

Restorative Justice as a Vision for Ministry

We place a high value on creating a culture of sanctuary within our congregations. Anyone should be able to enter our houses of worship or enter into relationship with our professional religious leaders without fear of being exploited in any way. Congregants should certainly be able to assume that they can trust their ministers to adhere to their own code of professional ethics by not taking advantage of them sexually.

But it happens. Still. After all the training and talking, some clergy still abuse their power and position by acting out sexually with members of the congregations they were called to serve.

We want you to know that we believe restorative justice is possible. We believe you have the right to be heard and that you deserve compassion and respect. Please contact the Office of Restorative Justice with any questions you may have. Also see the Resource list on the back of this pamphlet.

Office of Restorative Justice
Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA, ZIP Code

A Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct

This is the start of a

brochure to be developed by

the Office of Restorative

Justice, with areas to be

expanded on, etc.

What Is Clergy Sexual Misconduct?

Clergy sexual misconduct is a violation of professional ethics, a violation of personal boundaries, and a violation of trust. Misconduct may include sexual touching, or other sexualized behavior.

It is an injustice at the very seat of personal integrity — both for the perpetrator and the victim/survivors.

In *Is Nothing Sacred?* Marie Fortune describes the emotional cost of such violations for the victims, including feelings of shame, guilt, stupidity, betrayal, and exploitation. The victims become depressed and lose faith in themselves and their faith.

Clergy sexual misconduct is a grave injustice toward another person and our entire religious community. Clergy sexual misconduct violates the religious principles we hold.

What can you do if you have been a victim of clergy sexual misconduct?

If you feel you have been a victim of clergy sexual misconduct please talk with someone whom you trust. If you so desire, you may file a formal complaint against the minister.

It is not your job to protect the minister or your congregation.

The Office of Restorative Justice of the Unitarian Universalist Association

You may contact the office by calling:

Or see the report of the Safe Congregations Panel at www.

When you call the office you can expect to speak with someone who will listen respectfully and help you understand your options. If appropriate, you may also be provided an advocate to partner you in this difficult time.

Resources Available