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MCS Book by Els Valkenburg



Launched Worldwide by US Publisher McFarland

Book Review

MCS Book by Els Valkenburg Launched Worldwide by US Publisher McFarland



“My goal is to increase the understanding and acceptance of this environmental illness and spread the knowledge as far and as much as possible.”

A new and very comprehensive book on MCS, *Understanding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity - Causes, Effects, Personal Experiences and Resources*, has been launched worldwide in English. It is suitable for patients, their families, doctors, therapists, students, and others.

Els Valkenburg wrote the original book in Dutch. A year later the book became available in German and now the new English edition has been launched worldwide. It is sold in bookstores and can also be found in libraries, schools, and universities. Each edition is adjusted for the regional differences of the language.

Els is very proud that this project has succeeded after many years of hard work. She says, “My goal is to increase the understanding and acceptance of this environmental illness and spread the knowledge as far and as much as possible. I hope that young people, now supplied with the facts, will not end up like me. Had I received this information 10 years ago, I would not have been forced to live the life of a recluse with multiple chemical sensitivity.”

After Els found out that she had MCS, she discovered that there was little in the way of decent information in the Netherlands, so she started the web-

site www.the-abc-of-mcs.com.

With the exception of her husband, Els lost her entire family due to their unwillingness to understand and lack of respect for her illness. After experiencing this rejection and misunderstanding from her family, friends, and doctors, she decided to write the book. She says her experience gave her the power and motivation to break through from ‘suffering in silence’.

Els is married for 20 years now. She feels blessed that her husband never doubted her situation and is fully supportive of her in every way.

Els hopes that her book will help to improve the lives of other MCS patients, not only their health and living situation, but also their relations with family and friends through understanding and respect.

The book is also suitable for specialists and therapists because it covers current science which is underpinned with research and reports. Most books are written either from a scientific point of view or are based on patients’ own experiences. Els’ book is unique in that it has seven parts and is written based on personal experience, the experiences of others, and on current scientific research.

“Els personal view of multiple chemical sensitivity and environmental illness is supported by scientific research.”

General Information

Els personal view of multiple chemical sensitivity and environmental illness is supported by scientific research. She covers the effects of human exposure to perfume, smoke, air fresheners, cleaning products, exhaust, and other air contaminants which are linked to symptoms such as headaches, allergies, asthma, and fatigue in a question-and-answer format. The book contains additional reports from thirty-seven sufferers and a foreword by Kim Shoppink of Greenpeace, as well as a resource list and an index of related scientific articles.

Outline

Part I: What Is MCS?

This part covers many aspects of MCS, such as the general and scientific approach and topics including the adjustments needed in the life and home of MCS patients. Important and useful information is geared towards MCS patients, those who have simply experienced sensitivity to chemicals, and people who are new to chemical sensitivity. This part is for everyone who takes an interest, from physicians to students, from scientists to non-professionals.

It includes answers to the questions:

Why are MCS patients called yellow canaries?

Perfume never made people ill before; why does it happen now?

Can an MCS patient become ill as a result of something that has no smell?

Isn't MCS just psychological?

Part II: The Personal Story

This part was written because many severe sufferers experience the same type of social problems, such as learning to live with solitude, the loss of family and friends, and maybe having to wear a respirator mask in public. We hope that the recognition and the awareness of not being alone with MCS will provide comfort and strength. It will also help relatives of patients understand that there are others with similar problems who are looking for a way to live and survive. The author hopes that sharing the details of her own story will lead to more understanding for and from other people.

Part III: The Voices of Others

In this part, people talk about how they fell ill, how they learned – or, in some cases, did not learn – to live with MCS. These are people who work to raise awareness and who try to help others exhibit a positive example. Appearing first are the stories of the owners of several international MCS organizations, followed by the stories of a number of Dutch patients and short stories commemorating several patients who have passed away.

Part IV: The ABCs of MCS: Tips and Advice in Alphabetical Order

This part contains lots of information, tips, advice, links and other reference information. This part can be helpful for MCS sufferers who have both severe and mild cases. It provides support information for MCS patients to change their lives.

Understanding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

Causes, Effects, Personal Experiences and Resources



Els Valkenburg

Foreword by Kim Schoppink

“Its objective is to encourage people to find out more about the subject...”

Part V: Films, Books, Art, Music and Spiritual Nourishment

This part discusses movies and documentaries on MCS, and includes several book reviews. Art, music, and a bit of spiritual nourishment are covered.

Part VI: Further Resources

This part contains links to all the scientific articles mentioned in the book, various companies selling specific MCS products, MCS organizations and patient groups, and other important and useful websites.

Part VII: MCS Handout

This part contains a leaflet as an attachment that can be used to raise awareness and provide others with information. The leaflet can be cut out or cop-

ied and given to family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, physicians, or therapists. This contains the most essential information and serves as an introduction to MCS. Its objective is to encourage people to find out more about the subject and to start showing some understanding and respect for the MCS patient.

For More information on the book: www.the-abc-of-mcs.com

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Causes, Effects, Personal Experiences and Resources

Els Valkenburg

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