Preface

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Informed by a social justice lens and featuring Canadian content and context, this edited multidisciplinary book focuses on the teaching of sexuality(ies) in higher education. Top Canadian scholars in the sexuality field from various disciplines and fields, including psychology, history, early childhood education, medicine, education, anthropology, occupational therapy, social work, nursing, and community health, as well as Indigenous, queer, gender/women's, porn, equity, and disability studies, bring their experience and expertise to this book. This volume is the first of its kind in North America and its multidisciplinary approach is a rich and untapped area of scholarship, particularly within the helping professions.

Why does this topic warrant an edited collection? As described in more detail in [Chapter 1](#), in the late 1990s, when I was a medical social worker, and patients asked me for advice on sex, sexuality, and related issues, there was little available to me in terms of professional training and support, practical information, patient literature, or resources. More than twenty years later, given the proliferation of sexual content and information across social media and the internet, one might assume that these sex education gaps have been filled by modern research and scholarship. Indeed, it is true that over the last few years, some academic disciplines – for example, psychology, as well as sexuality, public/community health, gender, porn, disability, women's, and queer studies – have made leaps and bounds in sexuality research. However, this has not been the case across all disciplines. I have found that, at least in terms of social work, and what I would describe as professional programs and the helping professions, many educational gaps remain in higher education, especially in teaching about sex and preparing students for future practice in this area.

To fill these gaps, this book provides discussion of current debates and hot topics, celebrates multidisciplinary and diversity, and offers

practical application and recommendations, particularly for those academics responsible for training students to eventually work with vulnerable populations as well as the general public. Thus, this collection is primarily geared toward assisting instructors to provide adequate and appropriate sex education training, knowledge, and opportunities so that their students can explore complex personal and emotional issues; reflect on their attitudes about sex; build skills; and develop confidence so they feel more comfortable with helping others when they are eventually working in their respective fields.

In addition, the book is also aimed at professors and students who are interested in taking on a leadership role in this area, more effectively supporting others, and improving curriculum and the quality of the teaching of sexuality(ies) in their specific discipline. Although not intended specifically as a course textbook, this book, and/or chapters from it, may be of interest to educators in higher education from a variety of fields and can certainly be used as required/recommended reading in a variety of college and university programs and across many generalist courses or in stand-alone sexuality/sexual health courses.

Due to the length constraints of the book, there is limited coverage of sexuality, sexual health, and sex education in field education and placements. This research is necessary and represents a large gap in training and scholarship across multiple disciplines. For future research, some related questions that should be considered are how do we ensure sexuality content is covered in field education; how should field instructors teach/cover this content; how should students be supervised and evaluated for this content and learning; and what activities are best for students to try to learn this content.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank my two daughters, Ashley and Cassie, for their unconditional love and support. I also want to thank the University of Toronto Press and its publishing editor, Meg Patterson, and all the contributors, who worked tirelessly to finish their chapters.