

# Weight Stigma FAQs

## WHAT IS WEIGHT STIGMA?

Weight stigma, also known as weight bias or weight discrimination, is discrimination or stereotyping based on a person's size. Weight stigma also manifests in fat phobia, the dislike or fear of being or becoming fat.

## WHERE ARE SOME PLACES IT OCCURS?

- Healthcare
- Friends & Family
- Education
- (Social) Media
- Wellness/Fitness Industry
- Transportation, Housing, Employment, Etc.
- Public Settings (for example: chair sizes in movie theater or sporting events)

## I'M THIN AND HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A HIGHER WEIGHT BODY. HOW DOES WEIGHT STIGMA AFFECT ME?

Great question! Keep reading.

## WHY SHOULD WEIGHT STIGMA BE A CONCERN OF THE EATING DISORDERS COMMUNITY?

Everyone—in every size/shape body—deserves life-saving treatment, but weight stigma is a barrier to that for many people. People with all eating disorders come in all different sized bodies. Often, individuals, families and clinicians are resistant to weight gain that may result in a weight higher than which they are comfortable.



## HOW DOES WEIGHT STIGMA IMPACT PEOPLE WITH EATING DISORDERS AND IN RECOVERY FROM EATING DISORDERS?

Weight stigma prevents many people with eating disorders from being diagnosed with an eating disorder, seeking treatment for an eating disorder, and/or receiving treatment for an eating disorder. And weight stigma and fat phobia makes potential weight gain during recovery scary for those in any size body.

## HOW DOES THE EATING DISORDERS COMMUNITY PERPETUATE WEIGHT STIGMA?

Weight stigma and fat phobia remains very common in the clinical and research communities, and among people personally impacted by eating disorders. For example:

- Clinicians do not feed patients, especially higher weight patients, at an adequate level.
- Treatment programs do not accept patients whose weight may not be low.
- Research is not balanced to include all body sizes because of the general assumptions made about weight and its association to certain diagnoses. For instance, a person in a higher weight body can have Anorexia Nervosa (termed "Atypical Anorexia Nervosa") and, because of weight, be excluded from studies.
- Treatment programs advertise "weight management" or weight loss as a component of treatment for higher weight people with an eating disorder, especially those with binge eating disorder.
- People at eating disorder advocacy events and in the broader eating disorders community verbally make fun of or harass people in higher weight bodies at eating disorders events (including NEDA events) (or in non-eating disorders related settings).

