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New Resources for Nutrition Educators

BOOK

Social Marketing and Public Health: Theory and Practice.

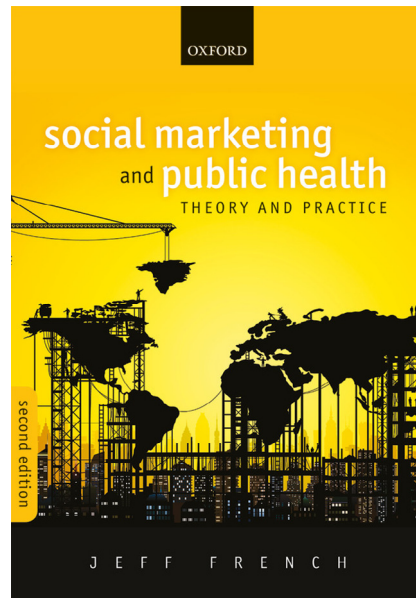
French J. 2017. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016. Softcover book, 243 pp, \$49.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-871769-0.

This is a practical “how-to” guide for those interested in understanding and applying social marketing principles to their public health practice and strategies.—Publisher

This edited text is aimed at social marketing novices and includes a series of 13 user-friendly chapters that cover a range of topics pertaining to social marketing. It is written in accessible language and uses a number of examples from a variety of social marketing efforts in different countries to illustrate concepts described in the text.

The initial chapter frames the overall approach of this text, which uses available information to create a citizen-informed view of public health rather than a top-down approach, thus democratizing the public health enterprise.

Within the author’s presentation of a citizen-informed view of public health, appropriately, no singular social marketing technique, approach, or method is promoted as superior to others. The reader will not find a traditional business marketing approach presented here that stresses product, price, place, and promotion. Choices made in developing, implementing, and evaluating social marketing interventions will depend



on the audience, context, and desired outcomes associated with the intervention.

As stand-alone chapters, the content is well presented and cohesive within each chapter. Those who are looking to understand segmentation concepts or want to know about how to commission a social marketing intervention will find those chapters useful. Brief overviews of behavior change theories and evaluation techniques are also presented; it is surprising, however, that broader evaluation frameworks commonly used in social marketing work (eg, reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance) were not mentioned. There is also a chapter discussing ethical concerns when cre-

ating and using social marketing as an intervention strategy, which are important issues for practitioners to consider.

Viewed as an entire text, some ideas could be more consistently interwoven to make a more cohesive volume. For example, early chapters stress the importance of the intervention leveraging the values of the target population, yet the chapters addressing theoretical approaches and evaluation strategies do not explicitly remind readers of this concern. In addition, some information is given different treatments across different chapters. For example, are the figures labeled “the four ‘forms’ of intervention” (p 40) and “the social marketing value/cost exchange matrix” (p. 88) essentially identical, or are the subtle differences between them important for the reader to notice?

This book provides a general overview of many concepts that are important in social marketing efforts. The presentation of real-world examples and practical steps and checklists are also valuable additions. Those who are planning, implementing, or evaluating social marketing efforts will find this to be a good starting point, but will likely want to supplement this text with additional information.

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