

Monograph Review

Title: Understanding and Accommodating People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in Independent Living

Author: Pamela Reed Gibson, Ph.D.

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Cost: Up to 20 at no cost, \$3 apiece after

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Via the web at <http://www.ilru.org/Publications/dateShelf.html>

Reviewer: Susan Molloy

Chemical and electrical exposures methodically incapacitate thousands of individuals a year, and slam them into isolation. Pamela Gibson, of Virginia's James Madison University, has written several outstanding books describing the emergence of this burgeoning population, and the crisis of accessibility it raises.

Now she gives us an on-target guidebook, part of ILRU's "Bookshelf" series, to make plain the access and advocacy requirements of these individuals who are being driven away from society at large, and possibly out of your office and your campus.

Dr. Gibson offers a succinct, straightforward primer, a foothold in this version of reality. She describes the rapid emergence of this illness in the U.S., and internationally, what many people with multiple chemical sensitivities and electrical sensitivities (MCS/ES) seek and what protections they must have to survive daily chemical and electrical assaults.

This monograph offers a way to grasp the emergence of people with MCS/ES. She explains what to call this illness and where these people come from, then offers some interpretations of what they want and what they can offer. She backs up every point she makes with solid references, as well as practical suggestions about how to get started and what to expect.

Today, people with MCS/ES have no orientation or rehabilitation programs, no occupational or physical therapy, scant, if any, legal precedents, no accessible housing, and no hospitals to break the fall. This includes Gulf War veterans with MCS/ES – the armed services don't offer them much either.

Wrongly perceived as latecomers or even "non-contributors" to the Disability Rights Movement, people with MCS/ES don't understand why they are not welcomed with open arms into today's disability rights programs and campaigns, let alone Universities and community colleges.

I don't just recommend you get this book. My own survival may depend on your awareness of what this book offers: an overview of the essential components of MCS/ES from Assistive Technology and Durable Medical Equipment to accessible housing, adaptive equipment, personal assistance, and safety from incapacitating electrical exposures and chemical assault.

Susan Molloy, M.A. in Disability Policy, San Francisco State University, Department of Public Administration, lives in the high desert of rural N.E. Arizona on several hundred acres with a dozen households of people with chemical and electrical sensitivity disabilities. Most of the houses are fully wheelchair accessible as well as being constructed and maintained with nontoxic materials. Susan has hammock hooks and plenty of room in the driveway, and welcomes non-smoking, fragrance free, traveling scholars. She can be contacted at: susanm@cybertrails.com