

## How To Avoid Seclusion/ Restraint:

- **Avoid threatening or the appearance of threatening.**  
*Example: waving, clenching fists, getting too close, verbal threats, yelling or screaming*
- **Avoid confrontation.**  
*Learn to Walk away*
- **Know what you can do to calm yourself.**  
*Example: music, deep breathing, quiet area, talk to someone*
- **Let the staff know what upsets you.**  
*Example: loud noise, crowded areas, raised voices*

## It Is Important To Know Yourself:

**Know what helps calm you if you get angry or anxious and share this with staff:**

- Listen to music
- Talk it out with your peers
- Talk things out in group
- Go to a quiet area to calm down
- Try deep breathing/meditation
- Write in a journal
- Ask to talk to a staff member

Let the staff know if you are having a difficult time; they are there to help you through it.

**RESTRAINTS ARE USED AS A LAST RESORT – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE MEANS OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT.**

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a mental health patient, please call Patients' Rights Advocacy Services.**



If you have any questions or complaints regarding your rights, contact your advocate at:

### MHS Patients' Rights Advocacy Services

600 West Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 805  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

(714) 276-8145  
(800) 668-4240

Fax: (714) 242-1579

### Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday  
8 AM – 5 PM.

[mhsinc.org/pras](http://mhsinc.org/pras)

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# A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO SECLUSION AND RESTRAINTS

## Know your Rights



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## Seclusion and Restraint Directive:

Staff will ask you questions on admission regarding what helps you. Questions on the Seclusion and Restraint Directive form will help staff better assist you in times when you feel you are losing control of your emotions. Please take the time to answer their questions. It will help you avoid seclusion/restraints by letting the staff know what things upset you and what calms you.

### Definitions:

**Restraint:** Any manual, physical or mechanical device that stops you from being able to move a body part freely.

**Seclusion:** The confinement of a person in a room or area which the patient is physically prevented from leaving.

### Types of Restraints:

- **Containment:** A **brief** physical restraint of a person who is aggressive or agitated and is a danger to self or others. It is a means to gain quick control.

*Example: holding an arm to escort you while walking*

- **Physical/Behavioral:** The use of a manual hold to restrict freedom of movement of all or part of your body-Used as a behavioral restraint.

*Example: Staff holding arms and/or legs and being brought to the floor to keep you or others safe*

- **Mechanical:** The use of a mechanical device, material or equipment attached to your body. A mechanical restraint restricts your freedom of movement of all or parts of your body. These cannot be easily removed.

*Example: leather cuffs on your wrists and/or ankles, belts and straps attached to a bed*



### The Staff Cannot:

- Place a pillow, blanket or other item on your face
- Obstruct your breathing by placing pressure on your chest or back
- Use a restraint that would endanger your life due to a medical condition
- If you are placed face down, one person has to monitor you for any signs of difficulty breathing or pain

### Restraints cannot be used:

- For staff convenience
- For punishment or retaliation
- As discipline
- As a threat to make you comply

### Restraints can be used only if:

- You become an immediate danger to yourself or others

### What to expect if I am placed in restraints:

- You will have someone with you at all times if in **seclusion AND restraint**
- Staff will do safety checks every 15 minutes. Staff will be checking your restraints to make sure they are not too tight, your breathing is OK and you are not having any physical difficulties
- Staff will offer bathroom, food and/or drink every 2 hours
- Staff will speak to you about your experience within 24 hours of being in restraints; this is called a **debriefing**. This is to help everyone find solutions so this doesn't happen again
- You may have anyone you designate called when they put you in restraints