



EEC Residential Licensing Policy Statement: 2016 – 02

Title: Separation from the Group Policy

Effective Date: Immediately

Date Issued: September 8, 2016

Supersedes: P-EEC-R&P-09

Purpose:

This policy will help direct what components need to be addressed and what are the limits for residential programs using separation from the group as a form of behavior management.

Policy:

Separation from the group is defined as a behavioral intervention used when a resident is a danger to self or others. The separation may be **exclusionary** whereby a resident needs to be away from other residents and is in a room or area (sensory room, time-out room, bedroom, living room, etc.) by himself/herself with staff supervision. Separation from the group may also be **non-exclusionary**, where the resident is not participating with other residents but is still within the milieu.

Any form of separation from the group cannot be punitive; it must be therapeutic and safety-oriented with the goal of successfully integrating the resident back into the group. This also includes when separation from the group is used as part of an individualized behavior plan previously approved by a medical professional, mental health professional, or the resident's overseeing psychiatrist and agreed upon by the resident's family and/or guardian.

EEC's amended regulations at 606 CMR 3.07(7)(k) identify the components necessary to a behavior support policy which results in a resident being separated from the group or from routine program activities. Routine program activities include but are not limited to meals, therapy, educational programs, communications, and personal hygiene activities. For purposes of this policy, program privileges such as television, radio, off-campus recreational activities and other earned rewards or activities do not constitute routine program activities. In addition, transfer of the resident to another area of the program or to another program for a limited period in order to receive appropriate therapeutic services shall not be considered separation.

Separation from the group, whether referred to as "time-out", "room time", "chair time", "out of program", "off mission", "sensory room time", "repair" or another name, must conform to the requirements of 606 CMR 3.07(7)(k)1-7. No resident may be separated from the group for more than twenty (20) minutes without the approval of the chief administrative person or his

or her designee. Such approval is subject to the following conditions:

- The chief administrative person or his or her designee must be a person at least one level above the personnel assigned to supervise the resident during the separation.
- Approval for time-out longer than 20 minutes may not be granted at the outset of the time-out, but must be sought when the resident has been in time-out for a period approaching the 20 minute mark, and the resident appears to require additional separation time.
- Separation must end when the resident's behavior indicates (s)he is able to safely return to routine program activities.
- Approval for an extension beyond the 20 minute mark can only be granted if the resident continues to exhibit unsafe behavior, or if a behavior pattern requiring longer separation has been documented.
- The resident should continue to be assessed every 15 minutes if the separation continues beyond the 20 minute mark and beyond the 30 minute mark as defined in 606 CMR 3.07(7)(k)1-7.

If, at the end of eight hours, the resident is not able to safely return to routine program activities, the program must seek an emergency psychiatric or psychological evaluation, in accordance with the program's emergency mental health plan required by 606 CMR 3.06(3)(a). The purpose of the evaluation shall be to determine the need for an alternative placement for the resident.

Following an emergency psychiatric or psychological evaluation, the program must convene an emergency individual service plan meeting to determine how the program will assist the resident to regain control and rejoin the program, or how the program will maintain the resident safely until the resident can transfer from the program to a more appropriate setting. The decisions of the service planning meeting must be documented in the resident's individual service plan.

Documentation:

All exclusionary separations must be documented. Programs must include a plan for how documentation shall be completed and maintained in their Separation from the Group Policy. At a minimum the documentation must record: who initiated the separation from the group, who observed the resident, the start time of the separation, the reason for the separation, where the separation occurred, the end time of the separation and who approved the procedure. This data should be easily accessible and kept in the individual resident's record or a specific log for separation.

Any form of non-exclusionary separation over 20 minutes must also be documented as required above. For some programs non-exclusionary separation has been included in a resident's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or behavior plan to address the resident's specific targeted behavior.

All programs must submit their Separation from the Group policies to EEC for review and approval. This submission allows programs to address the individual needs of the populations they serve. The Separation from the Group Policy will be included in the submitted documents checklist.