



PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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How Can I Make Relocation Easier?

By Donna D. Pinter, Ph.D.

You have a new job, you're moving to a new place – an adventure! Then why do you feel so anxious and apprehensive? New experiences mean the unknown, even if all indicators are positive. The physical and psychological act of moving your worldly goods, family, pets and self from one place to another can accelerate your stress level, especially if you have school-age children. Leaving a familiar place can be traumatic for both adults and children.

To reduce relocation stress, use as much time before the anticipated move to plan, plan, plan. If possible, take at least one trip to your new destination, preferably with your children. If they can't go, take photos and bring back brochures about the area, to help your children become more comfortable with their new home.

The services of a relocation company or a real estate agency can provide a good deal of helpful information, as can the Internet or a commercial on-line network.

When you pack, label all the boxes – and use bright-colored markers for those boxes containing necessities you'll need immediately upon arrival. Make time to say goodbyes. Have copies of your new address to give to your and your children's friends. Children have an especially difficult time parting from their friends, so try to have all the friends visit and take photos of them all together.

Count on glitches. They probably will happen, but they'll pass. Don't expect to have your new household running smoothly immediately. For a while when you arrive, go easy on yourself. Take-out food will help, as will going to a movie.

Many things, like meeting new people, take time. Explore your new community, let people know you're new to the area, and indulge yourself with phone calls to old friends.

Talk to someone who can help. If you would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please try our Psychologist Locator.