

December 14, 2009

We the Youth of Massachusetts, in order to form more trauma-sensitive and positive healing environments, provide choice for youth, and to ensure that all youth feel safe, protected, and respected do ordain and establish this Youth Position Statement on **Restraint and Seclusion**

Article I.

We believe restraint and seclusion should be prevented because they are overwhelmingly traumatizing experiences that are emotionally stressful for youth, staff, and families. Restraint and seclusion can physically hurt youth and staff. In addition, they emotionally hurt and cause a loss of self-respect, dignity, and trust between youth and staff. Restraint and seclusion can also hurt an entire unit/program/classroom by making people feel scared, unsafe, trigger other youth, and delay treatment progress.

Article II.

We believe these helpful practices should be used instead in order to prevent restraint and seclusion. These positive practices can help youth feel better and more hopeful.

* Create a safe and supportive environment that is comfortable and home-like that teaches alternatives like sensory strategies, comfort rooms, music, and blanket wraps and uses positive language: words, tone, and body language. Provide youth with activities such as: sports, art, music, individual support and attention, and appropriate physical contact.

* Create a respectful environment that promotes youth involvement, peer leadership, and peer support. Give youth a voice in the program: hold Community Meetings and create Youth Councils. Encourage youth to be active in their treatment. Respect every youth's right to confidentiality and show respect by listening to youth and communicating with youth. Eliminate point and level systems.

Article III.

We believe all programs should embrace essential values

in order to prevent restraint and seclusion. Important values that reflect good care should be adopted such as: communication, recovery, confidence, honesty, responsibility and respect. Other essential values that reflect kindness should be embraced as well, including: acceptance, patience, compassion, support, appreciation, and understanding.

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