## Q&A: Educator Pedagogical Approach

Assessing Social Determinants of Health: A Classification Tool for Functioning and Disability

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***Tell us about the background of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.***

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and endorsed by the United Nations in 2001. It is the sister classification to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) used worldwide in health systems for reporting data and coding for insurance reimbursement systems.  Like the ICD, the ICF provides a standard language for communicating information about functioning between health professionals, health and social systems, and different countries. The ICF framework is used for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels. With increased participation of social workers on interdisciplinary teams and the integration of the ICF in other professional scopes of practice, it serves as a useful resource for social workers.

***Share with us a bit about how you became involved with the WHO's international classifications.***

I had the opportunity to assist with the WHO Field Trials of the ICIDH-2 (the predecessor of the ICF) for the United States. Subsequently, I was able to present part of the U.S. report at my first WHO Annual Meeting in 1998 in Tokyo, Japan. I also helped with the WHO Taskforce on Environmental Factors, which became an official section in the ICF in 2001. The inclusion of the environment and information on its impact on individual functioning was a major accomplishment. In addition to questions regarding support and relationships and the physical environment, the environmental section includes questions on services, systems, and policies. See the Environmental Factors section of the ICF Checklist on page 3. Over 20 years later, I am still involved with educating social workers and other professionals about international classifications.

*What social work courses can use this education resource?*

This teaching resource includes content useful for undergraduate and graduate courses, particularly practice courses that address assessment, intervention, and evaluation. It can also be useful in other courses, such as health and social policy, international social work, disability, and interprofessional courses.

*What are your goals in sharing this piece?*

Increased awareness about the usefulness of international classifications among social workers is the primary goal. International classifications provide a mechanism for a common language to share health and functioning information between health systems and service providers. With greater emphasis on interprofessional teams, it makes sense that social workers become familiar with these standardized systems. Also, there are increased possibilities of coding and billing for the social work profession, so training on international classification systems is essential for enhanced job roles and value for social workers in the workplace.



Dr. Patricia Saleeby is associate professor and undergraduate social work program director in the Department of Sociology, Criminology & Social Work at Bradley University. She is a collaborating member of the World Health Organization Functioning and Disability Reference Group. She was one of the first social workers worldwide involved in the development of the international classification of functioning and health, and she has trained more than 1,000 people across professions over the past 20 years.

# PART 3: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- *Environmental factors make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Qualifier in environment:* | **0** No barriers | **0** No facilitator |
| *Barriers or facilitator* | **1** Mild barriers | **+1** Mild facilitator |
| | **2** Moderate barriers | **+2** Moderate facilitator |
| | **3** Severe barriers | **+3** Substantial facilitator |
| | **4** Complete barriers | **+4** Complete facilitator |

| *Short List of Environment* | *Qualifier barrier or facilitator* |
|---|---|
| **e1. PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY** | |
| **e110** For personal consumption *(food, medicines)* | |
| **e115** For personal use in daily living | |
| **e120** For personal indoor and outdoor mobility and transportation | |
| **e125** Products for communication | |
| **e150** Design, construction and building products and technology of buildings for public use | |
| **e155** Design, construction and building products and technology of buildings for private use | |
| **e2. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN MADE CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENT** | |
| **e225** Climate | |
| **e240** Light | |
| **e250** Sound | |
| **e3. SUPPORT AND RELATIONSHIPS** | |
| **e310** Immediate family | |
| **e320** Friends | |
| **e325** Acquaintances, peers, colleagues, neighbours and community members | |
| **e330** People in position of authority | |
| **e340** Personal care providers and personal assistants | |
| **e355** Health professionals | |
| **e360** Health related professionals | |
| **e4. ATTITUDES** | |
| **e410** Individual attitudes of immediate family members | |
| **e420** Individual attitudes of friends | |
| **e440** Individual attitudes of personal care providers and personal assistants | |
| **e450** Individual attitudes of health professionals | |
| **e455** Individual attitudes of health related professionals | |
| **e460** Societal attitudes | |
| **e465** Social norms, practices and ideologies | |
| **E5. SERVICES, SYSTEMS AND POLICIES** | |
| **e525** Housing services, systems and policies | |
| **e535** Communication services, systems and policies | |
| **e540** Transportation services, systems and policies | |
| **e550** Legal services, systems and policies | |
| **e570** Social security, services, systems and policies | |
| **e575** General social support services, systems and policies | |
| **e580** Health services, systems and policies | |
| **e585** Education and training services, systems and policies | |
| **e590** Labour and employment services, systems and policies | |
| **ANY OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS** | |
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