



About Chileda

For over 40 years, **Chileda has helped children and young adults with significant cognitive and behavioral challenges reach their full potential.**

Through both its day school and residential programs, the organization supports children and young adults, many of who are on the Autism spectrum and/or have significant behavioral challenges. Though the majority of its clients are from Chileda's home state of Wisconsin, the organization serves students from all over the U.S.



Challenges

In the early years, Chileda used a crisis management technique incorporating prone restraints. In the late 90s, as the organization became more and more attuned to the dangers of this approach, it focused increasingly on alternatives - using proactive approaches such as visual schedules, structured environments, therapeutic rapport and individualized behavior programming, as well as various de-escalation techniques - to address challenging behavior.

Chileda began giving regular presentations on **trauma-informed care**. This set the stage for an organization-wide movement toward a more trauma-informed approach; an evolution that picked up steam when new CEO, Dr. Derek Cortez, came on board.

"With Ukeru, we're learning and practicing new tools that keep people not only physically, but also psychologically safe. We are lessening the risk of retraumatizing people."

JONATHAN ZINNIEL,
*Director of Staff
Development, Chileda*

“Dr. Cortez truly appreciates the importance of listening and understanding people,” says Jonathan Zinniel, Director of Staff Development. “He knows that you have to treat your employees the way you want your employees to treat your clients.”

All of Chileda’s efforts up until this point paved the way for its work with Ukeru®.

Working with Ukeru

Though it had been making a concerted effort to reduce restraint and seclusion, in 2018, Chileda still had recorded over 3500 Emergency Intervention Forms for the year.

In 2018, led by Chief Operating Officer, Terri Gowey BCBA, Chileda sent an administrative team to become Ukeru certified®. The next year, Ukeru instructors traveled to Wisconsin, where a team from Chileda’s middle management—the individuals closest to the day-to-day work with clients—also became instructors.

“In some ways, we’d been on a parallel track with what Ukeru was teaching. We even bought kickboxing shields and pads to create our own protective gear,” explained Zinniel. “But where we failed was that we locked our shields and pads away; they weren’t accessible. By the time someone had a key to get them, it was already too late.”

Once it began implementing the Ukeru approach, Chileda learned to place materials where staff would be able to access them quickly and where clients were most likely to see them and become comfortable with their presence. Ukeru-trained staff brought the pads into classrooms and residential environments, letting students play with them. This past winter, students even used the shields as sleds, helping to normalize their presence. During matchbox car races, shields are used as a ramp for cars to speed down and across the floor.

“Now it’s hard to walk 20 feet without seeing Ukeru materials anywhere. It’s part of classrooms, hallways, homes, and even outside,” said Zinniel.

Having been designed specifically for trauma-informed crisis management, Chileda staff also **found the Ukeru pads and blocking materials far easier and more effective than the equipment they had used in the past.**

The concepts of Comfort vs. Control® and universal precautions (always assuming that, because trauma is so pervasive, everyone you are working with has experienced it) were discussed throughout the Ukeru training. And they resonated deeply with the Chileda team.

“Everybody has history. You should always assume that how someone is behaving is communication,” explained Zinniel. “If someone is struggling, something is going on with them. So approach them with Comfort vs. Control®. It’s a process and it requires changing culture. But it’s worth it. At Chileda, we are seeing the benefits.”

With a cadre of Ukeru certified trainers, the Chileda team began putting their own stamp on the training by weaving their own culture and stories into it.

“Because we hadn’t lived the Ukeru’s experience, we didn’t have the same stories. So we tailored the training to incorporate Chileda stories to make it as relatable as possible,” said Zinniel.

Today, all employees are required to be trained on Ukeru before starting at Chileda.

And the impact is being felt beyond the campus. A recent example showcases this point: one student is transitioning back to his home. And his hometown school is planning on getting Ukeru certified.

Results

Within a year’s time, Chileda has come a long way. It has:

- Reduced the number of Emergency Intervention Forms by **more than 78%**
- Reduced restraints by **nearly 77%**
- Reduced seclusions by **over 82%**
- Reduced escorts by **60%**
- Reduced staff injuries by **67%**

“[Comfort vs. Control®] is a process and it requires changing culture. But it’s worth it.”

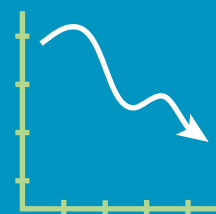
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