

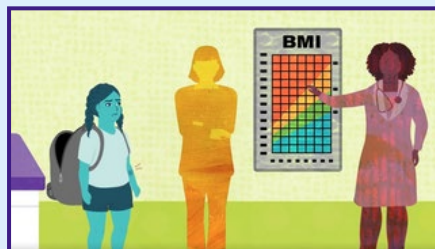
Understanding Weight Stigma in Healthcare

Why is Weight Stigma an Important Healthcare Issue?

Weight stigma is not only a social issue, but also a healthcare quality issue. Decades of research demonstrate that weight bias among providers is widespread, often implicit, and directly impacts patient outcomes.



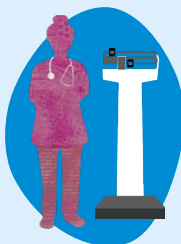
What is Weight Stigma?



Weight stigma refers to the negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discriminatory treatment directed at individuals because of their body size or weight.

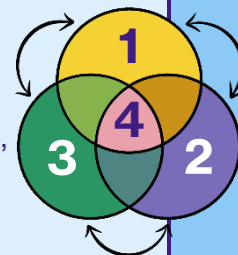
Where Does Weight Stigma Appear?

- Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Diagnostic overshadowing
 - Attributing all symptoms to weight
- Medical Environment & Equipment
 - Non-inclusive furniture
 - Public weigh-ins
- Institutional Policies
 - Weight-focused wellness programs
 - Lack of representation
 - Time constraints
- Digital Health Bias
 - EMRs flagging obesity prior to visit



What are the Impacts of Weight Stigma?

- 1. Psychological health:** low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, internalized bias
- 2. Physical health:** care avoidance, chronic stress, worsened health outcomes
- 3. Social health:** isolation, bullying, discrimination
- 4. Behaviors:** disordered eating, reduction in motivation to exercise, and overall social withdrawal



How Can You Help?



Every interaction with a patient is an opportunity to:

- **Foster** trust
- **Validate** experiences
- **Support** health-promoting behaviors
- **Respect** individuality and autonomy.

Language matters, environments matter, and the approach providers take can either perpetuate stigma or create a safe, empowering space for all patients.

Be the Advocate They Need:

Change starts with awareness, but it grows through action.

- Reflect on your own bias
- Continue learning from others and having open conversations
 - Every time we speak up, we shift the culture towards more inclusivity

