

Module 4: Weight Stigma

Video Summary

1 Weight Stigma Overview

- Stigma: any time we treat somebody differently based on one of their qualities or personal characteristics
- Weight Stigma: any time we treat somebody differently based on their weight or body size, specifically
- Prevalent in many aspects of life
 - Media
 - Healthcare
 - Hiring practices
 - Clothing availability
- Weight stigma is a critical consideration for preventing eating disorders & negative body image in kids

2 Weight Stigma and Kids' Body Image

- Weight stigma can put kids at risk of developing eating disorders
- Contributes to the "thinner is better" mindset (AKA "thin idealization")
- Thin idealization can lead to negative body image and disordered eating ("subclinical eating disorders")
- Kids can't control their body size or weight—and when they attempt to do so, they almost always diet. Kids should never diet. When they do, they are at a greater risk of developing an eating disorder
- Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure to look a certain way

3 Weight Stigma in Healthcare Settings

- Healthcare providers are important health influences for kids and teens!
- Tracking a child's weight/height as part of their medical record is not considered problematic. But using weight or BMI as a communication tool—when all the necessary context is impossible to communicate to a child—is problematic
- Using weight as a main or sole measure of health is problematic
- The phrase "obesity epidemic" contributes to weight stigma
 - Weight status is not an illness
- Just because higher weight status may co-occur with other conditions does not mean the patient's weight status causes those other conditions

4 Creating Your Own Personal Action Plan

- At the end of the video, we left time for you to create your own personal action plan for combating weight stigma in your professional practice
- We encourage you to use these goals to approach this call in a way that feels appropriate and comfortable to you

