

Seclusion & Restraint Reduction

Resource Guide: Developing Positive Cultures of Care

Product of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

Overview:

The Resource Guide is designed to provide administrative, clinical, and direct care staff with a menu of approaches, tools, and treatment strategies that can be used to establish positive treatment cultures. It is a compilation of effective strategies that were used in Massachusetts programs to reduce and/or eliminate seclusion and restraint use to date. The interventions described in the Resource Guide are not an exhaustive list; it is important to note that new ideas about improving program practices are evolving as the Massachusetts programs continue to advance and make changes and as other programs across the country join in the effort. Core interventions discussed are meant to provide readers with a basic understanding rather than an in-depth or step-by-step implementation plan. There is additional material at the end of each chapter for more information about each topic. This Guide was originally written to support hospital and residential programs, but the interventions have been found to be effective in day programs, partial hospitalization programs, and other treatment settings. It is intended to be useful for staff members of all disciplines.

The Resource Guide draws on state-of-the-art knowledge from national and local experts in key areas related to improving inpatient culture, and provides examples of adaptable interventions and current best practices. This Guide provides information and tools that support organizations, leaders, clinicians, and direct-care staff in implementing strength-based care and reducing/eliminating the use of coercive interventions by addressing administrative considerations vital to sustaining philosophy changes in program treatment cultures, introducing the concept of strength-based care, focusing on empowering and collaborating with children and families, providing tools and strategies for accomplishing these goals, emphasizing valuing families, providing guidelines for becoming more “family friendly”, addressing the impact of trauma on children, and suggesting treatment strategies for use in inpatient and residential treatment that include, but are not limited to, individual crisis prevention tools and sensory-based treatment approaches. This Guide also emphasizes a multifaceted approach in creating a supportive environment, from innovative use of physical space to creating partnerships between children, families, and staff members, and includes references to emerging promising practice literature that links the reduction of coercive interventions to treatment benefits and clinical outcomes. Narratives from consumers about their experiences of seclusion and restraint are provided, along with information on legal limitations and liability in the use of seclusion and restraint.

Program leaders may want to introduce the Guide to staff members, explain its purpose, and encourage them to read it and learn about the different elements that provide the foundation for strength-based treatment cultures.

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