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## RESTRICTIVE PROCEDURES

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The new regulations regarding Community Homes for Individuals with Mental Retardation were published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, Volume 21, Number 32, 8/10/91. Provider Agencies are struggling to revise policies and procedures to meet these new regulations. An area of special concern is the regulation regarding 'Restrictive Procedures' (6400.191 - 6400.206).

The Regulations provide additional 'restrictions' on the use of Restrictive Procedures. They do not say they cannot be used, just that certain requirements must be met in terms of planning, documentation and monitoring of their use. The challenge is clearly there to use more positive approaches and avoid the use of such Restrictive Procedures.

While the Regulations appear to discourage the use of Restrictive Procedures, the definition of Restrictive Procedures itself is quite broad and, in fact, leads to an increased need to write what then are 'Restrictive Procedure Plans'.

In the new Regulations, a Restrictive Procedure is defined as:

... a practice that limits an individual's movement, activity or function; interferes with an individual's ability to acquire positive reinforcement; results in the loss of objects or activities that an individual values; or requires an individual to engage in a behavior that the individual would not engage in given freedom of choice.

That last phrase (engage in a behavior that the individual would not given freedom of choice) makes you think twice and has drawn a lot of attention. A first reaction is usually "Gee, I don't know if there is anything I do that is truly my choice". BUT then again, think about it - there are a lot of choices we could make, but opt not to for one reason or another. When we are forced to do something against our will our reaction is usually quite negative - and that's the point!!

Interpretation of the second phrase of the definition (interferes with the person's ability to acquire positive reinforcement) has also created a stir. In the Draft of the 'Inspection Instrument' for monitoring adherence to the Regulations, examples are given which include 1) rewards for appropriate behavior (e.g., if you eat your peas, you may go to the movies), 2) providing Positive Reinforcement at regular intervals only if an inappropriate behavior is not displayed (sometimes called Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior or DRO).

Unfortunately some of the immediate reaction to this second phrase has been that we are no longer allowed to use rewards to motivate behavior. Such an attitude misses the point. We need to be aware that our use of rewards also can be a source of control and manipulation of others. We need to realize that with every reward opportunity, there is also a punishment opportunity (i.e., the failure to obtain the reward). Did you ever get mad because you did not get something you wanted expected, that you thought you had a right to?

The positive outcome of these rather restrictive Regulations is to increase our awareness of what we are doing, to think twice and to reconsider some things we have taken for granted. Contingencies and Rewards and Punishments are present in every situation and cannot be legislated away. We need to arrange the individual's environment to allow as many natural contingencies as possible to operate. It is when we begin developing artificial contingencies that we get into trouble. Consider the following 2 contingencies:

1. "After we clean up the house, let's sit down and have some coffee".
2. "If you clean up your room, then I will give you a cup of coffee".

In both cases obtaining coffee is the reward and contingent on cleaning. But, which of these 2 contingencies seems more restrictive?; which is a more natural contingency?; which is a contrived contingency to control??

Reprinted from The Arc of Berks County Newsletter (January 1992). For subscription information call 610-603-0227 or e-mail [berksarc@ptd.net](mailto:berksarc@ptd.net).