

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

Revisions approved by the Board; August 2023

POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

The Oberlin Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (hereinafter called the Fellowship) is a place of safety and integrity for each person's mind, body, and spirit. We are a supportive and nurturing faith community, honoring and respecting the rich diversity of those who gather.

When people join the Fellowship they agree to follow the Behavioral Covenant:

"Because I am committed to the well-being of the Oberlin Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and its members, I willingly enter into this covenant:

- To make the Fellowship a safe, open, and welcoming place.
- To treat each individual with respect and compassion.
- To treat the institution and its processes with respect."

...Created November 2003 and amended 2009

While welcoming a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we believe our congregation must maintain an atmosphere where openness can exist.

This policy exists to define the boundaries of acceptable behavior and to define actions safeguarding the well-being of the Fellowship and its members.

Disruptive behavior within the context of the Fellowship can include:

- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child (e.g., harassment, abuse or misconduct)
- Disruption of Fellowship activities and business

- Misuse or damage to the building

Such behavior can lead to diminished appeal of the Fellowship to existing and potential members. It can also lead to the exodus of dispirited members and leaders.

Therefore, the following shall be the policy of the Fellowship with regard to disruptive behavior.

REPORTING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Any person who has witnessed or experienced disruptive behavior or to whom such an incident has been reported should inform, without fear of retaliation, any of the following:

- The minister
- An officer of the Board
- A member of the Fellowship staff
- A member of the Committee on Ministry

If required by law, ordinance, or similar regulation, the minister or a designated member of the Fellowship staff will immediately report the incident to the proper authorities.

The Fellowship will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing the identity of the individuals involved only on a “need-to-know” basis and, as necessary, to investigate and resolve the complaint.

RESPONSE:

All situations will be referred to the Committee on Ministry, which will take every reported incident seriously.

Every alleged disrupter will have the opportunity to present their perspective.

The Committee on Ministry will make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The timeline for a decision will depend on the complexity and/or urgency of the situation.

If mediation fails, COM will recommend to the Board the removal from the congregation of the person with disruptive behavior. After due deliberation between the COM and the Board, and if both bodies concur, COM will convey to the person with disruptive behavior the decision to remove them from membership. See the revised Bylaws from 2022, Article IX, Committee on Ministry, Section 2.B.

MEMBERSHIP REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURE

The only person who can request reinstatement of membership is the one who was removed.

A reinstatement request may be made no sooner than one year following removal.

The request must contain information concerning the rationale for reinstatement: 1) a statement showing understanding of the reasons for their removal from membership and 2) a detailed explanation regarding how circumstances and conditions have changed, to justify reinstatement.

The request shall go to the Committee on Ministry.

COM will review the request and make a recommendation to the Board within sixty days.

The Board and COM must both agree, by majority decisions, with the request for reinstatement in order for it to be successful.

The joint decision of the Board and COM shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

If a request for reinstatement is not granted, any subsequent request may be made no sooner than one year following the joint decision of COM and the Board.