

## PROTECTING PEOPLE RECEIVING SERVICES FROM THE DANGERS OF CAREGIVER FATIGUE

### A Fact Sheet for: **Provider Agencies**

#### The Risks

Caregiver fatigue may result in an incident that jeopardizes the safety and well-being of people receiving services. This could include:

- A person's personal care and health needs not being met;
- Failure to prevent or de-escalate high risk behaviors such as choking or elopement;
- Inability to respond to a person's acute medical needs; and/or
- Failure to respond to an emergency, such as a fire.

#### What You Can Do

- **Monitor staff assignments, overtime and staff fatigue.** Implement policies that limit the amount of overtime staff are permitted to work. Ensure staff assignments are manageable and monitor employees for fatigue and burnout.
- **Provide support to staff through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** Employees may need support to address personal problems or work related issues that are adversely affecting their work and contributing to caregiver fatigue.
- **Consider using a “buddy” or mentor system to provide staff with peer support.** Implement a system to provide peer support to staff that would also help monitor staff for fatigue
- **Deter and detect willful acts of sleeping on the job.** Implement and regularly review the effectiveness of policies meant to deter and detect unauthorized *willful* sleeping on the job, through practices such as conducting frequent unannounced spot checks.
- **Establish emergency contingency plans to address the occasional need to relieve staff found to be unfit for duty.**
- **Identify and plan for addressing risk or staff accidentally sleeping on the job.** Implement policies that assess and plan for identifiable risks of staff accidentally falling asleep on the job; establish policies that direct staff to develop *Personal Action Plans* with their supervisors, especially for staff working non-traditional shifts, or who work alone.
- **Encourage, teach and support persons receiving services to respond to emergencies and other unsafe conditions.** Implement policies to direct treatment teams or other circles of support to assist each resident to develop *Personal Safety Plans* which include instruction on how to call for help if a caregiver is unresponsive to immediate needs.
- **Use creative strategies:** Consider identifying administrative staff who may be willing to assist with non-direct care responsibilities such as grocery shopping or cleaning in order to give breaks to front line staff.
- **Report Abuse or Neglect to the Justice Center’s 24/7 Statewide Toll-Free Hotline.** Call: 1-855-373-2122/ TTY: 1-855-373-2123.

#### Questions?

Justice Center  
Information and Referral

Toll-Free:  
1-800-624-4143

TTY: Dial 7-1-1 for the  
NYS Relay and give the  
Operator 1-800-624-  
4143

Email:  
[infoassistance@justicecenter.  
ny.gov](mailto:infoassistance@justicecenter.ny.gov)