

DEBRIEFING TIP SHEET

This tip sheet can serve as a guide for providers for debriefing incidents. The outcome of a good post incident debriefing is lack of future incidents.

Post-restraint review:

- Opportunity for growth occurs with there is effective review of the incident with staff and youth. (see tips in the table below)
- Youth should be given time and space to recover from the incident.
- The staff member involved in the restraint should be the one to process the incident with the youth, to repair and restore the relationship.
- Both staff and youth should be emotionally and physically ready to participate in the debriefing.
- The debriefing should following the incident or as soon as possible. The youth may refuse or not be ready to process with the staff member, where ideally the staff member would give more time and space with the expectation that the debriefing must be completed prior to the youth returning to normal programming. Reporting that the “youth refused to process” is not acceptable as reason for not conducting a debriefing session. Take a little time for both staff and the youth to calm down and try again.
- Debriefing should include both the youth and staff’s perception of the incident; identification of feelings (youth and staff); and strategies to prevent future incidents. Staff should not worry about “losing face” or control; this is an honest give and take with the intent to curtail any future events. Documenting and detailing debriefing can be more or less detailed depending on the procedures or protocols a program may implement. Tools such as the Life Space Interview are useful for post-restraint debriefing.
- Successful debriefing should conclude with the youth returning to regular programming (based on program policy/procedure).
- A good debriefing would include lessons learned, identifying triggers including antecedent behaviors that warned that youth was upset or may have led to the incident. What were the antecedent behaviors that led to the incident, did anyone notice these behaviors? If not, why? What alternatives interventions were attempted? Could the restraint have been released earlier? (for both staff and youth)
- Using the information obtained from the debriefing, staff should tie lessons learned to both the treatment plan strategy and a safety plan to minimize these events in the future.

These consideration guidelines provide discussion points for incident review and future intervention planning.

Communication	Was the individual offered an opportunity to communicate using signs, symbols, or speech and what was the response? Does staff know how the person communicates?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Tangible	Did the person want something? What efforts were made by the staff to fulfill the person's request?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Choice	Were choices offered or alternatives given? Was a change of activity offered?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Environment	Was a change of location or setting offered? Was thought given to a smaller space or to level of distraction? Were the person's sensory concerns known and were they supported?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Health / Physical Needs	Was consideration given to illness, hunger, thirst, pain, heat, cold, fatigue, activity level?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Relationships / Interaction	Was a change of staff member needed? Was the need for attention considered? How often does the staff provide systematic attention?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Therapeutic Alternatives	Were strategies such as music, massage, aromatherapy or perceptual stimulation considered and attempted?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?

Relaxation	Was relaxation, deep breathing, slow breaths, counting to 10 offered or modeled? Were other relaxation skills discussed?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Calming	Were verbal and/or non-verbal techniques such as reflection, empathy, reassurance, redirection or incentives and rewards considered and attempted?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Observation Techniques	Was careful listening, looking for cues or signs and attempts to slow down and not hurry considered and attempted?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Values/Sensitivity	Were attempts made to restore the person's confidence and dignity following the Crisis? Were non-confrontational attempts made to correct the situation and gain closure?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Learning / Life Space Interviews	Were coping or replacement strategies attempted? Were rehearsals attempted?	How was this done? Who did this? What was the person's response?
Staff Training	Were required skills presented by staff (if not why)? Were training needs identified?	How was this known? When will these be presented?

For assistance related to debriefing please contact your OCYF or OMHSAS Regional Office or the Bureau of Program Integrity:

Office of Children Youth and Families

Western Region: 412-565-2339

Central Region: 717-772-7702

Northeast Region: 560-963-4376

Southeast Region: 215-560-2249

Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services:

Western Region: 412-565-5226

Central Region: 717-705-8395

Northeast Region: 570-963-4335

Southeast Region: 610-313-5844

DPW, Bureau of Program Integrity: 717-772-4615