

LCP-2 Personnel Policy

Change history:

Date:	Change:	Made by:
3/20/13	Modified for new governance. Also changed eliminated "ordained" distinction in ministerial staff and removed reference to Assistant Minister.	LM
7/23/13	Hiring policy inserted as XIII.B; Prevention of harassment and abuse policy inserted as XIV.	LM
8/23/13	Vacation on calendar basis, study leave by PC, ordained to ministerial in a few cases in benefits. All based on PC review.	LM
4/09/14	Changed to reflect benefits for 80% FTE or more employees.	LM
1/12/15	Leadership Council – preapproval of overtime; delete harassment language which exists as a separate policy; modified staff evaluation process to reflect current process.	LC - TS

Personnel Policy

Preamble

The purpose of this policy is to define the personnel administration provisions of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, Colorado. Further, it is to provide for the administration of the policy and to ensure that the employment, supervision, development, recognition and separation of all Plymouth employees are fair, uniform, and within the provisions of the constitution of Plymouth.

I. Introduction

A. Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ acknowledges the importance of all its employees in the life of our church. Each employee is encouraged to see the whole church's functioning as being facilitated by his or her specialized area of emphasis.

B. Administration of Plymouth. The Senior Minister shall be the chief administrator of the church. The Leadership Council shall be the executive body of the church, with fiduciary, legal, personnel and strategic planning responsibilities.

1. Ministerial Staff.

- a. The Senior Minister shall be called for an indefinite term. When a vacancy occurs in the position, a committee to be known as the Pastoral Search Committee shall be elected by the congregation to seek a candidate. The constitution of the church and policies of the Leadership Council shall describe the election and work of the Pastoral Search Committee.
- b. When a Senior Minister has been elected and has accepted the call, the Association to which the church belongs shall convene an Ecclesiastical Council for the purpose of recognizing or installing the Minister in accordance with the established usage. The Minister shall become a member of the church and his or her ecclesiastical standing shall be transferred to the new Association at the first opportunity.
- c. The church may call Associate Minister(s) in the same manner as the Senior Minister. They shall become members of the church and shall be recognized by the Association in a similar manner.
- d. The Ministerial Staff may be referred to as Pastoral Staff with the same meaning.

2. Program Staff

- a. Program staff are staff members who have areas of responsibility relating to worship, congregational nurture and Christian formation. They include, but are not limited to, such positions as choir director, organist, and director of youth or adult formation. Program staff are exempt from the wage and hour provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and do not receive overtime pay. To be classified as exempt, at least 80% of an employee's work must be executive, administrative or professional in nature, requiring regular exercise of discretion and independent judgment.
- b. The hiring of program staff and the description of their areas of responsibility shall be the task of the Leadership Council, working closely with the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee. Ad hoc committees may be appointed to aid in the hiring process.

3. Administrative and Building Staff

- a. Administrative and building staff are staff members who assist the ministers and the program staff or who maintain the church building and grounds. They include, but are not limited to, such positions as administrative support staff and custodians.
- b. Administrative and building staff shall be hired by the Senior Minister.

II. Scope

These personnel policies cover all employees of the church. The Senior Minister, in consultation

with the Personnel Committee, reserves the right to waive or modify any particular policy in the event of a specific hardship with any employee.

III. Overview

The staff of Plymouth plays an important role in the life of the church. Employees are expected to show Christian consideration and cooperate with all other employees, members of the congregation, and the general public, even under trying circumstances. All employees are encouraged to support the mission of the church and share a common interest in the development and success of the church. Plymouth employees should be interested in, and in basic harmony with, the programs and goals of the church.

IV. Federal and State Laws and Regulations

A. TITLE VII - Equal Employment Opportunity Plymouth is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity. To the extent permitted by law, the church recruits, hires, trains, promotes and compensates individuals and makes personnel decisions without regard to race, color, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability unrelated to the individual's ability to perform the job.

C. Immigration Reform and Control Act The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 requires that employers hire only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. All persons hired by Plymouth must present evidence of U.S. citizenship or eligibility to work in the United States within three working days of the date they are hired.

V. Responsibility

A. The Senior Minister has primary responsibility for the administration of these policies and procedures. He or she may take problem-solving action, keeping the Personnel Committee informed of significant outcomes that may indicate the need for mediation or for revision of these policies.

B. Each employee is responsible for reading and understanding these policies and procedures.

C. All employees are responsible for furnishing the Senior Minister with necessary information regarding dates for vacation, sick days taken, leave of absence days, etc. A record of this information will be kept in the employee's file.

VI. Employment Status

A. Job Descriptions All employees of Plymouth, including ministerial staff, shall have job descriptions. Employees have the responsibility to perform the job as outlined in the job description, including additional duties as assigned.

B. Initial Review Period All new employees, other than ministerial staff, are "probationary"

for the first six months of employment. This policy allows Plymouth to determine whether the employee is able to perform satisfactorily the work assigned. It also enables the employee to review his or her position with Plymouth. If the employee's work is not satisfactory during this period, employment will be terminated. All new employees who continue at Plymouth are given a written evaluation at the end of the Initial Review Period.

C. Benefits Eligibility Full-time employees are eligible for full employee benefits. Full-time employment shall be a minimum of 40 hours per week.

VII. Compensation

A. Salaries for all employees shall be determined by the Leadership Council in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Senior Minister.

B. Salaries shall be reviewed at least once annually by the Personnel Committee in advance of the adoption of the new budget. Salary increases will be effective on the first pay period after approval of the budget at a congregational meeting.

C. Hours. Employees may be asked to work hours at times other than the regularly scheduled work week. Generally, administrative staff work Monday through Friday; custodial staff work Monday through Saturday. Normal hours for administrative staff are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Employees may adjust their regular work day to a different schedule with prior approval of the Senior Minister.

D. Lunch. Employees are entitled to a one-hour unpaid lunch break. Employees are expected to schedule their lunch by agreement with their supervisor so there is sufficient office coverage. Lunch periods may not be accrued for use on other work days.

E. Overtime. Every attempt should be made to complete work assignments during normal work hours. Overtime needs to be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor. Overtime begins when a non-exempt employee works more than 40 hours in a one week period. Paid holidays, paid leave days, paid vacation days, and unauthorized absences, during which the employee does not work, will not be counted as hours worked in computing weekly overtime. Overtime shall be compensated at the rate of time-and-a-half.

VIII. General Employment Expectations

Employees should feel free to discuss any problems or concerns at any time with the Senior Minister.

A. Attendance If an employee is to be late or absent from work, it is that employee's responsibility to contact his or her supervisor within the first scheduled hour of work. Absenteeism includes failure to report, late arrival, or early departure without authorization.

B. Use of Church Property No Plymouth employee shall use any Plymouth property, equipment, vehicles or other materials for personal use without prior permission from the

Senior Minister.

C. Conduct All Plymouth employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favorably on themselves and on the church, demonstrating tact, courtesy and good judgment. During working hours, employees are expected to devote their energies and attention to the service of the church and not to personal affairs. Employees are expected to present an appropriate appearance at all times.

In cases of unsatisfactory performance, the corrective action process is:

1. Verbal discussion In the first instance of a minor offense, a verbal discussion is conducted with the employee by a supervisor or the Senior Minister. The employee has an opportunity for comment, and specific recommendations are made for correction and follow-up.
2. Written notification If the same or more serious offenses occur, a written notice shall be given by the supervisor and/or the Senior Minister, stating the exact nature of the offense(s), specifying possible future disciplinary action, and again making specific recommendations for correction and follow-up. A copy of the notice is placed in the employee's file. The employee is required to read and sign the formal notice and has the right to appeal to the Personnel Committee if he or she feels that the notice is unjustified.
3. Dismissal If unacceptable behavior continues, termination of an employee may follow.
 - a. Ministerial Staff The relationship between the church and an ordained minister may be dissolved by either party through written notice of intent sixty days prior to the effective date. If it is the church's intent to terminate the employment of an ordained minister, such action shall require a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting duly called for that purpose. Notification of the severance of the relationship between an ordained minister and the church shall be sent by the Moderator to the Conference Minister and to the chair of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Platte Valley Association.
 - b. Program Staff Program staff may be terminated by a majority vote of the Leadership Council upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee.
 - c. Administrative and Building staff Termination of administrative and building staff may be done by the Senior Minister after consultation with the Leadership Council.

Employees have the right to appeal decisions of termination to the Personnel Committee.

The separation date is the last day worked by the employee. Accrued vacation cannot be used to extend the separation date. The amount of separation pay will be determined on an individual basis after consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Senior Minister.

IX. Benefits

A. Time Off

1. Vacation

Full-time, ministerial staff shall receive four weeks of vacation per year, not to exceed four Sundays. Upon completion of twenty years of service to the church, ministerial staff shall receive one additional week of vacation.

Program, administrative and custodial employees are eligible for two weeks paid vacation (prorated for part-time employees) after one year of active employment. The first week is credited after the employee has worked six months; the second week after one year. In subsequent years, the vacation is accredited on January 1 with the calendar year. There is no pro-rata accrual of vacation. Employees may carry over up to one week of vacation to the following year. (Example: Employees in the two week vacation category can have a maximum of three weeks on the books at any time during employment.)

After completing five years of employment, full-time program, administrative and custodial employees will have three weeks paid vacation available per year. After the completion of fifteen years of employment, four weeks of paid vacation will be available.

The timing of employee absences will be arranged in such a manner as to ensure proper coverage of work tasks at the church. Any unused vacation past the five days maximum allowed carry-over will be lost. Receiving pay in lieu of vacation time is not an option.

2. Holidays

a. Plymouth Church recognizes certain days during the year as paid holidays for its full-time employees. The schedule of holidays shall be as follows:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday & Friday in November
Christmas Day	December 25
One Floater Day	

b. Any holiday that falls on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

c. If work is required of program or administrative and building staff on a holiday, it shall be compensated at the rate of time-and-a-half.

3. Sick Leave

Full time employees will accrue one (1) day (8 hours) of sick leave per month (12 days or 96 hours per fiscal year). Part-time employees will accrue the same benefit, but prorated to conform with the percentage of full-time worked. This time may be used for personal or immediate family member illness or medical appointments.

If sick leave is not used within a year, a maximum of 100 days may be banked for use only in the event of a short-term disability or parental leave not otherwise covered by other insurance benefits for a given employee. In the case that an employee becomes disabled for more than ten (10) days and needs to use banked time for short-term disability, this should be communicated to the immediate supervisor and a written request should be forwarded to the chair of the Personnel Committee as soon as possible. This request should include a medical verification of disability and an estimated time of return to work. Final approval will require agreement by Leadership Council.

Employees will continue to accrue sick leave during sabbatical leave.

Employees terminating employment will not be paid for accrued and unused sick leave.

4. Jury Duty. Full-time and part-time employees are excused for jury duty and will receive full salary while serving.

5. Leave of Absence

a. A full-time employee who is not able to continue employment or who may request to interrupt his or her employment for a period of time may be granted a leave of absence by the Senior Minister.

b. During leave of absence, salary is not paid. Benefits will be continued at the employee's expense. When a person on leave of absence requests to return to employment he or she will be given preference when an appropriate position opens. Service will be reinstated from the point at which the leave of absence was granted, and the employee will not be subject to the probationary period or the waiting period for selected benefits.

6. Study Leave

a. Full-time ministerial staff shall be granted up to two weeks annual study leave with pay within the following guidelines:

Study leave is not additional vacation, but it may be taken in conjunction with vacation.

Study leave must be directly related to career goals and objectives as well as the development of skills that are useful to Plymouth. Therefore, it is granted only when clearly identified targets have been agreed upon for the particular study leave being

requested.

Satisfactory provisions must be made to cover the employee's work.

Study leave, if granted, must be used within the period designated and is not cumulative from year to year.

Study leave for the Senior Minister and Associate Minister(s) will be reviewed and granted by the Personnel Committee. A report on the specific accomplishments of the leave will be presented to the Personnel Committee.

Study leave for all other employees will be granted by the Senior Minister.

b. Plymouth may provide time off and cover payment of fees and expenses for employee job-related growth experiences, including continuing education, upon the recommendation of the supervisor and the approval of the Senior Minister, and subject to the availability of funds.

7. Sabbatical Leave

a. In its commitment to the growth and development of its ministerial staff, Plymouth, through its Personnel Committee, shall administer a sabbatical leave program.

b. All full-time ministerial staff, after each five years of service, may apply for a sabbatical leave with full salary for up to and the equivalent of three months, plus regular accrued vacation. With the approval of the Personnel Committee and in consultation with the Senior Minister, a six-month sabbatical leave at half salary, plus regular accrued vacation may be granted. Full salary shall be paid for vacation.

c. A plan for the use of the sabbatical leave shall be developed with the Personnel Committee and shall be implemented in consultation with Leadership Council.

d. A report on the sabbatical experience will be submitted to Personnel Committee and Leadership Council.

e. Sabbatical leaves may not be taken simultaneously by two ministers of the church. The minister not on sabbatical leave will be responsible for all pastoral services during a sabbatical leave of the other minister on the staff. If it is determined, after consultation among the ministers and the Personnel Committee, that additional or replacement pastoral services are needed in the absence of one of the ministers, Leadership Council may allocate an appropriate amount in the church budget for that purpose.

f. It is expected that a person will continue in the service of Plymouth Church for a period of at least one (1) year following the sabbatical leave.

8. Funeral Leave. Plymouth Church will allow a maximum of five consecutive work days of

paid leave for any full-time employee to make arrangements for and/or attend the funeral services of a member of the immediate family. Additional days for travel may be taken and charged as vacation time. Immediate family consists of spouse or partner, children, parents, brothers, sisters or other relatives living in the same household. One day is allowed to attend funeral services or assist in other ways upon the death of other relatives.

In the event more time is needed, the Senior Minister may grant additional days of vacation time or unpaid excused absence.

9. Parental Leave. A full-time or part-time employee who has at least six months of continuous service is eligible for parental leave in the period immediately preceding and following the arrival by birth, adoption or guardianship of a child as follows:

- a. Employees taking parental leave must use up all accumulated vacation time and all but two weeks of accumulated sick leave first. An employee is then eligible for up to three months leave at 50% of normal pay. Any approved leave beyond three months will be leave without pay.
- b. The employee should normally apply for the leave at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child, specifying the amount of leave time desired.
- c. Benefit coverage, except vacation, will continue at the expense of the church during the parental leave period, up to three months; after three months the coverage may be continued at the employee's expense.
- d. If both parents are employed by Plymouth, parental leave will not be granted simultaneously.
- e. Upon completion of parental leave, the employee will be eligible to return to his or her position.
- f. Any salary increase action for which the employee may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective on return to employment.

10. Military Duty. Any employee called to temporary active duty, such as National Guard or Civil Air Patrol, will be excused for this purpose without pay.

B. Other Benefits

1. Annuity and Retirement Fund. All full-time employees shall be enrolled in an appropriate pension plan. Plymouth will make contributions to the employees' plan at the rate of 14% of base salary or the figure currently suggested by the denomination's pension boards. Ministerial clergy contribution will be at the rate established by the United Church of Christ Pension Boards.

2. FICA

a. Plymouth shall pay the employer's share of FICA for all employees, as required by the law

b. Ministerial staff are eligible to enroll in Social Security on a self-employed basis and are required by law to pay FICA directly. In line with UCC guidelines, Plymouth will provide a FICA offset equal to one-half of the Social Security self-employment tax on the sum of cash salary and housing allowance for settled clergy.

3. Housing Allowance. Plymouth shall annually designate as housing allowance a portion of the total compensation paid to ministers or provide a parsonage, in accordance with Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

4. Group Health, Disability and Accident Insurance

a. Plymouth Church shall provide health, long-term disability and accident insurance to all ministerial staff. Health insurance shall be extended to spouses and dependents.

b. Subscription to group coverage through the insurance carrier designated by Plymouth Church is available to each non-ministerial employee working 80% or more FTE at the employee's option and the employer's expense. If employees desire coverage, application can be made through the Senior Minister. Employees are currently eligible to join the plan upon completion of 90 days of work time. Spouses and/or dependents of employees choosing this coverage may be added to the policy at the employee's expense. An employee may not elect to receive a salary adjustment in lieu of health insurance coverage.

c. Employees working less than 80% FTE may elect to participate in the health insurance plan, at their own expense, subject to the insurance carrier's underwriting guidelines. The Senior Minister shall be consulted for more detailed information. The benefits the church provides are subject to review and change based on costs and the availability of coverage.

5. The church may provide for short term counseling for employees in conflict resolution, stress management, finance or substance abuse areas at the discretion of the Senior Minister.

6. Worker's Compensation. Employees who are injured during the hours of employment on the job will be covered by the Colorado State Workers' Compensation Act. Every injury, no matter how trivial, must be reported immediately to the Senior Minister or his or her designee or benefits could be lost.

X. Problem Solving

Plymouth desires to maintain an open and frank atmosphere in which questions, suggestions, problems or complaints can be raised without fear of reprisal. Employees are encouraged to raise questions and suggest improvements at any time, including suggestions for improvements in these

personnel policies.

If an employee encounters a problem with another staff member, he or she is encouraged to discuss the matter directly with that employee. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, he or she should discuss the problem with the supervisor of the employee. If the problem remains unresolved, he or she should discuss it with the Senior Minister. If the resolution suggested by the Senior Minister seems unfair to the employee, the grievance procedure may be engaged.

XI. Grievance Procedure

Plymouth is committed to treating employees honestly and fairly within the parameters of these personnel policies. If any employee feels that a personnel policy has been applied incorrectly, he or she is encouraged to discuss the problem directly with the Senior Minister who shall provide a response expeditiously. If this informal procedure does not resolve the problem to the employee's satisfaction, he or she may file a formal grievance, which will be handled as follows:

1. The employee should submit a written grievance to the Senior Minister.
2. The Senior Minister shall provide a written response to the employee within ten days.
3. If the employee remains dissatisfied, he or she may submit a written grievance to the Personnel committee.
4. The Personnel Committee will gather information from all parties involved and shall prepare a written response within twenty days. The response of the committee is final.

XII. Performance Feedback and Evaluations. All staff members are to be evaluated yearly or more often when requested by the staff person, his or her supervisor, or the Leadership Council. "Staff members" includes all employees of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ.

High standards of compassionate openness, honesty, and confidentiality are expected.

A. Performance Evaluation for Senior Minister

The Leadership Council will conduct an annual evaluation process.

XIII. Separations

A. Resignations

1. Should an ordained minister desire to dissolve the pastoral relationship, he or she shall notify the Moderator in writing, who, in turn, shall submit the resignation to the Church Council. When accepted, the resignation shall become effective at the end of sixty days,

unless otherwise agreed upon by both the Minister and the Church Council.

2. All other program staff may resign by submitting a resignation to the Senior Minister at least thirty days before the effective date, or otherwise by mutual agreement.

3. Administrative and building staff may resign by submitting a resignation to the Senior Minister at least two weeks in advance.

If an employee voluntarily resigns, he or she will receive a final paycheck on the next regular payday following the last day worked. If an employee is dismissed, he or she will receive a final paycheck on the last day worked. If the employee is insured, his or her insurance will continue through the last day of the month terminated. Retirement contributions will be discussed prior to the employee's departure. Any monies owed to Plymouth Church will be deducted from the final paycheck. Employees should keep the Church informed of address changes so that W-2 forms and other mail can be properly forwarded.

4. When a staff person resigns or retires, the Personnel Committee should arrange for an exit interview in executive session. If there are no legal considerations, the exit interview can be made open to members of the congregation if the staff member and Personnel Committee mutually agree.

a. If the person resigning or retiring is not the Senior Minister, the Senior Minister shall be a part of the interview.

b. When a ministerial staff person resigns, a member of the Association Church and Ministry Committee may be invited to the exit interview.

B. Hiring Policy

This section was written in order to provide clarity concerning the purpose and responsibilities for staff members and to avoid possible issues involved when a "member relationship" conflicts with a "staff relationship." The policy also speaks to giving time to newly hired staff so each has a chance to learn and grow into a new position without the confusion that might result from long held personal loyalties or former job expectations.

1. Members of Plymouth are ineligible to be considered and/or hired as permanent church staff.

2. Members of Plymouth permanent staff are welcome to join the congregation, and will sign a policy statement at the time of hiring to affirm their understanding that:

a. their employee responsibilities are primary,

b. they must take care to separate the voice used to express personal opinions as a congregational member from that used to give opinions as a professional staff member concerning congregational decisions, and

c. they will be asked to take a hiatus from Plymouth programs and worship when they leave a position

3. Temporary staff members will be subject to the expectations found in #2, a and b above. Should it be considered beneficial to the church community, temporary staff may become permanent at the request of the senior minister and permission of both the Personnel Committee and Leadership Council. Once permanent, he/she will be subject to all elements within this policy.
4. When a permanent member of staff leaves, he/she will be asked to take a hiatus from Plymouth programs, including, but not limited to worship, social events, committees, and meetings:
 - a. In the case of lay employees, the Personnel Committee shall set the duration of the hiatus during the exit interview with the employee. If the staff member does not choose to attend the exit interview, the Personnel Committee will determine the length of the hiatus. The staff member will sign a statement of understanding that will reside in his/her personnel file. The member may again serve as a volunteer after hiatus in the same areas in which he/she has previously held professional responsibilities unless the Personnel Committee and/or Leadership Council believe such action would be harmful to the church community. Each separate situation will be considered as it arises.
 - b. In congruence with the prevailing customs and ethics of the UCC, clergy who wish to return to Plymouth's congregational life after prior permanent service, must first be in consultation with the Rocky Mountain Conference as well as Plymouth's Personnel Committee and church Leadership Council. Decisions concerning renewing participation in Plymouth programs will be made after such discussions.

XIV. Prevention of Abuse and Harassment Policy

- A. See LCP-8

XV. Staff Relations

Our role as leaders in the life of this congregation can be summed up in the words of Paul, "Each has his (her) own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another." Plymouth Congregational UCC constitution states that "the purpose of this Church shall be to worship God and to make God's will visible in the lives of people, individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death and living presence of Jesus Christ." It is this cause and purpose for which we are organized as a Church and it shall be "the first and last item" of our responsibilities as staff here at Plymouth Congregational UCC.

1. As members of the staff of Plymouth Congregational UCC we function together in a team ministry. To be effective the team must maintain clarity of leadership roles.
 - a. The Senior Minister is called by the congregation to administer the program of the Church and to oversee all areas of the life, work and worship of Plymouth Church. This is done in cooperation with the Leadership Council and boards and the staff team. The Senior Minister is ultimately held responsible for all areas of life, work and worship at Plymouth Church, and for the supervision of all staff.

- b. The Associate Minister(s) is also called by the congregation and is responsible for duties as defined by the Church and specified by a job description that identifies specific duties and responsibilities.
 - c. Also included on the staff team are other non-ministerial staff who are employed or volunteer for specified program or administrative duties.
- 2. The staff team of Plymouth Church shall form one working fellowship serving in and for a cause greater than ourselves, either individually or collectively. Our primary loyalty is to Jesus Christ for whom we labor in this particular place. At the same time, we shall seek to fulfill our individual calling through a humble and loving ministry to those with whom we work and the congregation we serve.
- 3. As a staff team we are called to develop sensitivity to and respect for one another and to our individual ministries. Members of the staff shall strive to maintain a high level of commitment, honesty, communication, trust and care for one another. Open, honest and constructive communication between staff members shall be the norm. Members of the staff agree to deal with individual faults, mistakes and needs in Christian love and charity. Confidentiality will be upheld, support for one another shall be a priority, and disagreements will be discussed in private and will remain private. This shall not prevent any staff member who believes that he or she has a grievance from using Plymouth's grievance procedure, outlined in the Personnel Policy. Our ethos will be: 1) talk to, not about; 2) stand shoulder-to-shoulder; 3) always assume the best intentions.