People live and exist in relation to their environment and within the context of their lives. Thus, it stands to reason that context and environment can have a significant impact on function and functional movement. Modifying or changing the context or environment may enhance a client’s ability to participate in occupations of choice. Both the World Health Organization (WHO) *International Classification of Functioning and Disability* (ICF) and the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, 2nd Edition* (OTPF-2) discuss the impact of contextual and environmental factors on function and disability. The WHO (2001) essentially states that a client’s disability resides within the society, and not within the individual. In other words, a client with a disabling condition or diagnosis is hindered by societal norms, expectations, environmental accessibility, and other factors. The client with a diagnosis is not disabled by the actual medical condition. In this sense, if no stereotypes or stigmas existed and universal design was widely accepted, then an individual with a medical disability should be able to function independently in all aspects of society.

The ICF lists two groups of contextual factors: personal and environmental. Within the ICF, personal factors are considered intrinsic, or internal to the person, while environmental factors are considered extrinsic, or external to the individual. The key is how these factors impact the person’s ability to function by either facilitating or hindering performance. The OTPF-2 lists cultural, personal, physical, social, temporal, and virtual aspects as factors of the context and environment. As in the ICF, environment refers to external situations. However, environment includes both physical and social aspects in the OTPF-2. Gold Box 3-1 defines context and environment as presented in the OTPF-2. This chapter will follow the definitions of the OTPF-2 as they relate to context and environment.

**CONTEXTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

**Contextual Factors**

The domain of context and environment in the OTPF-2 is divided into six areas. Context includes a cluster of four inter-related variables that may exist both within the individual or external to the individual. This cluster of interconnected perspectives includes all of the cultural, personal, temporal, and virtual aspects of a person’s life (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2008). The domain subsection of environment, as stated earlier, includes both social and physical aspects pertaining to the overall environment of the individual.