

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax Operational Policy

**Subject: Incidents of Dangerous, Threatening, or Disruptive Behavior
Number: I.C.**

Effective Date: 10/10/18

Approved By: Coordinating Team

Policy

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We celebrate diversity and welcome all individuals. At the same time, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax affirm that our congregation must maintain a safe atmosphere for all those present in UUCF spaces and events in order for such openness to exist. Understanding that risk is a part of life and can never be completely eliminated from any activity, UUCF is committed to carefully considering the specific risks that are associated with a given activity or behavior and taking steps to mitigate those risks. This approach ensures that all that can be done will be done to insure safety, but recognizes that some risks will still remain in any community.

Definitions

Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to behavior that results in:

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any person involved in UUCF (including adults, children, youth)
2. Disruption of our congregation mission and activities,
3. Diminishing the appeal of the congregation to its existing and potential membership.

Right Relations / Covenant

The covenant of right relations will be placed here when approved by the congregation.

Procedures

The procedures of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax for dealing with incidents of dangerous, threatening, or disruptive behavior as set forth in this policy. These procedures may also be invoked by one of the ministers if they have reason to believe that an individual may pose a danger to the congregation because of past criminal, violent, or threatening behavior. Even in situations that require the application of these procedures, affected individuals should be treated with dignity and respect.

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by one of the ministers, if available, or by a Lay Minister, or, if these individuals are not available, by the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the service, meeting or activity until such time as it can be safely resumed. If necessary, authorities will be contacted. Whenever any of these actions is undertaken

without a minister present, notification must be given promptly to the ministers, who will in turn notify the Lay Ministers and the Coordinating Team.

2. All allegations of dangerous, threatening, or disruptive behavior, including situations not requiring an immediate response and concerns about potentially threatening behavior, will be referred to a committee of five, including at least one Lay Minister, two other lay members, and the two ministers. The committee will be appointed by the Coordinating Team. This committee will be responsible for gathering information and making a recommendation regarding an appropriate response.

3. In evaluating the behavior in question and in preparing a recommended response, the committee will seek to determine whether the behavior is a disruptive behavior and what the prudent resolution should be in order to best manage risk to the well-being of the congregation and its members. To this end, the committee process shall include consideration of the following:

- a. **DANGER:** Is the individual the source of a threat or a perceived threat to life, limb, emotional well-being or property?
- b. **DISRUPTIVENESS:** Is the behavior interfering with worship or another program? Are other people prevented from safely participating (including emotional and physical safety) in a congregational activity because of the disruptive behavior?
- c. **OFFENSIVENESS:** How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
- d. **CAUSE:** Why is the disruption occurring?
- e. **HISTORY:** What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?
- f. **PROBABILITY OF RECURRENCE:** How likely is it that the disruptive behavior will occur again, if no action is taken?

4. The committee will present a recommended action to the Coordinating Team for its review. If necessary, the Coordinating Team may consult with the Board about resolution. After incorporating the committee resolution with Board input, the CT will determine the appropriate response level in accord with committee and Board. Though resolutions will vary depending upon the situation, the following actions might be used:

- a. **Level One:** the CT determines no further action is necessary and the minister(s) communicate the nature of the concern and resolution to the person implicated in the concern.
- b. **Level Two:** the CT determines awareness, improvement in the behavior, and continued vigilance is prudent and the minister(s) meet with the individual to

communicate the nature of the concern, impact on the congregation, and need for awareness and change.

- c. Level Three: the offending individual is excluded from UUCF premises and/or specified activities for a limited period of time, or may also be permanently barred from specified activities or parts of the UUCF premises (for example, from activities involving children and youth and from the Program Building when such activities are taking place.) The reasons for the exclusion and the conditions of return shall be stated in a letter signed by the minister(s) and the President of the Board of Directors. The minister(s) can personally convey the reasons and conditions set forth in the letter where possible and appropriate.
 - d. Level Four: the offending individual is barred from UUCF premises and all UUCF activities, with the reason for that action stated in a letter signed by the minister(s) and the President of the Board of Directors. Reinstatement may occur, but only at the request of the individual and upon approval of the Board of Directors, in consultation with the ministers. If reinstatement is possible, the requirements for reinstatement including the individual's rights and responsibilities will be communicated in writing in a letter signed by the minister and the President of the Board of Directors.
5. When action is complete, the Coordinating Team will provide a report to the parties involved, and when appropriate, to the Board.