

MANDATORY BOUNDARY TRAINING FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. WHAT IS BOUNDARY TRAINING?

- Boundary training for ministry personnel includes opportunities to reflect on power dynamics within the pastoral relationship, to understand the responsibilities of ministry personnel to maintain professional boundaries with those under our care, to become familiar with the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policies and Procedures of the United Church of Canada, and to offer leadership within our communities so that they are safe for vulnerable people.

2. WHY DO I HAVE TO TAKE BOUNDARY TRAINING?

- When clergy have been taken to court for violation of boundaries there is an expectation that clergy understand that sexual activity has no place within a pastoral relationship. Ministry Personnel are expected to understand their responsibility to report disclosures from minors, respond to complaints appropriately and know legal definitions of sexual harassment, abuse and assault. Therefore the denomination has a responsibility to equip our ministry personnel with this information. The practice of ministry is complex; with access to people's homes, care during times of vulnerability and in our humanness getting our emotions and sexual feelings engaged. We are expected to be wise and discerning in our use of power. Boundary Training offers time for reflection on these complexities.

3. WHO MANDATED THIS TRAINING?

- **In Hamilton Conference** the Conference Record of Proceedings 2001 contain this policy: "Hamilton Conference adopt the policy that all Ministry Personnel, including Voluntary Associate Ministers, serving pastoral charges or outreach ministries in this Conference are expected to take training offered by the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Committee, in co-operation with Presbyteries, concerning The United Church of Canada's Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures, every three years (changed to every five years in 2017). Newly appointed or transferred Ministry Personnel would be expected to take this training in their first year. For those already in the Conference there will be a 3 year implementation period. (Committee name change update 2010)." In 2010 **the General Council Executive** approved changes to the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policies and Procedures including mandating that ministry personnel take training in the policy once in their vocational lives.

4. HOW OFTEN MUST I TAKE BOUNDARY TRAINING?

- The General Council has mandated the training once within the vocational lives of ministry personnel. Our Conference, in co-operation with Presbyteries, is asking you take it once every five years.

5. WHERE IS BOUNDARY TRAINING OFFERED?

- General Council offers regular online training through United Online: [United-in-Learning Boundary Training](#). The trainers leading these workshops have been trained by Marie Fortune of the FaithTrust Institute, Seattle (www.faithtrustinstitute.org).

6. I AM A CANDIDATE FOR MINISTRY OR SOMEONE IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS MUST I TAKE THIS?

- **Boundary training is a requirement** for commissioning to diaconal ministry, ordination or admission. The Conference will need a certificate or equivalent demonstrating that you have completed this requirement prior to the annual meeting in the year you will be received as ministry personnel. For those under appointment (student supply, candidate supply, intern supply, ordained supply) you must complete the course in the first year of your appointment.

7. **I AM IN SPECIAL MINISTRY OR RETAINED HOW DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO ME?**

- As ministry personnel in the United Church of Canada exercising your ministry in whatever setting you must comply with the General Council mandatory training. As ministry personnel within Hamilton Conference we expect you to take the training every five years.

8. **I AM RETIRED MUST I DO THIS?**

- If you are exercising your ministry by presbytery appointment or as a Voluntary Associate Minister you must take this training.

9. **I AM A DESIGNATED LAY MINISTER DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?**

- **Yes it does.** You are considered ministry personnel because you are under presbytery appointment. You must complete the training in the first year of your appointment.

10. **I AM A CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTER MUST I COMPLETE THIS?**

- You are not considered ministry personnel. General Council does not have jurisdiction over your ministry and therefore cannot require it. However taking the course will equip you further for your responsibilities.

11. **WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FULFILLING THE MANDATORY GENERAL COUNCIL REQUIREMENT?**

- Some Conferences are linking fulfillment of the mandatory training to 'good standing'. Only ministry personnel in good standing may apply for call or appointments. In some Conferences there is a six month 'grace period' following accepting a call or appointment to complete this training. In Hamilton Conference, each presbytery is dealing with non-compliance differently. We expect that the consequence of failing to complete the 'once in a lifetime General Council' mandatory training will mean **no** approval of your new call or appointment, renewal of your appointment, or initial or renewal of your Voluntary Associate Minister status.

12. **I HAVE TAKEN EQUIVALENT TRAINING WILL THAT COUNT?**

- **No.** We are happy you have taken other training and would also like you to participate in one of the trainings mentioned above.

13. **WHAT DOES THE MANUAL SAY?** The Manual 2016 p207 contains the following:

J. Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline

15. Policies

15.1 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures

The United Church will not tolerate, and will seek to eradicate, any behaviour by its members, lay and order of ministry, adherents, or employees that constitutes sexual abuse or child abuse.

The United Church is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies, organizations, or other bodies that operate under its name. Complaints of sexual abuse or child abuse will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

The General Council has approved the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse. These policies and procedures are referred to as the "Sexual Abuse Policy" in these bylaws. They must be followed.

The Sexual Abuse Policy is available from the General Council Office.

The United Church seeks to protect from abuse all people who use the pastoral or professional services of the United Church, whether or not they are members or adherents. Any person who has used the professional or pastoral services of ministry personnel or employees of the United Church for purposes of pastoral care, counselling, marriage workshops, daycare, and so on, has the right not to be abused in any way. They are entitled to make a formal complaint under the Sexual Abuse Policy.

14. **WHO DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** Contact your Conference Office: Sue Duliban HR Administration (sduliban@hamconf.org) or Diane Blanchard Conference Personnel Minister (dblanchard@hamconf.org).