



## PEACEFUL RESOLUTION SPECIALIST AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

R&M Welty, Inc. is a company with a firm belief in planning our work and working our plan. We expect that we will have conflicts as all homes do. However we are confident that when these incidents occur we will be able to peacefully intervene before tempers flare to the point where physical confrontations are inevitable. We are constantly aware and watching our persons served for the smallest clues that they might be edgy or building up stress or hostility. We attempt to intervene as early as possible taking opportunities to talk about what might be bothering each person served. We notify the most senior staff when we see evidence of underlying problems arising and offer to walk and talk or offer redirection as indicated/needed. If there is a conflict between two persons served, we rearrange our day to keep them separate until we can speak to them separately and find enough common ground where we can meet together and arbitrate a healthy compromise. The following are some techniques company owner, Myron Welty, has observed and utilized effectively for many years at AMRTC with some of the States most difficult persons.

1. Follow the out of office policy: Employees are to remain in the common areas interacting with the persons. This way, staff become aware of potential conflicts and can steer conversations in a healthy way and separate persons who are not getting along. Just illustrating a generous staff to persons served ratio is often enough to prevent many incidents from occurring.
2. Know where all team members are at all times: All employees on duty at any given time should know where all other staff are. Any staff member who will be leaving the immediate proximity of the other employees needs to inform the other staff member(s) of where they are going and what they are doing. This is to establish an approximate timeline. If an employee is overdue to return, the other employees will do an immediate wellness check or call that employee's cell phone from the posted emergency numbers in the office. If an employee sees a situation gathering steam and it looks as though an altercation might be inevitable, the senior staff on duty should either call or assign another staff member the task of utilizing the on-call list and asking for additional staff to come to the house for added security.
3. Portray a confident demeanor: As employees of R&M Welty, Inc. *staff need to be in complete control of the environment.* Employees will not be *intimidating or aggressive* in their demeanor but will be calm and strong. Persons served, especially when they are new to our program, might feel the need to bestow employees with stories of physical prowess to impress them with how dangerous they are. Employees' response will be to congratulate them for being more mature now and no longer having the need to resort to physical violence. Employees should remind the persons that we as workers are "not fighters" and that we are proud of them for making a solemn promise when they came to us to not hurt us or other persons served. We let them know that we are here to protect them and that we would never allow anyone to hurt them, or sometimes make the point by saying "*we would never allow anyone to hurt one of our employees or persons served*". Typically the bravado that spills out at times like this is simply fear of the staff and other persons served. By letting them know we are not fighters but instead "protectors" will often be enough to deter further fighting stories.
4. Follow locked door/emergency protocol procedures: By simply following our locked door policy we maintain a safe environment. *Employees need to remember to close and lock all doors behind them.* Shield the door code buttons from persons served direct view and *clear an area of dangerous contraband or hazards at the first sign that a crisis is brewing.* If noncombatant persons are in an area of conflict, staff are to calmly ask them to vacate the area and later thank them for their



cooperation. We need to address the issue of leaving a crisis area when asked during calm times and inform the persons that failing to leave an area when asked will be considered a safety infraction at near the same level as those persons who are fighting and being aggressive. They need to know that failing to leave a crisis area when asked will automatically result in them being considered “unsafe” the rest of the next day or longer. During crisis periods it is okay to remove the person's phone from the wall and all table benches should be locked outside or in the office.

5. Have an expectation of success: *The human brain during a crisis makes hundreds of nonverbal threats assessments every second.* If we as staff are expecting a fight we may very well find one based on our expectations alone. *Likewise if we expect a peaceful resolution we can sway a crisis situation in that direction as well.* We allow the persons served as much personal space as we can safely do, and we maintain nonfighting postures. We give the person every opportunity to end the conflict. That’s not to say that we are not prepared to protect ourselves or intervene as a group should the situation escalate, but we never power struggle or feel the need to win an argument. We often win by losing; meaning we accept, even if only temporarily, what the person is saying - even if we know it is flawed reasoning. We would much rather appear to be relinquishing the point to the person than to see a fight incur to prove we are right. There will be plenty of time later to discuss the issue. *We feel so strongly about our employees' expectations of peaceful resolution that we keep track of which staff members seem to “always be on” when an altercation occurs, and which staff members seem to “never be on” when similar situations happen.*
6. Maintain a secure environment: Employees all need to do a “walk through” at the beginning and end of each shift to check for any unsafe items. Employees are to be constantly studying their persons contours for evidence they may be harboring a weapon. Employees are to clear areas of dangerous items at the first sign of conflict. Employees must wear clothing that allows full mobility and keep their hair neat and tied to prevent it from being a safety hazard to themselves. Employees must do scheduled inventories and searches as indicated and check the vehicle(s) for contraband before each use.
7. Participate in tag team dynamics: If an employee finds themselves in a conversation that is becoming heated they should take a moment *to think about whether the issue at hand is imperative and if it is worth the conflict. Typically it is not,* and the employee needs to politely excuse themselves from the person’s presence. The employee should then find another staff member and explain the situation and the person’s escalatory behavior. Then a short time later but not sooner than 5 minutes the second staff member without the original staff member being in close proximity, approaches the person and attempts to renegotiate the issue. Oftentimes the person may be reacting negatively to a certain staff member or was interrupted and upset and takes it out on a specific person. If allowed to think about it before it becomes a major issue that they cannot back down from, the person will oftentimes realize it is in their best interest to comply with the original request or react favorably to the second employee. Likewise if an employee observes a staff member start to get sucked into an argument with a person, it is ok to tap the staff member on the shoulder and say “tag off” - if this occurs the first staff member, even if in disagreement, needs to immediately walk away. This is done to protect both the staff member and the person. Oftentimes newer staff might not realize what they are doing, and it will take a more seasoned staff to remove them from the situation and then return later to discuss the situation and how it might have been better handled. **YOU DO NOT WANT MYRON TO FIND OUT YOU FAILED TO REMOVE YOURSELF FROM A SITUATION WHEN TAPPED.** *Avoiding power struggles with the persons is a significant skill that all employees need to master if they are to remain an employee here.* Staff members thought to be antagonizing or *treating the persons in a disrespectful or*



*argumentative manners will not be tolerated.*

8. Conduct emergency intervention when necessary: When an obvious threat to one of our person's or staff's safety is imminent, and the present staff feel they can intervene with relative safety, a coordinated action is initiated by the senior staff on duty or another staff member in a better place to orchestrate the emergency procedure. A person will presumably be in an out of control aggressive episode. The staff members will form as near a circle as possible and then on cue and, with good eye contact with team member(s), the charge person will make a move that could be considered erratic or possibly aggressive to draw the persons attention from the other member(s) who are about to intervene and secure the persons arms. Often the first staff member who makes the distracting gesture can say "Marco" as he makes his move which will signal the other "Polo" staff that it is time for them to simultaneously intervene. It is of the utmost importance that staff members intervene as a group and each staff member secures a single limb. Once a person has been immobilized the staff should quietly hold them for a time period of no more than 15 minutes.
9. Take aftermath steps: Following the release of a person from an emergency manual restraint the staff are to be very aware that it is not uncommon for persons to contract to safety for the purpose of being released by the staff and once free might begin to reinitiate the aggression. The staff are to remain calm and quiet after the incident in an attempt to restore the environment to a therapeutic milieu. If the person appears to be honoring their contract to remain calm the staff should take the opportunity to see if they are "feeling better" which is a nice way of saving face for the person as if their feeling poorly led to the altercation. *We assess the person for injuries and see that they get the medical attention they need.* At a point in time and no more than 24 hours after the incident the staff involved in the incident and any administrative employees available need to meet with the person and discuss the chain of events that in the person's opinion led to the altercation. *The staff will then explore with the person at each step what they might have done to curb the aggression that followed.* We are not punitive in our attitude or demeanor but are very serious about it not happening again. We remind the person that we are their support system and we care for them. We reiterate that they made a promise against violence when they came to us and that we expect them to honor that. We offer our handshake as a means of cementing their pledge to no further aggression. We share the observations and information gathered in the incident review with our coworkers in both our verbal shift reports and in the communication book and persons progress notes.
10. Know when it is unsafe to intervene: If at any time and for any reason a staff member feels an employee, person served, or citizen is in danger and feels the employees on duty are not in a safe place or in safe numbers to intervene, they must call 911 and summon help. We pride ourselves at being able to avoid or handle incidents, but there may be times when our best action is no action, and we call the professionals who have better resources to handle these types of emergencies.

\*Be as specific as possible when calling 911 including asking for an ambulance if needed and describing our type of facility and what the person in question is wearing and doing. If safe to do so, a staff member should arrange to meet the deputies before they walk into an unknown situation.



## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Employees of R&M Welty, Inc. will follow a NO HANDS ON POLICY with regards to person served care. Employees will have physical contact only as necessary to assist persons in day to day activities such as navigating stairs or as needed to complete activities of daily living and other self-cares. Employees will attempt to de-escalate situations in a manner that does not require physical intervention. The company realizes that the efficacy of its program will be judged by how successfully staff are able to maintain a safe environment without physical contact or restraint of the persons served.

### *EMERGENCY USE OF HANDS ON RESTRAINT*

R&M Welty, Inc. staff will be responsible for maintaining a safe physical environment for staff to work and for persons to live. If a person is observed to be illustrating behavior that will likely cause harm to themselves or others or are causing significant property destruction that could lead to serious harm to themselves or others, R&M Welty, Inc. staff will intervene as necessary to maintain a safe environment and protect themselves and others. R&M Welty, Inc. staff will receive training in legal physical therapeutic intervention techniques and will attempt to restore safety by utilizing these measures.

Once a person has been immobilized by therapeutic hands-on techniques, employees will maintain a safe firm hold on the person for a period no longer than 15 minutes. During this period of time if the staff feel the person has sufficiently resumed control of themselves the staff will offer the person an opportunity to verbally contract to discontinue the aggressive behavior. If the staff feels comfortable and safe with the persons contracting to safe behavior they may release the person and resume the daily schedule. If after being released a person resumes physical aggression the staff may re-apply the physical hands on restraint for another period of less than 15 minutes. If after 15 minutes the person is still unable to resume control the staff will call 911 and continue to physically restrain the person until Sheriff Deputies arrive and take control of the person. The same goes for if the person is manually restrained for 15 minutes 3 consecutive times without safety being restored - 911 must be called and person surrendered to Sheriffs' Deputies.

Staff will attempt to curb these types of situations before they escalate by avoiding power struggles over non-imperative issues. A staff member who begins to experience verbal resistance or agitation from a person should excuse themselves from the situation and allow the person room and time to deescalate. After a period of time of no less than 5 minutes a second, different staff may try approaching the person about the issue if it cannot safely be eliminated altogether.

An example might be if a person is pacing in an agitated manner in front of the TV, preventing others from watching a show, and is refusing to follow a staff members redirection, a second staff member might ask other persons to vacate the room and then quietly attempt to offer the agitated person the opportunity to talk about what is bothering them. If the person continues to be agitated and also refuses to respond to the second staff member, the other staff and persons could decide to vacate the room and allow this person an opportunity to regain control independently. Staff could use this time to summon adequate staff members to maintain safety. If the situation continues to escalate, staff should move other persons into another safe area. The agitated pacing and refusing redirection does not meet the criteria of physical intervention and can be ignored in an attempt to extinguish the behavior. The behavior can then be discussed at a later time with the person when they are in a better mood to receive feedback and formulate a better stress management technique.