

Is There Really No Place Like Home? An Exploratory Study of the Impact of Non-Visitable Homes on Wheelchair Users

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RTC on Community Living Retreat
Sept. 15-16, 2014
Houston, Texas



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Partners

- NCIL
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Background

- Much of the U.S. housing stock does not facilitate social opportunities for the growing number of people living with mobility disabilities
- Several Healthy People 2020 objectives address this problem
- Goal:
To explore and document the lived experience of wheelchair users in attempting to visit the inaccessible homes of family members and friends

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Progress to Date

- Qualitative interviews conducted with 16 wheelchair users with diversity of age, sex, U.S. location, race/ethnicity, SES, disabilities, and equipment type
- Interviews transcribed and data coded using Atlas-ti software
- Data analyzed using phenomenological reduction to determine the essence of the experience

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Overarching Themes

- Social Isolation
- Assault to dignity
- Health consequences
- Difficulty discussing the issue of home barriers

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Lessons Learned

- Many participants emphasized that discussing home barriers with family members and friends was extremely difficult

“First of all I don’t think I’ve ever had a full on conversation about it. It’s not even something that’s comfortable to have a conversation about because so much of it feels like you’re trying to make the other person feel guilty or they feel defensive about it.”

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In Progress

- Two page tear-out resource on discussing home barriers with family/friends and creating temporary access will be published in APMR next month
- Reeve Foundation funded a small grant to create an online visitability resource for their website—in progress

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Next Steps

- Collect quantitative data on effects of invisitable homes with validated survey questions
- Conduct more extensive study of the effect of barriers, particularly of different age groups, perspectives, and life experiences
- Explore ways to facilitate productive discussions regarding barrier removal
- Connect disability and aging communities to pursue visitability policy
- Track progress in passing visitability policy nationwide

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Implications

- For people with disabilities and homeowners: Information that may assist them discussing and removing home barriers
- For advocates: Data on the effects of invisitable homes on individuals and families
- For policymakers: Data on how archaic homebuilding practices affect people with and without disabilities
- For researchers: Understanding of a major source of social isolation

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Acknowledgements

- NIDRR for a Switzer Fellowship to conduct this research – grant # HF133F110017
- The Research and Training Center on independent Living for housing me
- Dr. Glen White for his support and for suggesting the title
- KU students Becky Cannon and Jordyn Gunville for assistance with reliability coding

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) grant number H133B110006. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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Freedom from Want

Norman Rockwell



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Dinner Party

John Callahan



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