

# THE DANGERS OF RESTRAINTS

To report abuse or neglect, contact Adult Protective Services at **1-800-898-4910**

## What is a restraint?

A restraint is any device or practice which restricts freedom of movement or normal access to one's body and cannot easily be removed by the individual.

A restraint is defined based on its **effect on the person**, NOT on what the device is called. Any device may potentially be a restraint - depending on how it is used. It is important to understand the **intent** of the practice.

If the answer to both of the following questions is yes, **then the device is a restraint.**

1. Does the device or practice keep the individual from moving about or reaching part of their own body that they would otherwise be capable of doing?
2. Is it difficult for the individual to remove the device?

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## Examples of Restraints

- *Use of side rails to keep someone from getting out of bed on their own*
  - *Tucking in or using Velcro to hold a sheet, fabric, or clothing so tightly that movement is restricted*
  - *Using trays, tables, bars, or belts that a person can't remove and prevents rising on their own*
  - *Placing a chair or bed so close to the wall that it prevents rising on their own*
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## What is an enabler?

An enabler is a device or practice that improves function for an individual and:

- is used at the request of the individual to make them feel more secure or comfortable; or
- Is recommended or approved by a professional healthcare provider.

## Why should restraints be avoided?

### What are the risks?

Restraints may cause both physical and psychological harm to a person. Prolonged use of restraints can result in:

- Pressure ulcer formation
- Loss of muscle tone and reduced bone mass
- Injury while resisting or trying to remove the restraint
- Loss of dignity and self-esteem

## What can you do if you spot or suspect restraint use?

You may contact your (or the participant's) support coordinator to facilitate a consultation with a health care professional to explore alternatives that can be used.

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### Examples of Enablers

- A bed rail that a person tells you they can use to make themselves feel more secure or for repositioning

- A trunk restraint that helps a person maintain an upright posture and improves breathing

- A customized wheelchair seating system which positions a person at their optimum functionality. Examples include a seatbelt for someone who doesn't have enough balance to keep themselves from falling out of their chair, and positioning devices to improve sitting balance and prevent deformity (Ex: a subasis bar, abduction wedge, lateral supports, thigh guides, headrests, etc.)

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*to report the situation.*