

CPI *Unrestrained* Transcription

Episode 15: Kendra Stea

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Host: Terry Vittone

Terry: Hello, and welcome to *Unrestrained*, the CPI podcast series. This is your host, Terry Vittone, and I'm joined today by CPI's Director of Client Services and nationally certified counselor, Kendra Stea. Hello and welcome, Kendra.

Kendra: Thanks, Terry.

Terry: You're welcome. Kendra earned her master's degree in counseling and worked in social services before joining CPI as a Professional Instructor back in 2001. Today Kendra works with organizations at a national level to shape their workplace violence prevention policies and procedures. That work is right in line with the organization we're going to talk about today, the Restraint Reduction Network™. The Restraint Reduction Network™ first came into being in the UK back in 2014. Its stated purpose is to bring together organizations who share a common commitment to improve outcomes for people who may be subjected to coercive or restrictive practices. So Kendra, let's begin.

Kendra: Sure.

Terry: Can you begin by telling our listeners about the concept, formation, and goals that the Restraint Reduction Network™ can place today in the United Kingdom?

Kendra: Yeah, sure. I mean, I think that as a company, CPI has long been invested in assisting organizations to become restraint-free environments. So my colleagues in the UK got together and said, "Somebody needs to launch this network." But it was important to CPI that it's not a CPI thing because we're not the only one that's invested in creating restraint-free environments. So we agreed to kind of launch it, or host it, create the webpage for it, the landing page, and the membership part of the network. And then we started to drum up interest by talking about it with our customers, enlisting support from experts in the UK on restraint reduction, and they launched that then at a conference that they had last summer. It was really widely received, so why not expand that to the North American branch of our business?

The goal is to create a network of organizations and individuals that are committed to making practice safer for everybody and reducing the use of restraint or seclusion or other course of practices. We want to do that by creating a clearinghouse, if you will, for resources, for people to network, to share data, and practice strategies so that we can have more organizations get to zero.

Terry: Do you know what kind of organizations have joined? I mean, sort of a sampling of the kind of people who are involved in that Restraint Reduction Network™.

Kendra: I mean, they had a wide response from a variety of organizations. Our presence over there is more in the human service or disability sector, the health care and mental health sector, so I think it tends to be more organizations from those sectors. But certainly, the idea of going restraint free is this concept that applies to all sectors we work with. They have both individual professionals that have signed up and committed, they have organizations that have committed, and then there are just individual people who are just supporting the network. But it's not just CPI customers, and that's the most exciting thing—that it's starting to get interest and attention from other training providers, other organizations that use different strategies than CPI is offering, which is exactly what it was intended to be.

Terry: So public awareness is reaching the point where individuals themselves are saying, "This is something meaningful for me to join."

Kendra: Right.

Terry: That's excellent. So that concept is in place in the UK with the Restraint Reduction Network™, how does it make its way over to a domestic Restraint Reduction Network™?

Kendra: Well, you know, I've been very interested in the work they were doing once they started to launch this over in the EU. So I worked a lot with my colleague, Chris Stirling, over there, and we started to just talk about how we could launch it here. Kind of just piggybacking off of the work they've done already in the UK in getting the pledges started. So it was really pretty simple for us to put it together because we don't have to re-create the wheel; it's invented for us. So we looked for an opportunity to launch it, which will be later this summer. We'll talk more about that in a minute.

So the first step kind of in putting it together here in the United States was really thinking about—or North America, I should say—it was really thinking about who could we engage as practice leaders in this restraint reduction effort, people not necessarily affiliated with CPI to give voice to the Restraint Reduction Network™ in a broader context. So I have a couple of individuals who have agreed to support

the network as kind of co-chairs for the kick-off, and that is Dr. Kevin Ann Huckshorn (Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health for the state of Delaware) and Barbara Trader, who is the Executive Director of an organization called TASH. Both women are highly committed in their fields to improving practices for individuals. Kevin Ann works in health care/mental health, and Barbara is really about supporting individuals with disabilities in school and residential settings. So I think it's a nice broad spectrum of support from national experts and leaders in the field on reducing restraint and seclusion.

Terry: I see. So let's talk about something in the UK called "the Pledge." When you join, how does that work? What do people pledge when they join the Restraint Reduction Network™?

Kendra: Basically, when you go onto the Restraint Reduction Network™ website, there is a button on the top that says, "Take the Pledge." You can take your pledge either as a professional or an organization or a supporter. So if I wanted to sign up as a professional, I just choose that. And basically, the pledge says that "I support the mission and values of the Restraint Reduction Network™ and the desire to deliver restraint-free services. I will encourage my employer to join the network and make an organizational commitment to staff, service users, and their families to reduce restrictive practices and promises, and minimize the abuse and misuse of restraint." And then there are some expectations of that.

The expectation when you take the pledge is that you will share information on the Restraint Reduction Network™ and within your organization, that you're encouraging others to take the pledge too, and that you're making a personal commitment in your day-to-day work to do whatever you can do as a professional to reduce the use of coercive practices. It's a commitment that you're making. It's a personal commitment, though, really, or even as your organization you're saying basically, "We're going to do this."

No one's really checking on you. But the idea is that over time we'll have organizations share their data, share their outcomes, share the practices they were using to achieve those outcomes. One of the things that I've noticed here at CPI is I often work with organizations who are very proud of the results that they're achieving with our outcomes. But there's no national clearinghouse to share those results. And sometimes those results actually are not that great. They're an improvement for the organization, but if you line it up against national averages or the success stories that some individuals or some organizations are achieving, there's still work to be done, and they don't even realize it because they have nothing to compare it to.

Terry: I see.

Kendra: So our hope is that the Restraint Reduction Network™, through these individual or organizational pledges, becomes a place to share that data, share practice strategies, and really have everybody get to zero.

Terry: So one of the benefits for them as a member, say . . . so I'm going to say, "Hey, I didn't have an unqualified success with my restraint, but I had a partial success. I'm going to share that." And maybe someone out there in a similar situation would say, "Hey, I have complementary piece that can maybe help you complete your strategy on restraint reduction." That would be of benefit to that organization, and as you mentioned a clearinghouse of sharing results and ideas.

Kendra: Yes, exactly.

Terry: And with a player like TASH and Barbara Trader, that would also probably be another ancillary resource for people or maybe for-profit businesses, for instance, who might join.

Kendra: Exactly. So through other organizations or advocacy groups joining into the network, I think that it will become a natural place to just share practice strategies and resources for individuals who want to just take their work to the next level. We have organizations that I was just talking to the other day. When they first came on board with CPI they were doing 13 to 15 restraints a day. They're down to one or two a month, maybe.

Terry: That's dramatic.

Kendra: That's tremendous impact. They're a forensic psychiatric hospital. They work with very difficult individuals, highly challenging, highly acute environment, but they're able to say to other people, "Yes, this can work for you too."

Terry: That really makes you sit up and say, "Well, what techniques and strategies were so dramatically effective in changing your rate of putting hands on people?"

Kendra: Exactly. And part of that is a training program for your staff, which may be CPI's program. In this case it was, but it's more about a culture change. So what are all the pieces you put together in the bigger picture that reduces your use of restraint and seclusion so dramatically?

Terry: So you start to see where this Restraint Reduction Network™ as an entity has a very compelling reason to be as a place for these, all of the people, all sorts of people who deal with behavior management issues to come together and say, "We're not alone. We can all participate in this." Is there any fee associated with it?

Kendra: Not at this time. There's no fee to join. The idea is "Let's get it going and get people joining in and get people access to resources." There are a ton of great resources out there through a variety of individual organizations, both governmental or non-governmental, but people aren't always aware of them. So I think the more we can pull this to a central location tied together by this common goal of reducing restrictive practices, I think it serves a greater good for all the advocates out there trying to improve practices. Groups like SAMHSA, groups like the Sanctuary Model, other pieces of information that are out there that are great practice strategies or have great resources, the American Nursing Association, the Emergency Nurses Association.

They all have resources for creating safer workplaces, but there's not a place to share it all and bring it all together and to pick which of those pieces work best for our organization, and this is our story. So we're hoping that the network can be that place to tell your story about, for you in your environment based on the individuals you're supporting, what worked best to get to zero.

Terry: Now, I've seen, associated with the Restraint Reduction Network™, a PDF of a document called "Six Key Restraint Reduction Strategies." I wonder if you could talk about those strategies, why they're important or how people would involve these strategies in their workplace.

Kendra: Sure. The six key strategies that you're referencing is a PDF that's adapted from a document called "The Six Core Strategies." The Six Core Strategies were written by Dr. Kevin Ann Huckshorn and her group at the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors, when she was working with them. They're a series of strategies, if you will, that talk about some really key ideas or steps that you take to create a restraint-free environment.

So in just a high-level strategy, one is about leadership and looking at the executive leaders that commit to the idea of being restraint free. I've talked to any number of organization leaders that are like, "No, we need restraint. It's just what we do." That's not the right attitude, obviously, for going restraint free. They talk about performance measurement. We can't change things where we're working. We can't improve our practices if we don't know where we're at. So we have to measure our baseline and then take a systems approach to measuring those key outcomes and continuously evaluating our progress.

Another strategy is learning and development. Training staff is important. It's critical. If they don't understand how to identify last resort, they may use restraint inappropriately or at times when it's not called for. Providing personalized support. One of the things in the research that's found is the more person-centered and trauma-informed you are with your approaches in any environment, the greater

the success in de-escalating and reducing incidents that may lead to restraint or seclusion.

Terry: It makes sense.

Kendra: Another strategy is communication and customer focus. Again, involvement of the individuals that you're serving in this process of going restraint free—communicating feedback loops, not only with your staff but with your service users, become a critical piece. If everyone in the facility, the school, the home, is buying into becoming restraint free, including individuals that are being supported there, it's a lot easier to get there. So that's another strategy.

And finally the sixth one is about continuous improvement. Debriefing is critical, and without that we can't improve our practices. We have to talk about every incident that occurred, assess what went well, what we might do differently to continuously improve what we're trying to accomplish.

Terry: Do you find this idea—it's new to me, and I find it compelling—that in an organization that would sometimes embrace restraint as a behavior management method, that maybe for the first time they're having a dialog with people that they serve and saying, "We're trying to reduce this; work with us. We're trying to broaden awareness of all the players involved in a situational restraint that might be called into play."

Kendra: Right.

Terry: That sounds kind of ground-breaking.

Kendra: Yeah. I mean, I think it's a strategy that's been introduced now for a few years, that people are beginning to adopt this more collaborative approach with our service users, whether that's students and parents in our school, whether that's residents that live in a group home that we run, or whether it's patients or individuals being served in our inpatient unit or locked psychiatric hospital. The more we engage them as people first, the easier it is. It's just much easier.

Terry: It sounds so simple, doesn't it? It gets lost.

Kendra: Well, it is simple and it is very difficult all at the same time. We work and support individuals who have very complex needs, that are very sick.

Terry: Of course.

Kendra: So sometimes it takes longer to engage them in the process of recovery and healing, or in the strategies that will support better outcomes for their educational

experience or however we're interacting with them. But it's something that you can commit to easily. And that's what this Restraint Reduction Network™'s about. We're going to commit to doing things the different way in our organization. We're going to work hard at it. Some days we're going to get it right, and some days we may not get it right. But then we're going to talk about it and figure it out for next time.

Terry: When you talk about the commitment in an organization, that dovetails into my next question, which is regarding the benefits and obligations that come with membership in the Restraint Reduction Network™. An administrator or somebody who makes those decisions in an organization that uses restraint might come in and say, "Hey, this sounds great. The strategies sound evolved and there's a chance for me to participate." How far does it go in both benefits and obligation?

Kendra: Everybody wants to know "What's in it for me?" That's a fair question to ask. So what's in it for organizations is our hope is that it will be a quick place to come for ideas, to measure your own success against the success of like organizations. In some ways maybe that's friendly competition, even who can get to zero faster. I don't know. But certainly I think that a benefit is I have one place I can go and click through to have access to people's stories to hear more about what's working in the industries that are serving individuals that are vulnerable.

I have an easy place to also tout my successes. I think that's important. We hear all the time about all the bad outcomes. The news is all over negative outcomes. We need places to tell the success stories. And I think that's another benefit of the Restraint Reduction Network™. Here's an opportunity for me to share what's working and what we're doing well—and to highlight those successes so that others can learn from it. So the obligation that comes with that is not to just sign on and say, "We're going to do this," but to really do it. And to come back to the site, load up your information, share your practice strategies, share sample policies, share stories of success, and not be afraid to share information about a failing you've uncovered as well, but what are you doing to improve it? So I think that the benefits become endless.

Terry: Well, as a professional support network it certainly is viable right away.

Kendra: Exactly.

Terry: So say I'm listening to this and I say, "Wow, that sounds really interesting. When can I join and where can I go?"

Kendra: Well, the website for the EU group or UK group is up and running at the RestraintReductionNetwork.org, all one word, RestraintReductionNetwork. There's nothing that says you can't join that one to start. But we will be launching the US or

North American, I should say, version of the Restraint Reduction Network™ in conjunction with our Instructor Conference this summer, in July. So in July, in New Orleans, we will be holding a week-long Conference rolling out our *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® program with enhanced content to all Certified Instructors that are attending. And then it will be followed by a couple of days of breakout sessions on any number of topics, whether it's improving your training, getting better buy-in, or creating culture change within your organization, coaching and mentoring and developing staff with ongoing, endless options for breakout sessions.

But on Tuesday evening, on July 21, we will be launching officially in a two-hour kind of Conference session open to the attendees, where they will have the opportunity at the end to sign on. So the website will be fully up and running for the North American network at that time. We'll begin the process of loading up resources and talk about why it's such an important network to join.

Terry: All right. So Kendra, could we have some closing thoughts about the Restraint Reduction Network™, your hopes for it, where you see it doing the most good?

Kendra: You know, I'm really excited that we're taking the opportunity at CPI to launch this. My hope is that every training provider out there, our competitors, and the organizations that they serve catch wind of it as well and join in because this isn't about CPI. This is about better serving individuals in our world. I think that the benefits just are so great once we start to share practices.

We don't know what we don't know some days. And if I have a place I can go and read about people's success stories and review some resources, I can make a subtle change to my practice at my organization that might make a complete difference in someone's life. That's a big deal to me personally, it's a big deal to me professionally, and I think ultimately it's everybody's goal. No one wants to use coercive practices. It's not fun. It's not helpful. There's no good in it. So the more we can work to reducing that, I think the better off we're all going to be.

Terry: I think there's an opportunity for a professional network to rise up here, for people to say, "Oh, you put something in here six months ago, and it was really on! I wonder what you have to say now?" New connections between people who otherwise would not have had a dialog or even possibly met each other.

Kendra: Exactly. I was at a conference in December where an organization said, "We think we're doing really good, but we're not really sure." And I talked to them about the Restraint Reduction Network™ as a place to go check—check and balance for what we're all doing, trying to do, trying to accomplish to have a better understanding of when are we doing really well.

Terry: Excellent. Well, my guest today on *Unrestrained* has been Kendra Stea. Thank you, Kendra.

Kendra: You're welcome.