



# Pacific Northwest District

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

## HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS TEAM

Healthy Congregations Team (HCT) consultants serve member congregations of the Pacific Northwest District to facilitate health and healing with emphasis on relational integrity and leadership skill building. We endeavor to lift up the inherent gifts of our congregations and strengthen them so that PNWD Unitarian Universalists may model our UU values in the larger world. When conflict occurs, we view it as an opportunity to facilitate a congregation's creativity and capacity to engage diverse viewpoints and values with skill and grace.

### About our congregations

Healthy, thriving congregations don't happen by accident. They are built by people who devote their many talents, passions and intentionality to create together a faith community that lives and models its values. Unitarian Universalists hold an amazing diversity of beliefs and opinions. It is challenging for us to treat one another with consideration and compassion when our perspectives differ on emotionally-charged issues. Learning and practicing healthy styles of communication does much to prevent relational damage in times of disagreement, maintain the integrity of everyone involved, and strengthen our bonds with one another as we endeavor to achieve our mission in the world.

### Conflict in congregational life

Does it surprise you to learn that conflict arises normally in congregations? Well, it does! Although conflict is often uncomfortable, it is also an opportunity for creativity and growth. Learning how to handle differences with skill and kindness, a congregation that is committed to its relational integrity can move through contention into ongoing constructive conversation. The HC Team is often called in to facilitate this movement.

### Healthy Congregations Team Services

- Communication skills training for congregations and/or lay leadership teams of churches and fellowships that are not currently experiencing stressful conflict.
  - Basic communication practices and relational skill-building. Workshops may include: active listening, non-triangulation, compassionate communication, engaging difficult conversations, understanding conflict dynamics.
  - "Dancing with Norms": Surfacing current behavioral norms and co-creating new ones to enhance congregational health.
  - Covenant of Right Relationship: Covenants describe the way people interact with one another, incorporating core principles and values that are held dear; they set out an image of how individuals aspire to behave in groups. A CRR workshop engages a congregation in developing its own covenant.
  - Guidance in pro-actively creating a congregational conflict management team.
- Assistance for congregations and lay leadership teams of churches and fellowships currently experiencing conflict or its aftermath.
  - Facilitated conversations to navigate differences among individuals or groups.
  - Comprehensive assessment with recommendations for congregations experiencing major distress or contention. Option of on-going mentorship in implementation phase.
  - Guidance in healing and reconciliation following a congregational conflict that has damaged or broken relationships.
- On-going mentorship to provide support and follow-up for any of the above services is also available.

***In consultation with the Pacific Northwest District Executive, the Team may provide customized programs that respond to needs not addressed by services described above.***  
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