The Case for Weight Inclusive Healthcare

Linda Posen, MSW, LGSW Selena Salfen, MPH, RD May 16, 2024



- Linda Pozen, MSW, LGSW (she, they)
- Selena Salfen, MPH, RD (she/her)
- Weight Inclusive Ramsey County (WIRC) initiative
- Content heads-up





## What is weight stigma?

- Anti-fatness, fatphobia, weight bias, anti-fat bias, weight-based discrimination, fat oppression
- Weight stigma:
  - Stigma attached to perceived, actual, or contextual fatness
  - Comprised of ideologies, practices and systems that mark fatness as an undesirable, deviant or inferior embodiment
  - Consistent, systemic oppression against larger-bodied people, which makes it difficult or impossible to find clothes and spaces that fit, healthcare that's effective and non-discriminatory, equal access to employment, and other basic human rights that we all deserve.
- Alternative to weight stigma = weight neutral or weight inclusive

#### Resources

#### Weight-Centric or Normative

Weight is considered a very important indicator of health and weight loss is promoted.



#### Weight Neutral: Public Health Communication, Clinics and Programs

- Do not assume a person's weight or BMI is evidence of a particular way of eating, physical activity level, personality, psychological state, moral character or health status.
- Do not encourage weight loss. Instead, focus on weight neutral, sustainable behaviors, access and social determinants of health.
- Avoid language, imagery and communications with weight stigma.
- Work on anti-fat bias in ourselves and our programs.
- Seek direction and guidance from people with lived experience of fat oppression **with** intersectional perspectives.

#### Ableism

Ageism

#### Anti-fatness (Sizeism)

Cisgenderism

Classism

Colorism

Heterosexism

Racism

Sizeism

Xenophobia

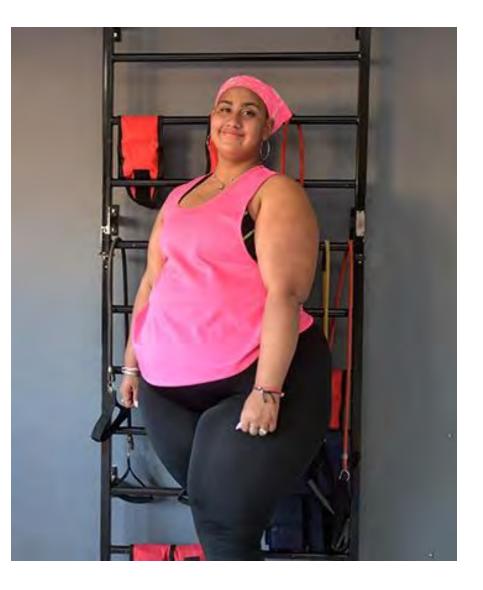
Adding anti-fatness to our equity lens

#### **Anti-Fat Bias and Practice leads to:**

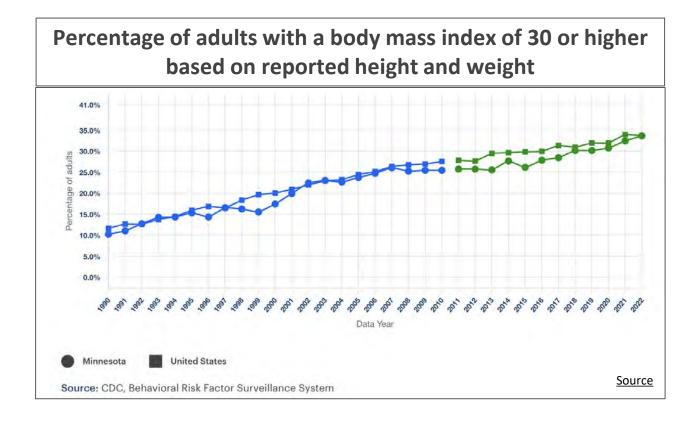
- Physical and mental health issues
- Disrupted relationships with food and body
- Weight cycling
- Internalized fatphobia
- Discrimination in daily living
- Environments, equipment and clothing made only for smaller bodies
- Poor healthcare
- Discrimination in the legal system

Weight-based discrimination bans: Michigan, Washington D.C., 3 counties in Maryland, and 6 cities

- At least half of U.S. adults have been a target of weight-based teasing, unfair treatment or discrimination
- Weight-based and appearance bullying top forms of bullying in schools
- Harms of weight stigma are relevant across cultures
- Anti-fat attitudes and practices hurt everyone

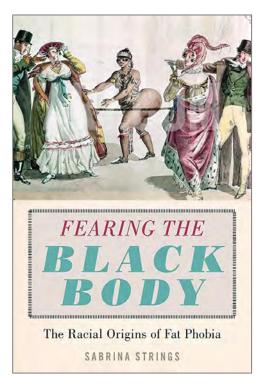


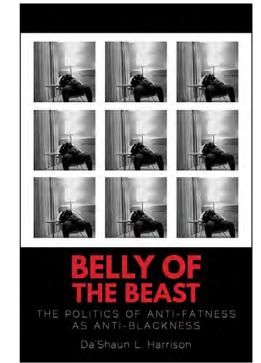
- **1996** Surgeon General C. Everett Koop declared a "**war on obesity**"
- This war has been ineffective and harmful on multiple levels
  - Implicit bias against higher weight people grew from 2007 to 2016, but waned for race, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability
  - Higher weight children are significantly less liked than in 1961

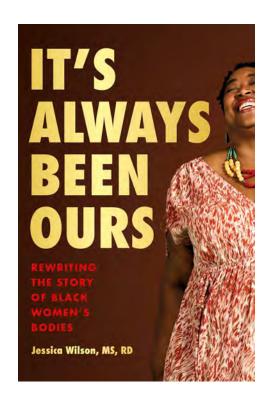


#### **Anti-fatness = Rooted in anti-Blackness**

- Dr. Sabrina Strings 12 min. interview
- <u>Da'Shaun Harrison Belly of the Beast</u> <u>Excerpt</u>
- Jessica Wilson on Burnt Toast podcast
- <u>Fat Phobia is a Social Justice Issue with Dana</u> <u>Sturtevant, Hilary Kinavey and Sirius Bonner</u>
- <u>Sonya Renee Taylor The Body is Not an</u> <u>Apology</u>
- <u>Gloria Lucas Eating Disorders & Historical</u> <u>Trauma</u>
- Institutional Antifatness w/ Marquisele Mercedes & Monica Kriete – Death Panel podcast (explicit)









#### **Trauma Informed = Weight Inclusive**

- Being seen as a label
- Non-acknowledgement of power dynamics
- No choice in service or treatment
- Being non-collaborative
- Marginalizing practices
- Non-inclusive language and messaging

The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, 2022

#### Anti-fatness/weight stigma is associated with increased

- Inflammation
- Blood pressure
- Blood glucose
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Cortisol
- Substance use
- Social isolation
- Allostatic load
- Disordered Eating
- Avoidance of physical activity

## Weight stigma in healthcare can lead to healthcare avoidance and trauma

- Research shows healthcare providers hold negative stereotypes of larger patients
  - Using terms like lazy, weak-willed, bad
  - Reporting patients as a waste of time and unmotivated to make lifestyle changes
- **74%** of patients who experienced weight stigma reported experiencing it from doctors
- **68%** of very large people report delaying healthcare



Obesity Stigma and Bias, Fruh, et al, 2017 Obesity Stigma: Important Considerations for Public Health, Puhl, et al, 2010 Obesity and healthcare avoidance: A systematic review, McGuigan RD, Wilkinson JM, 2015. Impact of weight bias and stigma on quality of care and outcomes for patients with obesity, Phelan SM, et al, 2015 Stigma Experienced by Children and Adolescents With Obesity, Pony, et al 2017 Weight Bias in Pediatric Inpatient Care, Halvorson, 2019 Overreliance on BMI and Delayed Care for Patients With Higher BMI and Disordered Eating, Ramaswamy & Ramaswamy , 2023

#### Weight stigma harms patients

- Healthcare providers often focus on body size while ignoring other symptoms/concerns
- Larger patients denied medical procedures due to BMI
- Weight loss recommendations can initiate or perpetuate disordered eating/eating disorders



<u>No Health, No Care: The Big Fat</u> <u>Loophole in the Hippocratic Oath</u> by Marquisele Mercedes, Pipewrench Magazine

Obesity Stigma and Bias, Fruh, et al, 2017 Obesity Stigma: Important Considerations for Public Health, Puhl, et al, 2010 Obesity and healthcare avoidance: A systematic review, McGuigan RD, Wilkinson JM, 2015. Impact of weight bias and stigma on quality of care and outcomes for patients with obesity, Phelan SM, et al, 2015 Stigma Experienced by Children and Adolescents With Obesity, Pony, et al 2017



## Weight focused messaging can result in disordered eating and eating disorders.



of children demonstrated disordered eating



of the U.S. population will have an eating disorder in their lifetime

Lopez-Gil JF, et. al. Global Proportion of Disordered Eating in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. 2023 The Social and Economic Cost of Eating Disorders in the United States of America: A Report for the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders and the Academy for Eating Disorders. June 2020

### Eating Disorders (EDs)

- Underdiagnosed in people with larger bodies
- Underdiagnosed in racially and ethnically diverse populations
- Healthcare rarely screens for EDs, often accidently cheers on EDs



Flament MF, et al, Weight Status and DSM-5 Diagnoses of Eating Disorders in Adolescents From the Community, 2015

Sonneville, KR, et al, Disparities in eating disorder diagnosis and treatment according to weight status, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and sex among college students, 2018

Becker, A. E., et al., Ethnicity and differential access to care for eating disorder symptoms. International Journal of Eating Disorders, 2003

Loth K, Wall M, Larson N, Neumark-Sztainer D. Disordered eating and psychological well-being in overweight and nonoverweight adolescents: secular trends from 1999 to 2010.

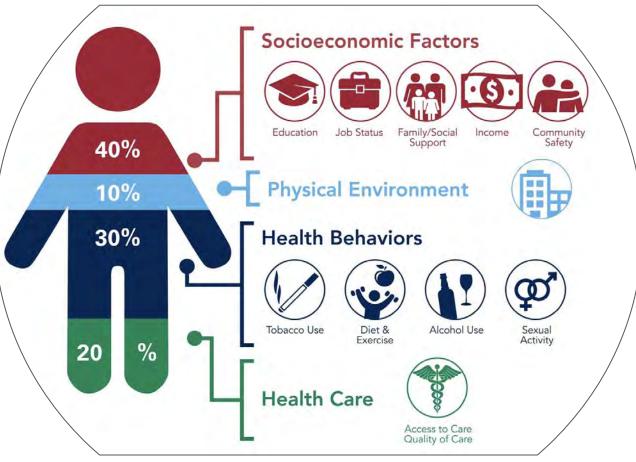


#### Losing 5% or more of body weight lowered survival odds in older women.

#### N=54,437, 61-81 years at start

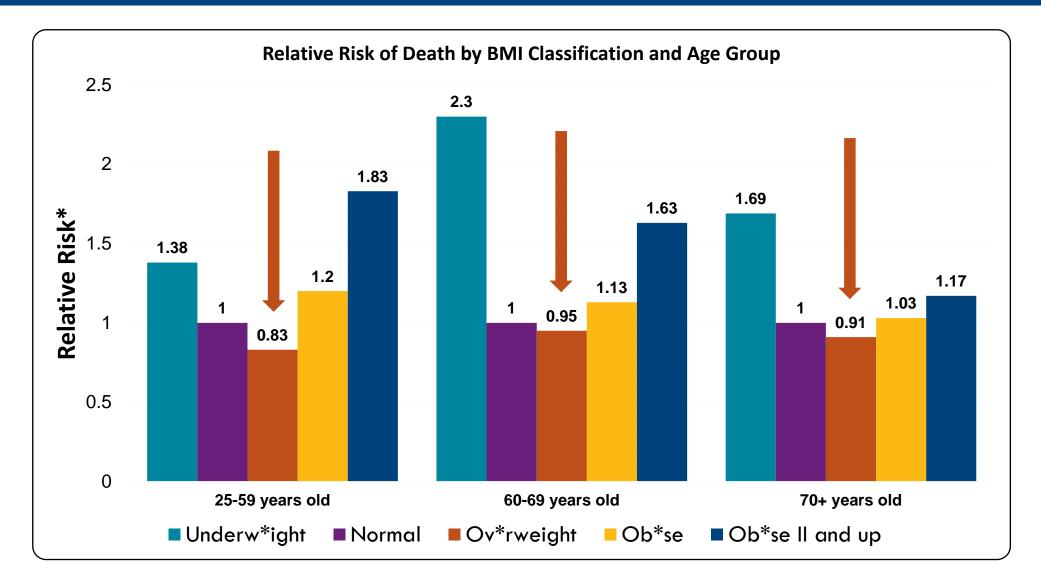


Setting the stage for conversations on health...



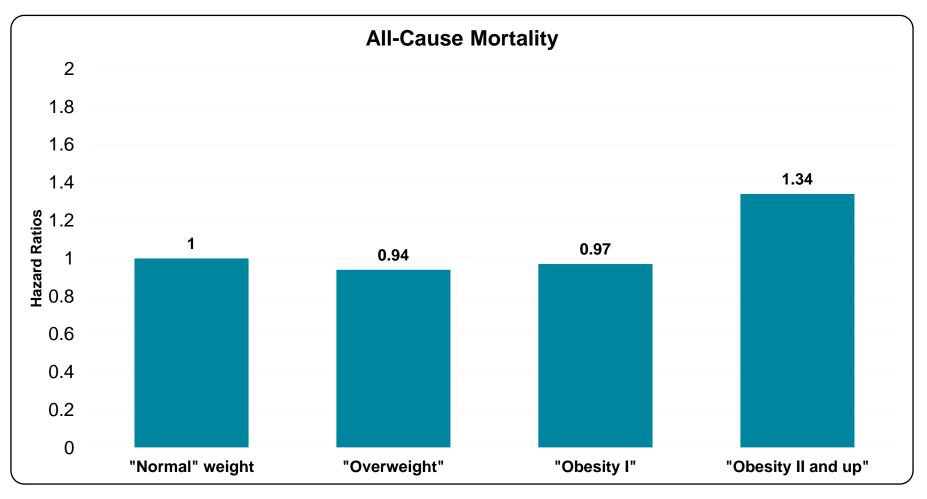
- "Healthism" places responsibility for health on individual, portrays health as a choice
- Health is not a moral obligation and some people will never be healthy by society's standards
- Who defines health?

Institutes for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)



\*the risk of a certain event happening in one group compared to the risk of the same event happening in another group

Association of all-cause mortality with overweight and obesity using standard body mass index categories: a systematic review and meta-analyses



## ~50% of US adults misclassified using BMI

National Health & Nutrition Examination Survey, 2005–2012 (N = 40,420)

**Cardiometabolic Health** 

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Triglycerides
- Glucose
- Insulin resistance
- C-reactive protein

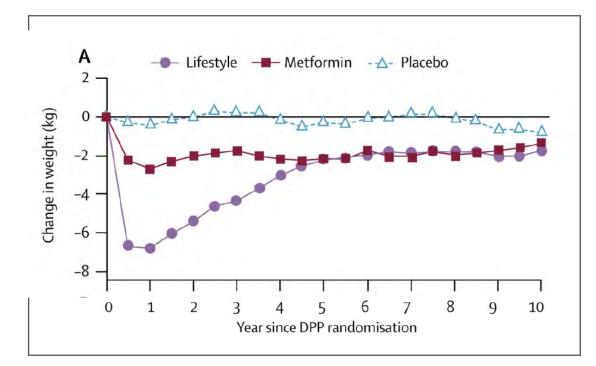


Even if we were 100% sure high weight leads to worse health...

## 1. Weight loss is not sustainable long-term

- Dieting fails 90-95% of the time
- Most weight regained in 1-5 years
- More weight is often regained (66% chance)
- But what about GLP-1 agonists?
  - No long-term data
  - Unaffordable
  - Side effects
  - Take for a lifetime
  - Real world results vs. research
  - Most are injectables
  - Risk for malnutrition, muscle loss, EDs
  - Not everyone wants this

#### Diabetes Prevention Program Outcomes Study (10 yr follow-up)



Fildes, A., et. al. Probability of an obese person attaining normal body weight: Cohort study using electronic health records. American Journal of Public Health, 2015 National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia). Summary guide for the management of overweight and obesity in primary care. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

nue for the management of overweight and obesity in primary care. *National Health and Medical Research Council*, 2013 Mann, et. al. Medicare's search for effective obesity treatments: diets are not the answer, Am Psychol, 2007

Methods for voluntary weight loss and control. NIH Technology Assessment Conference Panel. Consensus Development Conference, 1992 Gaesser, et al, Obesity treatment: Weight loss versus increasing fitness and physical activity for reducing health risks, 2021

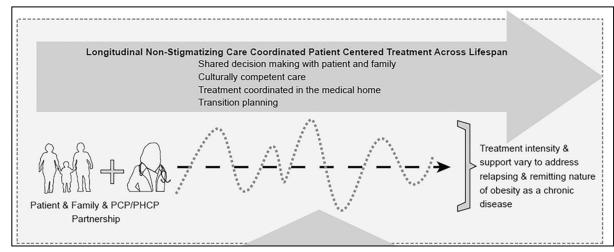
main, et. al. meuicare's search for enecuve obesity treatments: diets are not the answer, Am Psychol, a Nuntary weight loss and control, NIH Technology Assessment Conference Panel, Consensus Development Conference 1



#### Repeated attempts to lose weight are not without harm.

#### **Common results of weight cycling**

- Inflammation
- Hypertension
- Insulin resistance
- Increased triglycerides
- Decreased HDL
- Higher rates of gallstones
- Reduced bone mineral density
- Increased mortality
- <u>And more</u>



Clinical Practice Guideline for the Evaluation and Treatment of Children and Adolescents With Obesity, 2023

Weight cycling can account for all excess mortality associated with "obesity" in both the Framingham Heart Study and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

#### **3.** Health-supporting habits can promote health at all sizes

Weight neutral approaches can be more sustainable and better for well-being

#### Weight Neutral Approach – No weight loss focus

- Cholesterol
- Blood sugar
- Blood pressure
- C-reactive protein (CRP)
- Disordered eating
- Body dissatisfaction
- Depression
- Body image avoidance

## Interventions that stress weight loss send a message to larger people (all people) that the only way to be healthy is to be thin.

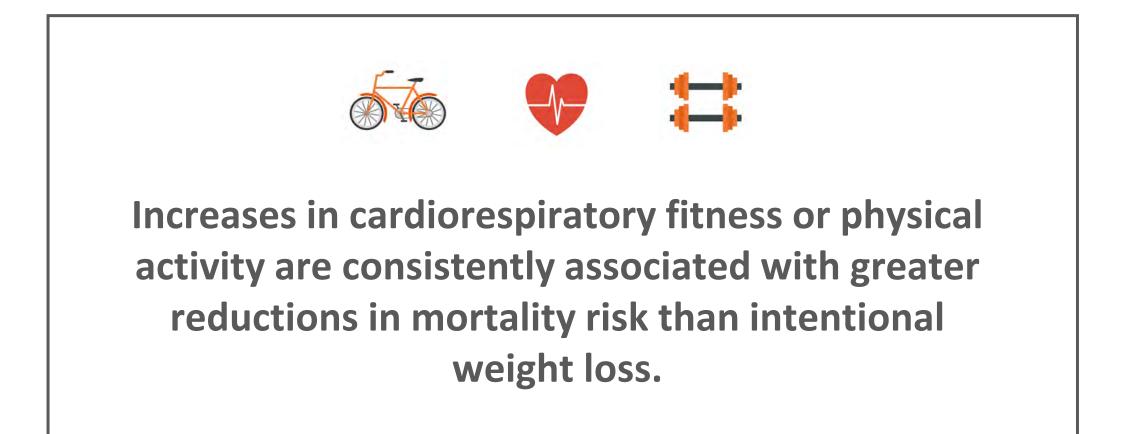


Physical activity Self-esteem



Freepik: (B) studioredcup L Bacon and L Aphramor, Weight Science: Evaluating the Evidence for a Paradigm Shift, 2011 JT Schaefer and AB Magnuson A review of interventions that promote eating by internal cues, 2014 D Clifford, et al, Impact of Non-Diet Approaches on Attitudes, Behaviors, and Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review, 2015 T Tylka, et al, The Weight-Inclusive versus Weight-Normative Approach to Health: Evaluating the Evidence for Prioritizing Well-Being over Weight Loss, 2014

### **3.** Health-supporting habits can promote health at all sizes





# ...But what about diabetes?

Image: Joe Zhuang, Vecteezy

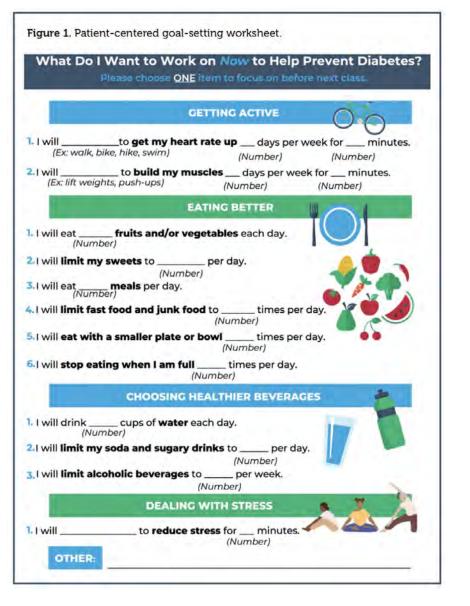
#### But what about diabetes?

Patient-Centered Goal-Setting in the National Diabetes Prevention Program: A Pilot Study Natalie D. Ritchie,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Katherine A. Sauder,<sup>4,5</sup> Peter G. Kaufmann,<sup>6</sup> and Leigh Perreault<sup>7,8</sup>

Diabetes Care 2021;44:2464-2469 | https://doi.org/10.2337/dc21-0677

Participants in the non-weight focused Diabetes Prevention Program had greater A1c reduction on average and were more likely to have normal blood sugar at follow-

up.

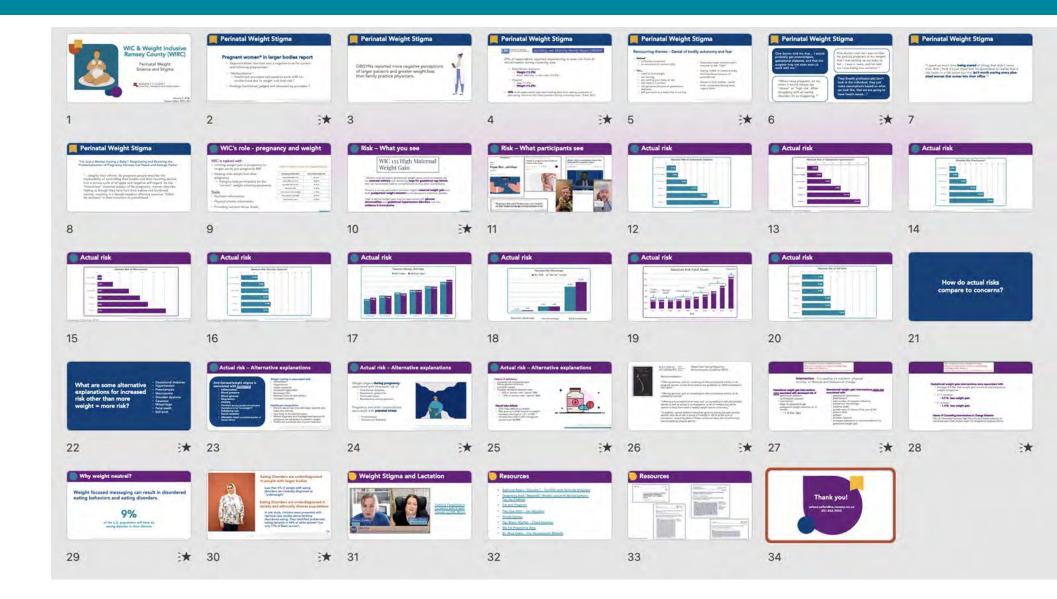




# ...But what about pregnant people?

#### Weight Inclusive Ramsey County WIC Presentation

Perinatal Weight Science & Stigma - January 2024, Selena Salfen, MPH, RD



Recording Slides



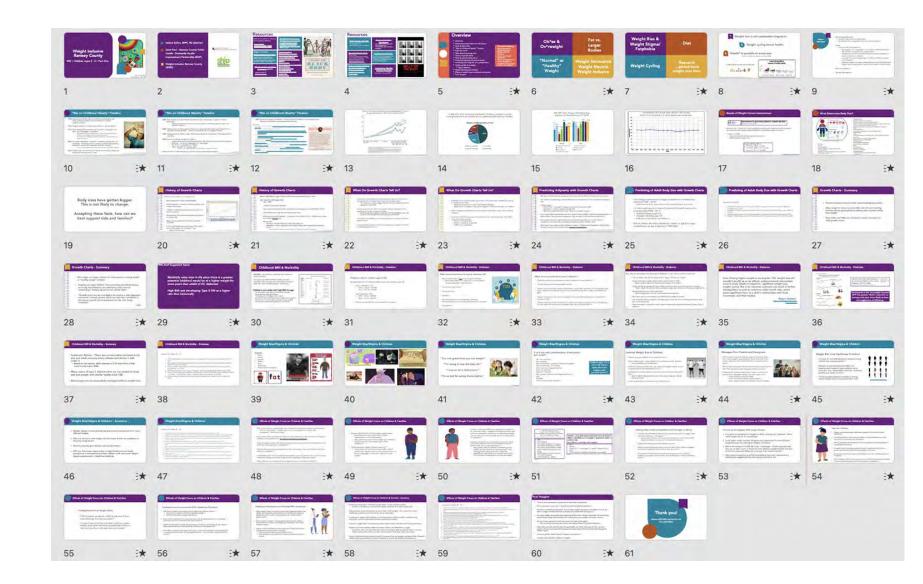
## ...But what about kids?

## **Ramsey County WIC Presentation**

Weight Stigma and Science – Children 2-5, February 2023, Selena Salfen, MPH, RD

Recording

Slides & Sources



#### What can we do?





#### **Critically Review Information on Weight and Health – Where is there bias?**

Does research or information consider factors that contribute to poor health for people with higher BMIs?

- Weight stigma and weight cycling
- Socioeconomic status (SES)
- Healthcare inequalities
- Healthcare avoidance



<u>Wage disparity for fat and other marginalized people, NAAFA</u> Puhl, R., Suh, Y. Health Consequences of Weight Stigma: Implications for Obesity Prevention and Treatment., 2015 Tomiyama, A., et al. How and why weight stigma drives the obesity 'epidemic' and harms health. 2018 Bacon and Aphramor, Weight Science: Evaluating the Evidence for a Paradigm Shift, 2011

#### **Resources – Questioning weight stigma in research**

<u>"What the 5%!?" Type 2</u> <u>diabetes and weight loss</u> <u>recommendation</u>

> FionaWiller, AdvAPD, PhD

Quick Guide to Evaluating Weight Science Research

Ragen Chastain Weight & Healthcare Substack Anatomy of a Weight Loss Paper

FionaWiller, AdvAPD, PhD

#### What can we do? Changing Our Health Messaging

#### What is a good weight?

Every person is different. Hmong people are often smaller than the average person in the United States.

#### BMI

A healthy BMI for everyone is 19-25.

#### Women

- Average Hmong women are 58-61 inches tall.
- A healthy weight for Hmong women is 98-124 pounds.
- An average woman in the United States is 64 inches tall and a healthy weight is 112-150 pounds.

#### Men

- Average Hmong men are 63-64 inches tall.
- A healthy weight for Hmong men is 110-150 pounds.
- An average man in the United States is 69 inches tall and a healthy weight is 135-170 pounds.

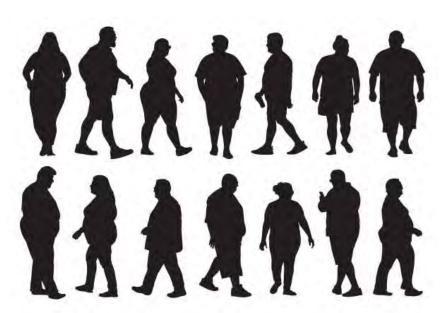


## Unintended risks of weight focus:

- Disordered eating
- Weight cycling
- Discouragement
- Abandoning health promoting behaviors when weight loss stalls

- Work environment How are we talking about bodies?
- Continue these conversations, learn more
- Avoid linking larger bodies to chronic disease or attempting to notify people of higher weight status







- Ensure lobbies and waiting rooms have weight inclusive imagery and messaging
- Ensure medical equipment and seating appropriate for a variety of body sizes



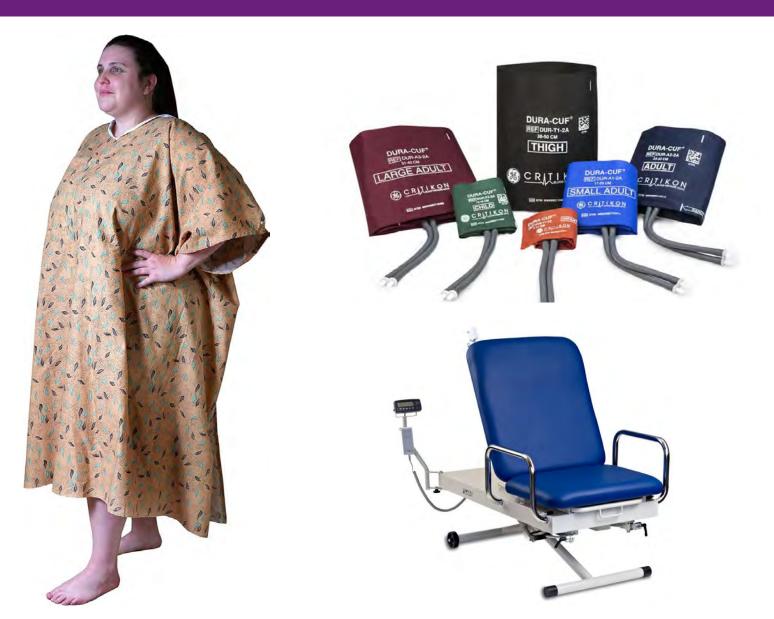












- Weigh only when medically necessary
- If weighing is medically necessary/required by funding, offer no-see or closed, private weighing to everyone



### What you may hear

- Desire for weight loss
- Fears about weight and health
- Automatic expectation of weight focus

### What we can do?

- Work on our internalized weight stigma or weight bias
- Calm fears
- Deflect to weight neutral interventions
- Connect to weight inclusive spaces
- Support body autonomy
- Practice informed consent
- Practice, practice, practice



<u>Health at Every Size</u> <u>Health Sheet Library</u>

#### **Complexities: Weight Inclusive Practices**



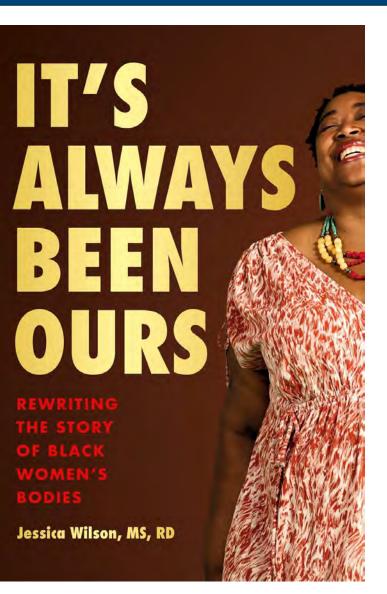
- Power dynamics
  - Not safe or comfortable for everyone to advocate for weight inclusive care
- Ideas about size and appearance ideals vary by culture
- Thinness = privilege, access



#### Note on "body positivity"

For some, body positivity is seen as a movement; for others it feels like a mandate, a societal expectation that we can somehow transcend the lessons we've learned from society and put a positive spin on what it's like to exist under white supremacy. If only we could change the way we think, then it will be easier to navigate the world with the bodies we have. And, to be clear, it is possible for some people to do so. For those with more privilege than others, changing a mindset really will result in living a happy life. For others, it's much more complex.

- Jessica Wilson, MD, RD



#### jessicawilsonmsrd.com

# **Practicing Informed Consent**

- Process in which a health care provider educates a patient about the risks, benefits, and alternatives of a given procedure or intervention.
- Ethical and legal obligation of medical practitioners in the US
- Originates from the patient's right to direct what happens to their body.



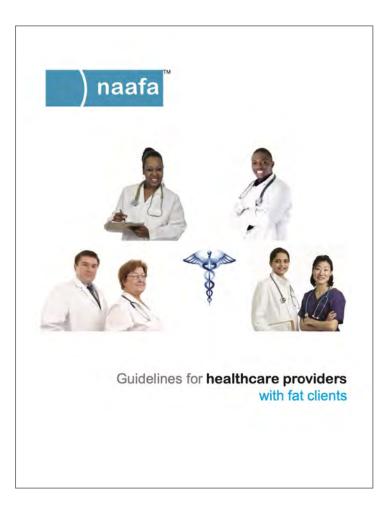
#### Are we providing informed consent when we promote weight loss?





Guidelines for therapists who treat fat clients

#### **Guidelines for therapists** who treat fat clients



Guidelines for healthcare providers with fat clients

#### Resources

- National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance 

   (NAAFA)
  - <u>Videos/Interviews</u>
  - Brochures and toolkits English
  - Brochures and toolkits Spanish
- Ragen Chastain
  - Weight and Healthcare Newsletter Newsletter
  - Dances with Fat
- <u>Center for Body Trust</u>
- Pipewrench Magazine The Fat Issue
- <u>Aubrey Gordon books</u>
- Project Heal
- Maintenance Phase

- Body Liberation + Public Health Project
- Black women's disproportional weight stigma experiences in pregnancy
- Sunny Side Up Nutrition Podcast <u>The New American</u> <u>Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines with Katja Rowell, MD</u>
- wsletter Rachel Millner, Psy.D, CEDS-S <u>Dear Kids (Especially</u> <u>Higher Weight Kids), The American Academy of Pediatrics</u> <u>Got it Wrong</u>
  - <u>Health at Every Size (HAES) Friendly Disordered Eating,</u> <u>Exercise & Body Image Screening</u>
  - Weight Loss Drugs Podcast Louise Adams
  - <u>NoWeigh.org We Hurt: The Lived Experience of People</u> who Have Experienced Weight Stigma



- What is Weight Stigma?
- <u>Support food neutral classrooms</u>
- <u>Creating a Size-Inclusive Healthcare Office</u>
- Laws that prevent size discrimination (<u>Campaign for</u> <u>Size Freedom</u>, <u>New York "Intro. 209-A</u>
- <u>No Health, No Care: The Big Fat Loophole in the</u> <u>Hippocratic Oath</u> by Marquisele Mercedes, Pipewrench Magazine
- <u>Fat Talk</u> by Virginia Sole-Smith
- Wage disparity for fat and other marginalized people, NAAFA
- Body Image with Bri

- How Workplaces are Exclusionary to Fat Team Members (and How We Can Do Better)
- <u>Creating A Size-Inclusive Healthcare Office</u>
- The Size of It: Fat Bias in the News
- <u>NoWeigh.org We Hurt: The Lived Experience</u> of People who Have Experienced Weight <u>Stigma</u>
- <u>The Problem With the AMA's New BMI Policy</u> by Ragen Chastain
- <u>Erin Phillips</u> Weight neutral diabetes information
- Weight Inclusive Nutrition & Dietetics (WIND)

#### Resources

#### **Fat Liberation Thought Leaders**

- <u>Patreon</u> (free) Marquisele (Mikey) Mercedes Watch Reconsidering "obesity" and its prevention from 6/13/2023
- <u>Da'Shaun L Harrison Belly of the Beast</u> YouTube Discussion with Kiese Laymon
- <u>Fat Oppression is a Feminist Issue: A Case for Feminist</u> <u>Divestment from the Anti-Obesity Assemblage</u> - Rachel Fox, April 5, 2023
- <u>The Anti-Obesity Assemblage Artifact Analysis Tool</u> Rachel Fox
- <u>Unsolicited: Fatties Talk Back podcast</u> with Marquisele Mercedes, Caleb Luna, Bryan Guffey, Jordan Underwood, and Da'Shaun Harrison
  - How Do I Strip You of Your Power?
  - Un/touchable

#### **Spanish Language Resources**

- <u>¿De qué tiene hambre tu vida?</u> Podcast, <u>Ana</u> <u>Arizmendi</u>
- Raquel Lobaton
- Dra. Mónica Peralta, MD
- Dr. Haica Rosenfeld





#### Advancing De-Implementation of Universal BMI Surveillance

September 2023

Advancing De-Implementation of Universal BMI Surveillance

Public health interventions often catalyze positive changes for population health, but sometimes interventions can cause undue harm. Mounting evidence suggests that population health may be improved by dismantling the widespread use of body mass index (BMI) across medical organizations and in wider society. In this report, we discuss our efforts to catalyze de-implementation of universal BMI surveillance through the organization of a transdisciplinary, exploratory two-day seminar.

#### Prepared by

Natalie Egan Hannah Cory Daniel S. Goldberg Allegra Gordon Jennifer Jordan Jill R. Kavanaugh Alexis R. Miranda Tigress Osborn • Amanda Raffoul Tracy K. Richmond Kendrin R. Sonneville • Idia Binitie Thurston A. Janet Tomiyama • Chevese Turner • S. Bryn Austin



What's Wrong With the 'War on Obesity?' <u>A Narrative Review of the Weight-Centered</u> <u>Health Paradigm and Development of the</u> <u>3C Framework to Build Critical Competency</u> <u>for a Paradigm Shift</u> The Weight-Inclusive versus Weight-Normative Approach to Health: Evaluating the Evidence for Prioritizing Well-Being over Weight Loss

Ob\*sity treatment: Weight loss versus increasing fitness and physical activity for reducing health risks Stigmatizing paper with good information

Fat Liberation: How Social Workers Can Incorporate Fat Activism to Promote Care and Justice

Weight Discrimination and Risk of Mortality Unpacking Weight Science Podcast (many available for free on podcast apps)

Fiona Willer, Phd, AdvAPD

#### **Resources – Social Media**

#### Instagram

- 300poundsandrunning
- adiosbarbieofficial
- agingbodyliberation
- allgendernutrition
- alliancefored
- ameeistalking
- anti.diet.kids
- antidietfatty
- bipoc.eatingdisorders
- black.prediabetes.nutrition
- blackandembodied
- bodyhonornutrition
- bodyimagewithbri
- bodvreborn
- bodytraumapod
- carriedennett
- ch1stvharrison
- chevesturner
- crystalkarges
- dashaunlh
- decolonizing\_fitness
- desireeadaway
- dietitiankatbenson
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- fatfabfeminist
- fatjoy.life •
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- flareforjustice •
- foodfreedomdiabetes •
- fringeish •
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- hannahtalksbodies •
- healthyphit •
- heysharonmaxwell •
- iamchrissyking •
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**TikTok** 

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300poundsandrunning

agingbodyliberation

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Foodfreedomdiabetes

Powerliftingsocialworker

sacredspaceforfatbodies

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Theheavyweightmidwife

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katbensonrdn

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raffela mancuso

siriuswhileblack

Theshirarose

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Alliancefored

antidietfatty

bodyreborn

Fatdoctoruk

Fringeish

fatjoypodcast

Fatpositivefertil

fatwomenofcolor

THE POWER OF FAT COMM

Dr. Joy Cos

AMING OUR BODIES & LANGUAGE

Leuryck Valentin

What ACTUALL

makes kids healthy:

@anti.diet.kids

anti.diet.kids

Environment

Medical

care

**4 FAT LIBERATION VIDEOS** 

YOU CAN WATCH TODAY

From Fat Women of Color™

Following

FAT LIBERATION VS BODY POSITI

FAT LIBERATION THROUGH A

Astra Marie

Following

Dietary pattern

hysical activity

Mental

health

care

Sleep

Risk

avoidance

sunnysideupnutritionists

the bodylib advocate

the spanglish therapist

thebodyisnotanapology

thefatdoctorpodcast

thefriendineverwanted

theheavyweightmidwife

themindsetnutritionist

theunplugcollective

understandingnutrition

weightinclusivenutrition

vour.latina.nutritionist

voursouthasiantherapist

sizeinclusivemedicine

Tic4largebodies

whitneytrotter.rd

thepowerliftingsocialworker

thefatsextherapist

the.lovelybecoming

theantidietplan

thebodyactivists

thecelestialliferd

thefatdoctor

Thelindywest

theshirarose

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projectheal

notquitebeyonce

noweighcampaign

radicallyfitoakland

radlove.nutrition

reclaimingourplate

rootedresistance

sacredspaceforfatbodies

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