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To the Student

We wrote this exciting textbook for middle school health and wellness classes based on our experiences as professors of psychology (Catherine Sanderson) and biology (Mark Zelman), and as the accomplished authors of high school and college-level textbooks. Our backgrounds give us a deep well of knowledge of the most current scientific theory and research to draw from.

Perhaps the most valuable experience we had in preparing us to write this book is our roles as parents to a combined total of seven children, ages 15 through 29. After all, in writing this book, we both reflected frequently on our experiences as parents and our goal of ensuring that our own children maintain excellent physical, mental and emotional, and social health.

This book includes all of the standard topics found in middle school health and wellness books—including self-talk, self-compassion, and self-care; body positivity, neutrality, and compassion; health effects of vaping; medication and drug abuse (including opioids); digital citizenship and personal digital footprint; how social media affects physical, mental and emotional, and social health; and healthy relationships. We wanted our book to give middle school students the most current health information, presented in an engaging writing style so students would enjoy reading the book. We included a focus on practical health skills that young people can use to develop and promote positive health and wellness habits throughout their lives.

In this new edition, we include information about the COVID-19 pandemic, including the characteristics of a pandemic, controlling disease outbreaks, and disease prevention. We also discuss the influence of stress, such as experiencing a global pandemic, on health and strategies to promote physical and psychological well-being.

As the authors of high school and college-level textbooks, we felt confident in our research and writing abilities, but felt that the pedagogy was better left to health teachers. We would like to thank Lindsay Armbruster for developing the skills-based questions, activities, and resources that are a vital part of this course. We are delighted with the final product, and wish all readers of this book a lifetime of health.





Catherine A. Sanderson Mark Zelman

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