



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SALEM

Harassment Free Environment Policy

Status	Board/Committee	Status Date
Approved	Board of Directors	June 1, 2017

Introduction

Direct threats of physical harm are easy to identify, but harassment can be subtle as well as subjective. When the attention is unwelcome, harassment can take the form of minor remarks, jokes, teasing, or apparently innocent, playful behavior. Just as we cannot know all of someone else’s experiences, we cannot know how a comment or gesture will be interpreted or affect them.

It is not uncommon, or necessarily inappropriate, for members of our community to interact with each other in a humorous or playful manner. Not every look, smile, or comment is a sign of harassment. Generally, there is no intent to be harmful or offensive.

Still, one can never be sure how someone else may be affected by a comment or gesture. In communication, the sender may have no intent to offend, but that may not be how the message is received. We should all think of how our verbal and nonverbal communications could be interpreted when socializing with others within the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem (UUCS) environment, or at functions as a representative of UUCS.

UUCS is committed to maintaining an environment free of harassment. Harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, or interferes with the effectiveness of the congregation. Verbal or physical conduct that is offensive or derogatory toward gender, religion, age, disability, race, national origin, or any other category protected by law, will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, termination of contracts, or revocation of UUCS membership.

Leadership at all levels share the responsibility of preventing harassment at UUCS. This includes immediate reporting of any incident, and addressing the conduct that may constitute harassment. Leaders are responsible for reporting and addressing these behaviors, no matter how the awareness of conduct was gained.

Sexual harassment

Any unwelcome behavior, or discrimination that is sexual in nature is a form of harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment and is prohibited within the UUCS environment. This policy applies to sexual harassment by members of the same gender as well as opposite genders.

Effectively addressing harassment complaints

Anyone at UUCS who is subjected to unwelcome behavior is encouraged – but not required – to tell that person promptly that the conduct is unwelcome and ask the person to stop the conduct. Anyone who receives such a request must immediately comply and must not retaliate.

Anyone who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment of any type by another person within the UUCS environment is encouraged to immediately report that conduct to any member of UUCS's Safer Congregation Committee.

If a person in a UUCS leadership position, receives a complaint, or becomes aware of conduct that might constitute harassment, that person must immediately report the complaint and/or concern to a member of the Safer Congregation Committee for immediate investigation and resolution.

The Safer Congregation Committee will convene a response team and follow their internal procedures to investigation and resolve the complaint.