

# NOT IN ISOLATION

## HOW TO REDUCE ROOM CONFINEMENT WHILE INCREASING SAFETY IN YOUTH FACILITIES

 [stopsolitaryforkids.org](https://stopsolitaryforkids.org)

 #StopSolitaryforKids

### EXAMPLES OF SAFELY REDUCING ISOLATION

Not in Isolation tells the stories of how four jurisdictions reduced isolation without compromising staff or youth safety. Each jurisdiction had a “story” about why and how it reduced isolation. Whether it was in response to suicides, federal litigation, or new laws, these sites made intentional changes to safely reduce the frequency and duration of isolation.

Read the report here: <https://bit.ly/2IR4dni>

Check out the Not in Isolation webpage for more resources: <https://bit.ly/2GDxv7Y>

### JURISDICTION HIGHLIGHTS

#### COLORADO DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

- Developed an organizational model to change agency culture and improve practices;
- Used the legislative process to request additional staffing resources;
- Implemented an incentive-based behavior management system;
- Remodeled physical environments to align with principles of adolescent development and rehabilitation; and
- Relied on regular data analysis to steer reforms.
- **Reduced average length of isolation from 7 hours to .75 hours between 2014 and 2018.**

#### MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

- Integrated Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) into the behavior management system and living unit management;
- Redefined accountability based on skill-building – rather than punishment – to change behavior;
- Identified positive youth-staff relationships as a critical tool for facility safety;
- Developed “exit strategy” guidelines to help youth transition out of room confinement quickly;
- Created individual support plans for youth who continuously acted out or could not respond to programming.
- **Average length of isolation under 1 hour, 6 minutes since 2016 and assaults on staff did not increase.**

#### OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

- Changed culture before changing policy;
- Developed a culture based on Positive Human Development (PHD);
- Used data strategically to create Skill Development Counselors and specialized units;
- Leveraged the political process to secure funding; and
- Created a 10-Year Plan that included redesigning physical plants to support alternatives to room confinement.
- **Incidents of isolation decreased from in 370 in 2016 to 102 in 2019.**

#### SHELBY COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER, MEMPHIS

- Implemented daily circle-up groups;
- Enhanced staff training on how to work with youth and Safe Crisis Management;
- Established a standardized review of videos and documentation of room confinement incidents;
- Hired an additional staff to enhance programming and volunteer activities; and
- Relied on assistance and examples from consultants (including other facilities).
- **Reduced average length of isolation from 25.86 to 8.6 hours between 2015 and 2018.**

### USING THIS RESOURCE

Although navigating changes to isolation policy and practice differ in every jurisdiction, facility directors and agency administrators can learn from the experiences of their peers. Not in Isolation includes information about concrete strategies that have worked to reduce isolation and prevent injuries to staff and youth. Advocates, legislators, and other stakeholders can also use Not in Isolation to demonstrate that it is possible to reduce the use of isolation.

**Not in Isolation is a publication by the Stop Solitary for Kids campaign, a partnership between:**

Center for Children's Law and Policy  
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University

Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators  
Justice Policy Institute

**For more information go to: [www.StopSolitaryForKids.org/not-in-isolation/](https://www.StopSolitaryForKids.org/not-in-isolation/)**

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