SPOTLIGHT ON MARCIA SCHERER, Ph.D.

Each month we try to "spotlight" someone who is making a difference with ICF. Marcia Scherer directs the ICF part of the "Cornell ICF Project" (the NIDRR-funded Rehabilitation Research and Training Center [RRTC] on Disability Demographics and Statistics directed by Dr. Andrew Houtenville). She is also Editor of the journal *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, an official journal of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM). We would not be surprised at all to see a future issue of this prestigious journal devoted to the ICF!

Marcia was also honored this spring with the invitation to serve on the National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research, the officially chartered body advising the directors of the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR), National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on scientific matters and policies related to NCMRR's programs. Appointment to this Advisory Board is indicative of all the members' substantial credentials as leaders in the various rehabilitation fields, including Assistive Technology (AT) in Professor Scherer's case.

Professor Scherer has earned fellowships in several important disciplines. She is a Fellow of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. Moreover, within the American Psychological Association (APA), she is a Fellow of the APA in Rehabilitation Psychology; and a Fellow of the APA in Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology.

Marcia is a collaborator on the NIDRR-funded Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) for the Advancement of Cognitive Technologies, based at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. She regularly works with teams of rehabilitation professionals in Australia, England, Ireland and Italy on assistive technology assessments and services.

Marcia writes: "The ultimate focus of the ICF is on the whole person in a social context. The ICF is based on the biopsychosocial model, an integration of medical and social models. This has great appeal to me since the University of Rochester is the home of the biopsychosocial model! – it all started here with George Engel, M.D., psychiatry, in the 1970’s."

Marcia points out that even though ICF codes pertaining to AT are located in the Environmental Factors domain, in a category labeled Products and Technology, the overall value of AT resources are ultimately determined by their impact on daily activities and participation in community life, as well as on such personal factors as coping styles, education, profession, and current experience. For individuals with disabilities, ATDs (Assistive Technology Devices) can facilitate independence in accomplishing activities (i.e., the capacity or capability to execute tasks or actions such as reading, writing, walking or moving, dressing, and eating). She views ATDs as valuable facilitators of activity performance and participation in a wide variety of life situations.
The evaluation of the impact of assistive technologies on daily activities and community participation, and measurement strategies for assessing these outcomes, represent important areas of AT research.

Marcia's ICF-specific publications include the following:


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Dr. Scherer reports that her favorite hobby is "extreme rock hounding." Several times a year she can be found in Colorado or Utah digging around in the mountains and looking for minerals and fossils. Her favorite? Petrified wood from the Jurassic or Triassic periods.

Here is Professor Scherer's contact information:

Marcia J. Scherer, Ph.D., M.P.H., FACRM
President
Institute for Matching Person and Technology
486 Lake Road
Webster, NY  14580
Phone:  (585) 671-3461
E-Mail:  Marcia.IMPT97@aol.com
Website:  http://members.aol.com/IMPT97/MPT.html

And, her faculty address is:
Associate Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
University of Rochester Medical Center
601 Elmwood Ave., P.O. Box 664
Rochester, NY 14642
Website: http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/pmr/fac/scherer.html

And, her journal editorial board address website is:
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