What is weight stigma?

Definition:
- Shame placed upon individuals based on weight or body size.
- Judgment and biases predetermined by weight, body size, lifestyle
- Judgment of a person's character, work ethics, and personality based on weight
- Suffer prejudice and discrimination because of their weight
- Inequalities in the employment, health-care, and educational settings due to negative stereotypes that overweight and obese persons are lazy and incompetent
- Can be communicated both directly and indirectly
- Negative attitudes affecting interactions
- Subtle and overt expressions

How are individuals stigmatized?

- Ways individuals can be stigmatized:
- Comments regarding body size
- Looks – demeanor
- Employment
- Education
- Health-care providers
- Stereotypes leading to rejection, prejudice, and discrimination
- Mistreatment from peers (specifically bullying in children)

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Origins of Weight Stigma

- Media portrayal and societal pressure regarding obesity
- Cultural value of thinness
- Culture blaming victims (overweight/obese people) instead of investigating environmental factors
- General belief that people only fail to lose weight because they lack the will power and discipline (when research tells us that 97% of people who lose weight on a diet, gain it back and sometimes more...)

Key Source: Yale Rudd Center   www.yaleruddcenter.com

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