

## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Feb. 15, 2017

### **POLICY**

Openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime value held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles.

Tolerance of diversity is a central value of our religious principles and we must ensure an atmosphere where such openness can exist. To the extent that anyone's freedom of belief, expression, opinion, personal physical and/or emotional well-being is intimidated or threatened by another or others, the source or cause must be met firmly and promptly, even if it means expulsion.

### **DEFINITION**

Disruptive behaviour may be defined as involving:

- physical and sexual assaults or threats
- verbal or written threats, bullying or on-going conflict
- disruption of essential Church activities
- diminution of the appeal of the Church to its potential and existing membership

### **PROCEDURE**

The following shall be the procedure of Beacon Unitarian Church in dealing with these issues:

1. If an immediate response is required, due to a breach of conduct (see our Covenant of Right Relations), this will be undertaken by the Minister, if available, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be safely resumed. If physical assault takes place or further assistance is required, the police may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister, the Minister must be notified at the earliest opportunity. A follow-up letter detailing the offense and the action taken because of the offense, must be written and distributed to the Minister and the Board President within one week.
2. If the situation does not require an immediate response, it will be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board, consisting of Church members who are not on the Board.

The committee will respond in terms of their own judgment observing the following:

- a. The committee will respond to the situation as presented. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable" behaviour in advance.
- b. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.
- c. The committee will systematically collect information from the complainant(s) concerning the incident(s) before action is taken.
- d. The committee will contact the person named as the source of the problem and take notes of the situation both from the point of view of the individual and from the committee member's point of view.
- e. The committee will send a written summary of their findings and recommended action to the Board of Directors.
- f. The Board of Directors will decide on the action to be taken.

- g. If a problem is established, the Board will clearly communicate this to the offending individual, then draw up a contract stipulating clearly defined behavioral changes and have him/her sign. If this is not possible and the behaviour continues, the offending individual should be excluded from the church for a limited period of time, with reasons for the exclusion clearly explained and written, as well as the conditions required for individual's reinstatement.
3. The committee and the Board of Directors will consider the following questions in making any recommendations and/or decisions:
- a. **Dangerous:** Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property including him/herself?
  - b. **Disruptive:** How much interference is occurring with individual members or with church functions?
  - c. **Offensive:** How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
  - d. **Causes:** Why is this disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the congregation? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
  - e. **History:** What is the past frequency and degree of disruption caused?
  - f. **Probability of Change:** Is it likely that the problem behaviour will diminish in the future?
4. The Board of Directors will respond on a case-by-case basis. The following levels of response are options that may be implemented:
- a. **No Action:** It may be determined that the complaint is not warranted. The Board of Directors will explain and discuss this with the person making the complaint.
  - b. **Warning:** A member of the Board will meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern and expectations for future behavior.
  - c. **Suspension:** The offending individual is excluded from the congregation and/or specific activities for a limited period of time with the reasons and conditions for return clarified in writing by the Board President.
  - d. **Expulsion:** The Board recommends to the congregation that the offending individual be expelled from congregational activities and church membership. Expelling a member will be done by special resolution of the members. If so approved, the Minister/Board President will write a letter to the individual explaining the reasons, the individual's rights and possible recourse. In the rare case that an individual is being considered for expulsion, the Board will consult the CUC.
  - e. The offending individual may appeal the decision to the Board.

Adopted by the Board April 2, 2017