Defining Bias and Stigma



Weight Bias

Negative attitudes toward a person because of their weight

Weight Stigma

Stereotypes and labels assigned to people living with obesity

Weight Discrimination

Actions against people living with obesity that can cause exclusion or inequities

Puhl R, Brownell KD. *Obes Res.* 2001;9(12):788-805. Obesity Canada. Accessed June 3, 2025. https://obesitycanada.ca/for-patients/weight-bias/

END WEIGHT STIGMA

THE OBESITY SOCIETY

Implicit vs Explicit vs Internalized Bias



Implicit Biases

- Automatically activated, not necessarily personally endorsed, and may occur unconsciously
- Can shape the way that people view and treat individuals living with obesity
- Predict nonverbal communication and decisions under cognitive burden

Explicit Biases

- Intentional and conscious negative opinions or behaviors
- Influence verbal behaviors and decisions that are within conscious control
- Include assumptions that people living with obesity are lazy, lacking willpower, etc

Internalized Bias (Self-Stigma)

- The extent to which individuals living with obesity endorse negative weight-biased beliefs about themselves

Phelan SM et al. *Obesity (Silver Spring).* 2014;22(4):1201-1208. Phelan SM et al. *Obes Rev.* 2015;16(4):319-326.

END WEIGHT STIGMA

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