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| DYS Seal | **Commonwealth of Massachusetts** |
| ***Executive Office of Health and Human Services*** |
| **Department of Youth Services** |
| **Official Policy** |

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| ***Policy Name:*** | Response to Residential Group Disturbances | | |
| ***Policy #:*** | 03.02.20(c) | ***Effective Date:*** | February 1, 2017 |
| ***Repeals:*** | 03.02.20 (b) | | |
| ***References:*** | Restraints and Use of Force Policy  Law-Enforcement Assistance Policy  Search Policies  Involuntary Room Confinement Policy | | |
| ***Signature:*** | Peter J. Forbes, Commissioner | | 11/08/ 2016 |
| ***Applicability:*** | This policy shall apply to all DYS employees for the program types listed here. Providers shall have in place this policy or an equivalent policy and procedures in accordance with contract requirements. This policy applies to locations of hardware or staff secure programs, including alternative lock up facilities (ALP’s), detention, assessment, revocation, treatment, and track 1 and track 2 programs. Community placement or DYS reception centers are not required to have site specific codes in accordance with the policy but staff shall be trained in the event they must respond to applicable locations. | | |

Policy:

It is the policy of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) that, in the event of a group disturbance, staff shall use appropriate responses that prioritize the safety and security of staff, youth and visitors in accordance with this policy and related procedures. Locations shall have in place site-specific codes as approved by Regional Directors of Residential Services to respond to specific incidents. Such codes may be used during a group disturbance at the location in accordance with these procedures when location personnel determine additional staff support is needed.

When there is a group disturbance, containment of the incident to keep staff, youth, visitors, and the community at large safe is the priority. The protection of property shall become a priority after the safety of all individuals is no longer in jeopardy or staff reasonably believe the protection of such property will also protect the safety of the staff, youth, visitors, or community at large.

Staff shall receive training in de-escalation, defensive and disengagement techniques, use of force, physical restraints, and mechanical restraints at DYS Basic Training and DYS Annual Review Training or provider equivalent training. During the DYS On the Job Training portion of DYS Basic Training or provider equivalent training, Location Managers/designees shall review with new employees site-specific codes and the use of two-way radios, intercoms, and other security measures available at individual locations.

Facility Managers or designee(s) shall review the preventive measures contained in these procedures and practice the site-specific plans during code practice drills with all location staff of the first and second shift at a minimum of once every three months. Drills shall be documented in the operation log noting the time and date of the event and on the Code Response Drill Form which shall be maintained in the Code Response Log.

Procedure

1. Definitions:

Code Response Log: A separate binder system that is used to record the code response drills and applicable forms for each residential location.

Community Placement: A location in the community as approved by DYS or its contracted providers where a DYS youth, who has signed a grant of conditional liberty (GCL), lives. Such location does not have 24 hour on site supervision by a DYS state or contracted provider employee and includes, but is not limited to home, foster care, and independent living apartments.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP):Aprogram through Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) that provides DYS state employees and their family members with free and confidential services including but not limited to in the moment support, assessment, referral, short-term counseling, work-life services, legal and financial assistance, and management consultation.

Employee Support Services (ESS): A DYS program designed to provide additional support and resources to state employees who experience emotional, psychological or physical trauma as a result of a workplace incident including but not limited to critical or serious incidents.

Group Disturbance**:** An incident involving multiple youth where the safety and security of the location is jeopardized.

Location personnel: All staff on site at the time of the group disturbance trained in crisis management including de-escalation, defensive and disengagement techniques, use of force, physical restraints, and mechanical restraints from DYS Basic and DYS Annual Review.

Location Manager: Manager of a state or provider agency location including Program Directors and Assistant Program Directors, also known as the functional title of administrative officers.

Positive Youth Development (PYD): DYS Framework which describes the process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. PYD Essential Features highlighted by DYS include: Activities grounded in strengths; youth have a voice; promote multiple areas of growth & development; engage youth as resources, nurture and value caring and respectful relationships.

Program Administrative Team: Staff that include the following members: Program Director, Assistant Program Director or designee, Clinical Director or clinical designee, Program Teaching Coordinator or educational designee or provider equivalents.

Residential Placement: DYS state or provider operated program where a youth resides, where youth are not allowed to leave without approval, and there is 24/7 DYS state or provider supervision at the location including but not limited to hardware secure programs, staff secure programs, and programs considered Track 1 and 2.

Site Specific Code Procedures (Code): Written site-specific communication and action plan and procedures for the specific location that detail the process of assessing a situation, who should be notified, if additional support is needed and the steps to be taken during a group disturbance or another emergency/crisis event. Such code may include types of responses depending on the assistance needed at the particular location.

Weapons: Items such as guns, knives, clubs, incendiary devices, ammunition, or any other device meeting the definitions set forth in G.L. c. 269, §10, or any other object that could be used, alone or with other objects, to cause bodily harm.

1. Preventive Measures
2. Location Managers under the direction of the Regional and Program Administrative Team will work to practice preventive measures with the location staff to assist in the deterrence of group disturbances.
3. Such preventive measures include:
   1. Developing structured and diverse programming by the Administrative Team and location staff that promotes positive youth development, reduces idle time, and includes regular access to recreational space including outdoor areas;
   2. Utilizing positive behavior support systems to offer incentives to youth including the ability to present such information to the Regional Incident Review Team;
   3. Complying with the DYS Search policies to prevent contraband;
   4. Maintaining clean, healthy living conditions;
   5. Treating youth in a fair and respectful manner consistent with the principles of trauma informed care;
   6. Developing a culturally competent workforce capable of serving the diverse needs of youth in its care;
   7. Becoming familiar with each youth’s level of engagement in programming, behavioral history in the community and other programs, and any gang or negative peer affiliations;
   8. Maintaining situation awareness in communicating, monitoring and controlling the everyday movement of the population by ensuring appropriate staff positioning at all times;
   9. Addressing inappropriate youth behavior in a timely manner, ensuring that staff use appropriate demeanor for a positive intervention; and
   10. Reviewing general emergency procedures with the youth at orientation such as a group disturbance and that it is the staff’s priority to keep them safe. Staff shall review with youth expectations of their behavior and that youth must comply with the emergency directions by the staff.
4. Response to a Group Disturbance

1.During a group disturbance,Shift Administrator/Supervisor or provider equivalent or any location staff if supervisor is not immediately accessible shall assess the situation and respond as follows:

a. Assess the situation and determine whether or not it can be controlled with or without additional staff support;

b. If it is assessed that additional staff support is needed to help with the group disturbance, location staff shall follow the Site Specific Code Procedures (Code) calling for additional staff assistance;

c. take all reasonable steps to protect staff and youth using available location staff until additional staff arrives; and

d. continue with the steps as outlined below in C. 2 – 6 as needed.

2.During a group disturbance where a code for additional staff has been called, theShift Administrator/Supervisor or provider equivalent or any location staff if supervisor is not immediately accessible shall provide instructions to location and responding staff, unless Management (facility administrators or regional managers) assume coordination of the code. The following shall be communicated:

a. To the Location: All activity of youth, staff and visitors within the location shall stop when code procedures are implemented until the program has gained full control and the shift supervisor or designee deems the code over.

b. To Staff:

* + 1. For co-located locations, location personnel shall call (call a code) to nearby programs in a clear, effective manner notifying them of the location of the disturbance as designated in their site-specific procedures; and then call 911 if additional assistance is needed.
    2. For stand- alone locations, locations may call 911 for state or local authorities or emergency services as detailed in their site specific code.
    3. If law-enforcement and or emergency medical assistance is requested, the Location managers/designees shall meet with them upon their arrival and brief them on the situation.

c. To Compliant Youth: Staff shall instruct youth in the same room as the disturbance to separate from each other and follow any other directives as provided for in the site specific procedures.

1. During a group disturbance, whether or not a Code has been called, staff shall prioritize their initial physical response in the following manner completing the following as needed:
   1. Assist staff members in need of help by separating youth from other staff and then other youth;
   2. Staff shall follow the DYS Restraint and Use of Force Policy including using defensive and disengagement techniques if possible and utilize the DYS restraint technique when the number of staff are available to allow such technique to be utilized. DYS restraint technique may not be possible based on the threat of harm (reasonably perceived threat of physical injury), and the number of youth involved exceeds the number of staff required for the DYS restraint technique (two staff for each youth).
   3. If a youth possesses a weapon, the staff’s primary focus shall be the safety of staff, non-involved youth and visitors;
   4. Mechanically secure with handcuffs all youth actively involved and move youth to a secured area;
   5. Continue to escort or instruct compliant youth to move to a safe location or contain them in a safe area; and/or
   6. Contain area.

4. When physically holding or separating youth during a group disturbance and where the incident prevents the use of the DYS Restraint technique, staff shall:

1. Use only the amount of force reasonably necessary to stop the disturbance.
2. Staff shall not use or permit the use of physical force that may cause excessive bodily injury or force that is beyond the threat of harm. Staff shall notify the Location Manager immediately if excessive force or prohibited techniques were used. Such prohibited techniques include but are not limited to chokeholds or other holds that limit circulation or air flow; excessive sitting, kneeling or otherwise putting substantial body weight on a youth; excessive twisting of limbs; pressure points that inflict pain for submission; punching or striking; or the use of chemicals including chemical mace and pepper spray.
3. Contain youth actively involved in a standing, seated or ground position holding the youth’s body with both arms and, if needed, body ensuring no asphyxia until mechanical restraints can be applied.
4. Continue verbal commands to the youth directing them to separate from each other and to move into another area

5. Location personnel shall use all available security measures, such as two-way radios, physical restraints, mechanical restraints, intercom systems and any other measures that are available at the Location and contained in the site specific code procedures.

6. Institutional Security Officers (ISO) where available, will monitor all programs via video surveillance while staff are responding to a program disturbance and coordinate with non-DYS responders if necessary; at least one ISO staff will respond to the location if able.

1. Follow up Actions After a Group Disturbance

1. Once the group disturbance is no longer active, staff shall take the following immediate actions, if necessary:

a. Assist youth and staff in need of medical help.

b. Utilize involuntary room confinement for youth that need involuntary room confinement until the program is secure utilizing constant motion while youth are secured in their rooms; and

c. Suspend programming at the location until the location is considered safe, information regarding the disturbance is communicated to all staff, and a plan is established for youth to regain behavioral control.

2. Shift Administrator/Supervisor or provider equivalent staff or designee shall notify the Central Office Communication Information Center (CIC) in accordance with the Serious Incident Policy and follow the Regional On Call Protocol.

3. Provide clinical services to all youth at the location.

4. Conduct an after action Incident Review of any group disturbance with Location staff, Program Administrative Team and Regional Director of Residential Services including the review of the following:

a. View and retain the video of the time before and during the group disturbances;

b. Program event schedule for the day; and

c. Interview of staff and youth involved.

5. Offer information on the DYS Incident Response Team (IRT) protocol to staff involved in the group disturbance.

6. Offer information on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Employee Support Services (ESS) to staff involved in the group disturbance.

7. Location Managers working with their respective Program Administrative Team and Directors of Residential Services shall continue to reassess the program events and site-specific code to better address safety concerns for the location during and after code response practice drills utilizing videos of prior group disturbances to analyze and assist.

8. Location Personnel shall comply with the DYS Media Response Advisory if media is at the location.

1. **Documentation:**
2. Prior to leaving the shift, all staff, unless transported for medical treatment, shall write an internal incident report and submit this report to the Location Manager/designee. The Location Manager/designee shall complete a serious incident report documenting any injuries incurred and medical attention received as required by policy and distribute said report to the Regional management, program administrative team and the Communication Information Center (CIC), central office monitor and Director of Residential Operations.
3. Location personnel shall ensure proper documentation of the group disturbance, and any resulting use of Involuntary Room Confinement in JJEMS.
4. If applicable, Location Manager/designee shall document the transfer and resumption of control with law enforcement authorities and Location personnel in the program’s operation log.
5. If applicable, Location Manager/designee shall assess any physical plant damage and submit a damage report to the Facility Administrator.
6. If applicable, document code response in the code response log.

**Response to Group Disturbances, 03.02.20(c)**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

* Locations have written site-specific communication and action plan for the specific location that details who should be notified and the steps to be taken during a group disturbance or another emergency/crisis response to an event for program support.
* Location personnel are trained in specific codes for that location and the required responses.
* Proper documentation and notification is completed in the event of a group disturbance.
* Locations have programs that prevent group disturbances.
* Location personnel are trained in the use of security items and procedures.
* A listing of emergency notification telephone numbers shall be posted in the Operations Log.