



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *of the Religious Society of Friends*

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures

Distinction between policy and procedure

Policy is a set of overall principles determined by a governance committee or council.

Procedure is a set of processes developed by those responsible for implementing a policy or an aspect of a policy.

This Document Does Not Apply to Harassment Involving PYM Staff Members

To address incidents related to harassment involving members of PYM staff, readers should refer to the PYM Personnel Handbook.

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Background and Context, for this document

Regarding our commitment to environments that are free of discrimination and harassment, the following policy and procedures specifically concern PYM's understanding of and response to harassment. The first procedure is applicable to all incidents of harassment in any event or program that is PYM-sponsored or PYM-run. The remaining procedures are applicable to all incidents of physical harm or non-consensual touch, with an emphasis on smaller events especially for PYM youth programs. Those responsible for implementing our harassment policy should use their discretion as to which set(s) of procedures to follow.

Harassment is unwanted behavior generally involving the exercise of formal or informal power by someone over another person. What one person might consider an innocent comment or behavior could be experienced as harassment by another person, particularly if the behavior is repeated. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome or offensive sexual comments, advances, requests of sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a harassing nature directed to a person.

Does this mean that we must refrain from offering hugs to friends, or making comments about a friend's appearance? No, but we should be sensitive to the possibility that another might be made uncomfortable by such behavior.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting embraces the practice of enthusiastic consent. We expect everyone who participates in any program or community space planned by or sponsored by PYM to follow this practice. Enthusiastic consent requires that we go one step beyond simply asking before we touch someone or before we say something that we think might be sensitive. We also need to pay close attention to the body language of our interlocutor. Even if someone says yes, their body language might be saying no, or they might seem reluctant. If someone seems reluctant even though they are saying yes, we take this into account before following through on what we have requested. We wait for consent that is enthusiastic, that clearly states in words and body language that, for example, someone wants a hug or to talk about a sensitive topic.

PYM Anti-Harassment Policy

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) is committed to co-creating environments for staff, volunteers, committee members, and program participants which are free of discrimination and harassment. Demeaning actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, ethnicity, ability, age, gender, gender identity, veteran status or any other reason prohibited by law or central to one's identity will not be tolerated.



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Overall Anti-Harassment Procedure

PYM program staff have appropriate training, and at Continuing and Annual Sessions PYM program staff also assemble a Pastoral Care Team with appropriate experience. In the event that there is an incident that is reported outside of a PYM program, there is a Pastoral Care Team appointed by the Quaker Life Council which can provide support.

If you feel harassed by the comments or behavior of another person in the course of a PYM event or program, and if you feel able, you can tell this person clearly that you find their behavior objectionable and ask them to stop it.

If someone tells you that they have been offended or embarrassed by something you did, please simply apologize and be mindful so as not to repeat the objectionable behavior. Intention is different from impact; always be respectful and open when your impact was different than you intended.

If you feel unable to confront the person or find that they repeat the objectionable behavior despite your request to stop it, please approach a member of PYM program staff or a member of whatever Pastoral Care Team has been identified to you or is available. It could be a special event-specific Pastoral Care Team or the Quaker Life Council Pastoral Care Team.

If you witness or are told about a situation involving possible harassment, first check in with the person who appears to have experienced the harassment. If they feel uncomfortable about the behavior, encourage them to confront it or report it.

If the harassment involves a person(s) who is under the age of 18 or an active participant in a PYM youth program, please refer to the nonconsensual touch and physical harm procedures below, which follow this procedure.

PYM Staff and/or the Pastoral Care Team Response to a Reported Incident of Harassment

Informal procedure:

You may simply want an opportunity for a confidential discussion of the incident with a member of program staff or the available Pastoral Care Team and help with how to handle it. If this discussion is sufficiently helpful, and you are able to stop or avoid further objectionable behavior, no further steps will be taken unless it is determined that the nature of the complaint is serious enough to warrant further action, such as a formal procedure.



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Formal procedure:

You may want a formal investigation and more assistance in dealing with the perceived harassment. Program staff and/or Pastoral Care Team members will initiate the formal procedure in any case which it deems sufficiently serious. In this event, both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be notified of such a decision.

In a formal procedure the following steps will be taken:

1. You will be asked to submit a written, signed complaint. This complaint may be brief, but it should include
 - name(s),
 - a description of the objectionable behavior,
 - the context,
 - and your feelings.
2. When such a complaint is received,
 - two members of program staff or the Pastoral Care Team will meet with you in confidence, discuss the alleged harassment with you,
 - and then proceed with a thorough investigation of the complaint.
 - Such investigation will always include, but not necessarily be limited to, a meeting of the investigators with the alleged perpetrator.
3. The investigating members of program staff or the Pastoral Care Team will reach a decision as to the merits and gravity of the complaint and how to handle the situation. If it is determined that harassment did indeed occur, possible consequences include:
 - a) Asking the harasser to acknowledge and stop the offending behavior;
 - b) Requiring the harasser to stay away from the person who experienced the harassment for the duration of the program,
 - c) Requiring the harasser to attend the program with the accompaniment of an elder,
 - c) Requiring the harasser to leave the program,
 - d) Refusing to accept the harasser at future program.

The investigating team will communicate its decision and the action taken to the individual who submitted the formal complaint and to the Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life. Any decision to exclude a harasser from future programs may be appealed to the General Secretary.

3. Complaints will be treated with confidentiality and discretion. Confidentiality will extend both to the charging party and to the person accused of harassment, as well as to all



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4. documentation resulting from the investigation. A brief report will be made of any formal investigation and the reports will be maintained by the Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life. The Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life is required to submit a general incident report using the form in Appendix A. See Appendix A for the report form.
5. Every effort will be made to protect persons making bona fide complaints from any kind of retaliatory action.
6. If a report is not made, PYM may be unaware of the facts and therefore unable to take appropriate action.

MANAGING SERIOUS CONFLICTS NOT BASED ON HARRASSMENT

Conflicts not involving harassment are normally handled through less formal means. From time to time a conflict within a program might prove resistant to less formal methods, have an explosive or particularly harmful nature, and/or require the kind of investigation described above.

Please note that PYM program staff also use a separate and more detailed set of procedures emanating from this policy in cases of nonconsensual touch or physical harm during youth program events and other smaller events.