



## Code of Ethics **for Leaders** Policy

(5-1-2024 reviewed by Standards Team; 5-28-2024 approved by UWM Board of Trustees)

Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) Code of Ethics for Leaders applies to the following:

- All credentialed leaders
  - Licensed or ordained Unity ministers (LUM or OUM)
  - Licensed Unity teachers (LUT)
- All non-credentialed leaders serving in the capacity of a credentialed Unity leader
- All ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All LUT candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All certified leaders and candidates
- All members of the UWM Board of Trustees
- All UWM staff members and contract employees
- All individuals certified to serve as consultants to our ministries
- All members of UWM Ministry Teams
- Unity Worldwide Ministries organization and representatives

### Introduction and Intention

Foundational to Unity is the principle and teaching that we are individualized expressions of God. This calls us, as Unity leaders to live from our Christ nature in all circumstances thereby being a harmonizing presence and a role model for those we serve. Because of this, it is our intention to be accountable to one another and UWM in maintaining a high level of professional ethics.

Our Code of Ethics articulates a vision of ethical behavior grounded in our teachings. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior that is both ethical and authentic; and encourages us to give full expression to our Christ nature.

We also recognize that certain violations of our Code of Ethics must be addressed. Some behaviors are explicitly illegal, and such violations may require suspension of membership or revocation of licensure and/or ordination from Unity Worldwide Ministries. Some behaviors are unethical by UWM standards and compromise our ability to perform and provide ministry. These behaviors harm our movement and interfere with our effectiveness in achieving our mission.

This document describes the process of how we hold one another accountable to this standard. Leaders who act in ways that are inconsistent with our Code of Ethics, Policies, Procedures, and Branding Guidelines may be subject to review through our Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS), Minister

Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS). These violations will be addressed in a consistent and open manner which assists us all in living our highest potential.

This Code of Ethics applies in conjunction with the Sexual Conduct Policy and Social Media Policy.

**Section I and Section II Ethics are grounded in spiritual principles and self-care. It is recommended that all leaders aspire to follow these practices.**

### **I. Dedication to Truth Principles**

- A. As a Unity leader, I dedicate myself to the principles of Truth as follows:
  - 1. God is Absolute good, everywhere present.
  - 2. Every human being is an expression of the Divine; the Christ spirit, by whatever name, indwells all people. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
  - 3. Human beings create their experience by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
  - 4. Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
  - 5. Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that they know.
- B. I look to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, to guide, govern, heal, and prosper me.
- C. I demonstrate Truth in my personal and professional life.
- D. I maintain a consistent prayer practice.

### **II. The Relationship to Self / Self-Care**

- A. I keep in mind that my personal self-care is paramount to the welfare of the ministry.
  - B. I demonstrate self-care by designing, implementing, and maintaining a plan of regular renewal and spiritual growth for my life.
  - C. I care for my body with good nutrition and exercise.
  - D. I consciously say “yes” or “no” to prevent burnout.
  - E. I lead by my strengths; I model and teach self-care.
  - F. I ask for help when I recognize the need, modeling and teaching the value in doing so.
  - G. I balance work, relationships, recreation, and renewal.
  - H. When I experience any personal crisis, I will seek help (recognizing that any personal crisis will also impact my ministry). I will confer with my board of trustees, my regional representative, and/or a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries. I may also choose to seek counseling or confer with colleagues.
- See “Appendix Self-Care Standards and Rubrics” for further details applied to this section.

**Sections III through Section VII relate to standards of behaviors all are expected to demonstrate. Failure to do so could result in a review through the Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS).**

### **III. The Leader’s Relationship with Others**

All credentialed leaders and non-credentialed leaders are accountable to one another and UWM to maintain ethical expectations as described in this and other UWM policy documents.

- A. I understand the role of the leader carries with it authority and power. I fulfill my responsibility and use this power to benefit the people who call upon me for service. I offer acceptance and support to all people with whom I have contact regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, creed, nationality, political affiliations, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. When people are angry, critical, or unkind, I respond compassionately.
- B. I recognize that more is taught by what a leader does than what they say. Therefore, I seek to keep my morals above reproach. I exercise good judgment regarding my social conduct. My relationships will be such as to command only the highest respect. I am conscious of the fact that to be pure in heart is to be pure in conduct also.
- C. I conduct my work, private and public, in accord with the teachings, standards, and ideals of Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries without competition or contention.
- D. I maintain appropriate leadership boundaries realizing that crossing boundaries is a betrayal of trust. In honor of that trust, I do not exploit nor violate the emotional, spiritual, physical, or financial well-being of people or institutions who come to me for help or over whom I have any kind of authority. I do not create or cultivate dependencies.
- E. I do not use my authority to defame or manipulate individuals or groups, or foster division within the ministry. I avoid situations and relationships that could impair my professional judgment or compromise the integrity of the ministry.
- F. I monitor my personal and ministry social media presence and communications in such a way that represents my role as a leader and demonstrates Truth principles in my personal and professional life. (See the Social Media Policy)
- G. As a leader, I work within my professional qualifications and limitations. I will refer people with needs beyond my expertise to a qualified professional.
- H. When appropriate, we will refer to the Disruptive Behavior Policy.  
<https://www.unityuwm.org/policies>
- I. Confidentiality:
  - 1. I am honor bound to hold sacred all confidences shared with me, except if a confidence reveals that the person confiding may pose a threat to self, others, or property.
  - 2. I never mention, without permission, either privately or publicly, the name, residence, or locality of any person under treatment in the past or present as an illustration or verification of Truth principles.
  - 3. I do not use privileged information for personal gain.
- J. Intervention in Abusive or Neglectful Situations/Mandated Reporting:
  - 1. In our unwavering commitment to recognize and honor the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, we bear the responsibility to promptly report instances of abuse or neglect (child abuse, elder abuse, dependent adult abuse, animal abuse, etc.) to the relevant agencies.
  - 2. I make a good faith report of such abuse to the appropriate agencies whether or not reporting is mandated by law.  
It is imperative that I, as a minister or acting spiritual leader, understand and abide by my local mandated reporting laws. If I am classified as a mandated reporter in my jurisdiction, it is important to know how my jurisdiction views the relationship between the clergy-penitent privilege and the responsibilities of a mandated reporter since many areas do not allow an exception for clergy privilege. Relocation to a new ministry in a different jurisdiction requires me to do due diligence to know the laws of the area.  
For United States: <https://www.startchurch.com/blog/view/name/are-you-a-mandated->

[reporter-what-every-minister-should-know](https://www.churchlawandtax.com/keep-safe/abuse-prevention/child-abuse-reporting-laws-22-facts-church-leaders-should-know/)

<https://www.churchlawandtax.com/keep-safe/abuse-prevention/child-abuse-reporting-laws-22-facts-church-leaders-should-know/>

For Canada: [https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-](https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report)

[fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report](https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report)

3. As a mandated reporter, it is a best practice to inform the person confiding (regardless of their age) of your reporting obligations.
4. Regarding minors, it is important to know your local laws regarding age, topic, and exceptions to confidentiality expectations. For additional information contact UWM Member Support.
- K. I refrain from sexual contact and/or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, or employee with whom I have a professional and/or pastoral relationship, realizing it is unethical and is deemed sexual misconduct. (Sexual misconduct involving sexual abuse and/or sexualizing a professional relationship is defined as sexual activity or contact, not limited to sexual intercourse.) [Refer to Unity Worldwide Ministries [Sexual Conduct Policy](#).]

#### **IV. Relating to All Ministers, Credentialed Leaders, Spiritual Leaders, Ministry Coordinators, and Lay Leaders regardless of Denomination**

- A. I hold all leaders in esteem and respectful regard; and use all rightful means to protect the personal and professional honor of all other credentialed or lay leaders.
  1. I honor & support the work of other credentialed or lay leaders.
    - a. I refrain from conversations with member(s) of another community that undermine the decisions or actions of the ministry's leadership. Should members of that community come to me for opinions, input, or advice about their ministry, I encourage them to talk to the ministry's leadership.
    - b. I reach out to the Regional Representative or the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead to process any concerns I might have about the leadership of another ministry.
    - c. I provide cooperative assistance to other leaders as they endeavor to do ministry or serve on a ministry team.
  2. When assuming the leadership of an established ministry as a credentialed leader or non-credentialed leader, I avoid criticism of the former leadership and their work. In those rare times when an ethical lapse by a prior ministry's leadership has occurred, I am truthful and compassionate while maintaining confidentiality.
  3. After leaving a ministry I will relinquish my work with that ministry. I will modify my relations with members of that ministry to support the highest interest of the current Unity ministry and its leadership.
    - a. I will not directly participate in that ministry in any way without the approval of the ministry's current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader).
    - b. I will refrain from actively soliciting the participation of this ministry's members whether in person or virtual in any new ministry endeavors I begin without the permission of the current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader). Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethical "rules."
  4. When I am disturbed by the activities of another credentialed or lay leader:

- a. I hold the situation in prayer.
  - b. I communicate directly with that leader.
  - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative and/or the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
  - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
  - e. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
5. When I am disturbed by the activities of an assistant or associate minister or licensed Unity teacher:
- a. I hold the situation in prayer.
  - b. I communicate directly with that leader.
  - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
  - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
  - e. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
6. When I am disturbed by the activities of another Unity ministry:
- a. I hold the situation in prayer.
  - b. I communicate with the appropriate leaders of the ministry.
  - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
  - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
  - e. If guided, I will file a Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) complaint.
- B. As an assistant or associate minister or a licensed Unity teacher (LUT):
1. I give the senior credentialed leader full support and cooperation.
  2. I do not criticize the credentialed leader in any way or discuss the credentialed leader in a negative way with any ministry member, board member, or person outside the ministry.
  3. If a problem arises:
    - a. I hold the situation in prayer.
    - b. I communicate directly with the senior credentialed leader.
    - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
    - d. In cases of perceived violations of the Code of Ethics, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
    - e. If guided, I will file a Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) complaint.
- C. Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS), Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Team members and relevant Unity Worldwide Ministries staff must be able to speak frankly about ethical violations in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Policy, Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) reviews, in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS), Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) training, and in evaluations of the Code of Ethics and related policies. Performing these activities is not to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics and related policies.

## **V. Leaders Relating to Ministries**

- A. I respect the free will of members to move or transfer membership away from the Unity ministry I serve and will accept such requests without hesitation or inquiry.
- B. I do not use a ministry for personal gain. Any funds or assets that have been raised in the name of a Unity ministry will be registered in the name of that ministry and not in the name of an individual. I do not mishandle funds, give the appearance of mishandling funds, or ignore or enable the mishandling of funds. I ensure proper tracking and recordkeeping of all funds.
- C. I will not directly attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministries or groups without the permission of the ministry leadership.
- D. Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethics “rules.” Virtual ministries on the Internet are open to the World Wide Web and should not be seen as an attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministry or group; however, unauthorized use of a ministry email list is unethical.
- E. I am ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries, denominations, organizations, and metaphysical groups.

## **VI. Relating to Our Unity Worldwide Ministries**

- A. I work in harmony and accord with Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- B. I uphold, communicate, and embody the Unity Worldwide Ministries’ values, mission, vision, and goals.
- C. I adhere to the policies and bylaws of Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- D. I first seek the full approval of Unity Worldwide Ministries before initiating a Unity ministry (study group, church, or alternative/evolving).

## **VII. My Pledge**

I sincerely devote myself to living in accord with this Code of Ethics in letter and in spirit. Code of Ethics provides a framework that holds me accountable to my colleagues and UWM. I recognize that such an agreement augments our mutual and individual effectiveness.

If I find myself questioning or confused about any part of this Code of Ethics I agree to consult with my Regional Representative and/or UWM Member Support Team Lead.

Please sign the Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, and Social Media Policy Acknowledgement & Signature Form (single-page document) and return it to Unity Worldwide Ministries.

## Appendix A: Self-Care Standards & Rubrics

C.1		Beginning	Developing	Competent	Exceptional	
Takes time for renewal of spirit, mind, and body.		Articulates an awareness of the need for self-care.	Designs a plan for self-care and begins implementing it.	Maintains a self-care plan and is consciously aware of needs and how to address them.	Models and teaches a life of regular renewal of spirit, mind, and body.	

C.2		Beginning	Developing	Competent	Exceptional	
Supports self-differentiation through clear and appropriate boundaries.		Articulates awareness of need for clear sense of self and setting of healthy boundaries.	Demonstrates capacity to set healthy boundaries.	Establishes healthy boundaries while maintaining connections. Takes a stand when necessary.	Models and teaches skills for developing a clear sense of self and setting healthy boundaries while maintaining connections to others.	

C.3		Beginning	Developing	Competent	Exceptional	
Able to ask for help.		Expresses recognition for the need to ask for help and identifies barriers to follow through.	Expresses recognition of comfort levels in asking for help and cites examples of follow through.	Describes concisely asking for help and expresses comfort in doing so.	Models and teaches the value in asking for help.	

C.4		Beginning	Developing	Competent	Exceptional	
Maintains mutually enriching relationships.		Describes the differences between personal and professional relationships.	Develops healthy personal relationships outside of the ministry.	Active participant in non-church (spiritual) community activities, developing inter-professional and personal relationships.	Models and teaches skills for cultivating enriching relationships.	