

The logo for Ukeru, featuring the word "ukeru" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "u" is white and is set within a white circle, which is itself inside a light green oval. The background of the entire page is a vibrant blue and green gradient with abstract geometric shapes and patterns.

## ► **About ReLife**

ReLife School is a special education cooperative program based out of Washington state that serves students with significant behavioral challenges. They partner with K-12 districts, schools, and community based organizations to serve children and adults through the age of 22 who are not able to access their education in a traditional setting.

The logo for ReLife, with the word "ReLife" in a large, green, stylized font. Below it, the tagline "A REGIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE" is written in a smaller, green, all-caps font.

## Challenges

Before implementing Ukeru, ReLife was resorting to restrictive practices when de-escalation failed. Administration wanted to move away from putting their hands on children completely.

ReLife's Principal, Dr. Reginald Reid, was looking for change. "We wanted something that did not require us to continue to put hands on children when we were in the de-escalation process." Ukeru's philosophy of Comfort Vs. Control and hands-off approach made complete sense for what ReLife was looking to achieve.

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The relationships that we are able to build with students by not putting hands on them is incredible. When students hear teachers tell them that they are in a safe space and they really believe it, it changes everything.

**Racquel Stewart**  
Special Education Teacher, ReLife

# Working with Ukeru

In order to ensure buy-in of Ukeru, Dr. Reid and the ReLife team made sure that staff knew that this initiative was to support and benefit them. **“We made a big deal about the benefits, we incorporated a new SEL curriculum that aligned with Ukeru and we gave staff lots of lead time to prepare for it. When we moved forward, there was no hesitation and no wavering about it.”**, said Reid.

ReLife implemented Ukeru in the 2021-2022 school year. In such a short period of time, ReLife has seen remarkable results. **“We have changed the culture of our program. We reduced holds and restraints in one year by over 93%. We are not putting our hands on children. We have better relationships and the students feel better about things as well”**, Reid proudly shared. To ensure this culture shift would be sustainable, ReLife set clear expectations for their staff, modeled correct usage and held staff accountable.

While ReLife is extremely proud of their results, they are very determined to completely eliminate the use of physical restraints to the fullest extent possible. ReLife is a great example of what an organization can achieve through thoughtful implementation of Ukeru and determination to see it succeed. Having Ukeru champions as passionate as Dr. Reid is a major key in this process.

ReLife has proven that creating **a trauma-informed environment is possible**. Dr. Reid is eager to continue to spread the word that there is another way. He wants others to know that they can achieve the same success.

## Results

**93%**

Restraint  
reduction in  
first year of  
using Ukeru



Reduced staff  
injuries by 50%



Staff feel better  
equipped to handle  
crisis situations

➤ ReLife changed the culture of their program through Ukeru's trauma-informed approach and philosophy of Comfort vs. Control. As a result, ReLife staff feel more confident, students feel safe and **relationships have been strengthened**.

“ I have always told my staff and students that my primary job is to make sure that everyone goes home at the end of the day the same way they arrived at the beginning of the day. The addition of Ukeru and the philosophy that it stands for absolutely helps me to ensure that everyone stays both physically and mentally whole.

**Dr. Reginald Reid**  
Principal, ReLife