

PROCESS OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

SFUU aspires to develop a culture of peace within our congregation. Our primary tool for achieving this aspiration is the SFUU Peacemaking Resolution in which all members are encouraged to be peacemakers, as we minister to and with each other. It is each member's individual responsibility to engage in peacemaking as we interact with each other. Peace teams are available to help us with peacemaking and conflict transformation. In cases when compassionate communication does not succeed, or in situations that require an urgent response, we implement the appropriate level of the Disruptive Behavior Policy. As Unitarian Universalists, we commit to both compassion and justice in all of our relations, may it be so.

The documents for conflict transformation include:

- Congregational Peacemaking Resolution
- Peace Team Statement of Purpose and Procedure
- Disruptive Behavior Policy

CONGREGATIONAL PEACEMAKING RESOLUTION

Prologue

SFUU has received a call to action to develop a culture of peace within our congregation as one part of a movement toward Just Peacemaking. This movement melds love and justice at all levels of human interaction and supports the second UU principle affirming and promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. As such, every member of SFUU is encouraged to be a peacemaker as we minister to each other.

SFUU Peacemaking Resolution

We covenant to each be responsible for peacemaking with each other and as a group, and to take up peacemaking as part of our mission through worship, religious education, and social action by:

- Developing our peacemaking skills in order to promote compassionate communication and interpersonal conflict resolution.
- Establishing Peace Teams to engage the congregation in a multi-level action toward a culture of peace.
- Working through congregational governing bodies to develop and honor behavioral covenants in all aspects of congregational life.
- Providing and attending workshops on conflict resolution and compassionate communication, to encourage understanding and participation in social justice ventures and to utilize UU resources such as *Peacemaking in Congregations*.
- Becoming a peacemaking resource within our communities in cooperation with other faith traditions.

All members of the congregation are encouraged to participate in conflict resolution training, to be offered at least annually.

The Peace Teams

A Peace Team shall consist of two standing members that make up the core of the team, other members of any given peace team shall be brought in as needed:

- One standing member shall be designated by the Committee on Ministry
- The second standing member shall be elected by the congregation
- As needed, the two standing members shall choose additional Peace Team members (depending on the conflict being resolved)

All members of a Peace Team must participate in SFUU-sponsored peacemaking training and agree to serve for a period of two years. Peace Teams will be available to members of the congregation as a resource for resolving conflicts. In addition, Peace Teams will be responsible for facilitating congregational workshops on conflict resolution and on how to be in relation with one another.

PEACE TEAM STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

SFUU has established a Peace Team to help nurture a culture of peace within our congregation. This action supports the second UU principle affirming and promoting justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Every member of SFUU is encouraged to be a peacemaker as we create an environment where the possibility of reconciliation is increased.

Our Peacemaking Resolution calls us to develop our peacemaking skills in order to promote compassionate communication and interpersonal conflict resolution.

If someone has a disagreement with another member, we encourage him or her to speak directly to the person and try to resolve the issue together. If that is not successful, people are invited to contact a member of the Peace Team to make an appointment for a session with two Peace Team members. They will use Compassionate Communication (as developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD) to give empathy until all sides feel heard to increase the possibility that the parties will be able to create new strategies that meet all their needs. This might be around a specific conflict or a reconciliation of a relationship.

A successful outcome may not be possible in one session and future sessions will be scheduled if everyone agrees it would be helpful. As part of the outcome process the participants will agree to what will be said to others as a result of the peace process. It is an expectation that summary comments will generally be made to those affected by the conflict.

The hope is that if people come to the Peace Team for help to smooth small disagreements, we can avoid having them escalate. Having a place to express honestly and to listen respectfully can be mutually beneficial. However, if behaviors that are disruptive to the atmosphere and purposes of this congregation cannot be resolved through the peacemaking process then that behavior will be addressed through the Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior.

SFUU POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

This policy seeks to address those behaviors that cannot be resolved through the peacemaking processes set forth in the SFUU Peacemaking Resolution and/or may be disruptive to the atmosphere and purposes of this congregation.

Prologue

Openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by the Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalist congregation (SFUU) and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles. We affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere so that such openness can exist. Each person is encouraged to practice taking personal responsibility for interacting respectfully with others in order to promote an atmosphere of just peacemaking and right relationship, both within the congregation and in the larger community. Behaviors that damage the integrity of our relationships with each other require an immediate and direct response; it is those behaviors that this policy addresses.

Definition of Disruptive Behavior

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child
2. Disturbance of church activities or events

3. Consistent behaviors that actively discourage people from participating in SFUU activities
4. Intentional misrepresentation of SFUU to the larger community

Disruptive Behavior Levels and Responses

Disruptive behavior may occur in a variety of church-related settings, including interactions within a group, between individuals, or by e-mail or other electronic forms of communication. If initial peacemaking efforts on the part of the individuals fail to resolve the conflict, then the following are possible responses to increasingly disruptive behaviors.

Level One: Mildly Disruptive/Offensive

1. If possible, a facilitator/leader will address the person about the behavior in private, and state what is acceptable/unacceptable. If necessary, the facilitator/leader may interrupt the church activity when the disruption occurs, or request that the person leave.
2. The facilitator/leader will follow-up with a written description of the incident to the Committee on Ministry within one week. A copy will be sent to the person whose behavior was disruptive/offensive and they will be given an opportunity to respond; that response shall be made within 10 days from date of mailing.
3. The Committee on Ministry will take one or more of the following actions:
 - Notify Minister/ Board President
 - Refer to Peace Team
 - Place documentation in a confidential file

Level Two: Major Interference / Offensive

1. A facilitator/leader will intervene strongly and publicly. This may include asking other members for assistance, requesting the disruptive person to leave immediately, and/or stopping the church function being disrupted.
2. The facilitator/leader will immediately notify a member of the Committee on Ministry, who will then notify the Minister, Board President, and members of the Committee on Ministry. Leaders will follow-up with written notice.
3. The Committee on Ministry will request the assistance of a Peace Team, and anyone else that needs to be included, to meet with the disruptive individual to discuss the situation. The purpose of this meeting is to resolve the conflict whenever possible and develop an appropriate written plan for the future.
4. Failure of the individual to reach an appropriate plan for the future may result in moving to level three intervention.

Level Three: Dangerous or Continuous Disruption/Offense

1. Threats will be immediately contained, this may include calling the police for assistance or the immediate removal of the disruptive person.
2. The Committee on Ministry, Minister, Board President, and/or the Peace Team will meet to discuss appropriate action, including expulsion of the disruptive person from the SFUU congregation.
3. If possible, a follow-up meeting will be held with the disruptive person to explain the actions that will be taken. Whether a meeting is held with the individual or not, a letter will be sent to that person stipulating these actions and the individual's rights and possible recourse, if any. The Board of Trustees may temporarily or permanently exclude the disruptive individual from SFUU membership, all SFUU activities, and the church premises.

Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalists strive to be an inclusive community, affirming, in a respectful way, our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. The concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual.