Be supported by the ***Safety Policy***.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

OPENING STATEMENT

The ***Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC)*** will be created to mediate when conflict cannot be resolved by the individuals or groups involved. Information regarding alleged conflict or incidents that led to concern will be collected by the **CRC** and documented before any action is taken. Members of the **CRC** are tasked with assessing and informing the Board of Directors of its findings and any recommendations as to any forthcoming action necessary.

The **CRC** shall consist of a standing committee of three members. Each **CRC** committee member shall be selected by the **UUFBC** Board of Directors based on each individual's exhibited facilitation skills and previous knowledge and experience within the functioning activities of *the fellowship*. **CRC** members shall serve on an "as needed" basis for a minimum of two years. Should one of the team members resign prematurely the board shall appoint a replacement.

The cost associated with this process (conflict resolution training for members such as UUA seminars) will be included in the annual **UUFBC** budget.

CRC members will excuse themselves from any conflict for which there is a bias based upon the individuals or the topics involved.

QUALIFICATIONS (Optimal)

- Has been a member of *UUFBC* for a minimum of two years.
- Is well respected by the membership.
- Has preferably served in other leadership positions.
- Has exhibited active listening skills and the ability to be nonreactive.
- Has experience in conflict resolution or is willing to learn.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The **CRC** Committee shall:

- Meet at least quarterly
- Excuse themselves from any conflict for which they have an inherent bias based on the individuals or issues involved.
- Report all activities of the committee to the board of directors, at least annually.
- Coordinate with the Leadership Development committee when conducting education and training in ***Right Relations/Conflict Resolution*** for *UUFBC* members and its leaders.
- Communicate with the *fellowship* regarding ***Right Relations*** process and policy.
- Develop and recommend additional policies and procedures, as needed.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

OPENING STATEMENT

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by *UUFBC* and expressed in its principles, we affirm that our fellowship must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When the congregation's well-being is threatened, the source of the threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this requires the removal of any offending person or persons.

POLICY

Disruptive behavior of an individual within the fellowship includes one or more of the following:

- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult, youth or child.
- The disruption of fellowship activities.
- The destruction or threat of destruction of church property.
- Violation of the fellowship's Covenant and/or compromising the healthy development of congregational life to its members.

If an immediate response is required, fellowship leaders should tell the person or group being disruptive that their behavior or actions are unacceptable. Fellowship leaders may ask the offender to leave, suspend the meeting or activity until safety is resumed.

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If further assistance is required church leaders should call 911. After an incident takes place fellowship leaders shall report the offense to the **Conflict Resolution Committee** and the board of directors. The **CRC** will send a follow-up letter to the offending party detailing what steps must be undertaken before they will be allowed to return to *UUFBC* or any of its activities.

Situations not requiring immediate response shall be referred to the CRC. In turn the CRC will respond in terms of its findings and shall observe the following:

- The CRC will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define acceptable behavior in advance.
- Persons will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.
- The committee will collect all necessary information.

To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:

- **DANGEROUSNESS** – Is the individual the source of a threat/perceived threat to persons or property?
- **DISRUPTIVENESS** – How much interference with the church functions is going on?
- **OFFENSIVENESS** – How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

The **CRC** once informed of the nature of the dispute or disruptive behavior shall determine the validity of the complaint. The findings of the **CRC** will be clearly communicated to the person/persons in question and a contract with a clear path to true forgiveness and resolution will be negotiated between all parties. The contract will clearly define and specify any expected behavioral changes required for continued participation in congregational life.

The CRC will inform the board of any impasse and may recommend the individual be excluded from any or all fellowship activities for a specified period of time.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Guidelines for Success

| POSSIBLE SCENARIOS | SITUATION | ACTIONS |
|---|--|---|
| <p>SCENARIO ONE We work it out</p> | <p>Conflict resolved by those directly involved. May use resources available from CRC or elsewhere.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use “I” statements: “ I’m feeling uncomfortable with what’s happening...” ● Use active listening and reflect back what you have heard. ● Speak for yourself and own your feelings. ● Be responsible for your behavior. ● Say “I am sorry” when wrong. ● Focus on behaviors rather than personalities. ● Avoid triangulation, speak directly to the person involved in the situation |
| <p>SCENARIO TWO We need help</p> | <p>No agreement reached, one or both parties refuse to meet with other and incident remains unresolved.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact CRC for assistance. ● Parties to the conflict find their own way. ● CRC may offer a process for resolution – NOT a solution |
| <p>SCENARIO THREE We engage in a process leading to a recommendation</p> | <p>Unsatisfactory resolution from SCENARIO Two or one of the parties refuses to participate in resolution. Board of directors shall officially refer the situation to the CRC for consideration.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CRC shall convene and apply the <i>Disruptive Behavior Policy</i>, taking necessary steps to assure the health and well-being of the fellowship. ● CRC will present a recommendation to the BOD and parties involved. |