

## Anti-Harassment Policy Presbytery of Eastern Oregon Anti-Harassment Policy

1. Introduction: As the Church of Jesus Christ, love is the rule of our relationships.
  - a. Jesus said, “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets,” (Matt. 7:12), and “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).
  - b. The Book of Order states, “The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.” (F-1.0301, “The Calling of the Church: the Church is the Body of Christ”)
  - c. Because we believe this, and because we seek to live it out in all aspects of our personal and corporate life, we believe that harassment in all its forms is incompatible with who we are as followers of Jesus.
  - d. The Presbytery is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment against any individual
  
2. What is harassment?
  - a. Harassment, simply put, is “*repeated unwanted behavior.*” To take the parts in reverse order:
  - b. *Behavior*: harassment consists of words or actions that demean, threaten, offend, ostracize or humiliate another person. This could include but is not limited to, name-calling in private or public, or in electronic communication such as email; offensive or demeaning social media posts; stalking; and mockery of another person’s **race**, ethnicity, age, sex, ability, geography, or theological conviction.
  - c. *Unwanted*: behavior or language that might appear offensive to an observer is characteristic of some relationships, but if the person to whom the behavior or language finds it offensive or demeaning, it has crossed the line into harassment. In these cases, intention is irrelevant; it is how the language or behavior is received that is crucial.
  - d. *Repeated*: When the insulting or demeaning language or unwanted behavior is repeated, especially after the unwanted nature has been clearly communicated, it becomes harassment.
  
3. How do we prevent harassment in the Church?
  - a. Jesus is our model for how we treat each other. But we don’t always live up to that standard. That means we must begin with ourselves in stopping harassment. One way is to ask ourselves before we speak in a meeting or write in an email, “Will what I am about to say or write tend to build up the community or break down the community?” More specifically, “Have I fallen into a pattern of using dismissive or demeaning language **and/or behavior** toward this person or this group?” If criticism is necessary, it must be done with genuine love and concern not only for the body as a whole but also for the individual.
  - b. We acknowledge together that harassment in all its forms is wrong, and we commit ourselves to repentance and genuine reconciliation whenever harassment occurs.

c. Power imbalances are a fact of life. We are responsible for acknowledging the manner in which imbalances of power and authority impact our relationships. Some signs of an abuse of an imbalance of power may include language or behaviors that harm, intimidate, or coerce another person over whom one has authority or any other form of power. If we are in a position of power, we need to test our words and actions by Jesus' standards. Imbalances of power may be the result of social capital, role, or authority granted by the community.

4. What do we do when harassment takes place?
  - a. If you are being harassed, or if you witness harassment, name the behavior, if possible. It may be that the person engaging in harassing behavior will recognize their fault, repent, and apologize.
  - b. If a person present in the presbytery believes they have been subjected to harassment, that individual has the responsibility to file a complaint about the harassment as soon as possible. The complaint shall be made in writing with the employee's immediate supervisor, and/or general presbyter/stated clerk of the presbytery and/or chair of the presbytery's personnel committee.
  - c. The complainant may also contact persons inside or outside of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to assist with filing a written complaint. The complainant may also pursue redress through the Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries ("BOLI") Civil Rights Division or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Once a supervisor and/or the general presbyter and/or the stated clerk of the presbytery become(s) aware of a complaint, whether in writing or not, the supervisor and/or stated clerk together with the general presbyter, MUST issue a Cease-and-Desist Memorandum to the alleged offender and contact the presbytery's Commission on Ministry, or Commission on Preparation for Ministry to report the complaint as soon as possible to determine if an investigation is warranted. All information gathered during the investigation shall be held confidential to the maximum extent possible.

*Additionally, the person(s) receiving the complaint should be reminded of their responsibilities as "mandatory reporters" according to the provisions of the Book of Order (G-4.0302)*

5. What Happens after a charge of harassment has been lodged and/or validated?
  - a. Retaliation: Retaliation against anyone who files a harassment charge or who participates in the investigation of these charges is strictly prohibited. Anyone filing a harassment or discrimination complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment nor discriminated against in any manner because of the complaint.
  - b. Disciplinary Action: When the activities or conduct of any member or staff of the Eastern Oregon Presbytery is considered to be contrary to the standards or aims of the Presbytery of Eastern Oregon or is considered to be disruptive to the operations of the Presbytery of Eastern Oregon, its programs, or ministries, the procedure for potential corrective action outlined above and/or in the Book of Order section on Church Discipline shall be followed.

This policy takes effect when it is approved by the presbytery, which will review it every three years and change it as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Book of Order. Each presbytery member will be provided with a copy of this policy. *The policy will be included in the Presbytery Manual of Operations.*