

What can providers do to reduce weight bias?

Identify Personal Attitudes

Awareness is the first step toward change. Take some time to ask yourself the following questions about your own attitudes, and identify any personal biases that you may hold.

- Do I make assumptions based only on weight regarding a person's character, intelligence, professional success, health status, or lifestyle behaviors?
- Am I comfortable working with patients of all sizes?
- Do I give appropriate feedback to encourage healthful behavior change?
- Am I sensitive to the needs and concerns of obese individuals?
- Do I treat the individual or only the condition?

Practice Bias-Free Treatment Approaches

- Consider that patients may have previously experienced bias from providers
- Recognize that being overweight is a product of many factors
- Explore all causes of the patient's presenting problems, not just weight
- Recognize that many patients have tried to lose weight repeatedly
- Emphasize behavior changes with patients rather than focusing only on weight
- Acknowledge the difficulty of making lifestyle changes, and provide support
- Recognize that small weight losses can result in significant health gains

