

## "ICF SPOTLIGHT" ON SUSAN STARK, PH.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Occasionally in the NACC ICF Newsletter, we turn the "ICF Spotlight" onto a North American scientist or other professional, in recognition of their contributions to the development or implementation of the ICF in the U.S. or Canada.

In this issue of the Newsletter, we are proud to feature in that Spotlight our colleague Susan L. Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, from St. Louis, Missouri.

"Susie" currently serves as Assistant Professor of Neurology and Occupational Therapy at the Washington University School of Medicine, in St. Louis, a joint appointment since 2005.

Professor Stark is fundamentally familiar with the ICF. Susie is also a long-time proponent for regularly using the ICF in clinical OT settings. She served as an ICIDH-2 Beta Field Test evaluator, and a liaison to WHO from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) during the ICIDH revision process. Susie has lectured about the ICF as a short-course instructor, through resources provided by NACC and by the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange at our annual ICF Conferences. Susie informed us that she now conventionally incorporates the ICF into her classroom and clinical instruction sets for her OT students, in fact serving as a pacesetter for infusing the ICF into regular OT curricula. Susie is a Registered and Licensed Occupational Therapist, and recently earned appointment as a Fellow of the AOTA. She is also a member of the Gerontological Society of America, and the Environmental Design Research Association. Moreover, as a clinician and investigator, Susie utilizes the ICF as the rubric for her independent and collaborative research on quantifying the effects of environmental barriers and home modifications among elderly and disabled persons.

Recently Susie collaborated with Drs. Geoff Reed and Lynn Bufka in a series of evaluations among various methods for teaching clinicians about and how to use the ICF. During this decade, along with Reed and Bufka, Professor Stark has been a substantial contributor to the American Psychological Association's *Procedural Manual and Guide for a Standardized Application of the ICF: A Manual for Health Professionals*. These authors presented a summary of research regarding ICF teaching methods at the 2007 NACC ICF Conference in Niagara Falls, NY. These authors have also submitted a manuscript on this topic for publication in *Disability and Rehabilitation*; a preliminary version of the paper was presented at the 2007 WHO-FIC Annual Meeting, which can be reviewed at the following website link: [https://crs.sanita.fvg.it/WHO/Documents/WHOFIC2007\\_D069.pdf](https://crs.sanita.fvg.it/WHO/Documents/WHOFIC2007_D069.pdf)

Professor Stark's educational background exhibits a path toward the type of research she and her colleagues conduct today: evaluating the effects of environmental barriers. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Exercise and Health Science at Alma College in Michigan, and in 1989, the Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy at Washington University in St. Louis. Susie's early career included hospital-based and community OT practice with the Veterans Administration and several schools in the St. Louis area, followed by a return to Washington

University as an Instructor. Susie earned the Ph.D. degree in Environmental and Behavioral Science in 1998 at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Today Professor Stark's research emphasizes identifying and quantifying the influence of environmental barriers on social participation among persons with disabilities. Another aspect of that research involves measuring the effects of environmental or home modification interventions, both at the individual and community levels. With colleagues in the Program in Occupational Therapy, including Drs. David Gray and Holly Hollingsworth and Ms. Kerri Morgan, Professor Stark has been an investigator in the CDC-funded, ICF-oriented studies entitled "Development of a Community Health Environmental Checklist" and "Mobility, Disability, Participation and the Environment." The latter study generated a validated instrument that captures self-reported difficulties in participation or the effects of environmental barriers that restrict participation, the "Participation Survey/Mobility" (PARTS/M), and the "Facilities and Barriers Survey for Mobility-Limited Individuals" (FABS/M). Bravo!

As if that isn't enough to keep any ICF researcher busy, Susie is the new mother of daughter Sophie, who joined a household that also includes puppy Harry and husband Paul. In those fleeting moments of spare time, Susie enjoys yoga, jogging, and photography.

You can review Professor Stark's Washington University faculty web page at this link: <http://aladdin.wustl.edu/ot/otweb.nsf/F/2C7D243B26162051862571E1007387AB?OpenDocument>

Below this entry, we've provided a short bibliography of some of Professor Stark's recent contributions to the ICF literature. We also encourage readers to correspond with Susie at the following Washington University E-Mail address: [starksu@msnotes.wustl.edu](mailto:starksu@msnotes.wustl.edu)

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Gray DB, Hollingsworth HH, Stark SL, Morgan KA. A subjective measure of environmental facilitators and barriers to participation for people with mobility limitations. Article in Press, Corrected Proof, accepted October 12, 2007, available online October 12, 2007, accessed January 15, 2008, *Disability and Rehabilitation* 2007 (October 12); Epub ahead of print; DOI: 10.1080/09638280701625377.