

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association**  
**RESOLUTION**

**BREACH OF TRUST:**

**SEXUAL OR FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT**

1992

We, the members of the RRA, are aware of the high level of trust that the role of rabbi engenders, and are convinced that service as a rabbi entails a high level of responsibility toward those we serve.

We note that many people who come to rabbis are facing crises that leave them emotionally vulnerable.

And we are aware of surveys and news reports indicating that significant numbers of clergy of various denominations have engaged in sexual relations with congregants or staff members, with often devastating consequences for the clergyperson, congregant, and institution.

We also are aware of instances in which clergy appear to have taken financial advantage of elderly or other congregants for personal financial gain.

We note the widespread discussion of issues of sexual harassment in our society following the recent U.S. Supreme Court nomination.

We note the recent standards prohibiting sexual misconduct with clients, congregants, and staff members adopted by the CCAR, the American Association of Pastoral Counseling, the American Association of Marriage and Family Counseling, and other professional organizations.

We note the conclusions of experts in this field that clear standards, prompt procedures for resolving complaints, and explicit indications of possible consequences of such conduct occurring in a clergy role are an essential part of prevention and of possible healing should such conduct occur.

We conclude that conduct in these areas involving a professional role as rabbi is a matter of ethical concern to the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

Therefore, we resolve:

1. That we regard sexual misconduct or financial misconduct toward congregants, students, staff members, or others in similar roles as a breach of professional trust.
2. That the RRA Ethics Committee present separate resolutions defining these issues and proposed organizational procedures for response at an upcoming RRA convention.
3. That the Ethics Committee also consider as a separate but related matter, an organizational response to sexual harassment of an RRA member in her/his professional role.