



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
MINISTERS
ASSOCIATION

**Introduction to Good Offices
for UUMA Members
October 25, 2023**

What are Good Offices?

Good Offices are one of the most enduring ministries of the UUMA. Good Offices offers structured collegial care to ministers when we have tensions or conflict:

- ❖ with each other
- ❖ with the institutions or organizations where we practice our ministries
- ❖ with the Unitarian Universalist Association

Who are Good Offices people?

Good Offices people are colleagues who are either elected by their chapter or appointed by the continental UUMA.

- ❖ Skills and training offered to Good Offices people
 - Listening skills, covenants and covenanting, ARAOM skills for Good Offices, conflict transformation, staff supervision, adaptive leadership and systems thinking, trauma informed care, boundaries, self-care
- ❖ Expectations of Good Offices people
- ❖ Supports available to Good Offices people

How do I connect with a Good Offices person?

You are welcome to reach out to a Good Offices person on your own or ask for support from the Director of Ministries for Collegial Care.

- ❖ How to connect with chapter Good Offices people
- ❖ How to connect with Good Offices specialty teams
 - Right Relationship Team
 - Contract/Call Negotiation Support Team

What are examples of things I might want to discuss with a Good Offices person?

- Discernment
- Problem solving
- Systems strategizing
- Conflict transformation support
- Anxiety management
- Negotiation support
- Relationship repair support

Who do I call when for what kind of care?

Good Offices	Mentor	UUA Congregational Life Staff	Spiritual Director or Therapist
<p>Whenever you are concerned about conflict developing that feels complex or potentially challenging.</p>	<p>Monthly during preliminary fellowship.</p>	<p>Whenever a situation arises in the congregation that might benefit from institutionally provided guidance, consultation or support.</p>	<p>In accord with your regular schedule or as needed.</p>
<p>Call early. Small challenges can often be prevented from getting bigger with early support. Accompaniment can be provided in the ministry setting.</p>	<p>For ongoing support and learning throughout the preliminary fellowship stage of your ongoing formation.</p>	<p>Call early. Here too small challenges can often be prevented from getting bigger with early support.</p>	<p>Spiritual directors and/or therapists can also offer discernment support and help with self-differentiation, but they do not accompany in the ministry setting.</p>

What experienced Good Offices have to say:

- Choose a GO who has current training/relationships
- Reach out for GO support as soon as your concern (of *any* sort) starts feeling a bit heavy. If you carry something heavy alone too far or for too long, you will hurt yourself. You might hurt others. You might hurt your/our ministry. Reach out!
- UUMA GO is a network. If the colleague you contact thinks you should be directed to someone with more expertise in your area of concern, they can refer you.

What experienced Good Offices have to say:

- ❖ Good Offices is completely confidential and follow up action is not mandated if you make a call. It can be a one time outreach/consult.
- ❖ I think it is important to know that we can provide advice, support, and a listening ear--but we can't necessarily solve your problem for you. And if you do want our advice--sometimes taking the advice offered can be a lot of work and require some real vulnerability and self-examination.

What experienced Good Offices have to say:

- ❖ Everyone says this and it is true: **call EARLY**. Call when there is a little friction, and maybe we can help get you out of it! It's sad when we get the call and the situation has already devolved into a negotiated resignation. We can help with that, but if we could have helped sooner, maybe it wouldn't have gotten to that point.
- ❖ Good Offices offers many things: listening presence in challenging circumstances, accompaniment in difficult meetings, perspective and information about resources.

What experienced Good Offices have to say:

- ❖ Our colleagues should know that Good Officers are available at chapter and continental levels with multiple levels of expertise for every professional concern from the mundane to the level-5 conflict in every ministerial context.
- ❖ The UUMA will help find a Good Officer who is a good fit for your specific situation. Also, our colleagues should know that it really, truly helps to have a thought partner while working through problems.