



# **The Construction of a New Classification of Family and Individual Social Problems**

## **Principles and Dilemmas**

Tal Arazi  
Yekoutiel Sabah  
Meital Weisman  
Noa Sher

### **Why do we need a classification of characteristics and needs of children- at-risk and their families?**

- To define the areas of intervention by the social services
- To assist in providing reliable data for policymakers and managers
- To serve as a lingua franca across services and hierarchies
- To ensure reliable assessment of clients' needs for the formulation of outcome-oriented intervention
- To support policy implementation
- To encourage learning and reflection

## **Main issues**

- The need to ensure validity and reliability of the data collected
- The challenge of implementing new terminology especially in a multi-organizational arena
- Implementation process as a tool to encourage outcome-oriented practice, learning and innovation

## **In Israel: The present collection of data is insufficient and arbitrary**

- No systematic data collection on main issues
- No emphasis on specific needs of children and adolescents in areas such as child neglect, juvenile risk behaviors, etc.
- No emphasis on the needs of a family as a whole, such as family exclusion, multidimensional poverty
- The data collected are often insufficient, ambiguous and unreliable
- A number of units and programs collect specific data, but do not share or merge them with others

## The Israeli Initiative

In 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services and the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute initiated a collaborative process to develop a comprehensive classification of the characteristics and needs, at the family and individual level, of the various groups served by the Israeli social services, including families and children at risk.



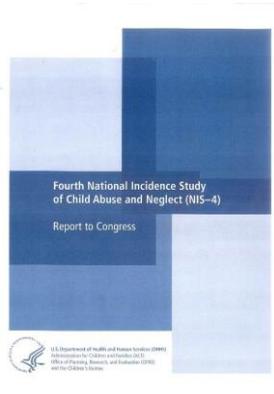
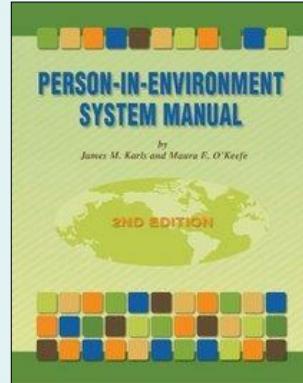
## PIE: A New Language for Social Work

**T**HE SOCIAL WORK profession has long been struggling to establish its identity and, in particular, to assert its independence and uniqueness among the human services professions. An important step in this struggle is the development of a new method unique to social work that describes, classifies, and codes the problems of clients. Developed under a grant from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the system, called "PIE" (for person-in-environment), provides social work practitioners in all settings with a common language for describing the problems

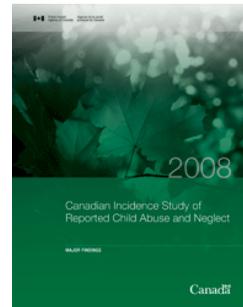
**James M. Karls**  
**Karin E. Wandrei**

*Developed under a grant from the National Association of Social Workers, a new system for describing, classifying, and coding the problems of adult clients of social workers is presented. Using the organizing concept of "person-in-environment," the new system succinctly notes social role, environmental, psychiatric, and health problems, and client strengths. Concepts and theories incorporated into the system are discussed, as are reliability*

*tion of their severity and whether they are acute or enduring. Axis V in DSM-III-R helps professionals estimate the client's global functioning (a person's psychological, social, and occupational functioning as measured by the global assessment of functioning [GAF] scale) at the time of the assessment and the client's highest functioning on the GAF scale for a few months during the past year. However, the major focus of DSM-III-R is still on mental disease, and in keeping with the medical model, this system stresses treatment of the disease first and the alle-*



### The Child Trends Indicator



## **Principles: Content**

- Exhaustive **and** mutually exclusive
- Generic **and** unique
- Universal **and** specific
- Suitable for professionals and for client self-definition
- Needs **and** strengths
- Individual **and** environmental (family and community) needs
- Differentiation between clients' characteristics **and** clients' needs
- Simple **and not** simplistic

## **Principles: Development Process**

- Reliance on a variety of sources of knowledge:
  - Professional literature
  - Policy papers
  - Laws and regulations
  - Experts
- Process of ongoing dialogue and feedback
  - Inter-organizational steering committee
  - Several rounds of feedback from practitioners and managers
- Pre-tests
- Continuous Updating

## Principles: Use

- Glossary
- Clusters of problems and needs
- Training during implementation
- Computerized data collection as an integral part of case management

## Example: The structure

Needs		
Individual	Family	Characteristics
3 clusters of violence, abuse and neglect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being abused/ neglected <u>within</u> the family</li> <li>• Being abused/ neglected <u>outside</u> the family</li> <li>• <u>Offensiveness toward a family member</u></li> </ul>	Poverty and exclusion	Diagnosed physical, sensory, cognitive or mental disability
Functional, personal & social barriers	Relationship difficulties within the family	Special life conditions (such as Holocaust survivor; primary caregiver, migrant worker)
Risk behaviors, social marginality and delinquency		

### **Example: Emotional, Cognitive and Social Neglect**

Consistent and ongoing pattern of neglect of the emotional, scholastic and social needs of minors and vulnerable people by those responsible for their well-being. The pattern is one of non-availability and lack of emotional responsiveness – no expressions of affection, love, concern, belonging, care and support, no meaningful stimulation, no opportunities to learn and develop scholastically, including having no contact with the educational/ therapeutic framework of the child or incompetent individual, and no guidance about social norms and behavioral limits.

13

### **Example: Disengagement from studies and employment**

Young adults and adolescents who are neither working nor studying in a normative framework for their age, including those who are formally enrolled in a framework but do not attend (disengaged youth).

14

## **Main challenges**

- Balancing the needs of policymakers, administrators and practitioners
- Balancing stability and flexibility
- Reflecting an integration of different sources
- The introduction of a new agenda
- Mobilizing broad consent in a fragmented field of work
- outdated computer system