

Unity of Santa Barbara

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT / CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

PURPOSE

In alignment with our intention to fulfill our vision and mission by embodying and applying peace principles and practices, this policy provide a process, which encourages and supports respectful interactions and harmonious relationship dynamics, particularly during times of disagreement or conflict. It is intended to apply to all UoSB members, Staff, Board and leaders.

For disruptive or dangerous behavior by UoSB members, congregants or visitors the Disruptive Behavior Policy shall also be applied to resolve the situation.

POLICY

1. TRAINING & EDUCATION

Unity of Santa Barbara staff and volunteers shall be informed of this (*Conflict Management Policy*) as part of their initial orientation into their paid or volunteer services. Board of Trustees members shall be informed of this policy as part of their Board orientation training.

2. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Principles and Values for communication and interaction:

It is expected that all adult interactions at Unity of SB are in alignment with communication principles and practices, which are respectful, collaborative, positive, and solution oriented. They show a willingness to listen, to compromise, understand another person's point of view and seek common ground if at all possible. Such interactions are best accomplished with an open mind and an open heart, and lead to healthy, effective and spirit-centered groups and individuals.

It is understood that there are times when people disagree. At UoSB it is expected that all disagreements are handled with the guiding principles and practices outlined above, and below.

a. In the Moment Response

Healthy communication is based on clear and timely identification and resolution of conflict.

When issues arise, it is never appropriate to be disruptive or disrespectful. It is important that participants stop disruptive or disrespectful interactions at the point of contact. If the disruption is between two individuals, a respectful, empathic response is suggested. It may sound like this: "when _____ happened (observation vs. evaluation), I felt _____ (describe feeling, happy, sad, confused, etc.), because I was wanting/needing _____ (describe need). Would you be willing to _____ (make a request vs. demand)?"

Simple Disagreements or differences of opinion can be handled in the same

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manner. If a conflict cannot be resolved in the moment, a request should be made to meet at a later time to resolve it.

If the conflict or disruption occurs in a group meeting, the same respectful, assertive response may be used. In addition, if the conflict is causing discomfort or a lack of safety in the meeting, UoSB Bylaws provide for the use of a “heart Check” that can be called at any time during group meetings. See Bylaws Article III: Section 3.05 (g) Prayer. *In any membership meeting, the Board President, minister(s), Association Conflict Transformation Representative, or any member may request a “Heartcheck.” Business will be suspended while the membership enters into a time of prayer on the issue. Upon such request, the President will call upon the minister(s) or other appropriate spiritual leader to lead the meeting in a short prayer.* And also, Article V: Section 5.03: (d) *Request time for prayer about any issue when there is a loss of spiritual unity among the members of the Board. Upon request, the President will provide a period of prayer and silence.*

It is important to then determine if the participants are able to proceed to resolve the conflict with an open mind and open heart in the moment during the group meeting, or if it would be better to coordinate a later time and location to attempt to resolve the matter in a professional and respectful manner. A call for a more formal Mediation process can be made at any time.

The same determination needs to be made if the conflict is with two individuals outside of a meeting. If individuals do not feel able to resolve a situation on their own, they may also request to a mediation process.

b. Response to a Conflict at a Later Date

If it is decided by a group to coordinate the resolution of a conflict issue at a later time, every attempt will be made to schedule a follow-up meeting prior to the adjournment of the current meeting. If the meeting was already adjourned, a follow-up meeting will be coordinated and scheduled within 72 hours, and the actual meeting will take place at the earliest possible date but no longer than the next regularly scheduled meeting. The only purpose of the follow-up meeting is to resolve the issue, no other business should be addressed.

At no time should an issue of conflict be left unresolved with no follow-up.

Similarly, individuals having conflict that cannot be resolved in the moment should also try to schedule a follow-up meeting within 72 hours.

If for any reason, the issue of conflict is not resolved at a follow-up meeting, a request for mediation should be made.

c. Following resolution of a conflict

When a disagreement or a conflict has been resolved whether through compromise or agreeing to disagree, all parties agree to support the final

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agreement. It is a violation of this policy and not in alignment with spiritual principles to participate in making an agreement and then proceed to speak disparagingly about the agreement to other individuals or in other group contexts.

d. Consequences for violations of this policy

At all times, the intention of this policy is to be in alignment with spiritual principals in all our interactions with individuals, groups, and meetings at all levels of the Ministry. Every effort is to be made to be as inclusive of others as possible and to work toward reconciling differences. When there are perceived violations of this policy, all members agree to hold each other accountable and follow the guidelines of this policy to correct the violation. Refusal of individuals to participate in reconciliation or resolution of conflicts may be grounds for invoking the Disruptive Behavior Policy.