

# **The Marks of Faithful and Effective Boundary Awareness Trainers Whose Work May Be Consulted or Utilized for the Continuing Formation and Professional Development of Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ**

## **THEOLOGICAL & DENOMINATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

1. Incorporates an understanding of Christian faith and provides a theological foundation in the teaching of healthy boundaries.
2. Demonstrates commitment to the health of the Body of Christ.
3. Values all persons and speaks relevantly to a diversity of life experiences (including race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, ability) in the inclusive spirit of the United Church of Christ.
4. Articulates a familiarity with the current polity of the United Church of Christ and its denominational structure, including the covenantal relationships between authorized ministers, local churches, associations, conferences, and the national setting.

## **PROFESSIONAL ROLE & QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Provides a personal and professional example of maturity in one's own faith and life experiences, appropriate communication and information sharing, as well as healthy self-care and relationships.
2. Maintains a current criminal background check and list of references, both of which must be made available to the United Church of Christ body that would utilize the boundary trainer.
3. Exhibits life-long habits of learning, including ongoing education in the best practices and current studies of boundary training, organizational systems and philosophies, etc.
4. Demonstrates effective leadership in group presentations, including the organization of materials, the management of group time and dynamics, the ability to foster an engaging and challenging environment, the skill to support (not solve) participants' discomfort when topics provoke new understandings of self and of others, and the flexibility to "read" and adapt to a group's needs.
5. Observes necessary boundaries as a trainer, such as the confidentiality of case studies and "in class" conversations, and a professional clarity in those instances when the trainer is also a colleague to participants. (It should be noted that the latter scenario is not ideal.)
6. Nurtures an ongoing attention to anti-bias in one's own leadership and in group dynamics; faithfully addresses bias and power in training events.
7. Cultivates a safe environment in which a diversity of persons can learn and participate, and invites feedback for one's own professional growth in excellence.

## **TRAINING CONTENT**

1. Focuses on a topic appropriately to meet the identified need(s) as well as the constraints of time.
2. Reflects cultural shifts of the past decade.
3. Demonstrates the study and incorporation of boundary materials, systems theories, legal revisions, and other relevant resources developed in the past decade.
4. Utilizes case studies.
5. Provides concrete preventative tools and identifies critical support networks for participants.
6. Engages the “gray areas” of boundaries and ethics, that is, fosters critical thought and awareness of situations that cannot be resolved simply with “Yes/No” or “Do/Don’t”; extends training goals beyond the logistics of boundaries to include increased self-awareness for participants.
7. Promotes a spirit of accountability and cooperation, debunking ministry as a solo endeavor.

## **TOPICS FOR BOUNDARY TRAINING**

Authorized ministers of the United Church of Christ should participate in boundary training once every three years, at a minimum, studying a diversity of boundary topics for holistic professional formation. The breadth of topics critical to authorized ministers’ boundary education includes but is not limited to:

1. Healthy Boundaries with Parishioners/Constituents
2. Healthy Boundaries with Family and Self
3. Financial Health and Boundaries
4. Domestic and Sexual Violence
5. Child Abuse and Safe Church
6. Healthy Boundaries with Teens and for Teens
7. Social Media Boundaries in Ministry
8. Healthy Boundaries during Ministerial Transition
9. Healthy Boundaries for Retired Ministers, including Retired Ministers in Active Service
10. Legal Developments, Obligations and Ramifications