An introduction to...

Relocation Stress Syndrome
An introduction to...

Relocation Stress Syndrome (RSS)

- **What** is RSS and its 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
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
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?
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
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?
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 Services
- Privacy
Scope of Final Rule

- Community Integration
- Individual Rights
- Choice of Setting
- Self-Determination
- Physical Accessibility
- Visitors
- Autonomy and Independence
- Landlord Tenant Rights
- Choice of Services
- Privacy
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
South Carolina cares for about 5,000 people in HCBS residential programs.

The Good News:
98% of these individuals are living 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”

SCDDHS, 2016, p. 45
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.
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

SCDDHS, 2016, p. 45-47
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?
Where can I learn more?


Where can I learn more?


Where can I learn more?


Final Thought

Happiness doesn’t have just one address.
Thanks for listening!