

Surviving the Holidays

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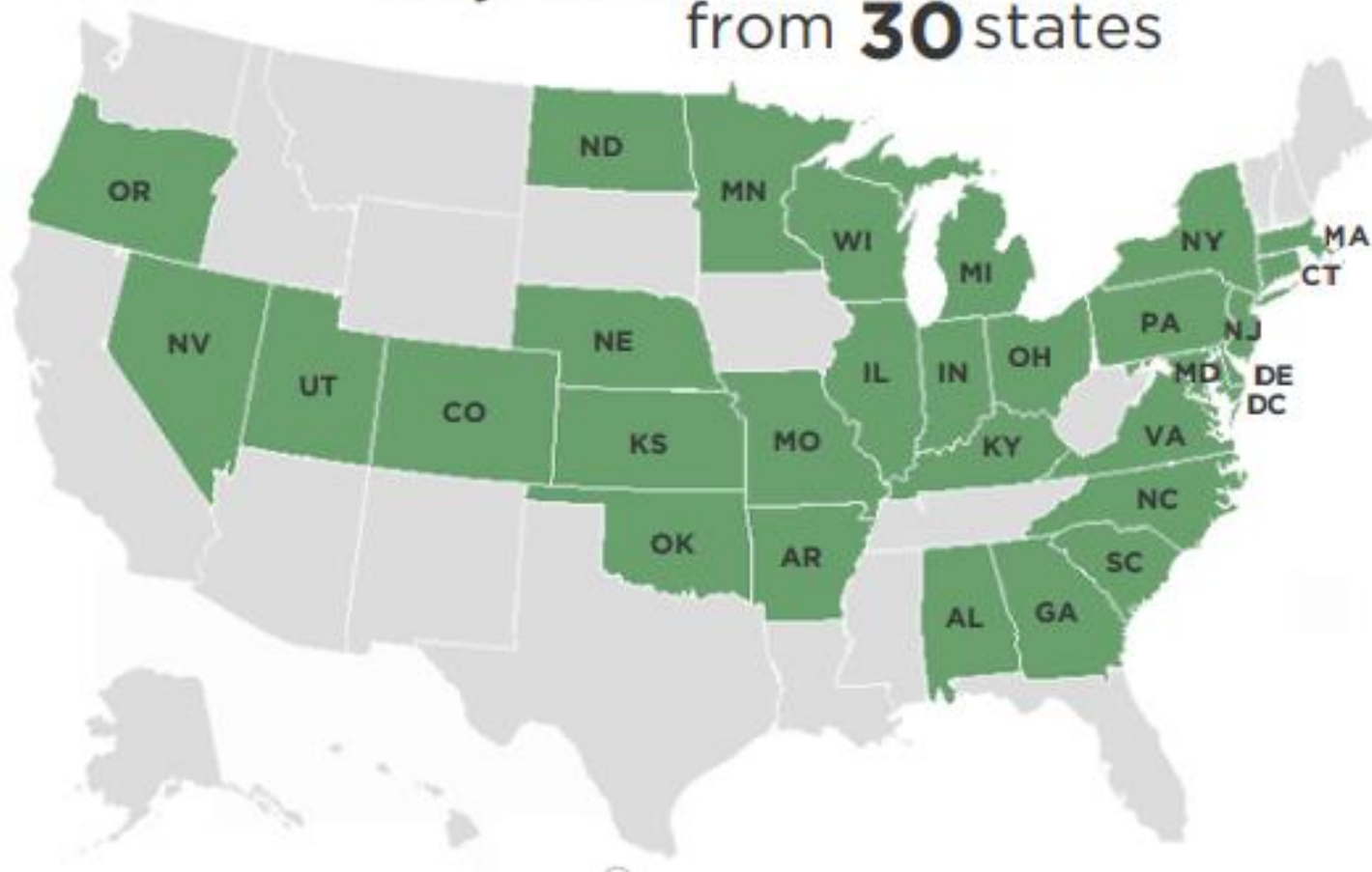
Objectives

- ▶ Understand national trends involving individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and the workforce supporting them
- ▶ Explore research findings on how Direct Service Providers (DSP) influence social inclusion and quality of life
- ▶ Learn practical strategies to support individuals and staff during holiday-related changes
- ▶ Recognize the role of grief and emotional stress in holiday experiences

National Core Indicators: Service Recipients

SAMPLE

17,585 total respondents
from **30** states



Service Recipient Data



71% can do things in the community as much as they want to



81% can do things in the community with the people they want



28% take part in groups, organizations, or communities



35% want to be part of more groups in their community



80% are able to get places when they want to do something outside their home



94% have a way to get places they need to go (like work, appointments)

Service Recipient Well-Being

78%

Have friends who are not staff or family

69%

Can meet with their friends in person
when they want

55%

Want help to make new friends or
keep in contact with friends

12%

Often feel lonely

National Core Indicators: Workforce

More than **325,591** DSPs with
3,934 provider agencies
in **26** states & D.C.



Staff Retention

On average, turnover ratio is 40% with a 20-30% vacancy rate.

Of the staff who left employment in 2023, 66% had been employed for less than one year

At the end of 2023, 32% of the staff who were employed at their agency had been employed there for more than three years

Workforce of Well-Being Impact

Dignity, respect, and fair treatment of workforce leads to improved participant outcomes:

- Better health
- Life free from abuse and neglect
- More rights and autonomy
- Greater ability to realize goals

Supporting DSP wellbeing during holiday periods protects these outcomes for individuals with I/DD.

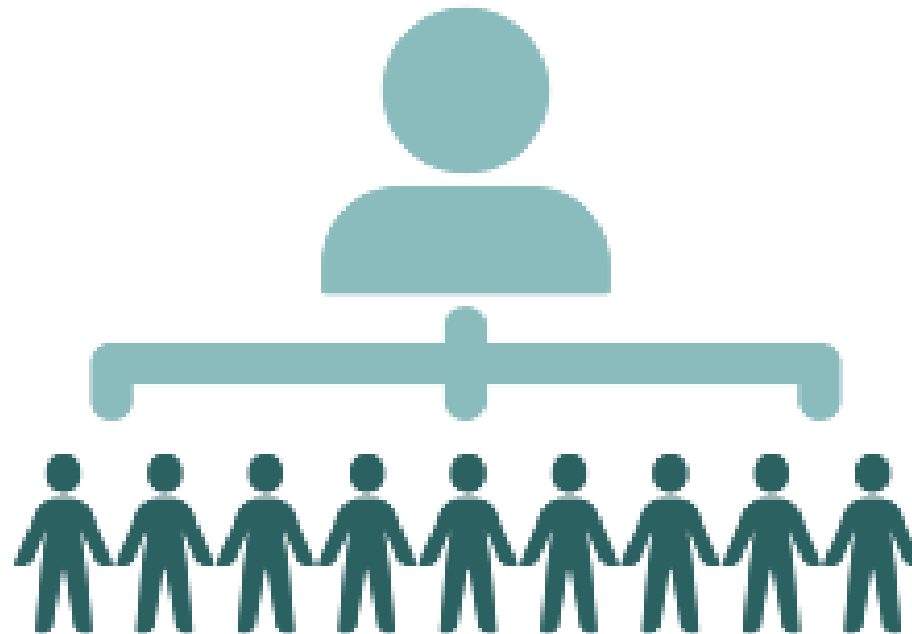
Tying it Together

Inclusion and connection improves well-being

Workforce turnover creates barriers to quality of life

Workforce well-being improves outcomes for service recipients

On average, supervisors in
provider agencies oversee nine
staff



Holiday Changes

The holiday season can bring:

- Routine changes
- New or different sensory experiences
- Social demands
- A degree of unpredictability

Complexity of Holidays

fun, joy,
connection

overwhelm,
grief,
disappointment

Grief During the Holidays

Holidays can resurface or amplify grief

- Individuals with I/DD
- Caregivers
- Individual or shared

Behavior as Communication

Changes in typical behavior:

- When
- Where
- For how long
- Intensity

Occurrence of a new behavior

Occurrence of an “old” behavior

Framework for Survival

Framework for Survival



Anticipate

Know what's coming or could come



Prepare

Plan supports and create options



Support

Regulate ourselves and connect



Reflect

Learn for next time

Anticipate Change

What sensory demands are coming?

What social expectations might be overwhelming?

How have past holidays gone?

What staffing or transportation challenges are likely?

What weather is forecasted?

Does the person tend toward loneliness?

Prepare

Visual reminders

Keep all informed

Sensory kits

Spaces for breaks

Backup plans

Support

Offer	Offer emotional predictability
Allow	Allow for degrees of participation
Invite	Invite, but do not require
Show up	Engage without judgement
Encourage	Encourage connection and reflection

Reflect

What worked well?

What was overwhelming?

During and
after, ask:

What supports helped?

What should we adjust?

Anticipate, Prepare, Support, Reflect



Prioritize
connection



Increase
predictability



Anticipate
change



Slow down to
reflect



Contact

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