



About Genesee Lake School

Located outside of Milwaukee, WI, Genesee Lake School is a nationally recognized provider of comprehensive residential treatment, educational and vocational services for students ages 7 to 21, who have been diagnosed with emotional, mental health, neurological and/or developmental disabilities. Genesee Lake school has specific expertise with providing care to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, anxiety/mood disorders, and behavioral disorders.

Their mission is to provide an individualized, person-centered, integrated team approach to care and services. They emphasize positive behavioral support, therapeutic relationships and developmentally appropriate practices to support each student's goals. Genesee strives to assist students with learning to live and thrive in a community-based, less restrictive environment.



Staff were excited about gaining new resources to use to maintain relationships with students, without having to re-traumatize. The feedback from staff was overwhelmingly positive. Many have stated how safe they feel utilizing Ukeru equipment or just having them present in general.

Lisa Pergande
Training Manager

Looking For Solutions



Genesee Lake School
A MyPath Company

Genesee Lake School recognized a need to reduce both their use of restraint and their number of staff injuries. To tackle these challenges, they sought alternatives that would promote staff and client safety, enhance staff's ability to de-escalate situations, and create a company culture that is safe and comforting.

After seeing the positive impact that Ukeru was having on other local residential centers, they were hopeful that Ukeru could help them achieve similar results. Ukeru's philosophy of Comfort vs. Control was in alignment with the direction they wanted to go as an organization.

Working with Ukeru

Genesee Lake School began their journey with Ukeru in February of 2020. In a four month span, they were able to successfully implement Ukeru, training upwards of 260 employees. To lead this effort, their administration sent out communication both internally to their employees and externally to their stakeholders, announcing their commitment to reducing restraint. Therapists introduced Ukeru blocking equipment to their students using social stories and Play Therapy sessions.

After students were introduced to the equipment and staff had all been trained in Ukeru, the blocking equipment was strategically placed within the environments of their center and group homes. In addition, internal policies and procedures were updated to reflect the application of Ukeru's philosophy of Comfort vs. Control. Another critical step was that leadership held monthly meetings to discuss the reduction of restraint and staff injuries, and they shared this information company-wide to further motivate and champion this effort.



Over 50% of our students have had the use of physical restraint removed from their program support plans. This highlights the success we've had not only with our students, but with our staff really grasping the concept of Comfort vs. Control.

Lisa Pergande Training Manager

48%

Staff injury reduction



Stronger relationships with students



Positive feedback from students

50%

Reduction of program support plans including restraint

Results

In just a few years, the results have been gratifying. They have reduced the use of restraint by 48% and in turn, have seen a reduction in the number of staff injuries. Staff feel empowered with Ukeru to manage crisis situations, without having the fear of re-traumatizing or damaging the relationship with a student. **“With the use of the Ukeru blocking equipment, staff can evaluate each situation and they are now responding instead of reacting”**, shared Lisa Pergande, Training Manager. In addition to sharing positive staff feedback, Pergande continued by proudly sharing that families have been engaged and supportive of Ukeru, “Many parents wanted to know how they could receive training and order equipment.”

As far as next steps, Pergande has made it clear that this is only the beginning. Their ultimate goal is to eliminate restraints across all programs and to continue to spread trauma-informed practices across all departments. “The safety of our students and staff is our top priority”, stated Pergande. Pergande ended by sharing another key takeaway, “It is also encouraging to have staff still request specific pieces of Ukeru equipment based on their preferences and needs. Staff aren't just provided with one option. We purchase every size and style so that staff have more tools available and can utilize what works best for them and the students they serve.”