This book is dedicated to my family for their support and tolerance; to all those at The George Washington University and at Jones & Bartlett Learning who are behind the Essential Public Health series; and, most importantly, to all those already working or planning to work on the front lines to help improve the lives and health of so many people in the United States and around the world. Your work is a testament to humanity at its best.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td></td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Author</td>
<td></td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I</td>
<td>On Health and Behavior—An Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Introduction: The Links Between Health and Behavior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Setting: Daily Life</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Complex Social–Ecological Web</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In This Text</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your Thoughts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Health Issues and Behavior</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Violence</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviors, Theories, and Interventions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Questions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table of Contents

### Section II  On the Roots of Behavior—A Multidisciplinary Survey

#### Chapter 3 Social Behavioral Theory and Its Roots
- Thinking About Theory 27
- The Context of Theory in Western Tradition 28
- Antecedents 31
- Chapter Questions 35
- References 36

#### Chapter 4 Individual Health Behavior Theories
- What Are We Talking About? 37
- The Health Belief Model 37
- The Theory of Planned Behavior (Formerly Known As the Theory of Reasoned Action) 41
- Two Models of Behavior Change in Stages: The Transtheoretical Model and the Precaution Adoption Process Model 45
- Chapter Questions 51
- References 52

#### Chapter 5 Social, Cultural, and Environmental Theories (Part I)
- What Are We Talking About? 53
- Social Cognitive Theory, Formerly Known as Social Learning Theory 53
- Social Network Theory 58
- Social Process Theories and Approaches: Diffusion of Innovations and Social Marketing 61
- Chapter Questions 65
- References 66

#### Chapter 6 Social, Cultural, and Environmental Theories (Part II)
- Communications Theory 67
- Community and Organizational Change 71
- Political Economy 75
- Anthropology and Cultural Theory: Behavior as Adaptation, Behavior as Meaningful and Symbolic 76
- Chapter Questions 79
- References 80

#### Chapter 7 Multilevel Theories
- Now What Are We Talking About? 81
- The Granddaddy: Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory 82
- Flay’s Theory of Triadic Influence 85
- Examples of Other Multilevel Models 89
## Table of Contents

### Chapter Questions 92

### References 93

**Chapter 8**

**Doing Something About It: The Ecological Perspective and the Move from Theory to Practice** 95

Where Do You Start? Picking Your Battles 95
Planning Approaches—A Sampler 96
Chapter Questions 105
References 106

### Section III  Putting Theory into Practice 107

**Chapter 9**

**Communities and Populations as the Focus for Health Promotion Programs** 109

Community Intervention, or Intervention in Community? 109
Community Intervention and the Complexity of Communities 113
Communities as Experts 115
Population-Based Health Promotion 115
Tailoring 116
Sustainability 116
Chapter Questions 117
References 118

**Chapter 10**

**Application of Theory: Schools and Worksites** 119

Settings for Intervention 119
Schools 119
Workplace Settings 124
Chapter Questions 129
References 130

**Chapter 11**

**Application of Theory: Communications Campaigns** 131

Communicating Through the Public Media 131
Communications Campaigns 132
Health Behavior Theory and Communications Campaigns/Mass Media Campaigns 136
Program Examples 138
Chapter Questions 140
References 141

**Chapter 12**

**Application of Theory: Global Health** 143

The Setting: Health in the Global Context 143
The Global Health System 145
Theory and its Application 146
Health Behavior Theory and the Global Setting 149
Program Examples 151
Chapter Questions 154
References 155

Chapter 13 Application of Theory: High-Risk and Special Populations 157
Introduction 157
Applying Behavioral Theory to High-Risk Populations and Contexts 160
Harm Reduction Approaches to Addressing High-Risk Behavior 162
Generative Approaches to Understanding Risk Behavior 163
Chapter Questions 168
References 169

How Does It Relate to Theory? 171
Introduction 171
Evaluation and the Current Program Environment 171
The Types of Evaluation 173
Using a “Logic Model” to Set Up an Evaluation 174
On Evaluation Methods 177
What Kinds of Outcome or Impact? 179
Chapter Questions 181
References 182

Section IV Current Trends 183

Chapter 15 Culture, Diversity, and Health Disparities: Are Current Theories Relevant? 185
Introduction 185
Why Health Disparities? 186
What to Do: How is Theory Connected to Resolving Health Disparities? 190
Chapter Questions 193
References 194

Chapter 16 Career Choices and Social/Behavioral Theory in Public Health: A Brief Introduction 197
The Possibilities 197
Chapter Questions 202

Index 203
Essentials of Health Behavior was one of the first books in the Essential Public Health series, which now includes over 20 books. It set a standard for the series. Dr. Edberg’s writing engages students as he takes them on a journey connecting theory and practice while reassuring them every step of the way. The Second Edition continues in this tradition with its emphasis on making theory come to life using stories and scenarios. A new chapter on multilevel theories takes on the challenge of integrating the multiple factors that influence behavior. Dr. Edberg’s writing allows students to understand these complex theories in ways that relate to their lives.

From cigarette smoking to eating habits to our daily routine, our everyday behaviors affect our health in ways that we often fail to appreciate or even notice. Beyond our individual behaviors, there are larger social and population forces at play in all of our lives, which serve to mold and further reinforce our individual behavior.

Essentials of Health Behavior skillfully combines an emphasis on individual behavior with a clear focus on the social factors that influence the “big picture” population health perspective. Mark Edberg’s approach grounds the practical everyday behaviors within key theories of human behavior drawn from the social sciences. Building on this understanding of health behavior, Essentials of Health Behavior examines a range of methods for changing behavior and applies these to programs in health promotion and disease prevention.

Edberg brings the lessons of extensive teaching experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to his writing, as well as his training and experience as an anthropologist and social researcher with a public health focus. At The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services and its Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, he taught health behavior courses as well as courses that focus on the impact of culture on health. As an anthropologist, he has a unique understanding of the impact cultural and social factors have on individual behavior.

Essentials of Health Behavior can be used in social and behavioral sciences as well as public health curriculums that look at the many factors that affect health behavior. Health behavior is a key building block for a curriculum in health education. In addition, health professions educators in the clinical disciplines are increasingly coming to appreciate that good outcomes rest on understanding the social and economic factors that affect individual behavior. As the behavioral and social sciences become more integrated into preparation for the clinical professions, the second edition of Essentials of Health Behavior provides a structured curriculum designed to fulfill these needs.

Students in a wide range of disciplines will benefit from Essentials of Health Behavior. They will take away key concepts that will serve them well for many years to come. They will find themselves engaged in a voyage of discovery and enjoy the journey.

Richard Riegelman, MD, MPH, PhD
Editor, Essential Public Health series
Health promotion, education, and prevention programs ultimately focus on changing health behavior. But what do we mean when we say “health behavior?” Is health-related behavior really something different than any other behavior? There is no reason to think it is. To help us understand it, we can draw from the fascinating, multidisciplinary, and ongoing quest to try and understand human behavior in general. That, of course, is a big task, and no book can cover that in any adequate way. What we can do is provide an introduction to the kinds of theoretical approaches that are used, or could be used, in developing and implementing health promotion programs, and to show how such approaches are applied to real-life settings.

It is my hope that combining these elements together in one book will fill an important gap for undergraduate programs in public health, and will provide an important piece of the foundation necessary for understanding the field. It is important that students in public health have a solid grounding in social/behavioral theory, and particularly important that they gain a general understanding in this subject area before they proceed to a graduate program or move to direct involvement in prevention and health education programs that apply such theory. Why? Because proper use of theory in public health means, in part, the ability to place particular theoretical approaches in context, to have some sense of their origins, their underlying assumptions, their strengths and weaknesses, and the programs and situations for which they might or might not be most applicable.

More and more, public health interventions and their evaluations are guided by theoretical frameworks. Program goals, program components, and the types of data used as evidence of program success are thus built on specific theoretical underpinnings. Without at least a general background, application of theory can all too easily become formulaic and inappropriate form without substance. A key aim of this book, in that sense, is to provide the groundwork for understanding, assessing, and effectively applying theory.

In that spirit, Essentials of Health Behavior is designed to:

1) Introduce students to the relationship between behavior and a selection of major health issues;
2) Provide an introductory background to the kinds of social and behavioral theories that guide our understanding of health-related behavior and that form the background for health promotion and prevention efforts; and
3) Explore some of the ways in which these theories and approaches are used in applied health promotion efforts.

In the first section, we will introduce the relationship of behavior to health, review a sample of current and ongoing health problems (domestic and international), and, in a broad sense, discuss the relationship of behavior to those health problems. In the second section, we will provide a context from which to understand theory, and survey theoretical perspectives from psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines that offer explanations of human behavior, keeping in mind that health behavior is one domain of human behavior in general—thus linking the field of health promotion and prevention to the broader context of social/behavioral theory. The third section will
introduce students to theory-based program planning and application, providing real-world examples across a range of settings—including community, school, and workplace programs, global health, mass media/communications, and programs targeting special populations. This section will also show how theory links program design, implementation, and evaluation. In the fourth section, current issues in the applied field of health behavior/health promotion will be reviewed, and we will present some of the occupational and career possibilities for which material in the book is relevant.

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

For the Second Edition, data and other information have been updated throughout, with additional applied examples of theoretical applications. A new chapter on multilevel theory has been added in the second section because of the growing recognition that complex community contexts require interventions that address multiple levels.
One can never attempt to do a book alone, and with that in mind, I am deeply grateful to a number of individuals who provided invaluable support and assistance in preparing this book:

- Dr. Richard Riegelman, MD, MPH, PhD, for his leadership in compiling the series and for shepherding everyone through the process.
- Natalie Terens, MPH, for thorough and timely help in preparing the manuscript.
- From the First Edition and carried into this revised edition, input and expert critique from Kristen Corey, PhD (Chapter 2); Deborah Galvin, PhD and Julia Lear, PhD (Chapter 10); Lorien Abroms, PhD (Chapter 11); and Laurie Krieger, PhD (Chapter 12).
- The Department of Prevention and Community Health, School of Public Health and Health Services at The George Washington University, for overall support and expertise.

And of course, thanks to my wife Haykham and children Eleazar and Jordana for tolerating my ever-present box of book-related materials and work that has accompanied me everywhere over the past year.
Mark Edberg, MA, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Department of Prevention and Community Health at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, with secondary appointments in the Department of Anthropology and Elliott School of International Affairs. Dr. Edberg is an applied and academic anthropologist with almost 25 years of experience in social research, interventions, evaluation, strategic planning for agencies, and communication, primarily in public health, in both domestic and global contexts. Key areas of focus have been: high-risk and marginalized populations, social determinants of health, health disparities, minority health, at-risk youth, prevention of youth violence, prevention of HIV/AIDS and STIs, substance abuse, general issues of poverty and health, and theory development. He currently directs a health disparities research center funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), and has directed research and interventions funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH), U.S. Office of Minority Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), and other DHHS agencies. He has been working globally with UNICEF in the Latin America-Caribbean region and with UNICEF-Belize, as Director of the Center on Social Well-Being in the Latin America-Caribbean Region. He has also provided consulting and support for the Organization of American States, USAID, Urban Institute, and local governments, and he maintains an ongoing collaboration with DSG, Inc., a consulting organization, for qualitative research and evaluation efforts. Dr. Edberg teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in social/behavioral theory, qualitative research, and the impact of culture on health, as well as courses in the Anthropology Department. He has published numerous journal articles, and his recent books include a book on culture, health, and diversity, this textbook on social and behavioral theory in public health, an accompanying reader, and a book documenting his U.S.-Mexico border research on narcocorridos and the narcotraficker persona (and implications for popular understanding of risks for violence, HIV/AIDS, and other issues). He is also a recipient of a Fulbright Senior Specialist award and a Fellow of the Society for Applied Anthropology.