

EAT LOVE LIVE

“So what if you’re fat?
You still deserve good healthcare!”

A FREE RESOURCE FOR CLIENTS & CONSUMERS
TO SUPPORT THE PANEL DISCUSSION



*Weight
Stigma*
Awareness Week

EAT LOVE LIVE

EDUCATION

EAT LOVE LIVE

“So what if you’re fat?
You still deserve good healthcare!”

CONTENTS

- What is weight stigma?
- How does weight stigma show up in healthcare?
- Why is weight stigma a problem?
- What is diet culture?
- Ways to advocate for yourself against weight stigma in healthcare settings
- Additional tools to use when accessing healthcare services
- Helpful articles addressing weight stigma
- Where to find more information
- Where to find community



WHAT IS WEIGHT STIGMA?

"Weight stigma refers to the social devaluation, denigration, and marginalization of people who are fat." Calogero, Tylka & Mensinger (2016)

Weight stigma refers to the negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discrimination directed at individuals based on their weight.

This can manifest in various ways, including social exclusion, derogatory comments, or biased treatment in healthcare, employment, and other areas of life. Weight stigma can lead to serious psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, and may also discourage individuals from seeking medical care or engaging in healthy behaviors.

It highlights the societal tendency to equate a person's worth with their body size, which can have harmful consequences for individuals and communities.

Weight stigma is influenced by a combination of cultural, social, and psychological factors:

Cultural Norms: Many societies idolize thinness and equate it with health, success, and beauty. This creates a standard that often marginalizes those who don't fit it.

Media Representation: The media frequently portrays thin individuals as more attractive and capable, reinforcing negative stereotypes about larger bodies.

Stereotypes and Misconceptions: Common beliefs that people who are in larger bodies are lazy or lack willpower contribute to stigma. These oversimplified views ignore the complex factors affecting body weight, including genetics, metabolism, and socioeconomic status.

Health Misunderstandings: There's a tendency to associate body weight solely with health, overlooking the multifaceted nature of well-being. This can lead to discriminatory attitudes in healthcare settings.

Socialization: Individuals may internalize societal biases from a young age, leading to self-stigmatization and perpetuating the cycle of discrimination.

Fear of Judgment: Many people fear being judged for their weight, leading to avoidance of social situations and further perpetuating stigma.

Combating weight stigma requires education, awareness, and a shift in societal attitudes toward body diversity and acceptance.

HOW DOES WEIGHT STIGMA SHOW UP IN HEALTHCARE?

Weight stigma in healthcare can manifest in several harmful ways:

Bias in Treatment: Healthcare providers may make assumptions about a patient's health based solely on their weight, leading to misdiagnoses or inappropriate treatment recommendations.

Derogatory Language: Providers might use judgmental or dismissive language, which can make patients feel ashamed or embarrassed about their bodies.

Inadequate Time and Attention: Patients with higher body weights may find that their concerns are minimized or that they are given less time during consultations, with focus shifted to weight rather than holistic health.

Limited Resources: Some facilities may lack appropriate equipment, like larger exam tables or gowns, which can create an uncomfortable or humiliating experience.

Avoidance of Care: Weight stigma can lead individuals to avoid seeking medical help due to fear of being judged or mistreated, which can worsen health outcomes.

Prevention Messages: Messaging that emphasizes weight loss as the primary solution to health issues is not rooted in evidence based care and can overshadow more comprehensive approaches that address mental, social, and physical health.

Stigmatizing Policies: Some healthcare practices may promote weight-centric policies rather than focusing on overall health, further alienating those with larger bodies.

Weight stigma in health care settings is often upheld by the myth that health is strongly related to weight and diet culture.

"A wider lens is needed to untangle our collusion with healthism and body size as a problem focus.

Instead we can introduce the possibility that people can learn to occupy a body unapologetically, one that does not uphold unnecessary and unrealistic ideals.

This is a vision of body autonomy that avoids collusion with the weight-based constructs in our culture that cause harm to people's relationship to their bodies."

WHY IS WEIGHT STIGMA A PROBLEM?

"If our clients are hustling for health, we must consider that they are likely to be hustling for a sense of worthiness in a culture that conflates the two."

Kinavey and Cool (2019)

Weight stigma is a problem for several important reasons:

Mental Health Impact: Experiencing weight stigma can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction, significantly affecting overall mental well-being.

Health Consequences: Weight stigma "is positively associated with diabetes risk, cortisol level, oxidative stress level, C-reactive protein level, eating disturbances, depression, anxiety, body image dissatisfaction and negatively associated with self-esteem". Wu and Berry 2017

Barrier to Care: Weight stigma can discourage individuals from seeking medical help due to fear of judgment or discrimination, leading to untreated health issues.

Social Isolation: Stigmatized individuals may face social exclusion, which can hinder relationships and support networks, further impacting mental and emotional health.

Reinforcing Stereotypes: Weight stigma perpetuates harmful stereotypes about body size, fostering an environment where discrimination is normalized.

Impacts on Treatment: Bias in healthcare can lead to misdiagnoses, inappropriate treatments, and a lack of holistic care, which can hinder recovery and overall health.

Cultural Norms: Weight stigma contributes to a culture that prioritizes thinness, reinforcing harmful beauty standards and limiting acceptance of body diversity.

"Compared to other forms of prejudice (eg racism, sexism), the prejudice and discrimination directly toward people who are fat is more likely to be publicly sanctioned even when openly hostile, which is why weight stigma is often referred to as the last socially acceptable prejudice".

Calogero, Tylka & Mensinger 2016

WHAT IS DIET CULTURE ?

Diet culture is a set of ever changing cultural myths around food, weight, and health. It focuses on thinness as an ideal, and labels foods and behaviors as either “good” or “bad.” It comprises a moral hierarchy of bodies that preferences the thin-ideal while perpetuating a fear of fat.

These cultural ideas are driven by broad systems and structures of power, such as patriarchal ideals about women’s bodies, racialised ideals around thinness and health, and capitalist industries that profit from body dissatisfaction and confusion around food and eating.

Diet culture is a system of beliefs that:

Worships thinness and equates it to health and moral virtue, which means you can spend your whole life thinking you’re irreparably broken just because you don’t look like the impossibly thin “ideal.”

Promotes weight loss as a means of attaining higher status, which means you feel compelled to spend a massive amount of time, energy, and money trying to shrink your body, even though the research is very clear that almost no one can sustain intentional weight loss for more than a few years.

Demonizes certain ways of eating while elevating others, which means you’re forced to be hyper-vigilant about your eating, ashamed of making certain food choices, and distracted from your pleasure, your purpose, and your power.

Oppresses people who don’t match up with its supposed picture of “health,” which disproportionately harms women, femmes, trans folks, people in larger bodies, people of color, and people with disabilities, damaging both their mental and physical health.

Notice that it’s not just about dieting. It encompasses so much more than that. Oppressive body and beauty standards. The promotion of weight loss at all costs. The moral value of food (the idea that there’s “good” and “bad” food, or a “right” and “wrong” way to eat). And discrimination of anyone whose body doesn’t fit the narrow “ideal.”

“When we see diet culture as something that exists outside of us – as something that we’re surrounded by and sometimes internalise – it gives us permission to be self-compassionate about our eating practices and reflect on weight-loss as a broader political project that can be challenged.” *Dr Natalie Jovanovski*

WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AGAINST WEIGHT STIGMA IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Helpful Phrases at the Doctor's Office Helpful Phrases at the Doctor's Office

- Do thin people get this health issue? What do you recommend for them?
- A century of research shows that almost everyone who attempts weight loss loses weight short-term and then gains it back long-term.
- Show me a study where a majority of subjects succeeded at the amount of weight loss you are suggesting for at least five years.
- Shame and stigma are shown to negatively impact health. Please provide me with shame-free care so that you avoid doing harm.
- Due to a low rate of success and serious, possibly fatal, side effects, weight loss drugs/surgery are not an option I'm interested in.
- In our limited time, I would like to focus on [what I came in for] not weight loss.
- I'm exercising my right of informed refusal of weight loss interventions.

Supporting Research at:
bit.ly/WeightInclusiveResearch



© 2020 Ragen Chastain

I Practice Weight-Neutral Health I Practice Weight-Neutral Health

Weight-Neutral Health is an evidence-based health practice where the focus is on supporting my health directly, rather than on body size or weight loss.

If In order for us to work together for my best health, please:

- Don't weigh me unless medically necessary (i.e., for proper dosage of medication) and don't tell me the number unless I ask
- Don't prescribe weight loss as a health intervention
- Prescribe/recommend the same things that you would for a thinner person in the same situation
- Prescribe evidence-based interventions and give me the opportunity to provide fully informed consent
- Provide me with shame-free, weight-stigma-free healthcare

Supporting Research at:
bit.ly/WeightInclusiveResearch



These resources were created and
generously shared by:

Ragen Chastain

Speaker, writer, researcher, multi-certified health and fitness pro, and thought leader in weight science, weight

@weightandhealthcare stigma, and healthcare. Reach out at ragen@SizedForSuccess.com and on Instagram @RagenChastain

EAT LOVE LIVE

WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AGAINST WEIGHT STIGMA IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Advocating for yourself against weight stigma in healthcare settings can be empowering. Here are some strategies to consider:

Educate Yourself: Understand your health condition and treatment options. Being informed can help you advocate for appropriate care.

Choose Your Provider Wisely: Look for healthcare professionals who promote body positivity and demonstrate a non-judgmental attitude. Read reviews and seek recommendations if possible.

Communicate Clearly: Be open about your concerns. If you feel stigmatized, express how it affects your experience. Use "I" statements, like "I feel uncomfortable when..." to communicate your feelings.

Set Boundaries: If a provider makes derogatory comments or focuses excessively on your weight, assertively redirect the conversation. You might say, "I'd prefer to discuss my overall health and well-being."

Bring Support: Consider bringing a friend or family member to appointments for support. They can help advocate for you and provide an extra layer of comfort.

Ask Questions: Don't hesitate to ask about treatment options or the rationale behind certain recommendations. Seeking clarity can empower you to make informed decisions. A great question is "What would you recommend for someone with this condition in a smaller body?"

Document Experiences: Keep records of your visits, including any instances of stigma. This can be useful if you decide to report the behavior or seek a different provider.

Feedback and Reporting: If you experience weight stigma, consider providing feedback to the healthcare facility or reporting the behavior. Many institutions are committed to addressing such issues.

Find Community: Connecting with others who have similar experiences can provide validation and strategies for advocacy.

Focus on Health Goals: Frame discussions around your health goals rather than weight. Emphasize overall well-being, lifestyle changes, and preventive care.

Advocating for yourself is about fostering a respectful and supportive healthcare experience. You deserve to be treated with dignity, regardless of your body size.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO USE WHEN ACCESSING HEALTHCARE SERVICES

"Know that once you have one weight inclusive practitioner on your healthcare team they will help advocate for you, if you would like, with your other healthcare practitioners." *Nina Mills*

How to advocate for weight inclusive healthcare

HAES Health sheets-

Links to printable self advocacy cards to use with healthcare providers

Ragen Chastain who is just an amazing human and advocate in this space has some amazing resources.

Advocating for yourself.

Cards to use at the doctors office

Helpful phrases at the doctors office

Ragen Chastain has a collection of video workshops that are informative and empowering.

HELPFUL ARTICLES ADDRESSING WEIGHT STIGMA

SO WHAT IF YOU'RE FAT? YOU DESERVE HEALTHCARE!

WHY EAT LOVE LIVE DOES NOT FOCUS ON WEIGHT LOSS

SIZE INCLUSIVE CLOTHING BRANDS & CLOTHES SHOPPING GUIDE!

WHAT IS WEIGHT-NEUTRAL DIABETES CARE?

HOW DO YOU FIGHT DIET CULTURE?

UNRAVELLING WEIGHT STIGMA & UNDERSTANDING ITS SOCIETAL IMPACTS

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



DR LEILA BYRNE

GENERAL PRACTITIONER AT TURN THE CORNER CLINIC

CONTACT

Turn the Corner Clinic (Brunswick) /
1300 557 502



SAM VAN ZWEDEN

A PLUS MARKET ORGANISER, WRITER &
FAT LIBERATION ACTIVIST

CONTACT

A Plus Market - @APlusMarket /
contactaplusmarket@gmail.com
Sam van Zweden - @SamvanZweden /
samantha.vanzweden@gmail.com



DR STEFANIA FRANJA

PSYCHOLOGIST & DIRECTOR OF SATIATE PSYCHOLOGY

CONTACT

Satiate Psychology / @Satiate_Psychology /
satiatepsychology@gmail.com /
0474 722 206



**JOSEPHINE MONEY (APD)+DR CHRISTIE
BENNETT**

DIETITIAN, SUPERVISOR, DIRECTOR OF EAT LOVE LIVE
& CO-FOUNDER OF EAT LOVE LIVE EDUCATION

CONTACT

Eat Love Live / Eat Love Live Education /
reception@eatlovelive.com.au /
(03) 9087 8379

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

A Fat Reading List

Weight Positive Practitioners

Weight inclusive Health Australia has a list of practitioners

Association for size diversity and health professional list

Learn from the lived experience and fill your social media feeds with people that look like you! :

Dances with Fat

Lindy Ashline

Lacey Jade

Nicola Salmon (fat positive fertility)

Body Liberation Photos

Plus Size Influences

Podcasts

She's all Fat and check out She's all Fat Extensive Resource list

Maintenance Phase

Organisations:

National association to advance fat acceptance

NAFFA

NAFA Resource list

Undiet online

A Plus Market

Untrapped

The body positive

Body positive hiking group

Association for size diversity and health

Medical Students for size inclusivity

WHERE TO FIND COMMUNITY

A PLUS MARKET

amplefolk **JIGGLE CLUB**

The amazing team at Ample Folk have created a live data base for fat babes to find and share plus size friendly doctors, cafes, theatres, beauty salons. Really any where that people may feel excluded from because of their body. The database is added to by the community of places they have had positive experiences!

Facebook groups:

This is NOT an exhaustive list - there are many more and many location based groups. Have a search and see what you find!

Fat, Happy and Fashionable

FATTIES: Fashionistas are Truly Terrific in Every Size

Fit Fatties: Weight Neutral Fitness for All Shapes and Sizes

Fat Babe Energy

Super+Fats

CurvyAU

Fat, Happy and Healed

Fat Babes Society

Fat Babes In The Wild

Fat Colourful Babes (Plus Size Make Up)

Fat Studies

CurvyMelb

Fat Girls Traveling

Chub Hub Community

Fat Positive and Pregnant Community

EAT LOVE LIVE

“So what if you’re fat?
You still deserve good healthcare!”

HAVEN'T WATCHED THE PANEL DISCUSSION?



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
WEIGHT STIGMA AWARENESS WEEK EVENT,
AND WATCH THE FULL RECORDING, AT:
WWW.EATLOVELIVE.COM.AU/BLOG/WSAW

*Weight
Stigma*
Awareness Week

EAT LOVE LIVE

EDUCATION