

PROTECTING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM THE DANGERS OF RESTRAINTS

A Fact Sheet for Provider Agencies

The Risks

Restraints jeopardize the safety and well-being of all involved parties

Physical injury such as head trauma, joint damage, abrasions, oxygen deprivation and death

Emotional trauma or re-traumatization to the person in care, staff or witnesses

Lost opportunities for people in care to practice and develop positive coping and stress management skills that support personal growth and independence

Damage to the therapeutic relationship between staff and the person in care

Protect Yourself and Others

What You Can Do

- **Establish a mission statement that demonstrates the agency’s commitment to a safe and therapeutic environment.** A strong mission statement can foster an agency culture dedicated to restraint reduction. All staff, people in care and advocates should be aware of and educated on this mission statement.
- **Foster a trauma informed environment.** Use a universal precautions approach by assuming everyone has a trauma history. Educate staff on the physical and emotional risks associated with performing restraints. Evaluate environmental conditions and consider modifications that create comfortable surroundings to support trauma informed care and personal development.
- **Implement a restraint review processes.** Include de-briefing for all staff involved, all people in care involved, and all witnesses following a restraint. Identify and assess areas in need of improvement. Consider trends such as time of day, location, and individuals involved in restraints.
- **Foster an environment that supports open communication.** Consider ways to improve communication between staff and people in care while maintaining healthy boundaries. Encourage involvement of staff, people in care and advocates in creating support plans for people in care.
- **Promote staff self-care.** Provide resources such as Employee Assistance Program services and trainings on self-care for staff. Consider having a quiet space for staff to take a “time-out” if an employee needs a break. Strive to maintain coverage sufficient to allow staff to take calming breaks as needed.

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