

Unity of Santa Barbara

Well-Being Behavior Policy

Unity of Santa Barbara (UoSB) endeavors to be welcoming and open to all persons. Therefore, it is important that the Minister, Board of Trustees, employees and others with leadership duties act appropriately to provide a safe and welcoming environment for children and adults—both regular attendees and visitors. This Policy establishes guidelines that consider the community's well-being first and foremost.

Unity affirms and promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person and supports leaders in creating a safe space within their congregations. Unity encourages healthy relationships among those who are part of the congregation, and between the congregation and the larger community.

Unity strives to be inclusive and affirming in our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges of an individual.

UoSB affirms the inherent worth of all people and seeks to create an open and inclusive spiritual community. This requires a safe and supportive environment, which includes addressing any situation which impinges on the individual's or the community's well-being. Such situations will be addressed promptly, directly, clearly and with compassion and consistency.

Behaviors that are not beneficial to the well-being of UoSB may impact the perceived safety of any adult or child, ministry activities, and/or maintaining the ministry as a loving, blame free safe community. Disruptive behavior under this Policy means one or more of the following behaviors:

- **Threatening:** The individual's behavior is a threat, or reasonably perceived to be a threat, to people engaged in the ministry's activities or to property for which the ministry is responsible.
- **Disruptive:** The individual's behavior has a significant negative impact on ministry activities and/or significantly interferes with the development of healthy relationships within the spiritual community.
- **Offensive:** The individual's behavior is such that a reasonable person's regularly attending ministries activities could reasonably decide to leave or not join the community.

The process for addressing these situations is outlined below:

1. Since prayer is foundational to who we are, when disruptive behavior arises, the Senior Minister and Board of Trustees (Board) will respond first with prayer (including, to the extent possible, when immediate action under Section 5 is necessary) – holding the situation and all those involved in a space of love and wholeness. Throughout this process ministry leaders will maintain a prayerful space in all discussions.

2. Accurate and timely records will be kept to document observed behavior and actions taken.
3. To determine the necessary response, the following questions may be appropriate:
 - a. Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the ministry?
 - b. Is there a known professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - c. What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?
 - d. How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
4. The Senior Minister and Board will decide upon the necessary response on a case by case basis. The following three levels of response are recommended for consideration:
 - a. LEVEL 1: The Senior Minister and Board, after or as part of an initial investigation, assigns a team of at least two people to meet with the individual. This team should consist of a Board member and/or credentialed leader, and a lay leader within the congregation. This team will clearly articulate concerns and work with the individual to co-create a plan of action which addresses the impact of any disruptive behavior on the community and works to assure that such behavior doesn't continue.
 - b. LEVEL 2: The Senior Minister and Board in writing excludes the individual from ministry activities as appropriate for a defined period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear and supplemented as appropriate orally.
 - c. LEVEL 3: The Senior Minister and Board in writing excludes the individual permanently from ministry activities and/or premises. The Minister and Board send a letter to the individual explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse, if any. If appropriate, the letter should be presented during a face-to-face conversation.
5. Immediate Response: If the disruptive behavior presents an immediate danger to anyone in the ministry, an immediate response is required. In such circumstances, those in the most responsible position should take action to establish safety. Immediate one time action could include:
 - a. Asking the individual to leave
 - b. Immediately suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed.
 - c. Calling the police department and requesting assistance.

Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without a board member or minister(s) being present, the senior minister and president of the board, or those acting as same, must be notified by phone as soon as possible. The senior minister, or person acting as same, should assure that in all situations a written report is submitted promptly.

6. The Board will review the immediate response and shall send a follow-up letter to those individuals whose behaviors appropriately require further restrictions or exclusions. The letter in reasonable detail will explain the further restrictions or exclusions and what steps, if any, must be taken before returning to the activities involved.

7. Whether and how an individual's membership in the ministry is implicated as a result of disruptive behavior is not the focus of this Policy. While disruptive behavior may be a cause for the loss or restriction of membership rights, such issues should be addressed separately, normally through the ministry's bylaws.
8. **Appeal:** Any action that restricts or excludes future participation by an individual the Board or Senior Minister determines to be disruptive may be appealed to the Board. A process is suggested, such as requiring a timely, written letter to the Board requesting review of any decision, setting forth reasons for any action requested. Whenever the Board cannot meet in a timely manner to make decisions under this Policy, the Senior Minister may act on its behalf, bringing such action to the Board for its review as soon as possible.

I have read, understand and accept the terms of this Well Being Behavior policy.

S/ _____

(print name)