

SafetyNet Suggestions to Proposed UUMA Guidelines—Code of Conduct

P 2 *Ethical Standards*

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

37

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

41

Note: While the above is better than the current guidelines, we suggest further improvements by replacing lines 34-41 as follows. "I will recognize the power that ministry gives me and refrain from practices which are harmful to others and which endanger my integrity or my professional effectiveness. Such practices include but are not limited to: sexual activity with any minor, a counselee, with a member, friend or visitor of my congregation, agency, or enterprise, with the spouse or partner of a person in the congregation, with interns, or any other such relationship in which my power as a minister is a factor."

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

28

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

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

44

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

Note to above. In above section, it is not relevant whether a UU minister is "married or in a committed partnership." Ministers should not pursue special friendships or romance with a "client or member" (language that should be broadened to include partners of congregants, friends, visitors, and so on. We suggest deleting both of these paragraphs (lines 42-47). The latter appears to condone relationships of unequal power. A possible alternative would be to replace "client or member" with "any minor, counselee, member, friend or visitor of my congregation, with the spouse or partner of a person in the congregation, with interns, or any other such relationship in which my power as a minister is a factor." However, we feel that this change is inadequate, since ministers should not engage in special personal relationships with congregants, and so on. Furthermore, "I will consider the advice of colleagues" is too vague and does not consider the possibility that some colleagues may condone unacceptable behavior when consulted. Therefore, we suggest deleting lines 42-47, or as a distant second best, replacing with more definitive and restrictive language.

P 3 *Expectations of Conduct*

line 6-7 Within the limitations of law, I will respect confidences given me by colleagues and expect them to respect mine.

Except in matters inconsistent with these guidelines I will respect confidences given me by colleagues and expect them to respect mine.

Note: The change is necessary to show the limits of supportiveness and confidentiality. Legality is not the standard to which ministers should hold themselves. Note that this "confidence" is not one recognized by the law of many states.

P 4-5 **Accountability Procedures**

46

47 The provisions of the Code of Conduct identify standards of behavior for members of the UUMA.

48 Violation of these standards by any member is a matter of concern to other members, and may result in
49 disciplinary actions.

Note. Can possible disciplinary actions be spelled out?

Concerns and the Role of UUMA Good Offices

2

3 In most instances, a member who believes a colleague's behavior to be inconsistent with the Code of
4 Conduct should express their concern directly. As an alternative, or should the direct approach not
5 achieve the desired result, a Chapter Good Offices Person (GOP) should be consulted. A GOP is initially
6 neutral, advising the member, and exploring the possibility of an informal resolution of the concern.

7

8 In the event that a Chapter GOP cannot settle a concern between ministers, the minister or the Chapter
9 GOP will seek advice or intercession with the Continental GOP. If the concern is still unresolved, the
10 concerned minister should write a letter of complaint to the Committee on Ethics and Collegiality (CEC),
11 fully specifying the nature of the concern making it a formal complaint.

Note. The section above needs further consideration. Members of Safety Net less familiar with the UUMA were baffled by it -- what a GOP is and why one might be needed. We think it requires at least a clear definition, but more likely a rethinking from the ground up. The GOP involved in our church's case was not perceived as supportive of victims. Furthermore, these guidelines may open a possible route to secrecy (within the UUMA and the church) surrounding sexual behavior by a minister.