

## ABOUT NEW HORIZONS

Based in North Hills, California, New Horizons is a nonprofit organization that empowers individuals with special needs (ages 16 and older) to reach their fullest potential. Founded in 1954, New Horizons now serves over 1,100 individuals annually in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys.

The organization provides job training, education, counseling, residential services, and social programs, emphasizing community integration and independence. They currently have 13 group homes located throughout San Fernando Valley, CA and partner with approximately 120 employee partners across the Greater Los Angeles area.

New Horizon's mission is to advance the rights and life choices of individuals within the neurodiverse community and their families through a broad range of high-quality, innovative and personalized services.

## LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS

Prior to Ukeru, New Horizons was searching for more effective training and strategies to help their staff better interact with and support their individuals. Ukeru was appealing to them as a partner due to its focus on psychology and knowledge of trauma-informed care.



We have used other crisis management tools in the past, but this one seems to be a better fit for our organization and the Members we serve. Unlike other programs that focus primarily on managing behaviors reactively, this approach emphasizes helping our staff understand why our Members act the way they do. That shift in perspective not only promotes more compassionate and effective responses but also enhances our intake process by giving us better insight into whether we can appropriately support individuals with complex trauma histories.

————— HANSEN VALLADARES

*LMS and Safety Administrator*



## WORKING WITH UKERU

New Horizons began working with Ukeru in June of 2022. They began by having two staff trained as trainers, Hansen Valladares and Eddie Banuelos. Together, they trained upwards of 200 staff in the first two years. They first trained department heads and managers to help lead the initiative. Once their leaders recognized the benefits, they extended the training to their staff.

In April of 2024, they added four additional trainers to their team to further support their efforts and expanded the training to additional staff. In 2024, they trained approximately 253 staff members and as of April 2025, they have already trained over 60.

"We train our new hires right away so that when they begin working with their members, they're better prepared to provide effective, compassionate support. [This early training helps maintain-and often improve our members' quality of life by ensuring consistent, informed care from day one,](#)" shared Hansen Valladares, LMS and Safety Administrator.

In addition to providing the training, New Horizons realized that they needed to shift their culture as well to better support their individuals. "Ukeru helped us shift our focus more intentionally toward our members and how their past experiences have shaped their behaviors and needs. We've learned to become better listeners, and with our now-trained staff, we've become more effective at engaging with them in ways that foster trust and understanding. [This has allowed us to support them in processing their experiences and making meaningful connections that promote healing and personal growth,](#)" Valladares proudly shared.



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Everyone has been very supportive. I like that there are blogs, podcasts and webinars that we can refer our staff to for more information.

— HANSEN VALLADARES  
*LMS and Safety Administrator*

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## RESULTS

The results have been truly remarkable. Since utilizing Ukeru, they have seen a drastic drop in behaviors across all programs, as a result of a better prepared workforce. They have reported an impressive 75% reduction of challenging behaviors. Simultaneously, staff injuries have been reduced by 38%. Employee retention has also improved by an astounding 20%.

Additionally, the feedback from staff has been great. "The staff have received Ukeru very well. I often notice a change while teaching and there is always a moment of clarity or a very visible moment where it starts to click for them. By the time we get to the end, they often will say that they really enjoyed the class and that it was eye opening," Valladares shared.



## NEXT STEPS

New Horizons doesn't plan to stop here. They are eager to continue to expand the training within their organization, with the ultimate goal being to have all staff trained. Additionally, they plan to continue to host Ukeru trainings at their site annually, with the hope of attracting more organizations that serve their population, to be trained by the Ukeru team.



This has been a great addition to our training schedule. It truly shifts the way staff think and interact with our Members - encouraging empathy, patience, and a deeper understanding of trauma-informed care. As a result, we're seeing more meaningful connections, fewer escalations, and a stronger sense of trust between staff and the individuals we support.

— HANSEN VALLADARES  
*LMS and Safety Administrator*

