

Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ
2401 North Lake Avenue, Altadena, CA 91001

Statement of Policy for Protecting Children and Youth
Draft 1: March 16, 1997

Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment

The Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ is committed to creating and maintaining a worship and work community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ should be aware that the Conference is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment, and that such behavior is prohibited by Conference policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the Conference to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this policy, and if necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Care-Givers Conduct Policy

Ministers and other employees or volunteers engaged in the ministries of the Conference are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of a parishioner or other individual with whom a minister, employee, or volunteer engaged in the ministries of the Conference has a care-giving relationship, is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Because ministers and other Conference employees or volunteers engaged in the ministries of the Conference often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise personally vulnerable, it is imperative that the care-givers be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually, and that the care-givers have adequate preparation and education for helping those individuals under their care. It is the policy of the Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ to encourage its ministers, staff, and volunteers to nurture safety within care-giving relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, and the importance of referring those in need. It is also expected that ministers and other employees or volunteers engaged in providing ministry will complete and submit the background disclosure and information release form attached to this policy.

Child and Youth Protection Policy

The Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which children and youth can learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we expect that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors will have been:

1. members of a local United Church of Christ congregation for at least six months or
2. friends of a local United Church of Christ congregation for at least one year.

It is the policy of the Conference to provide adequate supervision for all youth activities. We also expect all employees or volunteers who work with minors to complete and submit the background disclosure and information release form attached to this policy.

Definitions

Sexual exploitation is sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a minister, other Conference employee, or volunteer engaged in the work of the Conference takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the Conference worker.

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Sexual harassment includes repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It also includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in other Conference activities or;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or Conference-related decisions affecting an individual or;
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in Conference activities, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or Conference environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones. This includes:

- written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations;
- verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comment, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
- physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing, sexual intercourse; and,
- visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome, and using sexual behavior to control, influence or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment or another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, Conference leadership or their comfortable participation in the life of the Conference. For example, it is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, or suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition. Also, offering benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications in exchange for sexual favors is forbidden.