

The Bear Hug

House of New Hope Foster Care Orientation

Use of Physical Restraint

- The use of physical restraint on a foster child is strongly discouraged as it may be re-traumatizing and significantly violates a child's personal boundaries.
- The “bear hug” is the only physical restraint authorized for use by House of New Hope.
- The choice whether or not to restrain is dependent upon the concept of least amount of ensuing harm.

- Physical restraint should be the last resort and the least restrictive measure necessary' to keep injury from occurring and should last only as long as the threat of physical harm is clearly apparent.
- This does not include restraining until the youth calms down.
- The youth may still be out of emotional control and yelling, moving around the area, running, or causing minor property damage, but is no longer a clear threat of physical harm to himself or others and, therefore, making physical restraint not necessary.

Justifiable Use

- The ONLY reasons to use a physical restraint is...
 - To keep the child from harming themselves
 - To keep the child from harming others
- Protection of property is not a valid reason to use physical restraint.

Certification

- The use of physical restraint *MUST* be pre-approved by the treatment team and included in the child's ISP (individual Service Plan)
- Only persons certified for the Bear Hug may use this restraint.
- Persons must be recertified on an annual basis.

The “Bear Hug”



The Technique

- The Bear Hug may be completed from a kneeling or standing position.
- The Bear Hug involves wrapping your arms around the child's arms and chest while holding your own wrist.
- Do not squeezing hard as this may restrict breathing.
- Beware of injury to your face and head as the child flails with their head and attempts to get you to release them. Attempt to bury your head next to the child's in order to minimize injury.
- During the restraint, it is acceptable to reassure the child that they are OK in a soothing voice. It is not the time to educate, discuss or consequent the child.

Critical Incident Reporting

- House of New Hope must be notified immediately upon the cessation of the Bear Hug.
- A Critical Incident Report must be completed including sections on the use of restraint and submitted to House of New Hope within 24-hours.
- A de-escalation form must be completed and submitted to House of New Hope within 24-hours
- House of New Hope must notify the custodial agency by way of their reporting system.