

Improving Our Safety Culture Through Trauma-Informed Training

The Clock Tower Schools is Creating an Environment of Comfort vs. Control®. Recently, The Clock Tower Schools held a training on an innovative crisis prevention program offering an alternative to the use of restraint and seclusion. Ukeru® is a safe, comforting crisis prevention program developed by and for organizations like ours.

Restraints and seclusions are coercive, high-risk techniques used to contain an individual considered a danger to themselves or others. For individuals who have experienced traumatic events — whether through physical abuse, severe neglect, loss, and domestic violence or more common experiences such as bullying, shame, fear and anxiety — the impact of re-experiencing that trauma through the use restraints and seclusions can be devastating, leading to more aggression and fueling a psychologically destructive cycle.

Reducing and preventing these practices, on the other hand, enhances quality of treatment and increases satisfaction for those both receiving and providing services. With a trauma-informed approach and the proper training, coercive techniques like restraint and seclusion can be eliminated without compromising the safety of clients or employees.

Ukeru, which is Japanese for “to receive,” is the first crisis prevention training program to completely eliminate the use of restraints and seclusion as accepted behavioral management tools. Its approach is rooted in the belief that the use of physical restraints is not only unnecessary, but also unproductive and that all intervention should be built on an approach of comfort vs. control. By using Ukeru’s custom-made, soft, cushioned blocking tools, we will be better able to keep The Clock Tower School’s staff and the individuals in our care safe and comfortable.

There is data to show that this approach works. In 2004, Ukeru’s parent organization, Grafton Integrated Health Network, embarked on a mission to minimize the use of restraint and seclusion without compromising client or employee safety. In less than ten years, the organization significantly reduced workers’ compensation costs, dramatically lowered employee turnover, and, most importantly, greatly reduced client and staff injuries. Today, Grafton is 100% seclusion-free and 99% restraint-free. The success stories from other organizations across the country that have implemented Ukeru is further proof that the concept works!

We are so excited that the behavioral health experts who created Ukeru have now trained the The Clock Tower Schools team on key concepts such as trauma-informed care and conflict resolution. We have also been trained on the physical techniques and using the Ukeru blocking materials. We will begin implementing these approaches immediately and look forward to sharing stories of how comfort vs. control works in our environment soon!

“Ukeru benefits everyone - the treaters and the clients, teachers and students. A trauma-informed approach makes sense for everyone.”

— SUZANN SIMONCELLI

PT, Director of Community Based Professional Services, OLV Human Services