

The School at McGuire Memorial is Creating an Environment of Comfort vs. Control®

Recently, The School at McGuire Memorial participated in an innovative training called Ukeru®. Ukeru is a safe and comforting alternative to restraint and seclusion.

Restraint and seclusion 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 of restraint and seclusion 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, restrictive practices like restraint and seclusion can be reduced without compromising the safety of clients or employees.

Ukeru, which is Japanese for "to receive," is the first crisis intervention training program to completely eliminate the use of restraint and seclusion as accepted behavioral management tools. Its approach is rooted in the belief that the use of physical restraint 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 equipped to keep The School at McGuire Memorial staff and the individuals in our care safe.

There is data to show that this approach works. In 2004, Ukeru's organization, [Grafton](#), 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 School at McGuire Memorial team on the importance of trauma-informed care, de-escalation, conflict resolution, their philosophy of Comfort vs. Control, and so much more! In addition to the philosophical piece, we are thrilled to be trained in Ukeru Blocking and physical protection techniques. We are confident that this approach will increase both staff and individual safety and strengthen relationships, which we know are so important. We will begin implementing this approach immediately and look forward to sharing our success along the way.

For any questions about this new initiative, you can reach out to Heather Cook at hcook@mcguirememorial.org

"The last thing anyone wants to do is hurt a child. Ukeru has made me feel more comfortable with what I do because I know that I am safe and the students are safe too. That's what everyone should want for their school."

TIM FINDLEY

Autism Support Teacher, Sharpsville Area School District