

Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure
First Unitarian Church of South Bend, Indiana
Approved June 14, 2012

The Congregation believes that the church should be a safe environment for all and that no form of sexual harassment can be tolerated. Complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

Procedure

1. The complainant should bring the concern to any one of the following First Contacts: the Minister, the Director of Religious Education, or any member of the Board of Trustees (BOT).
2. The police should be contacted if illegal actions are suspected by any of the people involved at any stage of the procedure, or if any person involved is suspected of being in physical danger. As direct communication is the preferred manner to deal with disputes, the First Contact may choose to help by being present while those involved discuss and try to resolve the issue. The First Contact may ask the minister for assistance at any stage. The first contact is only responsible to see that the matter is addressed and that the Minister or BOT is made aware of the incident. This responsibility remains even if the issue seems resolved with direct communication, the complainant tries to withdraw the accusation, or the First Contact feels the complaint is without merit. Any incident or accusation of harassment must be addressed and recorded. If the complaint concerns the Minister, the First Contact shall inform the Committee of Ministry and the President of the BOT. The President shall call on the Congregational Services Director of the Central Midwest District, and the Regional Good Offices Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, for support and guidance. The President of the BOT must inform and involve the entire BOT before taking any additional actions.
3. If direct communication fails and:
 - a. The complainant wishes to pursue the matter within the church, the First Contact shall bring the matter to the BOT in the form of a written complaint signed by the complainant. The First Contact may ask the minister for help writing the letter.
 - b. The complainant does not wish to pursue the matter within the church, the First Contact will inform the minister of the situation. The Minister will make a written record to be held in a confidential file. The First Contact or the Minister may inform the BOT if they feel it is appropriate. If the complaint concerns the Minister, the written record will be held in a confidential file by the President of the BOT.
4. Upon receipt of a complaint of harassment, the BOT is encouraged to appoint an Action Group of three members to investigate the concern.

5. The first responsibility of the Action Group will be to contact the Congregational Services Director and the office of Ethics & Safety in Congregational Life of the UUA for guidance about how to proceed.

Web page <http://www.uua.org/safe/19278.shtml>

E-mail safecongregations@uua.org

If the accused does not wish to pursue a resolution of the complaint within the church, the Action Group will report to the BOT and recommend a course of action.

6. After the Action Group has completed its confidential investigation it must present a written report. The group may recommend to the BOT any of the following actions, or others as appropriate:

A covenant of right relations between the parties

A restriction or ban on communication between the parties involved

Counseling as a requirement

Termination of membership for the accused

Finding the complaint to be without merit

7. Any person who may be affected by this process has the right to appeal by petition to the BOT. The Board will convene as soon as possible, but no later than the next regularly scheduled BOT meeting to consider the petition. The decision of the Board in this regard is final upon a majority vote at a legally constituted meeting.

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