

**The UUMA Guidelines
for the
Conduct of Ministry**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Ethical Standards

I will be honest and diligent in my work to fulfill the offices of ministry according to the stipulations of my call or employment and my best professional judgment.

I will not misappropriate the money or property of the congregations, agencies or enterprises I serve, or of their members, staff or clients.

Within the limitations of law, I will respect the confidentiality of private communications from those to whom I minister.

I will honor the intellectual property of others, assuring that appropriate attribution is given to avoid intentionally creating the impression that the work of others is my own.

I will demonstrate respect and compassion without regard to race, color, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability or ethnicity. Such equitable treatment shall be extended to all to whom I minister regardless of position in the organization, including to those who may disagree with me.

I will work to confront attitudes and practices of unjust discrimination on the basis of race, color, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, or ethnicity, and to challenge them within myself and in individuals, congregations, and groups I serve.

I will make myself a candidate for a pulpit or other position of ministry only with serious intent, and I will observe the established candidating procedures of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

I will stay informed of the latest rules and policies of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

I will not engage in public words or actions that degrade the vocation of ministry, or diminish among us the esteem of our calling.

I will not engage in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with any minor child or unwilling adult.

I will not engage in sexual contact or sexualized behavior in potentially exploitive relationships, including with any person I am counseling, with interns, and with any staff person I supervise directly or indirectly except my spouse or partner.

I will respect the relationships of those to whom I minister, and not engage in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with any married or partnered client or member of the congregation, agency or enterprise I serve, or with the spouse or partner of a client or member of the institution.

If I am married or in a committed partnership I will not engage in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with any person whom I serve professionally except my spouse or partner.

In pursuing any special personal relationship of friendship or romance with a client or member of the congregation, agency or enterprise I serve, I will recognize the potential negative consequences for my ministry and/or the institutional system and I will consider the advice of colleagues.

Expectations of Conduct

I will share and support the concerns of the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association, especially as reflected in the UUMA Covenant, Code and Standards.

Within the limitations of law, I will respect confidences given me by colleagues and expect them to respect mine.

I will not speak scornfully or in derogation of any colleague in public. In any private conversation concerning a colleague, I will speak responsibly and temperately. I will not solicit or encourage negative comments about a colleague or their ministry.

These Expectations of Conduct apply to all forms of public or private media including electronic and internet communications.

I will seek consultation among my colleagues practicing the diverse forms of parish-based and community-based ministry within the same geographical area, so that we may develop a mutually agreed Letter of Understanding regarding our several roles and the ways in which these may and may not intersect.

If I am not a settled, interim or consulting minister of a congregation served by a colleague, I will not offer, and will not accept requests for, ministerial services or public leadership from members of that congregation, or in that congregational context, unless I have a covenant with or until I have consulted with the minister serving there.

If my colleague asks me to refrain from performing such service or appearing in a leadership capacity, I will comply.

Should emergency circumstances make advance consultation impossible, I will render only limited service, and consult with my colleague at the earliest possible opportunity.

If I have occasion to perform ministerial or leadership functions, apart from routine contact with members or clients of my current ministry, in contexts where colleagues are serving, I will make an effort to communicate with those colleagues, and to respect their professional prerogatives and be responsive to their concerns.

Ministers of a congregation hosting District or UUA events will be assumed to have invited colleagues to appear in leadership capacities at such events.

If I am to share the ministry of a congregation with other ministers, I will seek clear delineation of responsibility, authority, accountability and channels of communication before responsibilities are assumed. I will thereafter work in cooperation and consultation with my colleagues, taking care that changing roles and relations are re-negotiated with clarity, respect and honesty.

I will acknowledge the reality of power differences based on defined responsibilities and authority within congregations, agencies or enterprises. I will acknowledge the reality of privilege arising from differences of social location and historical marginalization. I will exercise the power of my authority and the privileges of my social location in such a way that I do not disadvantage my colleagues on the basis of my or their race, color, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability or ethnicity.

As a supervisor, I will recognize the special responsibility I have to colleagues and staff who I supervise, and I will work justly and compassionately with the authority given to me.

As a minister in a role supervised by a senior colleague, I will work to support my colleague's leadership and the success of our shared ministry.

When my ministry to a congregation has ended, I will refrain from offering or performing ministerial services for members of that congregation, except at the invitation of my incumbent successor colleague(s).

If I belong to or attend a congregation served by a colleague, I will honor the prerogatives of that colleague's responsibility for leadership in that congregation, and in all ways seek to support that colleague's ministry. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my colleague(s) in order to create a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about the role I am to play in the church. If I am a member of a congregation that I once served, this may include the possibility of absenting myself from any presence at all. I will articulate clearly my own hopes and expectations regarding my relationships in the congregation, and my intention to avoid wielding any undue influence among the members. I will only participate in leadership roles that support and benefit the ministry, and at the request and with the permission of the minister(s). I will neither listen to nor volunteer criticisms of my colleague(s). As

necessary I will describe appropriate channels of communications to members seeking to express concerns.

If I am a settled minister in a congregation having retired or other ministers as members, I will seek to foster cordial and candid relations with my colleagues in recognition of the value of their presence in the congregation. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about their participation in the life of the congregation. I will bring any concerns arising from the relationship my colleague(s) have with the congregation directly and promptly to the attention of my colleague(s).

If I am elected Minister Emeritus/a, I will recognize that this honor sustains a continuing but changed relationship with the congregation I once served as one of its ministers. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my successor colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about the role I am to play in the church. My successor colleague may choose to include the congregation's board of trustees in this covenant process. I will honor the prerogatives of my colleague's responsibility for leadership, and in all ways seek to support that colleague's ministry.

If I am a settled minister in a congregation that has elected a Minister Emeritus/a, I will recognize the meaning of the honor that the congregation has bestowed, and the significance of the continuing relationship of ministry it implies. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my Emeritus/a colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about their participation in the life of the congregation. I will bring any concerns arising from the relationship the Minister Emeritus/a has with the congregation directly and promptly to that colleague's attention.

The discovery of ministerial misconduct and the healing of congregations, agencies or enterprises that have experienced such misconduct, take priority over the expectations of collegial courtesy.

In calling attention to any deviation by my colleague(s) from this Code, I will adhere to the processes described in Accountability, below. So doing will not be regarded as a failure of collegial loyalty.