

Jean Lloyd emailed 14/7/14 jeanlloyd@carefocus.co.uk to George Matthews: Director Team Teach.

Hi George,

I am attaching a letter written by a former worker with us. He came to us as a former Child in Care and he remembered his experience as a positive one. He had been in a mainstream Home, the likes of which have all but vanished now, so he was a bit sceptical about using Physical Interventions. However, once he was trained and he saw the level of need of our young people, he had a change of heart...I asked him if he would offer some words in favour of RPI and thought that as a former Child in Care it may carry some weight. This chap, Jarone, has done some public speaking on being in Care as a child and has offered his services to speak on our behalf should they be needed. He is happy for this letter to go to you and be circulated in whatever forums may be of use. I have his contact details if they will be of use to you.

Jarone's e-mail address is, jaronemacklinpage@yahoo.co.uk

Best wishes,

To whom it may concern

04/06 /14

I was recently asked to write a letter in regards to the use of certain restraint holds. This was in regards to the potential changes that may be considered from the standpoint of the protection of children.

When I was first told about restraint holds I could not have been more horrified. Having been a former child of the Care sector I had very strong feelings about this particular subject matter. In fact I have spoken on several occasions advocating not using restraint holds on children. However this viewpoint was born from a place of the heart, a place of misguided protection. Recently I worked in a children's home where restraints are not only used, but are considered to be a part of the necessary toolbox at times.

When I first found out how often you might be expected to use holds I was worried to say the least. However, it was not until I found myself in a situation where I was being assaulted, that I could finally see the need in this kind of environment for holds and in particular, the use of Front Ground Recovery.

When I was assaulted, a fellow staff member had to de-escalate the situation with a 16 year old female wielding a weapon. Initially we tried several other holds in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. This only resulted in a struggle, keeping both staff and the young person at risk of harm. It was not until the young person was placed in front ground recovery that the situation began to de-escalate. When the girl had nowhere left to go physically she just sobbed and looked for comfort from a

mothering figure to help calm her. Whilst laying on the floor, the bond between the chosen staff member and the young person could be clearly seen. Creating an invaluable opportunity for staff to learn about those that guard their secrets so keenly out of fear that another trusted person in their life would hurt them.

The children that are being looked after have been treated and betrayed in many ways, which most people could never even imagine. The job that is being done by those that stand by these extremely, emotionally traumatised children is nothing less than superhuman. The only way that these staff can continue to keep doing the amazing job that they do is to stop the Powers that be of robbing them of their tool box.

I'm not saying that restraint and in particular, Front Ground Recovery, will work for every child, because it won't. In some cases it might make the situation worse. However, do we really want to deny those that would get benefit from the use of this technique purely because we do not trust staff to look for the most productive way of managing our children? On several occasions I have spoken to current service users in regards to the use of Front Ground Recovery and the majority of them thought of it as a positive experience. I have even heard the words used that they 'felt they needed it'.

One of the greatest problems that the Care sector faces is its lack of diversity and dynamics. So why are we looking to further streamline a service that deals with such interchangeable characters.

To whoever is reading this I would ask you to ask yourself in this situation what would you do?

If this was your own child would you try and find a way of calming and comforting your child or would you lock yourself away in a room. And if things got too bad simply call the police to deal with it. Because ultimately that is where decisions like this will lead. I personally believe that all children deserve the opportunity to turn their life around with the help and guidance of responsible adults.

So before any long term decisions are made on whether to ban restraints or not, why not go and work in a couple of these homes and see for yourself first hand whether this is an appropriate tool or not. Minds should be made up based on experience not data analysis.

Yours truly,

Jarone Macklin-Page

Former Child in Care and speaker on behalf of the sector