

Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Congregational Policies

C.V. Disruptive Behavior Policy

DB1 PREAMBLE

In accordance with our denomination's principles, we covenant to promote the free and responsible search for truth and meaning and also to affirm the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process, both within our church and outside of it. We wish to promote an open exchange of opinions among a wide variety of individuals, viewpoints, and beliefs. At the same time, we believe our congregation must maintain a safe atmosphere in order for such openness to exist. We strive to create this community of tolerance while not honoring destructive behavior by allowing it to continue. Real or perceived threats to the physical, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being of individuals or the freedom to express one's beliefs and opinions safely must be addressed firmly and promptly.

To the degree disruptive behavior compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as people of faith will reflect this emphasis on safety. Disruptive behavior is defined as the behavior of an individual within the Fellowship which raises concerns for the physical and emotional safety of children and adults, interferes with Fellowship activities, and/or harms the Fellowship's ability to serve both present and potential future members.

To that end, the following shall be the policy of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship to address these issues.

DB2 MANAGEMENT OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

If there is no immediate danger or threat of harm to persons or property, the following guidelines and steps should be followed to manage disruptive behavior.

If occasions of disruption or complaints of potentially destructive behavior arise and immediate response is not required, the situation will be referred to the Healthy Congregation Committee. The committee will use its best judgment and honor the following guidelines.

DB3 STEPS FOR MANAGING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

1. Communication

Anyone may refer disruptive behavior to the Healthy Congregation Committee in writing. This communication needs to come on a first-person basis (i.e. from the person(s) who found the behavior to be disruptive, not from a third party).

2. Assess the Situation

In accordance with published Procedures and Guidelines, the Healthy Congregation Committee evaluates the situation and recommends appropriate action.

The committee determines what kind of action or support is most appropriate, including but not limited to no action (the reporting individual is informed), conflict resolution, mediation or referral to community services.

All determinations of the HCC will be summarized in a monthly report to the Board of Trustees and the Lead Minister.

3. Develop Plan for Resolution

Resolution of an issue concerning disruptive behavior may be achieved with various levels of response:

Level 1: Recommend Behavior Change

Two committee members meet with the individual in question to communicate the concerns and recommendations of the committee.

The committee may inform the individual in question that continued disruptive behavior may lead to exclusion from activities and/or suspension of membership.

If a plan for behavior change is warranted, the committee shall inform the minister of its recommendations before acting.

Level 2: Exclusion from Specific Activities

If the undesirable behavior continues in spite of preceding steps, the Committee may recommend that the offending individual be excluded from specific Fellowship activities for a designated period of time. The reasons for exclusion and the conditions of return will be made clear in a letter to the individual given to the individual by the minister and one member of the committee.

Level 3: Suspension of Membership

If all other efforts have not remedied the disruptive behavior, the HCC may recommend to the board that the individual in question be suspended from Fellowship membership and excluded from the Fellowship premises and all Fellowship activities.

The person whose behavior was referred for suspension may make an appeal to the board, presenting his/her concerns or perspective, at the time the recommendation is considered by the board.

The suspension of membership, including the process for appeal to the board, will be communicated in writing to the individual in question. This communication will include clear descriptions of the conditions and procedures for reconciliation and the time parameters of the suspension. The individual will be provided contact information for a person on the HCC with whom he/she may speak concerning reconciliation, conditions of return, assistance in meeting those conditions if appropriate, etc.

4. Reconciliation and Return to the Fellowship

At the end of the suspension period specified in the written notice to the individual, he/she may apply for reinstatement by sending notice to the HCC.

Consideration of reconciliation and return to fellowship will be based upon the conditions described in the letter of suspension and information regarding the individual's behavior during the time of suspension.

Change history:

Disruptive Behavior Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on 1/19/2010