

[Part I]

*Social Competence  
and Social Noncompetence*



Part 1 addresses the concepts of social competence and social noncompetence and their behavioral manifestations. Chapter 1 reviews multidisciplinary literature concerned with defining these concepts and various associated conceptual designations. It explores the literature on social skills, viewed as manifestations of social competence, and identifies a developing literature in social work reflecting practice with socially unskilled populations.

Individual social competence is explored in chapter 2 as the necessary condition for group forming and group functioning. Individual social competence is seen to evolve in the increasingly social behaviors of children's groups at each age-stage. A description of this behavioral progression makes visible a set of social tasks to be undertaken at each age-stage, worked out in successive group experiences. Progressions in the development and functioning of group-as-group are seen to evolve in tandem with the accomplishment of each social task, achieving greater complexity as an entity as the social functioning level of its members advances. The portrait

of social tasks is identified as a tool for assessing the social functioning level at which socially noncompetent persons may be arrested, indicating social tasks still to be accomplished.

Chapter 3 identifies a class of threshold entities whose participants lack the social competence to generate group. It identifies a range of populations whose circumstances create alterations to normal social interaction, presents a portrait of features that characterize their social functioning, and discusses varieties of flawed or aberrational interaction.