

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

Behavioral Restraint Policy

All current teachers and administrators of the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School have been trained in the QBS Behavioral Safety program focusing on restraints. Below is a description of the theoretic principles that undergird the program, the course structure and the content of the course.

The State of the Art in Behavioral Safety

Safety-Care provides the tools you need be safe when working with behaviorally challenging individuals. We can help you to:

- Understand how and why crisis events happen, and ways in which we might inadvertently contribute to them.
- Prevent crises using a variety of supportive interaction strategies.
- Apply simple, evidence-based de-escalation strategies that are effective for any population.
- Respond appropriately and safely to dangerous behavior.
- Prevent the need for restraint.
- Intervene after a crisis to reduce the chance that it will happen again.

Course Structure

Safety-Care is taught in a least to most restrictive format:

Introduction

The course introduction sets the stage for the rest of the curriculum. Trainees are told about the course and its goals, as well as ground rules and the context in which the course is designed to be taught. Then it describes what challenging behavior is, how to assess its severity, and how to understand relevant diagnoses and conditions that might contribute. Then the course addresses relevant factors such as history and environment. We begin to address the effects of reinforcement, including an Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) model of behavior and ways in which staff might inadvertently reinforce challenging behavior.

Incident Prevention

It's far better to prevent behavioral incidents than to manage them. That's why Safety-Care gives participants the tools they need to plan and take action well ahead of any escalation. Participants in the course learn a wide variety of prevention skills so that they can each contribute to a physical and social environment that encourages behavior patterns that are positive and safe. These include non-invasive approach and interaction strategies, ways to create a safe and therapeutic environment, self-management skills, and the use of differential reinforcement to teach desirable replacement behaviors.

Incident Minimization

The best time to begin responding to an impending incident is right now. Participants learn how to identify each person's triggers and signals and how to respond to them safely and therapeutically. De-escalation is a core skill in Safety-Care. Participants learn and practice the use of three intervention strategies for re-direction of an agitated person, regardless of whether that person can communicate effectively with staff. In doing so,

staff learn how important it is to reinforce safe, desirable behavior without reinforcing agitated or dangerous behavior.

Incident Management

In the event that a behavioral incident does occur, participants learn how to stay safe without over- or under-reacting. Instead of coercive or aggressive interventions, staff learn how to safely separate themselves from an agitated person while continuing de-escalation interventions. In more extreme circumstances, intrusive safety management procedures may be necessary. Participants learn about the risks of these interventions, when such procedures should be used (and avoided), and how to intervene safely in a manner that minimize risks to the greatest degree possible. Physical management procedure taught in the course include 1- and 2-person stability holds, escort procedures, and a chair stability hold. These interventions can be scaled to working with children, adolescents, or adults.

Post-Incident Procedures

The occurrence of a behavioral incident begins the task of preventing the next one. Participants learn to involve the agitated person (when appropriate) and involved stakeholders in assessing what happened and developing plans to prevent future incidents.

Core Principles of Safety-Care

- Respectful, humane, non-coercive interventions.
- Emphasis on prevention over management.
- Evidence-based procedures are the basis of intervention. While the course material avoids jargon and is designed to be taught and used in a variety of contexts, the protocols in Safety-Care are based on procedures that have been validated in many studies as broadly effective. These include basic applications of functional assessment, differential reinforcement, antecedent management, functional communication training, and behavioral momentum.
- Positive reinforcement is embedded throughout the course.
- Effective staff training requires an evidence-based approach incorporating errorless teaching strategies whenever possible.
- A least restrictive approach requires a range of options. Staff learn a series of interventions that can be flexibly adapted to the specific circumstances they find themselves in. Whenever an agitated individual demonstrates a decrease in agitation, staff learn to shape and reinforce that decrease by moving to a less restrictive intervention.
- Physical procedures are designed to be simple, effective, safe, and have minimal abuse potential.
- Restraint must be used only when there are no other safe options and must end as quickly as possible.
- Consistent standards that reduce risk.