



Healthy Community Committee

What is the Healthy Community Committee?

At First Unitarian, the Healthy Community Committee has been charged with assisting, in a confidential manner, our church community with appropriately managing conflict when it arises between or among church members or between the senior minister and church members.

Who Are the Committee Members?

Team Members

- Gilbert Gutierrez, co-chair (2019)
nvomxo@hotmail.com
- Alisa Cooper de Uribe, co-chair (2020)
alisacooper@rocketship.com
- Shelley Alonso-Marsden (2023)
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- Brenda Cole (2023)
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- Dimitri Kapelianis (2023)
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- Angela Herrera
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You may call the church office at 884-1801 to request a team member's phone number.

First Unitarian Church Conflict Management At a Glance

The Healthy Community Committee proposes the following graded approach for managing conflict:

- Self-resolution using specific, direct communication between the parties in an attempt to arrive at a mutual agreement regarding the issue.
- Healthy Community Committee assistance for directing church members in conflict to the proper resolution resources, including mediators or the appropriate church staff member. Committee members themselves are not expected to resolve conflicts.
- Mediation by a professional who will help the parties work on a non-adversarial approach to successfully manage their conflict. The mediator's role is to promote direct communication between the parties, assist them in focusing on the valid issues of the dispute, and arrive at options for settlement.
- In certain circumstances, referral to church Board of Directors, who may determine a formal resolution when requested.

Recommended Approaches for Conflict Management

1. Self-Resolution

Discuss your concern with the person or committee involved. If you do not know who is responsible for your area of concern, check with one of the ministers, the church administrator, or the congregation's board president.

Use of these Conflict Communication Guidelines have been found to be helpful when addressing a conflict with others.

- Use subjective language ("I" messages). ("This is my experience, my recollection, my point of view, my feeling, my interpretation.")
- Share your feelings as honestly and completely as you are able. ("I am sad, happy, angry, frustrated, excited, fearful.")
- Be as specific as you can about whatever situation you are describing; give examples.
- Be respectful of the other person/s. Don't label them. Speak about the behavior you observe, not someone's character or personality.
- Tell the other person why your relationship with them is important to you; offer suggestions of things you might need to change to improve the situation or relationship.
- Ask directly for what you want.

2. Healthy Community Committee or Staff Help

Members of the Healthy Community Committee can direct church members in conflict to the proper resources to reach resolution. These may be professional mediators who volunteer with the committee to help the church or the appropriate church staff member. Requests for assistance from the committee are confidential, as is communication with the mediators. Committee members themselves are not expected to resolve conflicts.

If your conflict is with one of the church staff, you are urged to first attempt self-resolution. If self-resolution does not work, you may then approach

the staff member's supervisor. The committee can help you identify the proper person. If that does not produce a satisfactory result, you can go to the senior minister.

If you have a conflict with a committee, a fellow church member or the senior minister, which can't be resolved through direct discussion, you may ask the Healthy Community Committee for assistance. You may call or write any Healthy Community Committee member, who have agreed to keep these communications confidential.

The Healthy Community Committee member will then bring your concern to the committee or the senior minister as appropriate to determine a path to resolution. Sometimes the senior minister or church staff can resolve the issue. Sometimes mediation is needed.

3. Mediation

If the Healthy Community Committee believes a mediator would be helpful in managing a conflict, the committee will contact one who is agreed upon by all parties.

Several members of the congregation are professionally trained and have agreed to aid in managing conflicts. Each mediator has their own procedure and will contact all the parties involved. Mediators volunteer their professional and personal wisdom in this service.

Each party may be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. The agreement that the parties arrive at will be filed with the Healthy Community Committee.

4. Referral to the Board of Directors

If the conflict cannot be successfully managed, and in cases where, in the opinion of the Healthy Community Committee, the conflict places persons or the church community and its mission in jeopardy, the Health Community Committee shall refer the matter to the Board of Directors for formal resolution.