

## **Disruptive Congregant Policy - Handling Difficult People**

### Policy 2.5.7

Effective: 1998

Approved by: Board of Trustees

We, the members and friends of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, are a caring community where mutual respect prevails. We believe in the democratic process in human relations. Each committee/organization is encouraged to adopt and agree to ground rules for their meetings/events. When some participants in these meetings/events do not follow the rules, some policy is needed. Therefore, a five step process has been proposed to deal with these problems of unacceptable behavior.

Disruptive behavior does not need to be tolerated by a committee/organization. When it occurs, a member of the committee leadership should draw the disruptive person aside and state that the behavior is not acceptable. If a second complaint about the behavior occurs, a formal letter will be written by the appropriate leader to the person, stating that the behavior needs to be corrected, with copies to Ombuds and to the President of the Church. The letter should state that if the individual chooses to do so he/she can request that the Ombuds Committee mediate the dispute. The individual needs to state the problem to Ombuds in writing. Ombuds will discuss the problem and assign a member of the Ombuds Committee to meet the person and the committee/organization leadership to resolve the problem. Ombuds will report back to the Board.

If after making all reasonable attempts and consulting with Ombuds, the problems seem unresolvable, the leadership of the complaining committee/organization should request the Board's permission to deny the person access to the committee/organization's meetings/events. If, in time, the person reconsiders and wishes to reenter the group, he/she may meet with the leadership of the committee/organization to request reentry, subject to Board approval.

Note: In some situations, immediate action is warranted and should be taken. It is appropriate to call the police to remove a person exhibiting violent behavior. Note, too, that the five steps may be accelerated if the behavior is threatening.

Regarding rights of individuals who feel threatened by behavior of other individuals: No heretofore stated policy of the Church applies to an individual, on the premises, who feels threatened and calls the police on his/her own behalf.