

Restrictive Practices Policy

SAMPLE

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Purpose

The purpose of this Restrictive Practices Policy is to provide clear guidance on the safe, lawful and ethical use of restrictive practices within [Company Name]'s disability and aged care services. This policy aims to:

- Protect and promote the human rights, dignity, autonomy and wellbeing of people we support.
- Minimise and, wherever possible, eliminate the use of restrictive practices.
- Ensure any restrictive practice is used only as a last resort, in the least restrictive way, for the shortest possible time, and in line with relevant legislation and authorisation processes.
- Integrate work health and safety (WHS) risk management with behaviour support and clinical governance.
- Support workers to understand their legal obligations and apply safe, evidence-based practices.

This policy should be read alongside [Company Name]'s WHS Policy, Incident Management Policy, Behaviour Support Policy, Medication Management Policy, and Code of Conduct.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All workers of [Company Name], including employees, contractors, volunteers, students and agency staff.
- All services and programs delivered by [Company Name] in disability and aged care settings, including residential, community, day programs, in-home support and respite.
- All environments where [Company Name] provides services, including client homes, group homes, residential aged care facilities, community settings and transport.

This policy covers the consideration, use, monitoring and review of all forms of restrictive practice, whether planned or unplanned, and whether initiated by [Company Name] workers or requested/required by others (e.g. family, guardians, other providers, health practitioners).

Definitions

Restrictive Practice

A restrictive practice is any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person. In disability services, this includes the regulated restrictive practices under the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework. In aged care, it includes any form of restraint as defined in relevant legislation and standards.

Types of Restrictive Practices

- **Seclusion:** The sole confinement of a person in a room or area from which free exit is prevented.
- **Chemical Restraint:** The use of medication or chemical substance for the primary purpose of influencing a person's behaviour or movement, not for treating a diagnosed mental or physical condition.
- **Mechanical Restraint:** The use of a device to prevent, restrict or subdue a person's movement for the primary purpose of influencing behaviour.
- **Physical Restraint:** The sustained or prolonged use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a person's body or part of their body.
- **Environmental Restraint:** Restricting a person's free access to all parts of their environment, including items, activities or services.

Other Key Terms

- **Behaviour Support Plan (BSP):** A documented plan that sets out evidence-based, person-centred strategies to address behaviours of concern, with a focus on proactive and positive behaviour support and, where necessary, the use of restrictive practices.
- **Behaviour of Concern:** Behaviours that may cause physical or emotional harm to the person or others, or that significantly impact quality of life or access to services.
- **Last Resort:** A restrictive practice is only used when all less restrictive, alternative strategies have been tried, considered and documented as ineffective or inappropriate in the circumstances.
- **Least Restrictive Alternative:** The option that least limits a person's rights and freedoms while still managing the identified risk.
- **Authorised Restrictive Practice:** A restrictive practice that has been approved through the relevant statutory or regulatory authorisation process (e.g. state/territory restrictive practice panel, behaviour support plan approval, clinical authorisation).

Legislative and Standards Framework

[Company Name] will comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory laws, regulations and standards relating to restrictive practices, including but not limited to:

- Work health and safety legislation and regulations in the relevant jurisdiction.
- Disability services and guardianship legislation in the relevant jurisdiction.
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework and associated rules (where applicable).
- Aged care legislation, rules and quality standards (where applicable).
- Human rights, anti-discrimination, privacy and consent laws.

[Company Name] will:

- Monitor changes to relevant legislation and regulatory guidance.
- Update this policy, procedures and training as required.
- Ensure restrictive practices are considered within broader WHS and clinical governance systems.

Principles

[Company Name] applies the following principles to all decisions and actions relating to restrictive practices:

1. Human Rights and Dignity

- Every person has the right to liberty, autonomy, bodily integrity, privacy and freedom from degrading or inhumane treatment.
- Restrictive practices must never be used as punishment, for staff convenience, or as a substitute for appropriate staffing, environmental design or person-centred support.

2. Least Restrictive and Best Support

- Proactive positive behaviour support strategies must always be prioritised.
- Restrictive practices are used only when there is an immediate and serious risk of harm that cannot be safely managed in a less restrictive way.

3. Safety and WHS Risk Management

- The safety of the person and others (including workers and other clients) is a key consideration.
- WHS risk assessments will identify hazards associated with behaviours of concern and restrictive practices, and implement appropriate controls.

4. Evidence-Based and Person-Centred Practice

- Decisions are based on clinical, behavioural and WHS evidence, not assumptions.
- The person's preferences, communication style, cultural background and support needs are central to planning.

5. Informed Consent and Participation

- The person (and/or their guardian or substitute decision-maker) is involved in decision-making to the greatest extent possible.
- Information is provided in accessible formats.

6. Transparency, Accountability and Review