



First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego DRAFT - Restorative Justice Process for Staff

Though listed in steps we understand that the process is dynamic - the spelled out process is not necessarily needed for reconciliation

Has a Discernment Process happened? Is Restorative Justice needed?

Why? (Why is it important that we do this? / What are the values/principles/beliefs behind this process?)

- Moving away from punitive expectations of white supremacy culture, we uphold the values of reestablishing community and relationship through a process that is fair, just, compassionate that promotes healing and emphasizes the needs of the harmed party.
- Focus on the harmed party(ies)
- Because we are covenant based, that is, because we have agreed to be guided by a mutual covenant of right relationship and respect
- Process leaves space for exploration of what is needed for healing – not prescriptive
- Create and maintain beloved community
- Ongoing process

Objectives:

Restore Community and Covenant

Open the possibility for healing

Personal Spiritual growth for involved parties

Restore relationship of both parties to each other and to the community - relational

Shift away from a punitive model

Goals:

Centering the needs of the person harmed

- Greater or deeper connection because of healing, seeking repair
- Conflict isn't the end of the discussion, there's restoration of relationship/community
- Bringing the covenant-breaker back into right relationship
- Create a community of mercy, wholeness and growth through listening and learning together.

- Transformation (of conflict, behaviors, practices)
- “Creating a community where the interconnection between the spiritual life of the individual and community is valued.”

What kinds of transgressions? What constitutes a break in covenant?

Actions/behaviors/words that diminish/dehumanize/dismiss - breaking trust

- Expressed pain due to another’s actions or words (microaggressions/microinsults)
- Breaking confidentiality
- Triangulation - refusing to engage directly. Someone goes to another person to talk about a third individual rather than engaging directly with the person. Sometimes a mediator is required because it may be a difficult conversation to have. Support folks may be needed, and are present for the discussion, but are not in a triangle. Everyone has agreed that they are a part of the conversation.
- Disrespectful and unprofessional communication and behavior
- Intentional failure to communicate professionally and respectfully which could result in triangulation.
- Representing an individual’s opinion as that of the entire staff.
- Passing blame, blaming someone in the staff
- Refusing to engage in the work staff is doing
- Public vs Private
- Interpersonal vs institutional

Process:

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Step One – Look through a Restorative Lens: Identification of broken / strained covenant

When we look at the world through the Restorative Lens, we shift our focus from rules and punishment to impacts and repair. Remember the Guiding Restorative Questions and approach the conflict through that framework of understanding.

1. What happened?
2. Who was affected?
3. What can be done to create repair?
4. Are all prepared to be responsible for holding up accountability for each other / shared responsibility / Group Conscience?

Meet with the involved parties individually to build relationships and trust and talk through how each individual person has been impacted and what their needs are moving forward.

The person harmed may choose to inform the harming party or seek the assistance of a staff member they trust to initiate the process.

If I've caused harm: Set the standard for ourselves - If (I) am causing harm (I) will take the next step to address it. Take ownership of starting this process. Once (I) know I address it in a timely manner. (My) responsibility is to reach out.

Step Two – Conversation with all involved parties to determine parameters of **VOMPP** (if needed - refer to Step Three below)

Identify Needs: In addition to the information gained through the pre-conference meeting, clues for needs are found in several places:

1. Wrongdoings generate needs. Ask the involved parties, what is needed to repair the harms?
2. Harmful behavior indicates a need that is not being met. Behavior is an attempt to fulfill a need, so try to identify the need at the root of problematic behaviors. Is this a systemic need?
3. Do we need accountability to a third party monitoring the process?
4. Are all parties prepared to engage in process?

Step Three - After covenant breach has been defined and a process is found to be needed: **VOMPP** (facilitator/mediator required - harmed party chooses trained person to mediate)

VOMPP is a practice that can be done between two people, between two small groups, or—if there has been an incident in front of a group, it could be done as a fishbowl.

V: Vocalize

O: Ownership

M: Mirror

P: Plan

P: Public or Private

V: Vocalize—Both Parties talk with no interruptions on their experience with the incident. They take turns speaking. (Optional: a time limit)

O: Ownership—After hearing each other’s experience, each party vocalizes their own part in the incident. For example, “I was already angry” I stopped listening when I heard --- “I didn’t think about my words” “I didn’t say how I felt at the time”

M: Mirror—This is when each person pretends to be the other person. It goes beyond repeating back words; this requires each person to be empathetic about the other person’s experience and feelings.

P: Plan—Going forward; what do we do different? It can be specific (I will not...) or general (In the future I will speak out. Part of the plan can even be that time is needed to process and that there will be another VOMPP meeting at a specific time.

P: Public or Private? Part of the plan will focus on how the community has been affected and how that will be addressed. The person who has been hurt has the final say on whether the community will be addressed, but it is important to consider the community’s needs over the break in covenant.

- or -

Design Circle Questions

Remember to maintain the flow of the restorative questions, moving from impacts to ideas for repair. It is advisable to open with a question that will help to build comfort with the circle process and speaking in a circle. Ending with a question round that gives an opportunity for each person to have a final word provides a sense of closure.

The number of rounds and specific questions will vary depending on the needs being addressed by the circle.

Depending on the situation, the discussion of ideas for repair will take different forms. At times, it may be enough for people to verbally commit to what they will do to create repair. At other times, it may be necessary to suspend the circle speaking order to allow more in-depth discussion of what is needed to create repair. This may culminate in a written agreement with specific action items moving forward. This can help circle participants to continue to take responsibility and create repair after the culmination of the circle process.

Step Four - Revisit / Check in / Follow-up (public or private)