

## **WES Policy on Disruptive Behavior**

Approved by WES Board of Trustees \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date of Policy \_\_\_\_\_

Supersedes Old Policy Name: Not Applicable

### **To be inserted in the Bylaws at V. Centrality of Relationship, added as new paragraph B.**

**Preamble:** The WES policy on Disruptive Behavior is designed to guide our clergy and community leaders if a situation arises where one or more adults or children in our community feel physically or emotionally threatened by another. WES is a safe and welcoming environment for all members and visitors. Every day we live and affirm our Ethical Culture principles, including:

- affirming the worth and dignity of every person,
- honoring differences,
- disagreeing agreeably,
- eliciting the best in the human spirit,
- affirming our faith in human goodness.

Sometimes in human communities there is a possibility that one or more persons may engage in behavior that threatens the well-being or safety of others or the health and welfare of the community. This Policy on Disruptive Behavior will guide our community during such times.

#### **Definitions:**

- Disruptive Behaviors: is physical or verbal behavior that
  - Is perceived to threaten safety of any adult or child,
  - Is perceived to threaten physical property, and/or
  - Is disruptive to carrying out of WES activities.

In some situations, Immediate Action during an incident of disruptive behavior may be warranted. In other situations, Immediate Action may not be necessary. But in either case, Follow-Up attention will be given to the incident of disruptive behavior.

In a situation where Immediate Action is warranted, the event or activity leader:

- May ask, privately or publicly, the person or persons to stop engaging in the perceived disruptive verbal or physical behavior, so the event or activity may continue as planned; if this does not resolve the immediate situation, then
- May ask the person or persons engaging in the perceived disruptive verbal or physical behavior to leave the event or activity; if this does not resolve the immediate situation, then
- May suspending the event or activity until such time as it may be safely resumed.<sup>1</sup>
- If a clergy leader is not present for the incident where Immediate Action occurred, the senior clergy leader (or designate) must be notified immediately (within 4 hours).

**Follow-Up Attention** is given to any perceived disruptive behavior incident, whether or not Immediate Action was taken. Follow-Up Attention is designed to support understanding of differences and perceptions between and among WES members/friends, and to promote both individual and our community learning, deepen understandings and growth.

1. **Documentation:** The leader of the event or activity where the perceived disruptive verbal or physical behavior incident took place, must, within 24 hours, write a follow-up letter to the Senior Clergy Leader (or designate) and Board of Trustees President (or designate), detailing the perceived disruptive behavior and any immediate action taken because of it.
  - 1.1. If either the Senior Clergy Leader or Board of Trustees President are directly involved in the perceived disruptive verbal or physical behavior incident, alternative designees will assume their roles. The role identified for the Senior Clergy Leader will be assumed by the Director of Lifelong Learning. The role identified for the Board of Trustees President will be assumed by the Board of Trustees Vice President.
2. **Referral:** The Senior Clergy Leader (or designate) and Board of Trustees President (or designate) will confer and decide next Follow-Up steps—in most cases referring the incident to **(some identified member who has counselling training/skills)** to discuss the conflict situation with the individuals involved, understand what caused the disruption, and identify how to return to a state of “right relations.”
3. **Conversation:** The **“counselling person”** will have conversations with those persons involved and/or affected by the perceived disruptive behavior incident, for the purpose of sharing points of view, deepening understandings, and restoring the participants to right relationships.

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<sup>1</sup> Any person who feels in imminent physical danger shall not be prevented from calling the local police on their own behalf.

- 3.1. The "counselling person" will report the results of the discussion with the individuals involved, in writing, back to the Senior Clergy Leader (or designate) and Board of Trustees President (or designate), with recommendations for either closing the incident, or next steps.
  4. If Further Follow-Up Attention is required, the situation will be forwarded to the **STANDING MEDIATION COMMITTEE (NAME, CHARTER, SCOPE OF AUTHORITY, AND MEANS OF FORMATION/ELECTION ALL TO BE DETERMINED)**.
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