

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.”

Farhall, et al., 2003

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.

Melrose, 2013

What are the effects of RSS?

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

Effects of RSS

...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

Effects of RSS

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

Melrose, 2013

Effects of RSS



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**.

Melrose, 2013

Why do I need to
know about RSS?

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I need
to know
about RSS?

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

Community
Integration

Individual
Rights

Choice of
Setting

Self-
Determination

Physical
Accessibility

Visitors

Autonomy
and
Independence

Landlord
Tenant Rights

Choice of
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Privacy

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Why do I need to know about RSS?

“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.**”

GPO, 2014, p. 3030

Why do I need to know about RSS?

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

Why do
I need
to know
about RSS?

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”

Why do
I need
to know
about RSS?

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 our job 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

During

After

...the entire moving process.



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.

Walker, Curry, & Hogstel, 2007

Where can I learn more ?

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- Bigby, Christine, Whiteside, Mary & Douglas, Jacinta. (2017). Providing support for decision making to adults with intellectual disability: Perspectives of family members and workers in disability support services. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*. doi: 10.3109/13668250.2017.1378873
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Where can I learn more?

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- WI BOALTC Ombudsman Program. (2011). *Awareness: Relocation Stress Syndrome*. Retrieved from: <http://longtermcare.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=21549&locid=123>

Final Thought



Thanks for listening!

