An introduction to...

### Relocation Stress Syndrome



An introduction to...

### Relocation Stress Syndrome (RSS)

- What is RSS and it's effects?
- When does RSS occur?
- Why do I need to know about RSS?
- How can I help prevent and treat RSS?
- Where can I find out more?

Have you ever moved?

Was it stressful?



### Of course it was!







# The research shows...

"Psychological and immune-system indicators of stress have been **directly associated** with relocation."

# If it's stressful for you....

Moving to a new house may be stressful for anyone, but for individuals with disabilities or illnesses this stress can "exacerbate symptoms and impair functioning."

Farhall, Trauer, Newton, & Cheung, 2003

# What is Relocation Stress Syndrome?

## What is RSS?

### **Definition:**

"Physiologic and/or psychosocial disturbances as a result of transfer from one environment to another."

Morse, 2000

## What is RSS?

RSS was recognized as a formal **diagnosis** by the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (1992).

Walker, Curry, & Hogstel, 2007

## What is RSS?

### **Characteristics:**

Include loneliness, depression, anger, apprehension, anxiety, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, a loss of trust, and feelings of insecurity.

### What are the effects of RSS?

Stressful life events such as moving have been frequently "implicated as risk factors for mental and physical ill health"....

Hulbert-Williams & Hastings, 2008

...and are linked to many co-occurring illnesses including psychosis, the common cold, cancer progression, coronary artery disease, and gastrointestinal disorder.

Hulbert-Williams & Hastings, 2008

In one study in which institutionalized older adults were suddenly and involuntarily moved, within one year over 45% of them died.

Melrose, 2013



Negative



Potentially Serious



Possibly Even Deadly!

### When does RSS occur?

# When does RSS occur?

The adjustment phase following a move "lasts at least 1 year."

Walker, Curry, & Hogstel, 2007

RSS is especially prevalent in the **first four months** after relocation.

Melrose, 2013

# When does RSS occur?

RSS especially occurs when persons are moved **involuntarily** and the changes involved are perceived as **negative**.

January 6, 2014

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued **Final Rule:** 

"amends the Medicaid regulations to define and describe state plan section 1915(i) home and community-based services (HCBS)"

GPO, 2014, p. 2948

### Scope of Final Rule

Individual Choice of Self-Community Determination Rights Integration Setting Autonomy Physical Landlord Visitors and Accessibility **Tenant Rights** Independence Choice of Privacy Services

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Individual Community Choice of Self-Integration Rights Determination Setting Autonomy Physical Landlord Visitors and Accessibility **Tenant Rights** Independence Choice of Privacy Services

"The setting is **integrated in** and supports full access of individuals receiving Medicaid HCBS to the greater community, including opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals not receiving Medicaid HCBS."

South Carolina cares for about 5,000 people in HCBS residential programs.

#### The Good News:

98% of these individuals are living in homes in "community settings" rather than in institutions.

Buscemi, 2017

#### The Bad News:

Some residential locations may not be in compliance with "Final Rule" due to their geographical proximity.

Per State policy, settings which are not able to comply may need to move, forcing the "relocation of waiver participants"

#### The Bottom Line:

Many vulnerable people, including those living with disabilities, may soon be placed at risk for RSS in South Carolina....

....and it's <u>our job</u> to help them.

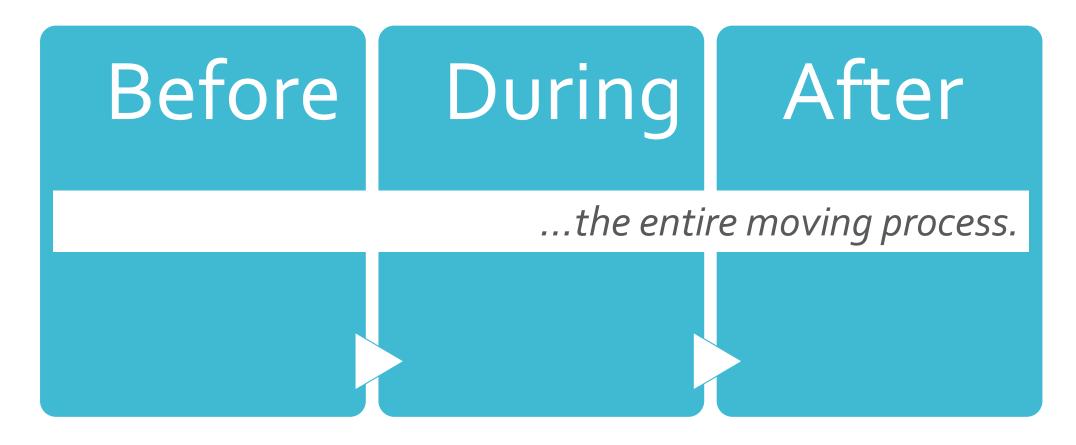
### RSS is one monster...



...we can't run away from.

# How can I help prevent and treat RSS?

Help is needed...



## Before the Move

### Follow State Policy guaranteeing:

- 30 days' notice given before a move
- Individualized transition plans designed to meet each person's needs
- Individualized transition approach to minimize disruption of services

## Before the Move

### **Employ a Strengths-Based approach:**

 Believing people living with IDD/MI can express choices with support that explains, explores, and supports issues, options, and preferences.

Bigby, Whiteside, & Douglas, 2017

• Presuming competence, considering the person's strengths, interests, preferences, and life goals.

Niemiec, Shogren, & Wehmeyer, 2017

## Before the Move

### Strength-Based Recommendations:

- Involve each person in the choice of a new residence
- Present them with more than one option
- Listen to their opinions
- Promote their personal choice

### During the Move

- Listen to what the resident is saying.
- Maintain the resident's daily routine throughout the planning process and the move.
- Monitor for signs of Relocation Stress.

"Measures to Minimize Relocation Stress"

Wisconsin BOALTC Ombudsman Program, 2011

## After the Move

- Facilitate communication of the resident with their family and friends.
- **Modify** the environment of the new residence to help with adjustment.
- Encourage "frank discussion" about each person's experience with the move.

### Where can I learn more?

# Where can I learn more?

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### Final Thought



### Thanks for listening!

