

# Preface to the third edition

This book, fully updated and expanded from the 2nd edition, aims to assist readers to develop the practical skills necessary to care for adults with physical health needs in varied health care settings. Practical nursing skills, carried out with competence and compassion, are highly valued by patients/clients and their families: these skills promote health, recovery and comfort, making an essential contribution to positive healthcare experiences. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (2007) recently highlighted the importance of fundamental skills by explicitly identifying them in their Essential Skills Clusters for pre-registration nursing students. This 3rd edition covers all of the NMC's essential skills as well as other skills which are important in nursing practice. In some environments nurses are more likely to supervise or support others than directly carry out these practical skills. To supervise others in providing quality fundamental care requires a sound knowledge and understanding of these skills, and a commitment to their value.

The book's first chapter explains the caring context for skills, emphasising the importance of the underpinning knowledge and attitudes of the caregiver, as well as the practical components of skills. This chapter also provides guidance to help students maximise learning from their practical experiences. Dignity in care is explored and subsequent chapters address how to promote the dignity of patients and clients when undertaking specific skills in practice. Each chapter starts with practice scenarios related to adults who have physical health conditions, mental health conditions and learning disabilities. The importance of promoting the physical health of people with mental health needs or learning disabilities is increasingly emphasised (Department of Health 2006, 2007). Therefore nurses working in mental health and learning disability settings need sound practical skills, as nurses working primarily with adults with physical health needs do. In this book, skills are discussed with application to the patient/client scenarios, emphasising problem-solving skills and a person-centred, caring approach. The book is interactive, evidence-based and promotes theory-practice links and reflective practice.

While this 3rd edition is particularly applicable to pre-registration nursing students following the adult, mental health and learning disability branches, it is also relevant to care assistants who are studying for qualifications in care, students on a range of assistant practitioner (foundation degree) healthcare-related programmes, and to all those involved in the teaching of practical skills, including university and college lecturers, and practitioners.

Nurses care for people in a wide range of settings in different circumstances so no single term is appropriate to use in every situation. In this book, the terms 'person' and 'people' are often used but in some contexts the terms 'patient', 'client', 'individual' or 'service user' are referred to in relation to people nurses are caring for.

I hope that this book will be really helpful to students who are learning skills for nursing adults and I wish all those using the book a successful and rewarding career.

Lesley Baillie  
January 2009

## REFERENCES

- Department of Health 2006. *Best Practice Competencies and capabilities for pre-registration mental health nurses in England: the Chief Nursing Officer's review of mental health nursing*. London: DH.
- Department of Health 2007. *Good Practice in Learning Disability Nursing*. London: DH.
- Nursing and Midwifery Council 2007. *Introduction of Essential Skills clusters for pre-registration Nursing programmes*. NMC Circular, July 2007