



EMERALD POINTS

**DEVELOPING AND  
IMPLEMENTING  
TEACHING IN  
SENSITIVE SUBJECT  
AND TOPIC AREAS**

A Comprehensive Guide for  
Professionals in FE and HE Settings

**WILLIAM McGOVERN  
AIDAN GILLESPIE  
TOBY BRANDON  
ALISON McINNES**



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A Comprehensive Guide for  
Professionals in FE and HE Settings

EDITED BY

**WILLIAM McGOVERN**

*Northumbria University, UK*

**AIDAN GILLESPIE**

*Leeds Trinity University, UK*

**TOBY BRANDON**

*Northumbria University, UK*

AND

**ALISON McINNES**

*Northumbria University, UK*



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*In loving memory of Kay Brown and Jo Cunningham, two inspirational  
Social Workers who sensitively championed Social Justice.*

*Alison*

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# FOREWORD

The very nature of sensitive issues makes them challenging and anxiety provoking for academic staff to deliver. Few of us feel equipped to wrangle with the thorniest topics in public health, but doing so in a classroom can be even more confronting. We want to translate complex issues into accessible material for an increasingly diverse range of students, without losing the essence of the challenging human experiences those issues contain. ‘Key Concepts and Concerns of Teaching Sensitive Subjects and Topics’ supports this journey by providing chapters exploring a wide range of commonly relevant themes.

A wide-ranging body of experienced authors bring their expertise to subjects like culture, colonialism, and faith. They acknowledge the complex experiences of substance use, poverty, homelessness, caring, and trauma with empathy and sensitivity. By exploring varied roles and identities through lived experience accounts, the text gives an active voice to populations that are often silenced. In addition to learning about the needs of the ‘other’ the authors challenge the reader to understand their own positionality, recognising the power inherent in being an educator.

This text has real-world applications for educators from a wide range of disciplines, delivering teaching for students at all levels. As society hardens its attitudes to some of the most disenfranchised people, facing the most challenging lives, it becomes increasingly important that we counter this by creating empathy and understanding in professional communities. ‘Key Concepts and Concerns of Teaching Sensitive Subjects and Topics’ encourages and supports us to create meaningful spaces to explore issues safely, developing the necessary empathy to meet needs and allow all members of society to flourish and thrive.

Dr Claire Hart  
Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy  
University of Northumbria at Newcastle