

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

The Disruptive Behavior Policy notes that the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole are given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree that disruptive behavior compromises the health and safety of members and friends of our congregation, our actions, as people of faith, must reflect an emphasis on congregational security. However, note that discomfort with a particular situation alone does not constitute disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior of an individual may lead to concerns related to one or more of the following:

- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child
- Disruption of church activities
- Diminished appeal of the church to its potential and existing membership and others who use our facility

Reporting Disruptive Behavior

Any person who believes that they have witnessed or experienced disruptive behavior or who has had a disruptive behavior incident reported to them should immediately report it to any of the following:

- The minister(s)
- The Board of Trustees
- Administrative Staff of UUSS
- Designated member(s) of the Congregational Safety Panel

If required by law, ordinance or similar regulation, the minister(s) or a designated member of the church staff will immediately report the incident to the proper authorities. UUSS will make a reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing the identity of the individuals involved only on a "need-to-know" basis and as necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

Immediate Response to Disruptive Behavior

The minister(s) and/or the leader of the group involved will undertake an immediate response to such behavior. This may include asking the offending person(s) to leave or suspending the meeting or activity until such time as it can safely be resumed. Local law enforcement may be called if further assistance is required and there is perceived risk of harm to persons or property.

Any time any of these actions is taken, the minister(s) and the appointed Board of Trustees member will be notified. They, in turn, will then consult with at least one additional representative from the Board to determine what steps must be taken before the offending person(s) may be allowed to return to UUSS. A letter detailing these steps will be sent to the offending party or parties.

Deliberate Response to Disruptive Behavior

Situations not requiring an immediate response, in particular, those situations of a recurring nature that have not been resolved or that result in a higher level of disruption, will be referred to the Congregational Safety Panel appointed by the Board. The Panel consists of a member of

each of the following: the Board, the Safety Committee, and the Committee on Ministry. The Panel will respond to problems as they arise, using their best judgment.

Persons behaving in a disruptive manner will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided. The Panel will collect necessary information. To aid in evaluating the situation, the Panel will consider the following points:

- **Danger**—Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
- **Disruptiveness**—How much interference with church functions is occurring?
- **Offensiveness**—How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away by the disruptive behavior?

To determine the necessary response, these points will be considered by the Panel:

- **Causes**—Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition or mental illness?
- **History**—What is the frequency and degree of disruption in the past?
- **Probability of Change**—How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

Levels of Response

The Congregational Safety Panel and the Board will decide on necessary responses on a case-by-case basis. However, the following levels of response will be used:

1. *Level One:* A Congregational Safety Panel member(s) contacts the person named as the source of the disruptive behavior and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be explored, understood (not implying *agreement* of perspective) to the satisfaction of the person behaving disruptively, and documented. Panel members will then assess the situation.
2. *Level Two:* If the basis of the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and a contract for clearly defined behavior change will be developed. Such communication and contract will be documented.
3. *Level Three:* If the person in question refuses to participate in development of a contract, refuses to abide by a contract, or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, they may be excluded from UUSS for a specified period of time with reasons for such action and conditions for return clearly communicated and documented. In such cases, the Board of Trustees will follow the process outlined in its bylaws.
4. *Level Four:* The person in question is permanently excluded from UUSS and the UUSS premises, with steps taken as needed to enforce the integrity of this decision.