
Preface

In 2009, the first edition of our *Assessing Impairment* text was published. At that time, it was still the case that a consensus definition of functional impairment in human behavior was still a distant goal. Significant progress has been made since the publication of this first edition in 2009. However, it is still the case that the definition of impairment varies widely despite the World Health Organization's efforts to create a standardized nomenclature for the assessment of human impairment. A recent Internet search of functional impairment in people resulted in tens of thousands of peer-reviewed and related articles focused on understanding, defining, evaluating, and treating impairment as a consequence of broad physical, emotional, and environmental phenomena. With the publication of the new DSM-5 (APA, 2014) and ICD-10 (ICD, 2010), the fields of medicine, allied health, and mental health are increasingly directed to appreciate disorders and disabilities as foundationally defined and understood by the level of impairment they cause. In this second edition volume, we have added a number of new chapters, particularly those related to the development of valid and reliable tools to assess impairment, as well as updated many of the chapters from the original volume. We have attempted to examine the methodologies behind the measurement of impairment. Developmental, legal, ethical, and social issues suggest that a comprehensive and consensually based understanding of impairment is essential in the treatment of medical, mental health, and educational challenges, adversities, disabilities, and disorders.

We have devoted our professional lives to the identification, assessment, and treatment of the developmental, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional problems that impact a significant percentage of our population across the life span. Though we are still a long way from understanding all of the powerful forces that ultimately combine to explain why some very disabled individuals lead lives of minimal impairment and vice versa, since 2009 the field has made significant progress. It is now well accepted that not all individuals with similar disabilities, disorders, or symptoms are equally impaired in everyday life. We continue to anticipate that the examination of impairment and its relevance to diagnosis and treatment will define

a new era in our understanding of medical, mental health, and educational disabilities. We continue to be indebted to the creative and visionary ideas of the contributors to this volume. Their thoughts and research will shape the future of this important field.

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