

Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church

Covenant of Right Relations

In order to foster a healthy community with an open and safe environment, we the members of the Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church do hereby covenant to:

- Practice gentleness and kindness with one another,
- Speak respectfully and honestly,
- Know that we will sometimes disagree, so do so in the spirit of equity; do as much as possible to reach a mutually acceptable solution,
- Practice fair treatment and respect differences,
- Address issues and behaviors rather than people and personalities,
- Speak personally and privately with one another about concerns or disagreements, avoiding gossip and indirect communication through another person,
- Acknowledge the spirituality of the community, maintaining a sacred focus,
- In the midst of conflict, keep perspective – take a breath,
- Seek denominational or professional help for resolutions when needed, and
- Trust and use this covenant.

(September 25, 2005)

COVENANT OF THE HEALTHY CONGREGATION TEAM OF THE
BUCKMAN BRIDGE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Created October 27, 2019

- We covenant to be guided by the BBUUC Mission, to be accountable to our BBUUC Covenant of Right Relations, and to live as best we can our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
- Discretion and confidentiality are hallmarks of our work together on behalf of our Church, and we covenant to practice both so that we may be trustworthy to those we serve.
- If the first duty of love is to listen, we covenant to listen with open minds, with open hearts, and without judgment. We covenant to avoid unhealthy triangulation and gossip.
- We covenant to work together in support of our Church's Bylaws and Policies, including (but not limited to) the Safety Policy, the Disruptive Behavior Policy, and the Right Relations & Reconciliation Policy.
- We covenant to keep learning and growing together, and to model best practices by bringing conflicts and concerns back to our Healthy Congregation Team.
- We covenant to continually educate ourselves and the Church about healthy conflict resolution and reconciliation, and to amend this Covenant when necessary, to support healthy process and communication.

Code of Conduct for Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church

1. Practice gentleness and kindness with one another.
We strive to be a community that welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes, but is not limited to members of any race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, color, immigration status, social and economic class, educational level, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.
2. Be considerate.
Others depend on the work that you do. You in turn will depend on the work of others. Any decision you make will affect co-congregants, and you should take those consequences into account when making decisions.
3. Address issues and behaviors rather than people and personalities.
Not all of us will agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for poor behavior and poor manners. We might all experience some frustration now and then, but we cannot allow that frustration to turn into a personal attack. It's important to remember that a community where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive one. We should be respectful when dealing with other members as well as with people outside the community.
4. Speak respectfully and honestly.
We are a spiritual community, and we conduct ourselves with kindness.
5. Practice fair treatment and respect differences.
Do not insult or put down others. Harassment and other exclusionary behavior are not acceptable. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Violent threats or language directed against another person.
 - b. Discriminatory jokes and language.
 - c. Sharing sexually explicit or violent material.
 - d. Sharing (or threatening to share) other people's personally identifying information ("doxing").
 - e. Personal insults, especially those using racist or sexist terms.
 - f. Unwelcome sexual attention.
 - g. Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behavior.
 - h. Repeated harassment of others. In general, if someone asks you to stop, then stop.
6. Know that we will sometimes disagree, so do so in the spirit of equity; do as much as possible to reach a mutually acceptable solution.
Disagreements happen all the time. It is important that we resolve disagreements and differing views constructively. Remember that we're different. Our strength comes from our diversity. Different people have different perspectives on issues. Being unable to understand why someone holds a viewpoint doesn't mean that they're wrong. Don't forget that it is human to err and blaming each other doesn't get us anywhere. Instead, focus on helping to resolve issues and learning from mistakes.

7. Set and respect agendas. Acknowledge the spirituality of the community, maintaining a sacred focus.

When groups of people gather together, it's important for them to understand the purpose of the meeting. Agendas help set expectations: when meetings start, when they stop, how people should prepare, what activities will occur, what will be discussed. Time is a precious commodity. In a community of volunteers, agendas help us use that time wisely. Consequently, it is not appropriate to attempt to divert a meeting from its stated agenda. Meeting moderators are responsible for helping a group keep to its agenda.

8. Use established processes.

BBUUC has built policies that guide the working of the congregation. These policies provide mechanisms for conflict resolution and further improvement of policy. These policies provide a consistent, equitable, and transparent process for the operation of the congregation. It is inappropriate to circumvent the established procedures of the congregation.

9. Use the Healthy Congregation Team to handle violations.

Violations of the code of conduct will be referred to the Healthy Congregation Teams and addressed through the BBUUC Grievance Policy, unless such violations are a threat to the personal safety of a congregant. In that case, those issues will be handled according to the BBUUC Safety Policy.

10. Adhere to BBUUC's Covenant of Right Relations.

Responding to Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is any behavior that has the effect of interrupting and preventing the regular business of a congregational activity. These activities may include worship services, fellowship functions such as dinners or game nights, education classes, and business meetings of the congregation, board, or volunteer teams. Each activity has a facilitator with responsibility for the success of the activity. That person, and the Healthy Congregation Team members, are responsible for managing disruptive behavior.

If a person behaves in a way that disrupts a congregational activity, the following actions will be taken:

1. If the physical safety of the congregation is threatened, a member of the Safety Committee or the Healthy Congregation Team will call 911 and request immediate assistance.
2. If the disruptive behavior is not a threat to the physical safety of the congregation, the HCT member or Activity Facilitator will ask the person to immediately stop the disruptive behavior. The HCT member or Activity Facilitator may refer the person's behavior to the Healthy Congregation Team for follow up.
3. If the person continues to be disruptive, the HCT member or Activity Facilitator will ask them to leave the activity. The HCT member or Activity Facilitator will document the behavior and refer it to the Healthy Congregation Team for follow up.
4. If the person refuses to leave when asked, the HCT member or Activity Facilitator will call 911 for assistance.

Grievance Policy

Mindful of the need of small and growing congregations to maintain a safe and healthy environment in which to practice our Covenants and fulfill our Mission, we adopt this Grievance Policy to guide us when it becomes necessary to help members, friends, staff and ministers of the Congregation return to right relations with one another. Additionally, this Policy is intended to support healthy communications, transparency, and accountability among the Congregation and its leadership.

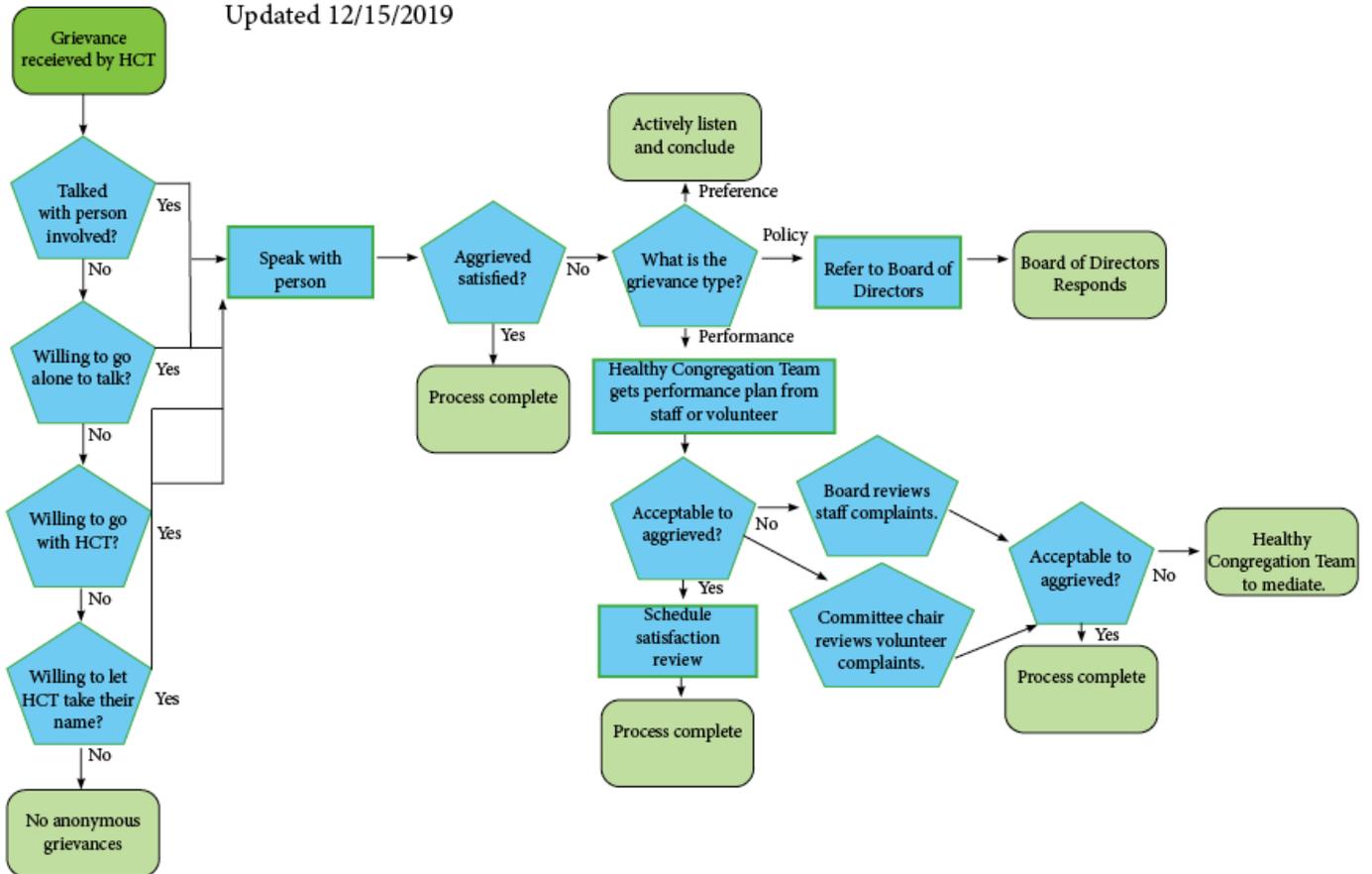
Our Grievance Policy (i) does not honor or respond to anonymous complaints, and (ii) includes the attached Flow Chart, which illustrates the process outlined below:

1. A grievance is reported to any member of the Healthy Congregations Team (HCT), a mission team of BBUUC.
 - a. The HCT will hear no anonymous grievances.
 - b. The HCT member meets to listen to the person involved, either alone, or with another member of the HCT.
 - c. The HCT determines if the issue falls under one of these three categories:
 - i. Personal Preference
 - ii. Policy
 - iii. Performance
2. Personal Preference Complaints
 - a. If the grievance is resolved by way of an “active listening” conversation between the aggrieved and the HCT member, the process is complete and the resolution is reported to the Healthy Congregations Team.
 - b. If the aggrieved person is not satisfied, it is determined if the complaint is related to Policy or Performance.
3. Policy Complaints
 - a. Policy complaints are referred to the Board for resolution.
 - b. The Board may consult with the Healthy Congregations Team for development of policies related to the Mission of BBUUC.
4. Performance Complaints
 - a. Staff & Volunteers
 - i. If the complaint is against a paid staff member, the Board develops a performance plan with the staff member and schedules a satisfaction review.
 - ii. If the complaint is against a volunteer, the Committee Chair and a member of the HCT work with the congregant to address the concerns and, if necessary, helps the parties to reconcile by way of a personal covenant between them.

The attached flow-chart is a summary of the process outlined above, and is incorporated as a part of this Right Relations and Grievance Policy.

Respectful Relations Grievance Process

Updated 12/15/2019



Addendum for Board review of Safety policy.

The below text is taken directly from BBUUC's Safety policy. The Healthy Congregation Team suggests that the Safety Committee reviews their policy and procedure document and update the mention of the Abuse Response Team (ART) to be Healthy Congregation Team (HCT). Below will not be a part of the HCT official policy but is listed here for your review.

Disruptive Behavior

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons.

There have been times when disruptive behavior of an individual in the church building or on the church grounds has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

- a. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child
- b. The disruption of church activities
- c. Diminishing appeal of the congregation to its potential and existing membership

The following shall be the policy of BBUUC in dealing with these issues:

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by a member of the Abuse Response Team (ART) and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, OR suspending the meeting or activity until such a time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required the Sheriff's Office may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken the Board must be notified; a follow-up letter detailing the offense and the action taken because of the offense, should be written and distributed to the Board.
2. Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to the ART. The ART will respond in terms of their own judgment observing the following:
 - a. The ART will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable" behavior in advance.
 - b. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.
 - c. The ART will collect all necessary information.
 - d. To aid in evaluating the problem, these points will be considered:
 - i. DANGEROUSNESS – Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
 - ii. DISRUPTIVENESS – How much interference with church functions is going on?
 - iii. OFFENSIVENESS – How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
 - e. To determine the necessary response, these points will be considered:
 - i. CAUSES – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - ii. HISTORY – What is the extent, if any, of disruption cause in the past?
 - iii. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
 - f. The ART will decide on the necessary response on a case-by-case basis.