• This is the third component of the Health At Every Size Curriculum on the topic of Size Acceptance.
• This curriculum was developed by a team of individuals representing three organizations:
  • The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
  • NAAFA, the National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance and
  • the Association for Size Diversity and Health

• You have learned about the Health At Every Size paradigm, eating for pleasure attending to hunger, satiety, and appetite and adopting joyful movement.
• Today we will talk about accepting and respecting the natural diversity of body sizes and shapes.

• We’ll start today by defining body image and discussing the various influences of body image.
• Then we will discuss how the world is made up of all sizes and shapes of people and that there is no true “normal”.
• We’ll take a look at the social injustice of size discrimination.
• Finally, we’ll talk about what we can do to promote HAES and fight against discrimination.
• First, let’s begin by exploring the definition of body image.
**Slide 4**

**Body Image**
- A person’s body image reflects how attractive they perceive themselves to be

- As a young child, we focus on how our bodies feel and do not focus on how our bodies look
  - This is a learned behavior
- Body image or our perception of how attractive we are changes over time and can even change day to day or minute to minute
- Many different things can affect the way we perceive our bodies
- Body image goes beyond weight, size and body shape
  - Also includes height, nose, eyes, ears, skin tone, etc.

**Slide 5**

**Positive Body Image**
- True perception of your shape
- Celebrate and appreciate natural body shape
- Belief that size or shape is an important indicator of worth
- Proud and accepting of your unique body
- Limited time spent worrying about food, exercise and body

**Negative Body Image**
- Distorted perception of size or shape
- Compare your body to others
- Belief that size or shape is an important indicator of worth
- Feelings of shame, awkwardness, and anxiety about the body
- Obsessive thinking about food, exercise and body
- You feel confident and comfortable in your body

**Slide 6**

**Where does our body image come from?**
- Many places
- First, our culture sends us many subliminal messages about what is considered beauty. And it’s interesting to note that the body size and shape considered “beautiful” has changed over time. Many years ago, plumpness was considered more beautiful because it was a sign of food security and therefore wealth.
- Our body image also is influenced by the people around us. We often receive both direct and indirect messages from friends, family members and even teachers and coaches about appearances and body size.
- Finally, our own unique personal characteristics
influence body image.

- Some people are wired to have more of a perfectionistic attitude, while others have a more laid back style.
- There are obvious differences between genders and even between cultures when it comes to body image as well.

- Let’s take a closer look at the cultural ideal of beauty that is present in the media.
- Media controls many aspects of our lives and how we think.
- Jim Morrison once said, “Whoever controls the media controls the mind.”
- This is definitely true when it comes to definitions of beauty. What we view as “beautiful” is largely influenced by what we see in the media.
- Possible discussion question: How does the media influence our decisions?

- It is difficult to escape the media’s version of the perfect body; it is everywhere from fashion magazines to TV shows and movies; even many news casters must fit a certain ideal image.
- Media images influence how we perceive ourselves.
- Research shows that exposure to media results in decreased body satisfaction and has even been connected to disordered eating and obsessive exercise patterns.

- American men and women are both influenced by the media, but here are some shocking statistics about women:
  - 50% are currently on a diet and 75% think they are too fat
  - Men and women are comparing themselves to unrealistic images seen in the media.
- Kilbourne reported in 1994 that only 5% of women actually meet the ideal image portrayed in the media.
• Men are affected by media images too.
• Young men exposed to muscular bodies had lower body satisfaction and lower body esteem.
• Researchers also found that negative feelings about one’s body also:
  • impacted their sexual well-being
  • In some cases lead to more aggressive and risky sexual behavior

• Unfortunately not much will change to improve our body image until the media begins consistently including people who are a variety of shapes and sizes in a positive light.
• Next, we’ll talk about the importance of size diversity in promoting health.

• What if these types of images were shown more in the media?
• This Image shows that beauty comes in many different shapes and sizes.
• Just like the color of our skin, the texture of our hair, or the size of our feet, our body size and type are, to a large extent, is genetically determined
• Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva believes diversity is to be celebrated when she says: “Uniformity is not nature’s way; diversity is nature’s way”

• Think for a moment about a world with uniformity instead of diversity. What would it be like if we were all the same?
• In what ways are we all different?
  • Answer: hair color and texture, eyes, skin color, feature shapes, body shapes, height etc.
• What would it be like to celebrate our differences instead of trying to all fit a specific mold? What does it look like, sound like, feel like?
  (This can be used as a group activity/discussion, open discussion to the class, journaling topic or a pause for reflection)

• Unfortunately, size diversity is not celebrated much in our society and this leads us to our next topic of size discrimination.
• Unfortunately discrimination is prevalent in our world today.
• The term discrimination is simply an unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things

Possible discussion questions:
• What are ways that people are discriminated against?
• What groups in the past/currently being discriminated against?
• Have you ever been discriminated against? How did that make you feel?

• Many people believe that discrimination based on weight is acceptable and in some ways it is encouraged.
• Throughout this presentation we’ll be speaking about individuals who are victims of discrimination due to their large size.
• However, size discrimination goes both ways. Assumptions are often made about people who are too thin as well.
• You may know someone who is genetically quite thin and it’s assumed they have an eating disorder when that’s not the case. It benefits all of us then, across the weight spectrum, to advocate for an end to size discrimination.

• Now we will take a look at various places where you might find size discrimination.
• First, let’s talk about the workplace.
• In March 2012 a Texas hospital actually announced that it will refuse to hire people with a BMI >35.
• The hospital’s policy states that employees “should fit with a representational image or specific mental projection of the job of a healthcare professional,” including an appearance “free from distraction” for hospital patients.
• Discussion question: Given what you have learned about BMI and HAES, what do you think of this policy? Does it shock you?
Health At Every Size®

Size Discrimination in the Workplace
- Overweight people earn less than non-overweight people.¹
- Get fewer promotions.²
- Viewed as lazy, less competent & lacking in self-discipline.²
- Can be fired, suspended or demoted because of their weight.³

¹Baum, 2004 ²Roehling, 1999 ³Korn, 2010

Researchers have actually found that overweight individuals earn less and receive fewer promotions than their skinnier counterparts.
Within the workplace, supervisors often view larger employees as lazy, less competent and lacking in self-discipline.
Supervisors may even fire, suspend, or demote an individual because of their weight.
These things can affect a person’s confidence in themselves, which only makes it harder for them in the workplace
  - Creates a viscous cycle

Health care professionals are entrusted with caring for all patients and treating them with respect and equality, yet there are many health care professionals that harbor discriminatory attitudes regarding patients of size.
In a study of 400 doctors, doctors were found to associate obesity with noncompliance, hostility, dishonesty and poor hygiene.
Obese patients often receive less preventative care and doctors may even provide less intervention for obese patients.
It’s very common for obese patients to avoid regular check-ups with their doctor for fear that the doctor will tell them they need to lose weight. This can result in fewer preventative health screenings.

Nurses and dietitians are guilty of size discrimination in health care.
In one study of nurses, 31% said they do not want to care for obese patients and 24% actually said they were repulsed by obese patients.
Dietitians also often have negative attitudes regarding overweight individuals.
In one study, only 1.4% of those surveyed reported having positive or even neutral attitudes regarding overweight individuals.
Doctors can be quick to assume that a patient’s medical problem is based on his or her weight, without taking a full assessment of the patient and evaluating all possible causes, immediately blaming weight.

Patients often avoid seeing their doctors because they don’t want to be weighed or told that they need to lose weight.

Researchers found this to be a barrier to obtaining regular gynecological screenings by women of size.

Insurance companies often charge more for premiums or deny people based solely on weight or BMI alone, without asking other health related questions (such as medical history).

As of 2014, it will be illegal for health insurance companies to deny health insurance based on size. However, employers may still choose to require employees to pay higher premiums.

If doctors make assumptions about fat patients, then they are making assumptions about thin patients as well.

Thin individuals get heart disease and diabetes too. It makes you wonder how many thin individuals go undiagnosed based on assumptions regarding weight and health.

Size discrimination is also prevalent in education systems.

This excerpt was taken from the National Education Association (NEA).

Discussion question: Have you witnessed fat discrimination in your school? Elementary through college?
• Similar to health care professionals’, educators also have negative views towards their larger students.
• Teachers say that overweight students are untidy, more emotional, less likely to succeed at work, and more likely to have family problems.
• These negative views can damage a child’s self-esteem and carry them throughout their life.

• Bullying can come from authority figures, not just other children.
• An individual seeking a weight loss intervention, made this comment.
• This is an unfortunate example of how comments and attitudes of teachers and other school officials can be much more damaging to a child.

• Well-meaning school officials and health educators often attempt to promote health in schools. But they often use terms like (click) obesity prevention.
• Imagine what it might be like for a fat child to hear this term or see a banner at school with this term?
• Health promotion programs need to advocate healthy patterns for children of all size and not single kids out based on size.
• These messages only promote bullying and discrimination in our schools.
• Other examples of discrimination include larger couples being turned down as adoptive parents or even being denied apartments.
• Public facilities often do very little to ensure that a larger person is comfortable.
• For example, they may have chairs that are too narrow.
• Airplane seats have also been an issue for larger travelers.
• In the media, fat people are often made fun of as a way to get laughs.
• This YouTube video aims to raise awareness about size discrimination, and how words matter—especially words aimed at marginalizing people of size over their weight. – focusing on weight being used as humor and childhood bullying <2 min

• All people are both privileged and non-privileged in certain aspects of their life.
• Perhaps you’ve heard of the term “privilege” which refers to unspoken advantages that certain individuals may not recognize they have.
• Thin people may receive certain “perks” so to speak simply based on the fact that a thin body size is the size society has deemed as preferred.

• Here is a checklist of a few items that thin people simply don’t have to worry about that a person of size would have to worry about.
• The complete list can be found on the reference link provided.
• Imagine you’re a large person walking into a donut shop. What might that experience be like?
• Imagine you’re a thin person walking into a donut shop. What might that experience be like?
**Slide 31**

**Size Discrimination and Current Law**
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not include weight as a protected class.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 only protects against disability discrimination.
  - Does not apply widely to weight-based discrimination.

**Slide 32**

**Size Discrimination and Current Law**
- Michigan is the only state that prohibits weight discrimination.
- Six US cities have enacted laws prohibiting weight discrimination:
  - Washington DC, San Francisco, CA Santa Cruz, CA, Madison, WI, Urbana, IL, and Binghamton, NY.

**Slide 33**

**Rates of Perceived Discrimination Among Americans Aged 25-74**
- Women are in pink and men are in purple.
- As you can see, for women, perceived gender discrimination is most prevalent, followed by age, and then weight.
- Interestingly enough, perceived weight or height discrimination is even higher for women then race.
- More women than men experience weight discrimination.
- In fact, for men, perceived weight or height discrimination is the lowest compared to the other forms of discrimination.
In this video, Lynne Hurdle-Price talks about her experiences with discrimination. She is an educational consultant for Hurdle-Price Professionals, where she incorporates the performing arts into her work. Video 7 min

• Hopefully these presentations have inspired you to ask the question, “What can I do to end size discrimination?”

• Finally today, we’ll take a look at ways you can make a difference in promoting size diversity and size acceptance.

• We can all advocate for equality. Here are a few ways to make things right and to help end size discrimination.
• What is “Fat Talk”?
  • Fat talk includes statements made that reinforce the thin ideal. It can be negative or positive talk.
    • Negative examples are “I need to lose weight” or “She has a muffin top”.
    • Positive fat talk could be “You look like you’ve lost weight” or “That dress makes you look really thin.” Even though these comments are “positive” it’s still fat talk. Comments that you once thought were compliments, can actually be destructive.
  • This video was developed by a national sorority and shows damage that results from fat talk.
  • Video = 3 minutes and 19 seconds
  • Stand up against discrimination. It’s everyone, it’s not funny and it’s not professional.
  • You can also help make things right by sharing what you’ve learned about HAES with others.

• By sharing positive messages you are stopping the cycle of prejudice.
• Be the voice for many people. Chances are if you are thinking it, someone else is to – a few voices and requests for body positive space can make a difference.
• You can share body positive messages on Facebook, form a club on campus that promotes body image and intuitive eating.
• You can also be on the lookout for size discrimination and write to the people in charge when you see fat talk and provide ideas for messaging that promotes health for all sizes and body diversity.
How to Make Things Right

- Inform local leaders that you want health, not weight promoted in your community
  - School district leaders
  - City Council members
  - State legislators
- Write companies that practice weight discrimination
  - Tell them to stop discriminating
  - Stop doing business with them

• Be part of the conversation by visiting your school district leaders, city council members, and state legislators to promote legislation and initiatives that reduce size discrimination.
• Refuse to shop at businesses who promote weight discrimination and write letters to voice your concern to those companies.
• Discussion question: Brainstorm other ways to advocate for HAES, size diversity and against size discrimination

And of course, you can join organizations that promote Health At Every Size and get involved with various programs and initiatives that are making a difference.
• By joining with others to fight these battles, our voices can be heard.
• We can make a difference!

HAES® Advocacy

- Join organizations that promote HAES and fight against size discrimination
  - National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA)
    - http://www.naafa.org
  - Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH)
    - http://www.sizediversityandhealth.org
  - Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
    - http://www.sneb.org

And of course, you can join organizations that promote Health At Every Size and get involved with various programs and initiatives that are making a difference.

Other HAES® Resources

- Health At Every Size
  - By Linda Bacon, PhD
- Intuitive Eating
  - Evelyn Tribole, MS, RD
- Diet Survivor’s Handbook
  - Judith Matz, LCSW & Ellen Frankel, LCSW
- Council on Size & Weight Discrimination
  - http://www.cswd.org/
- HAES Community
  - www.haescommunity.org/
- Additional Resources
  - Books, Articles, Websites/Blogs
    - http://www.sizediversityandhealth.org/content.asp?id=31

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