

Preventing Weight Bias

Helping Without Harming in Clinical Practice

If you learned a certain group of patients was facing disparities in health care, would you advocate for them?

If you discovered a barrier that was preventing your patients from getting recommended screenings, and it was within your power to knock down that barrier – would you?

If you found a technique that helped your patients adopt healthy lifestyle changes, would you use it?

The questions are easy. But the answers challenge us to change our practice.

Doctors, nurses and other health professionals self-report bias and prejudice against overweight and obese patients. Research demonstrates that obese patients frequently feel stigmatized in health care settings. These patients are more likely to avoid routine preventive care, and when they do seek health services they may receive compromised care. When patients feel stigmatized, they are vulnerable to depression and low self-esteem, they are less likely to feel motivated to adopt lifestyle changes, and some may even turn to unhealthy eating patterns for solace.

Weight bias jeopardizes patients' emotional and physical health. As the majority of Americans are now overweight or obese, this is an important clinical concern, one that no provider can afford to ignore.

This toolkit is designed to help clinicians across a variety of practice settings with easy-to-implement solutions and resources to improve delivery of care for overweight and obese patients. The resources are designed for busy professionals and customized for various practice settings. They range from simple strategies to improve provider-patient communication and ways to make positive changes in the office environment, to profound ones, including self-examination of personal biases.

We hope this toolkit helps you improve your clinical practice. If you would like additional copies or weight bias resources, just visit [The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity](#). The science on weight bias continues to evolve, so we encourage you to stay in touch and keep current. We also applaud you for taking this first important step to become informed about weight bias, and to provide more sensitive care to your patients.

