

## Understanding a Bias Incident

A bias incident involves conduct—including speech, nonverbal behavior, and actions—that discriminates against, stereotypes, harasses, bullies, oppresses, excludes, creates a hostile environment for, or otherwise harms anyone in the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship community based on their identity (e.g., sex, race, color, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, age, ability, national origin, veteran status, religion). Biased conduct does not have to be intentional to cause harm. Whether it results from explicit or implicit bias, biased conduct that is generated by misunderstanding, discomfort, stereotypes, fear, or hatred related to identity is still oppressive.

Determining for certain that harmful words or behaviors were motivated by bias may not always be possible. However, you don't have to be certain that a bias incident occurred to contact the Bias Response Team (BRT) and discuss your experience.

Bias incidents may or may not involve behavior that violates any federal, state, or local laws. If you feel you have been a target of a crime, one of your options is to report it to the police department that holds jurisdiction over the area in which the crime took place.

## Reporting a Bias Incident

Anyone who feels they have experienced a bias incident in a Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship setting may report it to the Bias Response Team

Online at <https://wp.buf.org/healthy-relationships-contact-form/>

By email: [minister@buf.org](mailto:minister@buf.org)

By phone: 360-733-3837 (Please leave a message and a BRT member will return your call)

Once you report a bias incident, a member of the Bias Response Team will contact you to talk about your experience and to offer support. They will also talk with you about our norms and policies around what members and visitors should be able to expect at BUF, and help you to consider possible responses. You and the Bias Response Team will work together to develop a plan of action. That plan can include the Bias Response Team contacting the person you feel engaged in biased conduct to ask if they are willing to talk about the incident (if we have their contact information). However, the BRT has no power to require that the person participate in such a meeting. The BRT does not make any judgment about whether bias occurred; it solely provides support and education. If the BRT believes that Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship policy may have been violated, it will refer the incident to the BUF Board or other appropriate BUF authority for review.