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Professional Crisis Management Association, Inc.

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Title: Modification of Usage Criteria

Policies:

It is the policy of PCMA to teach the “CASH” (Continuous Aggression, Self Injury or High Magnitude Disruption) definition of crisis and to encourage all PCM User organizations to adopt these criteria for physical interventions. PCMA believes that the “CASH” definition, as it is taught and further defined in PCM courses, protects individuals better than utilization criteria that are less specific, less observable, less measurable and that do not include the “continuous” component. PCMA holds that individuals are better protected when it is not only clear when staff members should not intervene, but also when staff members should intervene.

It is the policy of PCMA to allow user organizations to establish their own utilization criteria when it is necessary and appropriate (such as when criteria are dictated by local or national standards or oversight bodies), however, they do so with the understanding that PCMA does not condone, endorse or is in any way responsible for any under utilization or over utilization that may result.

- 1) All participants in PCM courses learn and are tested on the PCMA “CASH” utilization criteria. This ensures that physical interventions are not used when there is no active danger, or for retribution or in a “punitive” manner. One exception to the CASH criteria is taught in the PCM course and that is when there is imminent risk of physical harm if one does not intervene, for example if an individual is running toward a busy street. In this example, the individual is not displaying aggression, but is likely to be harmed if not stopped and/or transported in the appropriate direction.
- 2) Individual organizations, as stated in the policy above, may establish their own criteria. PCMA strongly recommends that this be done with care and with great consideration given to the quality of the definition. Organizations should consider that any modifications in utilization criteria may have unforeseen consequences. For example, the phrasing “last resort” might be interpreted to mean that aggressive individuals should receive anything they demand while they are being aggressive, because this is likely to calm them down for the moment without having to “resort to” physically managing them. It might not be anticipated that reinforcing intensive levels of aggression by giving the individual exactly what they want might make the frequency

and intensity of the behavior stronger and place people in the setting at greater risk in the future.

- 3) The PCMA will always be willing to assist organizations in making these difficult and important decisions to increase the chances that all procedures will be conducted in a safe and effective manner that maintains the individual's dignity. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for modifying utilization criteria lies with the organization, so we recommend that modifications be avoided when possible and made sparingly and cautiously when deemed necessary for the safety of the individual.
- 4) Agencies that request information to assist them in making independent decisions about definitions and utilization criteria that fall outside of PCM will be directed to speak with the Director of Program Development.

Approval Signature:

Neal Fleisig, Executive Director