Safety-Care®
by QBS

SUCCESS STORY | HUMAN SERVICES

Out of the Reaction Trap

How a New England human services organization stopped reacting to crises and started preventing them, cutting physical management by nearly 90% and its behavioral workers' comp costs to almost zero.

The organization: a nonprofit in New England serving individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and psychiatric conditions across residential homes, a day program, and brain injury homes.

40+	450+	150+	5
Years	Staff	Clients/yr	Programs

Trained on paper, reacting in practice

Before 2018, every staff member was certified in CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute). The training was done. The boxes were checked. But the organization was still averaging 156 physical management incidents a year, with 233 in 2013 alone.

When a new clinical director joined, she found herself entering physical management reports constantly. She had been trained in CPI too and still struggled to recall its terms. If a clinician couldn't remember it, how could direct care staff use it in the middle of a crisis?



The problem they named: the Reaction Trap

Staff had completed the training, but it didn't hold up when a real crisis hit. CPI satisfied the compliance requirement without changing what happened in the homes. Staff trained, reacted all year, retrained, and got the same results. This is the Reaction Trap, and its most common form is **Check-the-Box training:** certified on paper, exposed in practice.

> **"In behavior analysis we use the term 'train and pray,' because we hope people remember what the behavior plan says."**
>
> Clinical Director

Building the case for change

The clinical director had used Safety-Care earlier in her career and remembered that it "clicked." She pulled the organization's physical management data, ran a cost comparison, and invited QBS to present to the executive and senior leadership teams. Leadership agreed to give it a try.

Change wasn't easy. Some program directors and managers pushed back at first. Internal advocates kept making the case with data and projected outcomes, and over about a year, the organization rolled it out. By 2018, 100% of staff were trained in Safety-Care.

How Safety-Care helped them get out

Language that sticks
Plain, behavior-analytic language made sense to clinicians and direct care staff alike, so skills held up in real situations, not just in class.

Repetition that builds mastery
Staff hired in 2018 are now on their eighth or ninth recertification. Trainers teach in pairs, so a clinician and a house manager each bring their own examples.

Prevention before reaction
At the day program, one upset person could set off others. Staff now see it coming, divide and conquer, and de-escalate before a crisis builds.

SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

> **"It's the staff education, the staff repetition, and them being less focused on the [physical management] piece and more on the intervention part. Catching the difficulty before it has a chance to escalate."**
>
> Program Director

What changed

Physical management dropped sharply in the first year and kept falling. Fewer crises also meant fewer workers' comp claims tied to behavioral incidents.

PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT INCIDENTS

70.13%

lower yearly average

Averaged 156 a year under CPI (2013–2018) and 46.6 a year with Safety-Care (2019–2025).

89.7%

fewer in a single year

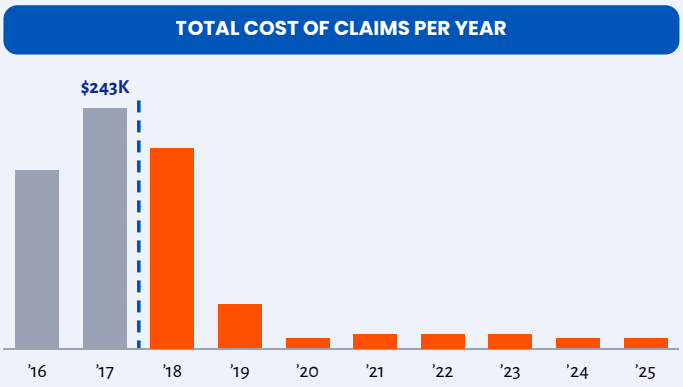
233 in 2013, down to 24 in 2025. Only 15 so far in 2026.

WORKERS' COMP CLAIMS FROM BEHAVIORAL INCIDENTS

Under $10K

a year in claim costs since 2020

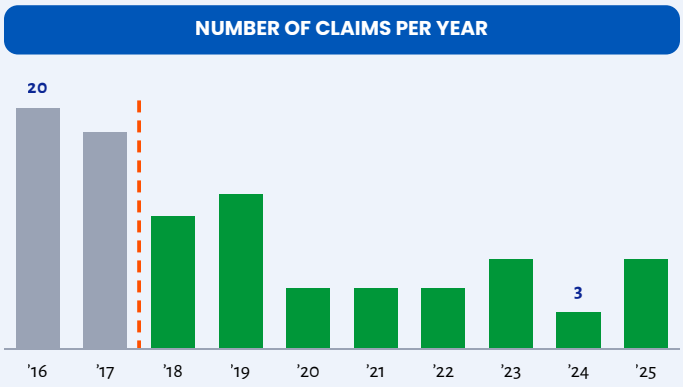
Down from $243K in 2017; close to zero the last two years.



3 to 8

claims a year since 2020

Down from 20 claims in 2016.



Gray bars show years before Safety-Care; the dashed line marks 2018, when training began. Claims data as reported by the organization, by calendar year. Values rounded.

Staying out of the trap

Almost none of the homes once flagged as "high priority" for behavioral incidents still meet the criteria. Instead of easing off, the organization is going further: it will retrain 100% of staff by mid-2027 with 13 in-house trainers, and keep Safety-Care as the standard for everyone.

> **"Now I don't have to sell [Safety-Care] to staff anymore; just look at our data."**
>
> Clinical Director

100%

of staff retrained by mid-2027

13

in-house trainers leading the work

Safety-Care stays the standard for every staff member.