

## **International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)**

### **What is the ICF?**

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2001 (Resolution WHA-54.21) and provides a standard language and framework for describing and organizing information on functioning and disability.

The ICF provides a framework for the description of human functioning on a continuum. It classifies functioning, not people. The ICF provides a hierarchy of classifications and codes via which a person's functioning is conceived as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors.

The ICF defines functioning and disability as multi- dimensional concepts relating to:

- The body functions and structures of a person
- The activities a person does and the life areas in which he or she participates; and
- The factors in her or his environment that affect these experiences.

Components of functioning and environmental factors which are classified in the ICF; are also classified in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD).

The ICF is used across broad sectors including health, disability, rehabilitation, community care, insurance, social security, employment, education, economics, social policy, legislation and environmental design and modification.

### **Value of using ICF**

The ICF provides a universally applicable framework and language to advance the development of policies and services to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The ICF:

- recognises the role of environmental factors in the creation of disability and the importance of participation as a desired outcome, as well as underlying health conditions;
- is in tune with current trends towards a greater focus on long-term health and functional outcomes in the health and community services fields;
- presents an overarching conceptual framework for the development and analysis of joined up data to support a wide range of government policies;
- incorporates key concepts from a wide range of fields relating to human functioning, and offers an extensive menu from which concepts and items can be selected for the design of information systems, or for targeted clinical or research applications; and
- provides detailed hierarchical sets of codes to assist in the collection of data.

**Resources for ICF Education**

The WHO online browser ([www.who.int/classifications/icfbrowser](http://www.who.int/classifications/icfbrowser)) includes all current ICF codes and definitions in six languages.

An ICF e-learning tool [<https://www.icf-elearning.com/>] introduces users to the ICF, provides examples and exercises to test your knowledge about the ICF.

An ICF Practical Manual (V0.9) is available and provides examples of practical applications of the ICF [<https://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>]. Also on the website is the ICF Checklist and the WHO-DAS 2.0 as tools to use the ICF.

There is also a website (<http://icfeducation.org>) which provides access to other resources and ICF users network

**Contact Information:**

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