



## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

REVISED: APRIL 2019

### I: BACKGROUND

First UU strives to be an inclusive community, embracing our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. So that our community remains strong and vibrant, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone attending our church or participating in a church-sponsored event. Toward this end, we recognize that the safety and well-being of our congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of an individual.

### II: DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

The policy applies to all adults while on the First UU campus or at an off-site First UU-sponsored event. We define disruptive behavior to be:

- perceived threats to the physical or emotional safety of any adult or child;
- sexual harassment;
- disruption of church activities;
- a pattern of smaller disruptions which, taken as a whole or cumulatively, can be considered a serious disruption; OR
- diminishment of the church's appeal to its potential or existing membership.

Criminal and violent behaviors are beyond the scope of this policy. In the case of such behaviors, all staff members and congregants have the authority and duty to contact the police immediately.

### III: CONFIDENTIALITY

Silence empowers the aggressor and often engenders gossip. Due to the types of behaviors that trigger this policy, confidentiality cannot be assumed. Often the aggressor tells their own version of events. Leadership must feel free to speak the truth about these events to the extent that good judgment indicates.

### IV: ACTIONS

A disruptive situation can be handled by the senior minister if they are available. However, all staff members and congregants have an interest and responsibility in the response to disruptive behavior. As such, any staff member or congregant who feels capable may handle a disruptive situation in a covenantal manner.

Usually a situation escalates from uncomfortable to disruptive. See Appendix A for examples of disruptive behavior. Make an attempt to diffuse the situation. If the situation continues to escalate, the recommended actions are:

1. Request that the offending party cease the behavior
2. Ask them to leave
3. Contact police or security to calm the situation or remove the offending person

If the senior minister does not handle the situation, the person who did so shall leave the senior minister a message immediately, followed by a detailed report within 24 hours. The initial message can be email, text, or voice mail. The report may be written or sent by email.

If the offending party is not a member or friend of our congregation, the matter is considered closed. If the offending party is a member or friend of our congregation, immediate action is taken per the Disruptive Behavior Policy. As follow-up, it is recommended that the senior minister and the board president follow the Serious Covenant Breach Policy.

## **APPENDIX A:**

Here are a few examples of disruptive behavior:

- perceived threats to safety: a rowdy drunk
- disruption of church activities: white person wanting to join the POC group
- diminishment of appeal: someone panhandling on the church campus
- disruption of church activities: someone on moratorium comes back to church and is asked to leave
- sexual harassment: sexual innuendos