

EATING DISORDERS & BULLYING/WEIGHT SHAMING

The harmful effects of bullying have received increased attention in recent years, starting an important national conversation. Weight shaming, which is linked to the development of eating disorders, needs to be a significant part of anti-bullying discussions, particularly in the context of the widespread anti-obesity messaging. Many who struggle with eating disorders cite bullying as one of the initial triggers, making it all the more important to teach our children- and each other - that bullying and weight shaming are never okay.

THE DANGER OF WEIGHT STIGMA

Weight stigma poses a significant threat to psychological and physical health. It has been documented as a significant risk factor for :³



depression



low self-esteem



body dissatisfaction

Low self-esteem is a common characteristic of individuals who have eating disorders.⁶

WEIGHT-BASED VICTIMIZATION AMONG OVERWEIGHT YOUTHS HAS BEEN LINKED TO:³

- LOWER LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- NEGATIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT SPORTS
- LOWER PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG OVERWEIGHT STUDENTS



THE BEST-KNOWN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EATING DISORDER IS THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IDEALIZATION OF THINNESS:¹

PREVALENCE OF WEIGHT-BASED TEASING

40%

OVERWEIGHT GIRLS



37%

OVERWEIGHT BOYS



are teased about their weight by peers or family members.⁵

THE DANGERS OF WEIGHT-BASED TEASING AND DIET TALK

Weight teasing predicts:⁵



binge eating



weight gain



extreme weight control measures

BY THE AGE OF 6, girls especially start to express concerns about their own weight or shape.²

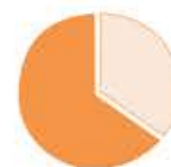


Of elementary school girls (ages 6-12)

40-60%

are concerned about their weight or about becoming too fat.²

Of American elementary school girls who read magazines...



69% SAY that the pictures influence their concept of the ideal body shape.⁴



47% SAY the pictures make them want to lose weight.⁴

AMONG OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE ADULTS, THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE WEIGHT-BASED STIGMATIZATION:³

- ENGAGE IN MORE FREQUENT BINGE EATING
- ARE AT AN INCREASED RISK FOR ED SYMPTOMS
- ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A DIAGNOSIS OF BED
- 79% OF WEIGHT-LOSS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS REPORT EATING MORE TO COPE WITH WEIGHT STIGMA⁷

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