



ALSANA

An Eating Recovery Community



How Fat Phobia Perpetuates Eating Disorders and Prevents Treatment: Working on Your Own Body Inclusivity

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Objectives



Origins of diet culture and fat phobia

Overlap of fat phobia/diet culture and eating disorder treatment

Recognize your own bias towards body size and food choices

Identify how to be a body and food inclusive provider

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Origins of Fat Phobia

- Diet culture has not always been here
 - >80% of human societies have held beauty ideals that favor fat women ⁽¹⁾
- Diet culture traces back to Ancient Greece and Rome ⁽³⁾
- Part of colonization in America ⁽⁵⁾
- Intensified with the British and American Industrial Revolutions ⁽⁵⁾
- First diet book published in 1864 ⁽²⁾

Barbours.
Aug 29, 1906



Caroline Clifford
"The Gibson Girl"
from photograph by Barbours

The Gibson Girl

- Drawn in the 1890s by an artist named Charles Dana Gibson for *Life* magazine.
- Inspired by the "Victorian Ideal"
- Advertising for weight loss products began
- "Flappers" were popularized

Flaws of BMI

- The originator was a mathematician (not a physician) and himself said that it could not and should not be used to indicate the fatness in an individual
 - Created for Belgian government as quick way to measure degree of obesity of general population of “the average man” (white Belgium males from the 19th century)
- There is no sensible scientific reason to square a person’s height (the founder had to square the height to get a formula that matched the overall data!)
- The BMI is physiologically wrong
 - No allowance made for relative proportion of bone, muscle and fat
 - Bone is denser than muscle and twice as dense as fat
- The BMI misclassifies metabolic health
 - More than half of those considered overweight by BMI have a healthy “cardiometabolic profile,” including a normal blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar.
 - About a quarter of people with normal BMI measures have an unhealthy cardiometabolic profile

Eating Disorders



- Eating disorders do not discriminate
 - <6% of folks with an eating disorder diagnosis are “underweight” ⁽⁹⁾
- 2018 study showed that the rate of disordered eating patterns in young adults is higher for people in “overweight” and “obese” bodies than their smaller counterparts
 - 29.3 vs 15.8% in females, 15.4 vs 7.5% in males ⁽⁸⁾
- Folks in larger bodies are ½ as likely to get an eating disorder diagnosis than their “normal weight” and “underweight” counterparts ⁽⁸⁾
- Limitations of DSM-5 (Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Health Disorders)
- Uninformed providers reinforce negative beliefs

Types of Biases

Explicit (conscious) bias

Implicit (unconscious) bias

- Implicit bias can interfere with clinical assessment, decision-making, and provider-patient relationships

Nutrition Biases

Food secure

Unhealthy

Lazy

Non-compliant

Restrictive meal plan

Goal of weight loss

Lack willpower

Need to exercise

Eats fast food

Recognizing Your Own Biases

Harvard
Implicit Bias
test

Do your own
work

Name your
own privilege

Learn about
other lived
experiences

Food and Body Inclusivity



Office space



Assessment



Compassion focused care



Intentionality with food
and movement
prescriptions

Resources



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