

# Harassment and Workplace Violence

## Rural United Pastoral Charge

### Purpose

The Rural United Pastoral Charge is committed to providing a safe workplace and will not tolerate any behaviour by its members, lay and Order of Ministry staff, or elected members that constitutes harassment or violence of any kind. Harassment and violence are prohibited by federal and provincial law.

### Policy

The Rural United Pastoral Charge is committed to providing a safe, harassment- and violence-free environment for worship, work, and study. Complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

#### Violence is defined broadly as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against an individual in a workplace that causes, or could cause, injury;
- An attempt to exercise physical force by a person against an individual in a workplace that could cause physical injury;
- A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for an individual to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the individual, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury.

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwanted and is a form of discrimination. Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviours, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse.

Sexual harassment is defined as any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, or to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to raise concerns about harassment, violence, and discrimination. It is also the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to respond to harassment, violence, and discrimination.

### Procedures

1. Harassment and violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. *All complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Any complaint against a congregation member should be presented to one of the congregation's Ministry & Personnel (M&P) representatives in writing. Complaints concerning the staff of the pastoral charge or a congregation's M&P representative should be made to the Chair of the M&P Committee. Should there appear to be a concern or conflict in that reporting process the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Official Board.*
3. Investigations will be conducted and/or facilitated by the appropriate individual as identified in the prior step. Complaints of harassment or violence will be investigated under the provisions outlined in the appropriate harassment or violence policies developed by The United Church of Canada (for example, the Sexual Abuse Policy).
4. Each stage in dealing with a case of harassment or violence needs to minimize further distress for the complainant and involve as few people as possible. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
5. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Ministry and Personnel Committee and/or other appropriate investigative bodies will review the information gathered, take appropriate actions, and respond to the complaint.