

PROTECTING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM THE DANGERS OF RESTRAINTS

A Fact Sheet for Staff

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 and 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

- **Commit to fostering a trauma informed environment.** Use a universal precaution approach by assuming everyone you work with has a trauma history. This approach will help you to recognize trauma reactions and triggers when a person in care is acting out of the ordinary and consider the potential impact before conducting a restraint.
- **Know your agency's restraint reduction goals.** Seek to understand how you can contribute to achieving those goals and communicate new ideas you have for doing so.
- **Develop self-awareness.** Through personal reflection or dialogue, identify your personal triggers that may impact your ability to provide safe and supportive care. Learn strategies to manage your triggers. Consider completing a staff check-in prior to your shift to help you prepare for work and complete your shift safely.
- **Listen and observe attentively.** Pay attention to early warning signs and make rigorous use of prevention and de-escalation strategies to avoid escalation and the use of a restraint.
- **Review support plans and treatment goals for people in your care regularly.** Not all people in care respond the same way to de-escalation techniques. Regular review, discussion and updates of individual treatment plans helps to ensure that the prevention and de-escalation skills that are most effective for each person are used.
- **Call for assistance when needed.** Use co-workers and supervisors in your efforts to reduce the use of restraints.

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