

## FIRST DO NO HARM

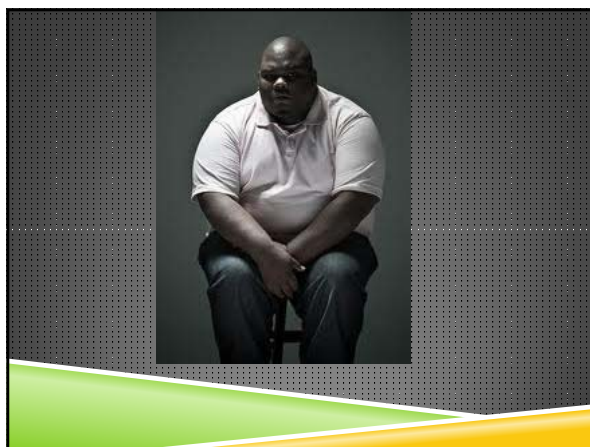
Interventions intended to increase public health should, at the very least, not decrease public health.

Public Health Messaging about “obesity” has become based in shame, stigma, and fear



## HEADLESS FATTIES





## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- ▶ Increased disease risk through increased stress (Muennig)
- ▶ Lower personal health care engagement (Puhl)
- ▶ Triggering eating disorders (Pinhas)

## SMOKING VS. OBESITY

- ▶ Behavior vs Body Size
- ▶ Escaping Oppression
- ▶ Changing a Behavior vs Changing Body Size
- ▶ Downside Risk

## WHAT MESSAGING WORKS

- ▶ Shame Free
- ▶ Future Oriented
- ▶ Behavior Based and Positive

## Fighting obesity or obese persons? Public perceptions of obesity-related health messages

R Puhl, JL Peterson and J Luedicke

Participants responded most favorably to messages involving themes of increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and general messages involving multiple health behaviors.

-Puhl et. al

Messages that have been publicly criticized for their stigmatizing content received the most negative ratings and the lowest intentions to comply with message content.

-Puhl et. al

Messages that were perceived to be most positive and motivating made no mention of the word 'obesity' at all, and instead focused on making healthy behavioral changes without reference to body weight.

-Puhl et. al.

#### BENEFITS OF POSITIVE MESSAGING

- ▶ Avoids double disservice
- ▶ Avoids reinforcement of public shame and stigma
- ▶ Creates a belief in the fat body as deserving of care
- ▶ Establishes positive relationship between people of size and healthcare establishment

We can have a complete discussion of public health without pathologizing body size

#### CASE STUDY

#### Five College Eating Disorder Committee:

#### One Approach to Health at Every Size in Public Health Messaging

#### FIVE COLLEGE EATING DISORDER COMMITTEE:

- ▶ Includes representatives from multiple disciplines on each campus (therapists, nutritionists, health educators, nurse practitioners, and athletic trainers)
- ▶ Meet 2-3x per semester for over 20 years (1990)
- ▶ Overall goal is to address issues of positive body image and provide information and support in address eating concerns of college students in the Five College area.

#### HISTORY OF APPROACHES

Film series, speakers, authors, creating of a film entitled "Recovering Bodies" with the Media Education Foundation, workshops, theater performances, media literacy, collaboration with faculty, educational programs and campaigns, and community action. Support and/or advising of student groups/organizations.

## PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

Have always included a positive body image message as part of our educational approaches but also focused on eating disorders.

1998—Stanford article: "Are Two Interventions Worse than None? Joint Primary & Secondary Prevention of Eating Disorders in College Females" published in *Health Psychology* discussed it was best these be done separately.

As a result, 5 ED Committee decided to do primary prevention focused on body image and secondary prevention only for trained professionals and peer leaders

- ▶ 1997 "Fat & Fit: Paradox or New Paradigm? Experts Challenge Assertion That Thinner is Always Better" (UMass School of Public Health and Exercise Science)

- ▶ 1999 Conference held at UMass/Amherst entitled "The Big Picture: Overcoming Weight Prejudice & Promoting Health for People of All Sizes"(Glenn Gaesser)

- ▶ 1998 Began support of NOW Foundation's annual Love Your Body Day event (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary) that was created as a response to media portrayals of women, particularly in advertising, that promote narrow and unhealthy ideals of beauty.

- ▶ 2006 "Separating Fat from Fiction: The Truth about Obesity, Exercise & Diet" (Ellen Perrella, MHC Athletic Trainer)

- ▶ 2009 Respond to BMI guidelines for public schools (Massachusetts legislation) in and editorial sent to and published in local newspaper

- ▶ 2010 Operation Beautiful book by Caitlin Boyle (Post-It notes exhibit @ MHC)

- ▶ 2012 Ragen Chastain(UMass, MHC, Amherst, Smith)-- "The Positive Body"; "Athletes @ Every Size" for dance majors; "Wellness Care for People of Size" for Health Services & Counseling Services staff; and "Every Body Dance Workshop"



### CHANGE THE RULES... NOT YOUR BODY: DON'T WEIGH YOUR SELF ESTEEM CAMPAIGN (2000-2001)

- ▶ Educational campaign focused on providing positive body image messages in a variety of formats: bus ads, postcards, table tents & buttons.
- ▶ Objective to give consistent messages on all five campuses to counter the vast number of negative messages and images our students are confronted with on a daily basis.
- ▶ Sponsored public/community event to draw attention to this issue.

### Change the rules... NOT YOUR BODY



Question the motives of the fashion industry.    Make room for every BODY.    Concentrate on the things you do well.

### DON'T WEIGH YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

### Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain, are  
moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are  
heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

- Mary Oliver

Sponsored by Five College Positive Body Image Campaign

# What have others done?





## Comparing Traditional and Nondiet Approaches to Health/Weight Issues

	Traditional Approach	Nondiet Approach
<b>Ideology</b>	Excessive fatness, as defined by standardized tables, is unhealthy. Goal is to eliminate excess fatness and achieve goal weight. This will ameliorate many medical problems.	Healthy weight is highly individualized and cannot be determined by a standardized table. Goal is to enhance health without focus on weight. Most medical problems can be ameliorated without weight loss.
<b>Weight</b>	The defined weight must be achieved and maintained to be healthy and happy (even if this requires permanent food restriction).	The body will seek its natural, healthy weight as one eats in response to body cues and engages in physical activity. It is possible to be healthy and happy at weights higher than the government and society advocates.
<b>Hunger</b>	Hunger and satiety cues are irrelevant and/or cannot be trusted. Hunger needs to be controlled/suppressed/ ignored to achieve a healthy weight. Diets/meal plans help control hunger.	Dieting and/or ignoring hunger causes food preoccupation and cravings, and makes it harder to stop eating when satisfied. Diets backfire and cause out-of-control eating. Goal is to relearn to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues.
<b>Food</b>	Avoid "bad," "illegal," or "unhealthy" foods most of the time. Monitor portion sizes. Do not eat too much. Follow a diet or meal plan if cannot control self. People need more education to know how to eat right.	<b>All</b> foods fit. <i>Restricting</i> foods often makes them more <i>special</i> . Free access to all foods makes "forbidden" foods less special, and "healthier" foods more desirable. Listen to the body's constant feedback about food choices without judgment. Temper choices with nutrition knowledge.
<b>Exercise</b>	Exercise is necessary to control weight. All people must exercise to manage weight. Overweight people need to exercise even more. People who do not exercise are too lazy and need to get on a program and stick with it.	Exercise/play/movement is our birthright. It is fun and results in feeling good. Activity associated with burning calories is tedious. Reconnect with the fun of activity. Explore/remove any barriers interfering with enjoying this birthright. <b>All</b> activity counts. Run laps if it you like it; otherwise, go outside and play!
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	Weight loss and/or maintenance of the defined weight will increase self-esteem.	Self-esteem and personal power increase when a person accepts themselves and their body. Size diversity is cool! Understand that people come in all shapes and sizes; and that cultural norms can be dangerous and pursuit of them can interfere with quality of life.
<b>Trust/Distrust of Self / Body</b>	The body cannot be trusted and must be scrutinized. Food and activity must be monitored closely to ensure extra pounds to not creep on.	People can trust themselves and their bodies. If they quit dieting, eat when hungry and stop when satisfied most of the time, and enjoy exercise/play/movement, their bodies' will reach/maintain a natural, healthy weight that is good for them.