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Assisting Severely Disturbed Persons

Proposed by the CARING COMMITTEE – Adopted January 14, 1997

Guidelines for helping a severely disturbed person in church:

- The person may appear unwell, agitated, confused, disorientated, or in a generally distressed state.
- A member observing this should try to help them by acting as a sympathetic friend, relating to them and trying to calm them down while maintaining respect for their personal space. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them.
- One should bear in mind that if the person has come to church in such a distressed state they are probably reaching out for help, although they may be in a state of denial and refuse offers of help. They might act in a belligerent manner and may even become violent causing harm to themselves or others.

Steps to take:

1. Offer help. “Can I help you?” “Is there anything I can do to help you?” etc.
Maybe phone family member or friend.
2. If refused, wait and keep the person under observation. Alert another member (or two) as necessary to assist.
3. At the next opportunity ask the person if they would like to be taken home or to the hospital outpatients. We don’t presume to know what is wrong; it could be anything from a chemical imbalance due to physical or mental illness, drug overdose, or a reaction to some overpowering news. Our main concern is that the person needs help and guide them safely to where they can receive it.
4. If refused, try to assist them to get home safely. Try and get the name of a family member or friend again. If refused and we are concerned about the safety and possibility they may do harm to themselves....Call the Police, preferably after the person has returned home.
5. If any noxious substance is being used on the premises it should be confiscated and locked away until agreement for disposal is reached.
6. Call the minister and report the incident. Assist in follow up if appropriate.

N.B. We cannot force anyone to go to the hospital against their will, however much we feel they need to. We want to avoid the police in the church building if possible. However, in a desperate situation we may have to call the police.

Our main concern is harm to themselves and others. Also causing a disturbance of the church service and focusing attention on themselves in the presence of a number of people, should be avoided if possible.

N.B. We are a CARING COMMUNITY and have a MORAL RESPONSIBILITY to see the person gets home safely and obtains the help needed.

Babysitting

Building Use by Outside Non-profit Groups Who Are Unable to Pay in Advance

This policy is intended to address the occasional situation where an outside group requests use of our facility without making the usual donation for that use. The individual responsible for building use may give permission for such use on a discretionary basis provided the following conditions are met:

- A dependable individual agrees to be present and responsible.
- The purpose of the group is in line with our principles. Individuals will not normally be permitted to use the facilities for personal reasons.
- The group does not collect dues and has no other source of income. The facilities are not being used for commercial or business purposes.
- A voluntary donation to the church is requested at the meeting and the collection given to our office administrator.
- The group puts up the standard security deposit. This deposit will be returned when the group is no longer using the building provided the building has been left secure and in good order.
- No key is issued on a long-term basis. Arrangements must be made to pick up the key at the church office before each event and to return it afterwards.

Booking & Damage Deposits

A. Regular User: If user is known individual (proven trustworthy) and has a positive history using the church, no damage deposit is required.

B. First Time User: A \$50.00 damage deposit is required, to be paid when the building is booked and will be returned when:

- the key is returned, and
- the building has been checked to see all obligations have been met under the rental policy.

C. Congregation Members and Committees: If the building is not left locked and in order, the member in charge (with key) will be called and reminded of the oversight.

Second occurrence for same member will result in another follow-up call. The member will be notified of the oversight and will be informed that if this happens again, we will ask for the return of the member's key.

Obligations to users when building is left unlocked after usage:

Users are liable for all damages/theft which occur because of doors/windows being left unlocked.

BUILDING USERS POLICY & CHECKLIST

Adopted December 2005

1. IN ADVANCE

- Bookings are made through the church office (429-5500).
- A building key is issued upon receipt of a damage deposit.
- Damage deposits are returned after keys have been returned and there are no complaints against the property.
- For publicity purposes, the name of the property is Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax, 5500 Inglis Street (at Bland), Halifax.

2. OPENING UP

- Do not arrive before the time you are scheduled. You may use the facility only for the period in which you have made the booking. Other groups routinely use the facility and no one is entitled to be here outside of their scheduled times.
- One key opens all exterior doors including door knobs and dead bolts
- For security reasons keep the inside front door closed/locked and use the doorbell for incoming guests. The church cannot be held responsible for theft or loss of personal items.

3. FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

- The second floor is off bounds.
- There are two washrooms in the hall opposite the office.
- There is a coat closet under the main stair on the way to the office/washrooms.
- Light switches are usually near the entry point of each room, the kitchen light is by the phone.
- The main service room lights are on dimmer switches. At the entry door opposite the kitchen there is a pair of switches which have a dimmer slide bar to dim the lights while the toggle switch turns them on/off. At the rear entry to the room there is a dimmer control knob for the two lights at that end of the room.

4. LOCATING AND USING THINGS

- The building has an automatic fire alarm system. Should the alarm sound, evacuate the building. The fire department will be notified automatically and will arrive within minutes.
- Thermostats are pre-programmed and electronically controlled. There should be no need to adjust room temperature. If complaints are voiced about thermal comfort, follow the instructions on the thermostats door (located in the main service room) to raise or lower temperatures. Do not expect immediate results.
- **Tables:** There are two collapsible round tables (max. 6 persons each) in the washroom behind the door, eight more in the room at the foot of the basement stairs. There are two collapsible rectangular tables behind the door in the Ballroom Gallery. There are two more behind the board table (wooden table under kitchen pass through) and three more in the room at the foot of the basement stairs. Return them all to their proper home.
- The basement is accessed through a stair between the kitchen and the main service room. The basement light switch is in the hall at the top of the stairs.
- **Service room:** The window at the back corner of the service room facing the driveway is operable, as is the fan on window sill. Both are the only means of air circulation in the room.

- There are about 100 stack-able chairs in the service room. Please return them stacked to their proper position.
- Do not use candles without saucers or drip trays below them, and do not move them around lit. Wax is difficult to remove from our carpets.
- Do not hang posters, etc. with push pins. Use masking tape, not scotch tape, and remove all of it when you are finished.
- **Kitchen:** In the kitchen you will find glasses, mugs, plates, cutlery, etc. Anything used must be cleaned up afterwards. Because we have no laundering facilities on site please avoid using the tablecloths. Instructions for using the automatic dishwasher are posted on the wall above the unit. We would prefer you use our dishes and dishwasher than disposable materials.
- There are four refuse bins at the rear of the kitchen (waste, paper recycle, bottle/can recycle, and compost) and a container for redeemable beverage containers. Please learn what goes where and respect our efforts at refuse reduction and recycling.
- The phone in the kitchen may be used for local calls. Do not answer it if it rings. The office answering service will pick it up.
- You will find an ashtray for smokers on the back door porch patio the kitchen.

5. CLEANING UP

- Your group is responsible for cleaning up after yourselves, leaving the facility in the same state as you found it.
- If the refuse bins become filled remove the bag to the patio just outside the kitchen door and retrieve a new bag from the janitor's closet in the kitchen.
- The vacuum cleaner is in the small closet at floor level below the kitchen phone. The wand for the vacuum, along with brooms, dust pans and mops are in the janitor's closet, also in the kitchen.

6. CLOSING UP

- Check that all windows and doors are closed and locked.
- Check that all lights are out (the fluorescent light at the back door is always on, and both front porches, the back door, and the patio lanterns are automatically controlled).
- Check that the chairs are stacked and all tables are put away.

7. RETURN KEY

- Your damage deposit will be returned when your key is returned and no damages or cleaning infractions have been reported.
- Report any problems or concerns to the office. We appreciate your feedback.

Donations of Objects to the Church

Developed by the Aesthetics Committee – Adopted October 6, 1997

1. Vestry, in consultation with the Aesthetics Committee, is empowered to make decisions about the suitability of gifts. Gifts are not automatically accepted by the Church.
2. Potential gift givers will be advised about the guidelines concerning suitability of gifts.
3. Gifts to the Church will be
 - in keeping with our principles and needs as a Unitarian Universalist faith community,
 - in keeping with Church aesthetics, available space, and program needs, and
 - of a quality and significance that make them worthy additions to Church property.
4. Once a gift is accepted by the Church, Vestry retains all rights and responsibilities of total ownership on behalf of the congregation.
5. Special conditions attached to donations are not encouraged. In unusual circumstances Vestry, in consultation with the Aesthetics Committee, will decide if it wishes to accept a gift with special conditions attached.
6. The giving and receiving of the gift will be documented by the Secretary of the Vestry. One copy of the documentation will be retained by the church. One copy will be given to the donor.
7. If a monetary evaluation is required for purposes such as a charitable donation receipt, a qualified independent assessor will determine the gift's value. A copy of this assessment will be retained by the Church.
8. When a donor suggests that she or he wishes to give a gift, the Aesthetics Committee will
 - review these guidelines with the donor.
 - Review the potential donation with respect to these guidelines, and
 - make a recommendation to Vestry about acceptance of the gift.
9. The Aesthetics Committee will ensure that all the above policies and procedures are followed with respect to the gift and will advise Vestry that this is the case.

Funding for Leadership Development

Any individual attending an event related to leadership or denominational development and approved by Vestry to attend on behalf of UUCH shall receive a partial bursary towards their expenses on the condition that they report back after their event to Vestry, in writing and in person, as to how they will contribute to the church after the event.

This subsidy is intended to support more widespread participation of UUCH members in leadership development activities. If the member fails to comply with any of the conditions of this policy, Vestry reserves the right to have the individual refund, in full, any subsidies received.

The subsidy will be calculated as follows:

- ✦ conference fees (including any meals in the conference package): 100%
- ✦ accommodation: 75% of cost up to a maximum of \$100/night. Alternatively if the member is billeted rather than at a hotel, the church will pay \$25/day towards meals.
- ✦ Travel: 100% of the lowest available airfare to conference city OR the use of Aeroplan points. In addition the church will pay \$16 reimbursement for gas or bus fare to the airport each direction.

It is recommended that:

- ✦ President attend CUC annual conference each year, and
- ✦ Vice President and one other member involved in RE attend CUUL school annually.

To apply members must complete an application form (in the Leadership Training Cubby), including a budget for all expenses, no later than the Vestry meeting that precedes 60 days prior to the proposed attendance.

Membership - Determining Active & Inactive Members

Participants in church life are considered members or friends. Members have signed the membership book; friends have not. Membership is for life.

Active Members

Active members are those who participate in congregational life throughout the year, and/or contribute financially.

Inactive members

Members are not permanently de-listed should they become inactive, not pledge, leave town, etc. They are simply moved to the inactive list and reinstated to the Active list when they resume participation.

In accordance with the church by-laws, members are deemed inactive if, over the past year, due to lack of participation and financial giving, it is felt that they have lost their connection with the denomination. This is measured in a number of ways:

- Whether witnessed at church activities such as worship, committee meetings or special events (personal observation of active church members).
- Whether attended at congregational meetings (refer to minutes of meetings).
- Whether financial contributions are recorded (consult with assistant treasurer).

Members who move away and inform us that they have become active in another UU congregation and consider that to be their primary affiliation (yet continue to support our congregation financially) are deemed to be **inactive** within our congregation.

Resignations

A member's name is struck from the membership book only when a member resigns in writing, email included.

Maintaining membership records, statistics

The membership chair and the office administrator work together to maintain the Active and the Inactive member lists. An up-to-date count of Active members is important because:

- It indicates growth or decline in membership and helps us plan accordingly.
- Annual dues payable to the CUC are based on the number of active members.
- Quorum for congregational meetings is based on a percentage (20%) of the number of active members.

Friends

Other than the church directory we do not keep a dedicated list of friends nor count them in the membership roll, although some participate quite fully in congregational life (including pledging and contributing) many on their path to membership. Friends are highly valued.

For more on friends, see "Privileges of Members and Friends" under Membership on website.

Safe Church

Adopted Fall 2011

Affirmation of Responsibility and Commitment

The Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax has a moral, legal, ethical and spiritual Duty of Care to its members, friends, volunteers, staff, visitors and others in its care.

This Duty of Care is an obligation to take reasonable measures to care for and protect individuals and the Congregation from harm.

This obligation is particularly significant to those who are vulnerable because of age, disability, handicap or circumstances.

The risk of harm is greater when people are in a position of trust because of their authority over another and/or their unsupervised access to persons and/or property, or because their role depends on a close personal relationship with a person to whom service is provided.

Be it resolved that the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax endorses a policy of risk assessment for all positions, ministries and activities.

Implementation of Safe Church Policy

Following this affirmation, the UUCH will implement a Safe Church Policy that is based on a policy developed by the Unitarian Fellowship of London, that was itself based on guidelines developed by Volunteer Canada.

The basis of the process is laid out in Volunteer Canada's 10 Safe Steps of Volunteer Management:

- ⤴ Determine the risk
- ⤴ Write a clear position description
- ⤴ Establish a formal recruitment process
- ⤴ Use an application form
- ⤴ Conduct interviews
- ⤴ Follow up on references
- ⤴ Request a police records check where appropriate
- ⤴ Conduct orientation and training sessions
- ⤴ Supervise and evaluate
- ⤴ Follow up with program participants

Each position should be evaluated for risk, as part of the position description. This task should be the responsibility of an expanded personnel committee or a revitalized Gifts-Based Shared Ministry Committee working with the chairs of the relevant program committees. This would clearly be a higher priority for committees with higher risk such as Religious Education and Caring.

The process of assessment is aided by a series of checklists which may be used to assess the risk of a

particular position based on factors such as vulnerability of persons served, degree of isolation, and degree of trust.

The process of interviews and reference checks could be a severe drain on the resources of a committee chair, and it would be inefficient to have to go through the process several times for different committees. **An ad hoc committee, reporting to the Personnel Committee**, should be formed whose responsibilities would include doing the interviews and following up on references, and then putting together volunteer files which can then be used by any committee which the individual is interested in.

A protocol for dealing with issues when things go wrong will be developed over the winter with the goal of presenting it to the Annual General Meeting in May, 2012. The delay is necessary because By-Law revisions will be required to implement a protocol similar to those in effect in other UU churches.

Sexual Harassment

Hiring

Adopted April 2013

When hiring full time or part time employees or contract workers, the Vestry shall endeavour to fill the positions with people who are not members or long term friends of the congregation. This is done primarily to ensure that decisions related to hiring and firing are not influenced by membership or by loyalty or friendships between members/friends.

There are two positions where it may be in the best interests of all to hire from within the congregation. The position of Director of Music and Director of Religious Exploration both require in-depth knowledge of Unitarian Universalism. As a result the best candidate for these positions may come from within the congregation. Even in these two cases the Vestry shall endeavour to ensure that the hiring process is open to the wider community. The hiring decision shall be made on qualifications only. No one shall be given an advantage in the hiring process based on their membership or long term friend status.