

Procedure: Non-Violent Disruptive Person

Policies

Non-Violent Disruptive behavior of a person in the past caused concerns about one or more of these things.

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child.
2. The disruption of church activities.
3. Diminishment of the appeal of the church to its existing and potential members.

When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, Foothills Unitarian Church addresses the source of the threat firmly and promptly. Actions to stop the disruptive person, but are not limited to, expulsion, and civil and criminal law enforcement.

Procedure Steps

1. Trained Person—If the Event and Operations Manager and/or support staff are at church, immediately tell a person to find and bring them.
2. Trained Person(s)—
 - A. If required, immediately stop the church activity until it is safe to restart.
 - B. Immediately use “De-escalation Techniques for the Upset Member/Visitor” in this section.
 - C. As soon as possible after starting “De-escalation Techniques for the Upset Member/Visitor,” ask the disruptive person to leave.
 - D. If the disruptive person does not leave, immediately tell a person to call 911 and to meet and bring the police. Use any operational phone.
 - E. If the disruptive person becomes violent, refer to Procedures Active Shooter/Violent Person in this section.
3. Event and Operations Manager—As soon as possible after the event, report it to the Board of Trustees on a Foothills Incident Report. Go to <https://foothillsuu.wufoo.com/forms/foothills->

[incident-report.](#)

4. Event and Operations Manager—If the person is a member, volunteer, or friend, refer to **Procedures: Non Violent Disruptive Member, Volunteer, or Friend** in this handbook.

De-Escalation steps for the upset member or visitor:

There are times when members or visitors can escalate disruptive behaviors. We all struggle with these situations. Some members/visitors lack the skill set to effectively communicate their needs or frustrations and may resort to speaking loudly, cursing, slamming doors, pacing, sometimes barely taking a breath to pause, and various other disruptive behaviors.

Techniques you can use to de-escalate upset members/visitors:

- Keep your tone of voice, facial expression and body language calm and neutral.
- DO NOT tell the member/visitor to calm down (think of how you feel if you think you have a legitimate complaint and someone says this to you).
- Listen without interruption and allow the member/visitor to vent. Responding before you have heard what they have to say may agitate them further.
- DO NOT judge or be dismissive of their complaint or concern (NOTE: their concern may be valid even if communicating it poorly or it is valid to them.)
- DO NOT take the communication personally, their frustration/anger is not about you.
- DO NOT get emotionally "hooked" or drawn into their agitation. If you feel your muscles tensing and pulse increasing, slow down your breathing.
- You do not have to have an answer for every question or respond to every statement.
- Respect personal space (it shows respect and keeps you safer). If you must enter their personal space, inform them you are doing so to avoid frightening them.
- Use positive or helpful statements: "Please tell me more so I can better understand how to help you."

Helpful statements you can use to de-escalate upset members/visitors:

- "You are frustrated (upset/etc.), I can understand why that was so frustrating for you."
- "I can hear how frustrated you are" or "that must be/have been scary."
- "I understand why...." (This does NOT mean you agree, it only means you are empathetic.)
- "I want to be able to help."
- "That sounds tough."
- For Phone Calls: "I'm going to do my best to help with this situation. I am asking you to refrain from (or stop) using profanity (or yelling, etc.)."

If there is an immediate safety threat, immediately tell a person to call 911. Use any operational phone.

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