

## Overcoming Bias and Stigma in Obesity

**The following is from a question-and-answer session that followed the live presentation between the participants and the presenter. The questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity.**

**Question:** Do you have any resources that you use when teaching moms to create a healthy home environment?

**Answer:** Here is an article as a reference:

- Fruh, S., et al (2021). A practical approach to obesity prevention, Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners: January 27, 2021 - Volume - Issue -doi: 10.1097/JXX.0000000000000556

**Question:** What is a process for addressing an active obesity bias conversation? How would you handle a situation where you overheard a conversation where someone was being stigmatized?

**Answer:** If you overhear people, in a kind way say, “you know, that's really not funny and that's really hurtful.” Then give them a little education about obesity and stigma and let them know that is not okay.

**Question:** How would you approach a patient who has layers and years of self-bias with strong family sources? How would you approach these patients and persuade them to change their viewpoint?

**Answer:** I encourage you to start the conversation, it's okay to have hurt. I often just ask patients how they felt when they relate an incident to me. I refer these patients for counseling too. And a lot of times, just talking about it can bring some healing and help them. And then also help them so they don't repeat the same thing. Many people walk around with so much shame and so much self-hatred; and I think that's really hard.

- Research with the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) quiz, a 10-question assessment trauma experienced in childhood. People who have high ACEs scores, have high rates of obesity. Elevated ACE scores correlate with elevated BMI.
- Research shows that therapist who does acceptance-based therapy (ABT) is valuable for people who are in a self-blaming or bias or stigmatizing situation.

**Question:** Are there any online educational programs that you would recommend that we could share with our colleagues or our employers about bias and stigma around obesity?

**Answer:** The Rudd Center has modules on this topic. These modules are designed for providers, and they are free of charge. <https://uconnruddcenter.org/research/weight-bias-stigma/>

**Question:** What terminology should we use instead of the word 'diet' to refer to eating?

**Answer:** Healthy eating, eating plans, or nutritional plans are great substitutes. Diet means start and stop. it's part of their management of this chronic disease that's going to stay with them for my life.

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**Question:** How do handle patients that do not want to be weighed?

**Answer:** Your patients need to feel safe with you, so they trust you with probably one of the most vulnerable areas, which is to be on the scale. Assuring a private place and all employees are trained to keep the area and numbers private.

**Question:** What resources are available for weight bias that are designed for the male population?

**Answer:** Rebecca Poole has quite a bit on men and obesity, stigma, and bias and how it's different lived experience for them than it is for women. And it's different in their age groups. So, men who are in their 20s to 35 to 40 don't often end up end up with any bias or stigma against them when they have obesity. They're just looked at as big guys. But when they get past that 40 to 45 age group, now they're big, fat guys. And that's what the research was showing. However, the resources are generally for both groups.

**Question:** What resources are available for education for elementary and secondary school age kids?

**Answer:** A healthy home environment includes family meals and working with parents on creating a positive home environment.

<https://www.consultant360.com/podcast/consultant360/pediatrics/obesity-prevention-children-starts-home> The [Rudd Center](#) has resources that address school-aged children as well as [STOP Obesity Alliance](#) at George Washington University.

**Question:** What about of resources for Spanish-speaking patients?

**Answer:** Both of the resources above have Spanish handouts