



Policy on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

Theological Preamble

We affirm, as members of the Body of Christ, that we, at Clinton United Church, have a duty of care towards all who join in our community for worship, work, and play. Called by God to create a world where justice and right relationships flourish, we begin with our own church family and state our commitment to provide a safe environment where the values of mutuality, respect, care and protection are extended equally to all.

Before his arrest and trial, Jesus said to his disciples: *I give you a new commandment: that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples - if you have love for one another. John 13:34,35*

Discipleship in the 21st century requires the church straddle the growing gap between the secular and sacred dimensions of life. In response to the demands of the provincial government to formulate workplace safety policies, Clinton United Church has developed a policy on Harassment and Violence. We wish to make it clear that our duty to care for the vulnerable, challenge attitudes of intolerance, confront situations of abuse, address power imbalances, and establish trusting and respectful relations, is not rooted in secular governmental directives but is rooted in our faithful response to God's call to seek transformation through love.

We acknowledge, with humility, that the Church often falls short of its purpose to be an agent of social transformation in the world. We acknowledge, with humility, that relationships within our own church community do not always reflect Jesus' vision of inclusion, compassion, and empowerment. We acknowledge, with shame that abuse does happen – even in the church. Called to seek justice and to live with integrity, we continue to strive towards wholesome relationships in this church, in our community and in the world.

The policy that follows complies with the laws of the land. As people of faith, we seek to comply with Christ's vision of a world liberated from all forms of violence, oppression, and injustice. We recognize the overlapping of societal and church aims and welcome secular/sacred partnerships that further our mutual goals.

POLICY:

Clinton United Church is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all individuals and will not tolerate any behaviour by its members and staff in the course of their attendance at, voluntary effort, or work effort, for or on behalf of Clinton United Church that can be considered harassment or violence of any kind. Harassment and

violence are unacceptable behaviours prohibited by Provincial laws, are contrary to the spirit of fellowship within the Body of Christ and will not be tolerated. We will:

- provide a safe, violence and harassment free place of worship and work where all individuals are treated with respect
- ensure that all individuals are aware of the Church's intent and advice on the procedures of reporting and resolution of incidents.
- ensure a safe and positive environment through the prompt resolution of complaints.

Responsibilities

The Official Board of the Clinton United Church will:

- Promote a harassment and discrimination free environment
- Take every reasonable effort to protect staff and members
- Provide information, instruction and support to staff and members to protect their health and safety.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee will:

- Have the ongoing responsibility to implement these procedures including the response to complaints and incidents, the education of new staff and annual review of the policy with staff and members.

Staff, Members and Adherents will:

- Uphold this policy and procedures

Procedures:

Workplace Violence

1. An assessment of the risk of workplace violence based on Clinton United Church staff and member feedback is attached in Appendix "A"
2. Assessments include the identification of existing controls, procedures and measures already in place and additional controls, procedures and measures to minimize risk.
3. When additional controls, procedures and measures are identified an action plan for implementation will be developed by the Ministry and Personnel Committee
4. The Official Board will ensure controls and procedures and measures are put in place.

5. All staff and members must be aware of the appropriate communication procedures to summon immediate assistance in the event of a workplace violence incident.
6. All incidents of reported violence should be documented and promptly investigated by the Ministry and Personnel Committee of Clinton United Church (hereinafter, M&P)
7. If appropriate, the police should be notified and will lead the investigation.
8. Staff or members who have information that they or a fellow worker is subject to domestic violence that may expose the individual or fellow workers to physical harm in the workplace, are encouraged to inform a member of the M&P who will assess the risk and put in place precautions to protect staff.

Workplace Harassment

1. All individuals covered by these procedures are encouraged to report, as soon as possible, alleged incidents of harassment verbally or in signed written form, to the Minister, a member of the Board, or any member of the Ministry and Personnel Committee of Clinton United Church, whereupon the Conflict Resolution Process of the United Church of Canada as per sections 065 – 068 of the UCC Manual will be initiated.

Each incident will be taken seriously, promptly investigated and documented. Where disputes are solved informally, there will be no formal report.

Education and Training

Once the policy has been approved by the Official Board it will be the responsibility of the Ministry and Personnel Committee to make every employee aware of its existence. During the hiring process for every employee, applicants will be apprised of this policy and upon hiring they will receive a copy from the church office and it will be reviewed with them by M&P. The policy will be reviewed with each employee annually to identify any additional risks due to changes in the workplace. Review of risk, procedures/safety measures will be undertaken periodically by M&P.

Prepared by: Ministry and Personnel Committee

Date: August 28, 2011

Approved by: Clinton United Church Official Board

Date: September 28, 2011

APPENDIX “A”

Assessed Risk	Risk Level H, M, L	Existing Controls, Procedures, Measures	Possible Controls, Procedures, Measures
Working Alone in the Church			
Risk of violence occurring due to stranger gaining entry to the church	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephones in offices and kitchen • Windows in Minister and Secretary offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility of Property and Finance Committee to review measures e.g. restricted access to church, intercom/camera system, panic alarm and communicate to the Board • Procedure to access immediate assistance: telephone with 911, personal communication device • Procedure to report concerns, incidents
Risk of violence occurring when entering or leaving the church	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot and street lights • Leaving in pairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. choir practice - first to arrive to church to stay in car until another person arrives to enter church

Pastoral Visiting in the Community			
Risk of violence during pastoral visit	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only visiting known church members, notification of known risks • Match visitors to needs of person • Debriefing at the Pastoral Care Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility of Pastoral care committee
Administering Benevolent Fund			
Risk of Violence due to handling of Keane Estate Funds	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written records • Procedures in place regarding frequency to access funds and amounts 	Those who oversee the Keane Estate Fund to explore alternate method of administering benevolent fund and communicate to the board

DEFINITIONS

What is workplace violence?

The Occupational Health and Safety Act define workplace violence as:

“The exercise or the intent to exercise physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace that causes, or could cause physical injury to the worker. A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker in a workplace that could cause physical injury to the worker”. The types of violence that workers could experience in the workplace include hitting, pushing, physical assault, stalking, criminal harassment, robbery, or threats of violence.

What is workplace harassment?

The Ontario Health and Safety Act define workplace harassment as:

“Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome”. Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours may include harassment, sexual harassment, degrading comments, bullying, threats, intimidation and physical violence. This is a complaint based policy with the intent to discourage unwelcome behaviour from occurring.

Workplace is defined as all work or volunteer activities that occur while on church premises, or while engaging in church sanctioned activities in the community.)