



Understanding and Utilizing the ICF Model for Effective Patient Care

Prerequisites

Students should be moderately familiar with the ICF model prior to this learning experience. This learning experience is designed to reinforce knowledge using a case study. Students should ideally have completed a separate activity in which they watch several videos of Ben and formulate an examination complete with findings (see “Ben - Physical Therapy Initial Evaluation”).

Links to helpful resources

[ICF model overview WHO website](#)

[ICF model in detail](#)

The completed ICF template is included in the ICE Faculty Zone. There is a blank ICF template attached to the student assignment.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, the successful student will:

1. Gain a better understanding of the biopsychosocial model construct of the ICF model
2. Review and define the terms health condition, impairment, activity, and participation
3. Differentiate between internal and external contextual factors
4. Properly assign a finding from Ben’s examination as an impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction according to the ICF model

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5. Problem solve findings from Ben's examination as either an internal or an external contextual factor according to the ICF and discuss potential overlap areas in the ICF model
6. Discuss ways in which the ICF model can be used for treatment planning

Watch

Watch the following videos of Ben (001):

- **Acute Care Part 1: Bed Mobility Scooting Up in Bed**
- **Acute Care Part 2: Monitoring Blood Pressure in Supine**
- **Acute Care Part 3: Monitoring Blood Pressure While Sitting**
- **Acute Care Part 4: Dizziness while Standing**
- **Acute Care Part 5: Bed to Chair Transfer**

Learning Activities

1. Begin by reinforcing how the biopsychosocial model differs from the disability model and elicit rationale from students as to why this model was adopted worldwide.
2. Have students work in small groups to review the terms impairment (body function/structure), activity (functional task) and participation (life roles). If concepts are unclear, giving generic examples can be helpful (ie. body structure=muscles and body function=strength).
3. Have the students then review the difference between internal (personal) factors and external (environmental) factors. Students should be reminded that these can be further defined as positive or negative.
4. Have students work in small groups or as individuals, and start by having them review the chart and medical background information of Ben, a young stroke survivor.
5. Ask the students to identify what they think is Ben's primary health condition. Ben has multiple co-morbidities so guidance will be necessary. Discuss how Ben's health conditions impacted the examination process (they will have seen this in the videos).
6. Continue having the students complete the ICF template filling out what they determine to be his impairments, functional activity limitations, and participation restrictions as well as his contextual factors. Remember to have the students differentiate between positive and negative factors in each category.
7. Discuss which impairments in body structure and function they identified in Ben. Encourage them to be specific as this will aide in treatment planning later (ie. instead of 'decreased strength' encourage them to document 'decreased RUE and RLE motor control').
8. Continue on with each category, having students make choices, rationalize their choices, and correct misunderstandings.
9. Emphasize that for patients like Ben, most goals should focus on the activity domain since that is most important to the patient, while not losing sight of how impairments influence function.

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10. The difference between activity and participation can be difficult for students to grasp- give several examples to assist in understanding.
11. Elicit discussion on how the ICF model seeks to treat the patient as a whole person and strives to account for the many factors that influence recovery from a health condition.

Optional Activity for Active Learning

Have the classroom labeled with 6 stations, one for each area of the ICF. Give each student an index card with a statement on it - either from Ben's case or more generic statements (ie. patient demonstrates 3+/5 strength of left knee extensors; patient has cardiomyopathy, etc.). Ask the students to determine on their own which station they should go to in order to be correctly categorized on the ICF model. Once all students have made a choice, have each group discuss if they think the correct choice was made. Instructors can then have each student read their index card aloud - if the larger group thinks they are at the incorrect station they vote that person 'off the island.' It's a fun way to encourage everyone to participate, it gives a good example of concepts of documentation, and students can 'play the game' on their own making up their own statements or using the index cards instructors make available at the institution.

Goal writing using the ICF

Students may not realize that the ICF is helpful when writing functionally based goals that are salient to the patient.

It's helpful to give an example of well written versus not so well written goals for someone like Ben.

Generic goal: In 2 weeks, patient will ambulate up and down stairs with minimal assist of one.

ICF based goal: In 2 weeks, patient will ambulate up and down 4 stairs with assistive device and CG assist of his father in order to access the front door of his apartment.