

AGENCY CONSIDERATIONS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Review policies and procedures to ensure they provide clear guidance on how and when to complete body checks. Ensure policies address the importance of preserving the dignity and rights of people receiving services during this process. Provide staff practical guidance on how to respond if a person does not agree to undergo a body check. Address requirements for photographing marks or injuries and provide guidance for staff to use agency issued equipment for taking or transmitting photographs of people receiving services.

NURSING INVOLVEMENT

For programs that have nursing supports, consider how often and when nurses should review body check documentation and instruct staff on when to alert nursing for any marks or injuries discovered. Provide space on the form for the nurse to describe their findings.

THE BUDDY SYSTEM

Whenever possible have two staff conduct the body check so one staff can witness and verify findings.

MEDICAL CARE

Train all staff to access nursing supports or other medical care such as a primary care physician or urgent care if needed when marks or injuries are discovered during the body check process. Provide training to staff on signs and symptoms of illness to assist staff in recognizing marks, bruises, or injuries that require medical attention.

DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Review body check documentation on a regular basis to ensure it is thorough, accurate, and completed as required by plans of care for people receiving services and following situations such as restraints, falls, or elopement. Provide support to staff who may need additional training or follow up to thoroughly document body checks.

FORMS

Use a body check form that has clear directions for completing and documenting the body check. Ensure the form instructs staff to answer questions and fill in blanks to capture as much information as possible. Structure the form to record whether marks or injuries are new or previously noted, the worsening or healing of previously identified marks or injuries, and whether a whole or partial body check was completed. Include a space on the form for staff to describe their findings.

TRAINING

Provide comprehensive training to staff on the importance of completing body checks and the role they play in safeguarding people receiving services. Incorporate specific sensitivity skills into training to help safeguard privacy, dignity, and respect for people receiving services during this process. Train staff to recognize when marks or injuries found may be a sign of abuse or neglect and require reporting to the Justice Center.