

# **Alyssum, Incorporated**

**An Alternative Mental Health Crisis Diversion**

**927 Route 100 North**

**Rochester, VT 05767**

**802-767-6000**

Alyssum has had Zero incidences of violence since it opened almost 4 years ago.

We have an incident reporting process in place which, while not as in depth as what H74 is talking about, does cover some of the requirements of H74

Alyssum has a very effective intake/screening process, and our program has the ability to screen out individuals who are not cognitively able to manage their behavior.

All staff do receive training, and there is always ongoing discussions, as relates to the possibility of violence (and this would include possible violence by people associated with current guests - such as an irate spouse). We have established protocols which all staff are familiar with, to work with an escalating situation.

It is evidence based that peer programs have FAR FEWER incidences of violence due to the nature of the approach and the mutual aspect. While not always the case, violence is often inspired by the methods being practiced in the program. This is an ongoing issue which we all know everyone is trying to work with, more peer run approach type programs would be a better answer than more "violence" protocols.

Alyssum is not broken, please don't try to fix it. A focus on fear and violence is counter-productive if unnecessary.

Again, my opinion would be that requirements of H74 might be applicable to the State Hospital or other level 1 facilities who are required to work with individuals who might be violent.

I understand why H74 is being tabled in the legislature, however, I do not feel that it should apply to peer run programs or programs who have the ability or choice to screen out individuals with tendencies towards violence. IF H74 were adopted, I would ask that Alyssum (and all peer run) reporting requirements and methodologies be looked at for what they are now and that we would be able to be compliant from within our established ethical boundaries.