Restraint and Seclusion: a survey of the Current Situation in our nation's institutions

Hello!

I am Patricia Godsey

C/S/X activist of 10 years

Social Work student

NCMHR Intern

NCMHR Policy priority alignment

Protect and Promote the Human Rights of Americans Diagnosed with Mental Health Related Conditions

-Ending involuntary treatment and coercive treatments

Questions to Ponder:

What moved you most about these results?

What would you like to see us highlight stronger in future presentations?

What recommendations would you make to our legislators based on what we learned here?

What feedback do you have about the specific recommendations we have proposed?

How can we get the word out?

Seclusion and Restraint Survey Design

Developed a steering committee made up of people with lived experience of having been secluded or restrained and people who have worked in places where seclusion and restraint are used.

Spoke with each steering committee member individually about the project and their experiences.

Drafted survey questions based on collective experiences. Steering committee approved surveys. Translated the questions into Spanish for increased accessibility.

Distributed surveys to c/s/x community and people/groups known to be working in settings discussed in survey.

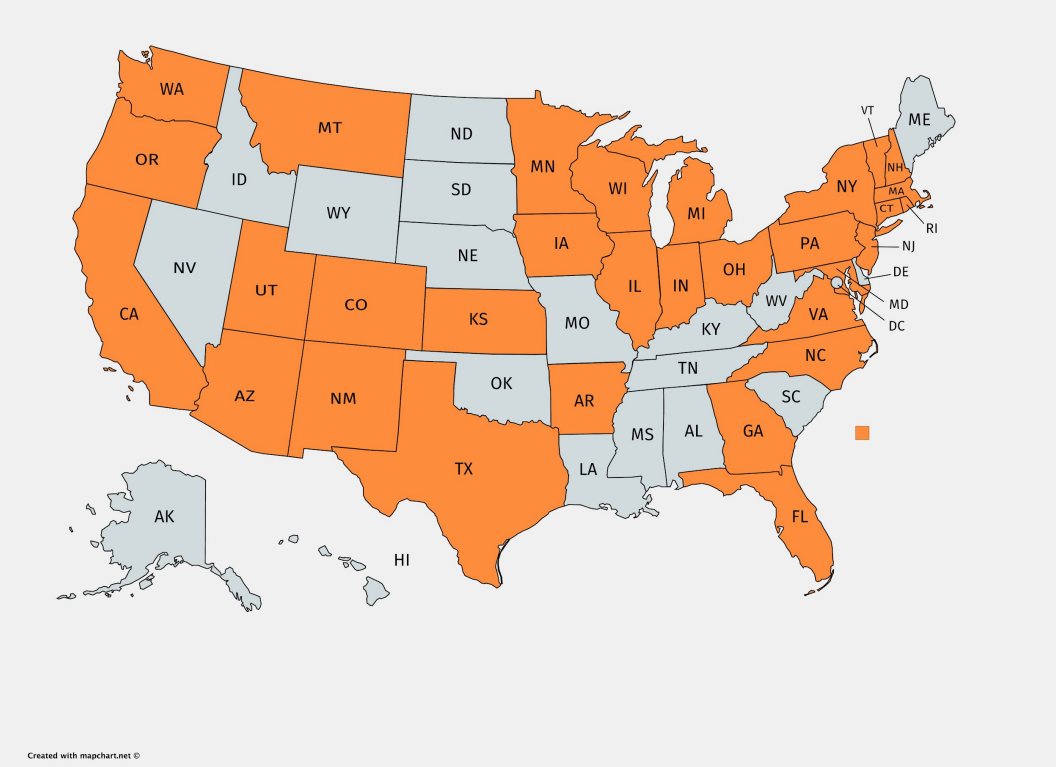
Analyzed data and looked for themes, giving each open-ended response up to five tags based on content.

Created a draft of recommendations based on the data to share with this group for feedback.

Steering Committee

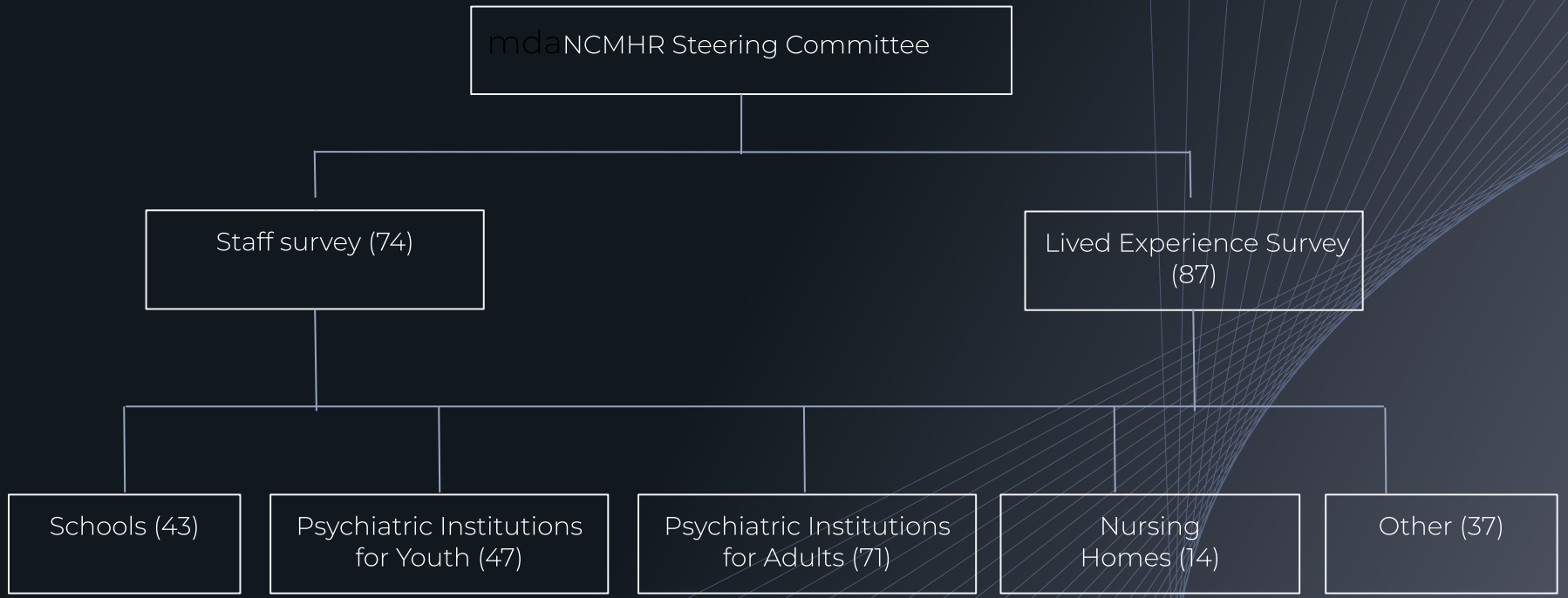
Alexis Garcia
Vic Savicki
Cindy Daniels
Kela Lynn
David Oaks
Dan Fisher
Donita Diamata
Kathy Savicki

Surveys Received: 161



* In addition to experiences in the United States, two respondents described experiences abroad.

Survey Structure



Staff Survey
74 participants

Schools	Youth Psych	Adult Psych	Nursing Homes	*Other
20	26	28	4	16

*Other settings may include: jails, prisons, emergency rooms, homes/community settings, hospitals, gymnasiums, migration facilities, and residential treatment settings

In the setting you worked, were all staff informed of or trained in laws and policies regarding seclusion and restraint?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	55%	81%	63%	100%*	40%
No	36%	9.5%	9.5%		33%
Unsure	9%	9.5%	26%		27%

In the setting you worked, were all staff trained in de-escalation practices?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	73%	81%	68%	50%*	47%
No	27%	9.5%	16%		33%
Unsure	0%	9.5%	16%	50%*	20%

Have you ever witnessed instances of seclusion or restraint that you perceived as preventable?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	91%	76%	68%	50%*	87%
No	9%	24%	32%	50%*	0%
Unsure	0%	0%	0%	0%*	13%

"I saw instances in which staff chose a hands-on restraint intervention due to their own escalation, rather than using de-escalation techniques in which they had been trained."

Have you ever witnessed instances of staff circumventing (going around) policies or laws when initiating seclusion or restraint?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	9%	52%	47%	25%*	40%
No	82%	43%	33%	50%*	33%
Unsure	9%	5%	21%	25%*	27%

"I have seen some staff 'catch and release' with the idea that if they let go before a certain amount of time they do not have to document the incident as a restraint."

Have you ever witnessed instances of staff circumventing (going around) policies or laws to prolong instances of seclusion or restraint?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	18%	28.5%	42%	25%*	20%
No	73%	62%	47%	50%*	47%
Unsure	9%	9.5%	11%	25%*	33%

Examples of Staff circumventing rules to Initiate or prolong seclusion and restraint

Intentional escalation to create less work for staff

Overstating the danger of the situation

Utilizing chemical restraints to sedate people including using them off-label

Keeping people longer because of the assumption that they would re-escalate if released when required by policy or law

Giving a medical reason for restraint because medical restraint have fewer regulations

Restraining or secluding as a punitive measure, for actions such as talking too loudly or refusing medication

Have you seen seclusion or restraint used as a punitive measure?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	55%	33%	63%	25%*	60%
No	36%	57%	37%	25%*	13%
Unsure	9%	9.5%	0%	50%*	27%

"For talking loudly, yelling, urination outside of the restroom in public area, for posturing at staff, refusing medication."

" I never witnessed actual restraints as a punitive measure, but occasionally staff threatened to restrain someone in a punitive way. This happened more frequently on the child and adolescent units."

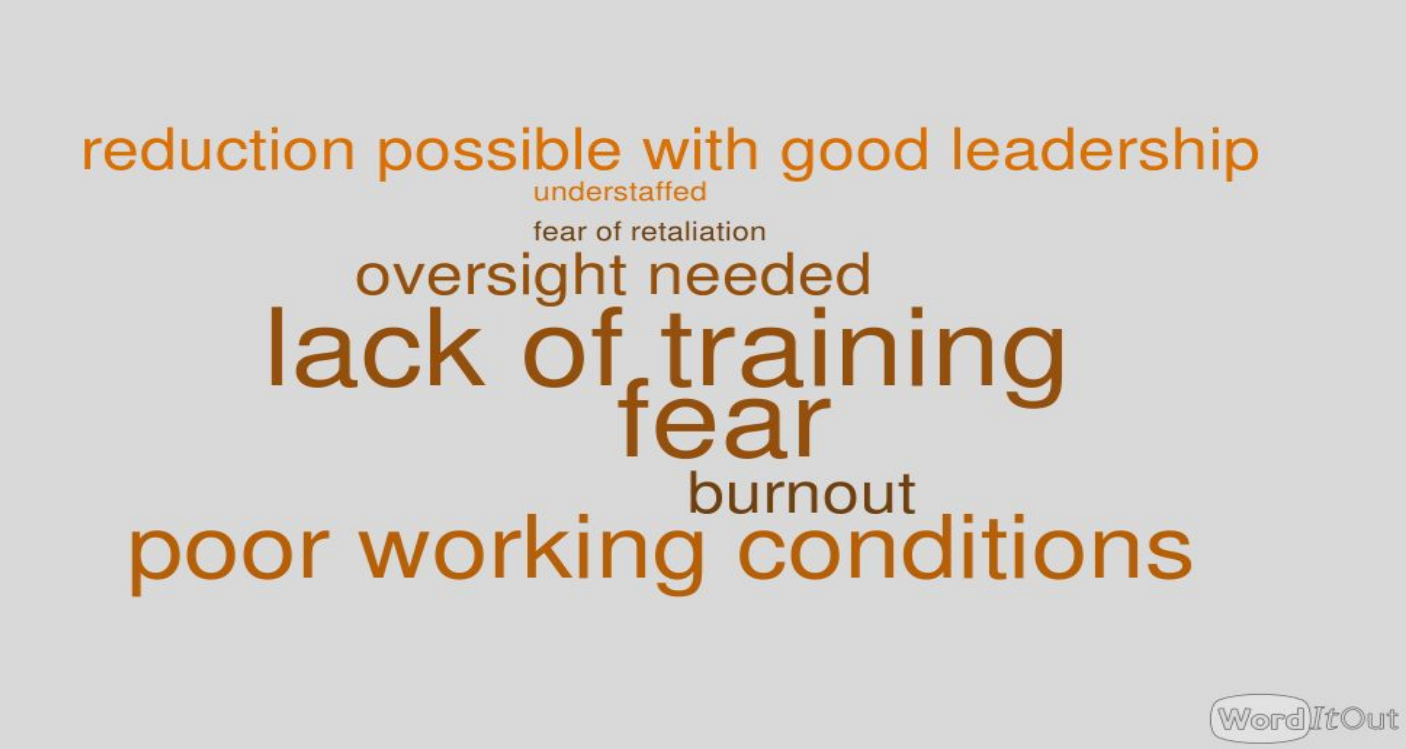
Have you been negatively impacted by the seclusion and restraint practices in the setting where you worked?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	55%	67%	79%	50%*	60%
No	45%	33%	21%	50%*	40%

Staff Survey Themes

Inappropriate Staff Behavior (113)

Poor Working Conditions (87)



Trauma (64)

traumatic for staff
retraumatizing
trauma
vicarious trauma
not trauma-informed

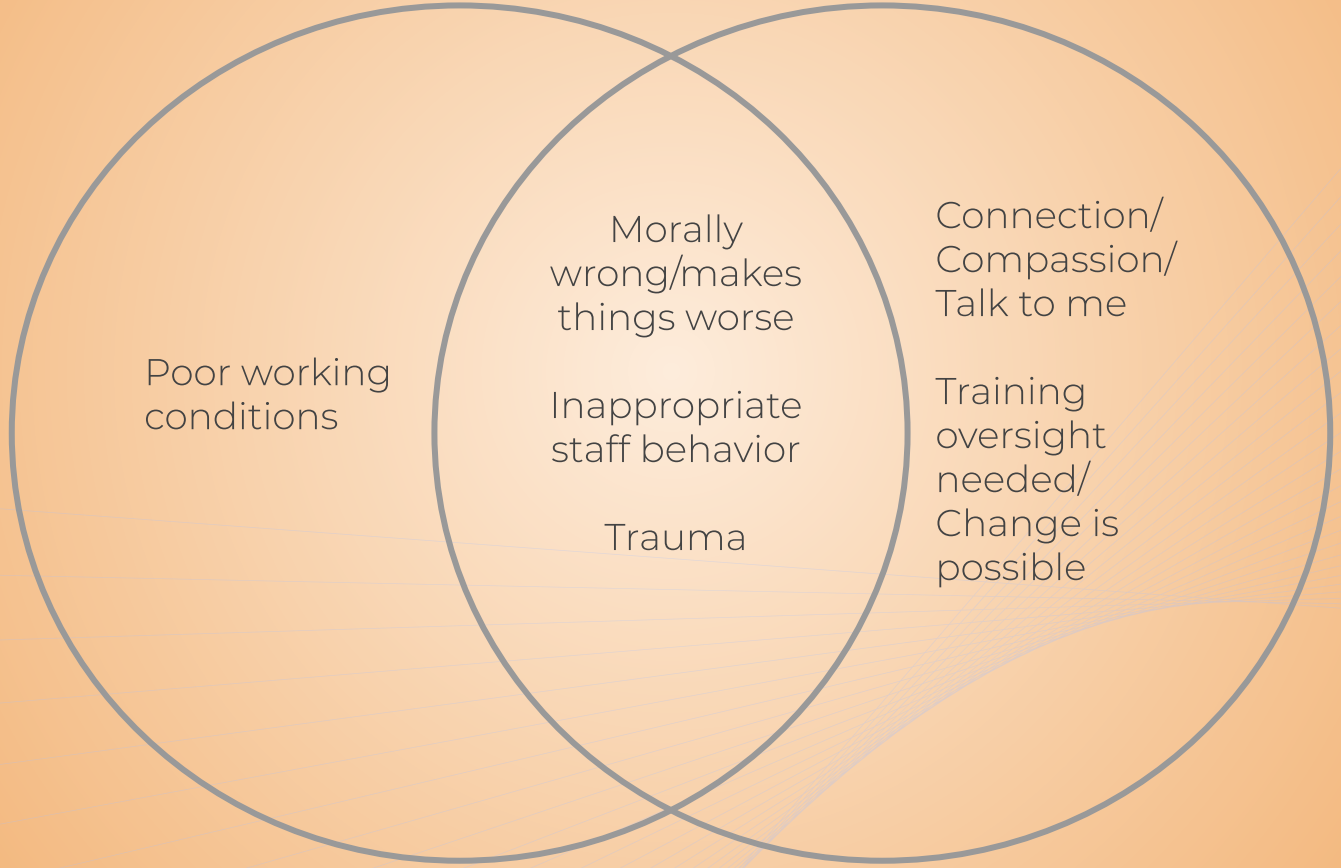
Morally Wrong (38)

Artist: Rachel Kitterman

Impact

"It was pure and simple abuse and torture that will intensify earlier instances of trauma they have suffered and cause them to be more fearful and distressed in the future, possibly for their whole lives."

Themes


Poor working conditions
Morally wrong/makes things worse
Inappropriate staff behavior
Trauma
Connection/ Compassion/ Talk to me
Training oversight needed/ Change is possible

Lived Experience Survey

87 participants

Schools	Youth Psych	Adult Psych	Nursing Homes	*Other
23	21	49	9	21

*Other settings may include: jails, prisons, emergency rooms, homes/community settings, hospitals, gymnasiums, migration facilities, and residential treatment settings

Had you not been restrained or secluded, would you have hurt yourself or someone else?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	18%	25%	12%	12.5%	0%
No	82%	56%	72%	50%	89%
Unsure	0%	19%	16%	37.5%	11%

Do you feel that the incident(s) could have been prevented?

	Schools	Youth Psy	Adult Psy	Nursing Home	Other
Yes	82%	70%	91%	62.5%	79%
No	9%	12%	0%	12.5%	10.5%
Unsure	9%	18%	9%	25%	10.5%

"The person can be talked to, in many cases my behavior was out of fear of what was happening."

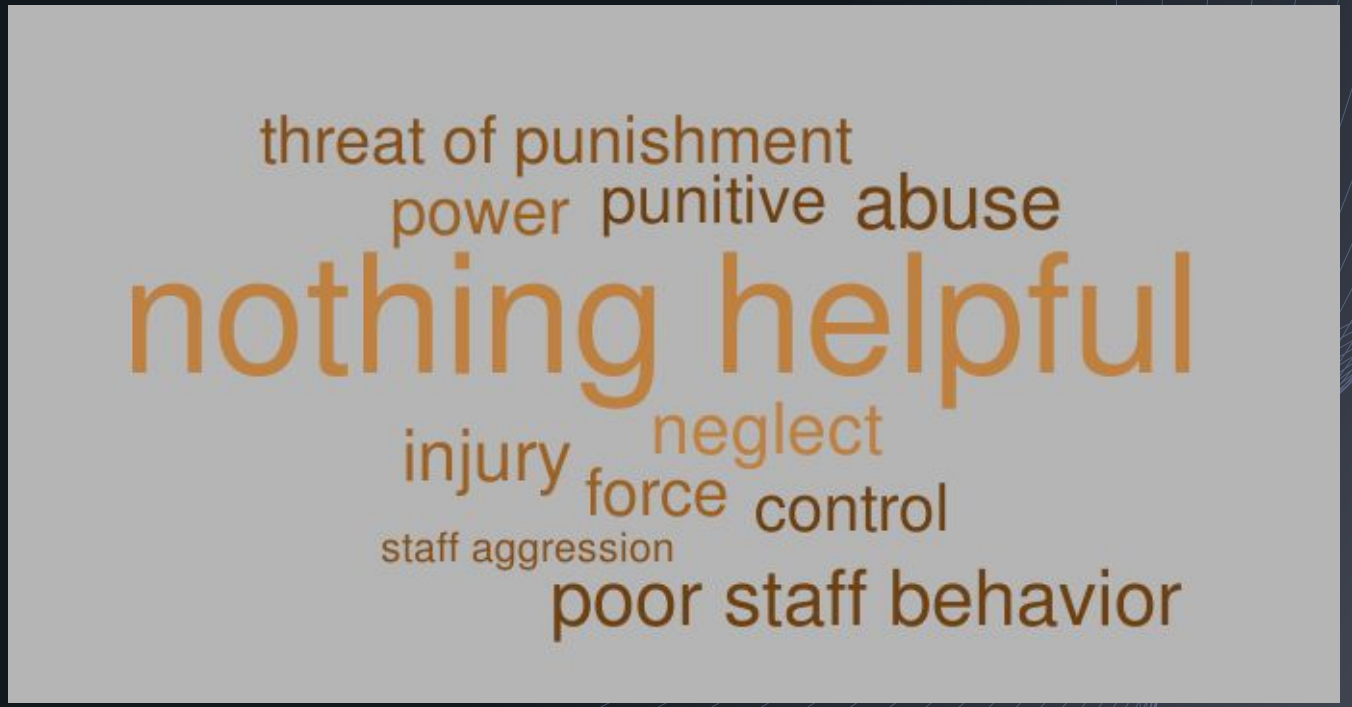
Staff: Have you ever witnessed instances of seclusion and restraint that you perceived as preventable?
Lived Experience: Do you feel that the incident(s) could have been prevented?

	Staff (Adult Psy)	Lived Experience (Adult Psy)
Yes	68%	91%
No	32%	0%
Unsure	0%	9%

"It makes people less likely to trust other people and makes recovery and healing harder to come to."

Lived Experience Survey Themes

Inappropriate Staff Behavior (167)



What was helpful?

32 of 87 (37%) respondents typed out a version of "nothing" or "not a thing" in response to a question about what staff did that was helpful.

- Tending to injuries
- Access to medical treatment
- Not acting afraid
- Allowing space
- Legal assistance
- Being understanding
- Providing snacks, books, and entertainment

Morally wrong or makes things worse (145)

Experience described as leading to mistrust and fear

“I am afraid to talk to mental health professionals for fear I will be locked up”

“I have had times when I needed intense therapy or more medication…I stay home rather than allowing myself to be institutionalized and risk being held and abused.”

Morally wrong / Makes things worse

Staff: 38

Lived Experience: 145

“These practices would in most cases be a crime if committed by anyone outside of an institution…”

Connection/

Compassion/

Talk to me (74)

Artist: Rachel Kitterman

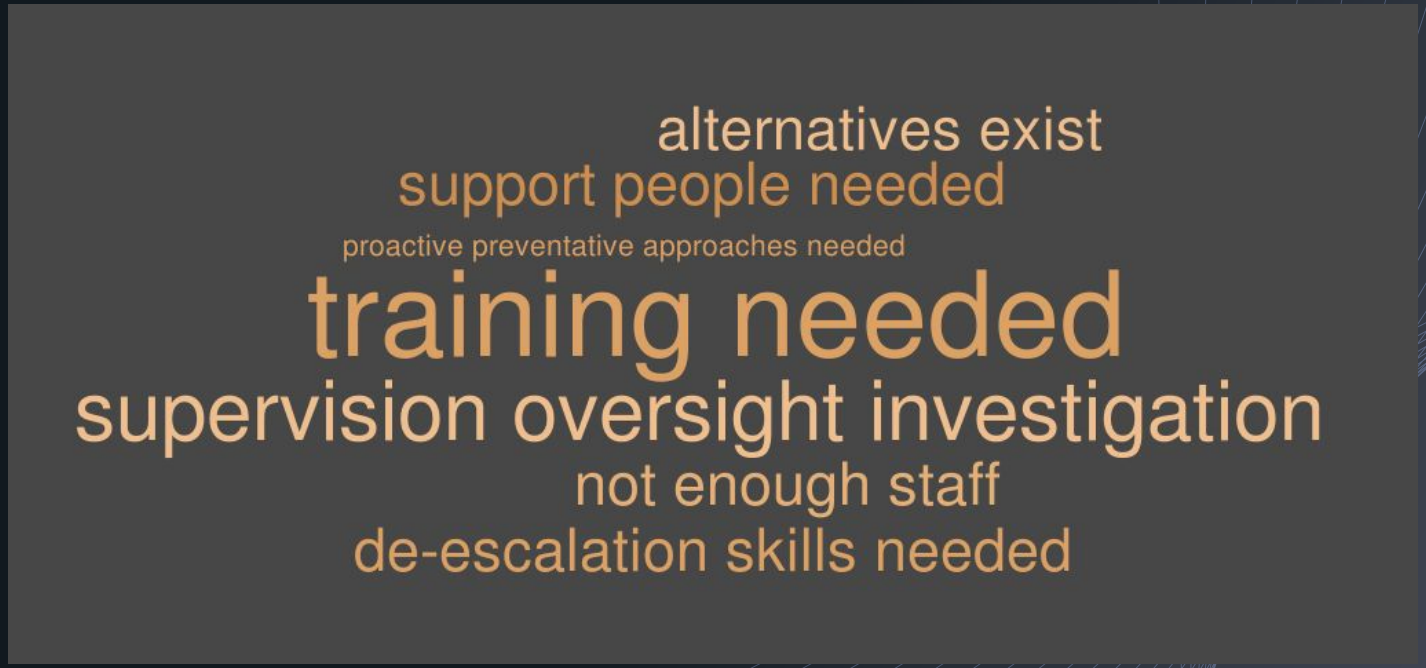
“The person can be talked to, in many cases my behavior was out of fear of what was happening.”

Trauma (64)

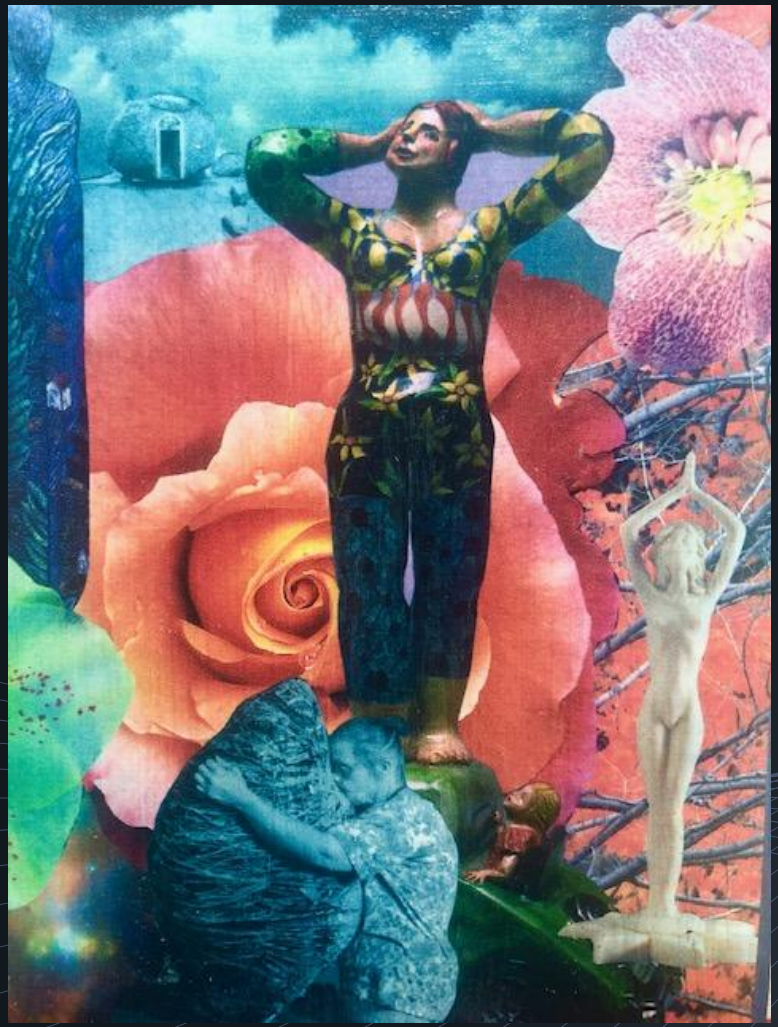
“There was no one speaking…I was physically thrown against the wall, thrown to the floor. Four men sat on top of me…the brazen lack of care for my physical wellbeing…shows how little my life meant to those in charge of my life”

Artist: Rachel Kitterman

Training and oversight needed (61)



Change is possible



“They treated me as if I was a small child and talked to me as if I wasn’t able to make meaningful decisions for myself. They gave me no other choices that might have helped me deal in a more thoughtful way.”

“In the children’s world, the ‘adult’ staff are always believed. The child often doesn’t have a voice and that voice is discredited.”

Artist depicted in this piece:
Judith Scott

Artist: Rachel Kitterman

Necessary/Helpful on occasion (Staff-26)

Necessary/Helpful? (Lived Experience-12)

Necessary only if violent / on rare occasion (4)

No impact (3)

Take responsibility (1)

They were following rules (1)

Woke me up (2)

Kept me safe (1)

Questions to Ponder:

What moved you most about these results?

What would you like to see us highlight stronger in future presentations?

Questions to Ponder:

What recommendations would you make to our legislators based on what we learned here?

Recommendations

- Create state and federal restraint and seclusion oversight committees
- Track all incidences of restraint and seclusion and make this information available to the public
- Create statewide plans to reduce restraint and seclusion
- Require universal training in trauma informed care
- Improve working conditions for employees including
  - Adequate staffing,
  - Increased supervision
  - High quality trainings in compassionate communication and de-escalation

Feedback/additional recommendations

Questions to Ponder:

How can we get the word out?

Contact information

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