

Introduction

Significant changes occurring in the organisation and practice of public health demand a fresh look at some of the established public health concepts, as well as a consideration of new and emerging themes.

Assuming no previous experience of public health and minimal knowledge of public health concepts, theories, principles and domains, this is the ideal guide for those new to the public health field. It is essential reading for those involved in public health practice. It will also appeal to a wider audience of professionals, lay people and students who are interested in public and community health.

Key Concepts can support programmes of study, or readers may use the book as a reference point, for supplementary reading or to provide an introduction to a specific concept. Public health lecturers, particularly undergraduate lecturers, can use this book to inform their teaching. Examples of appropriate programmes may include undergraduate degrees in community and specialist practice community nursing and public health where the emphasis is on application of theory to practice, as well as more generic foundation degrees. This book will meet a need in this new market, providing a succinct introduction to theoretical concepts and practical applications that students can then build on to meet their specific requirements.

The book aims:

- To introduce undergraduate students to the key concepts of public health.
- To reacquaint public health practitioners and the wider public health workforce with the key concepts of public health.
- To be used as a source book and educational tool for lecturers involved in teaching public health.

The concepts are organised into sections based on the knowledge that students, public health practitioners and the wider public health workforce need to support practice; practical applications of the concepts; and broader concepts affecting specific populations.

The concepts will be grouped into the following sections:

- **Theoretical concepts** – the building blocks for public health practice. These will consist of common subject areas for definition and discussion, explaining how and why these concepts are necessary for public health practice.
- **Practical concepts** – for application/implementation and evaluation of public health practice. These will have a practical focus with case history examples to illustrate application of the concept.
- **Populations and Public Health Practice** – This section will look at public health of populations, focusing on their specific needs using settings approaches where relevant.

Public health is often perceived as theoretical with no clear application of theory to practice; this book aims to explicitly demonstrate this application of theory through the use of case studies and application to practice examples.

Frances Wilson and Andi Mabhala