



Assessing Impairment: From Theory to Practice

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Impairment and *disability* are widely used terms, yet considerable disagreement exists as to their relationship?especially when *impairment* means different things to different professionals in the fields of mental health, medicine, and education. Although diagnostic criteria for various disorders are clearly detailed in the DSM-IV and elsewhere, criteria for impairment remain elusive. And patients with severe limitations but minimal symptoms, or the reverse, further complicate the discussion.

The first in-depth treatment of the theory, definition, and evaluation of this core concept, *Assessing Impairment: From Theory to Practice* cuts through the confusion and cross-talk. Leading scholars and clinicians offer a robust evidence base for a much-needed reconceptualization of impairment within the context of diagnosis and disability, arguing for a wide-ranging quality-of-life perspective. This contextual approach to assessment goes beyond mere symptom counting, resulting in more accurate diagnosis, targeted interventions, and improved patient functioning.

Within this concise but comprehensive volume, coverage focuses on key areas including:

- Current conceptualizations from the DSM-IV and other medical models.
- Methodologies for measuring symptom severity and impairment.
- Social/behavioral issues, such as resilience, adaptive behaviors, and family environment.
- Developmental issues across the life span.
- Legal and ethical questions and civil rights issues.
- Impairment and disability as they relate to trauma.

The interdisciplinary model proposed in *Assessing Impairment* gives clinicians vital tools for working with the unique limitations and strengths of every patient. Child, school, and educational psychologists will find it particularly useful, given the critical importance of early detection and the complexity of young people's lives.

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