

Video Discussion Guide

Weight Bias at Home and School

ABOUT THIS VIDEO

This 20-minute video, hosted by former supermodel and activist Emme, is designed to help parents and teachers understand the severity and impacts of weight bias in school and at home. Brought to you by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, this video features expert commentary and dramatic representation to address the obstacles that overweight and obese youth encounter with weight bias, and presents strategies to help combat this growing problem.

This video is ideal as an educational tool to be used in teacher trainings, PTA meetings, community and parent organizations, and in diversity education.

WHY WEIGHT BIAS?

“Every single minute of high school was awful. I weighed 240 pounds when I was 14. I was spit on, pinched, teased daily. I was ridiculed and had no real friends.”

Overweight and obese children are frequently bullied, teased, and socially rejected because of their weight. Weight-based bullying (also called weight bias) is not only common, it is often ignored. Research shows that overweight and obese youth are victims of weight bias at home, at school, and in the media. Sadly, because weight bias is so deeply embedded in our culture, we often don't recognize when it's happening.

Weight bias can be seriously damaging to a child's social, emotional, and academic development. This video educates parents and teachers so that they can help to protect overweight and obese children from the long-term impacts of weight bias.

TIPS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

Before presenting this video, think about how it applies to your particular audience. You can present your audience with a few introductory questions that they may consider as they are watching the video. Some examples of questions to ask before the video begins:

- ▶ *What are your own attitudes and feelings about weight?*
- ▶ *What are the attitudes of others in your school and/or family about weight?*
- ▶ *How might your children and/or students have experienced weight bias in the past?*
- ▶ *How is your school and/or family currently addressing weight-based teasing and bullying?*

WEIGHT BIAS AT HOME AND SCHOOL is available at:

www.yaleruddcenter.org/weightbias



Weight Bias at Home and School

AFTER THE VIDEO: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ▶ Review the questions presented prior to watching the video. Ask your audience to share their thoughts.
- ▶ What are your observations about weight bias among your children and/or students? Have you ever noticed a child being bullied and or teased because of their weight? How did you respond?
- ▶ How do you think weight bias affects children? How does it make them feel and how might they react to being the victim of weight bias?
- ▶ What strategies can be implemented in your school to increase awareness of weight bias and reduce weight-based bullying?
- ▶ What is your school's current policy on bullying? Is this policy adequate to protect overweight and obese children from being victimized because of their weight?
- ▶ Do you talk about your own or others' weight in front of children? What do these comments communicate to your children?
- ▶ What are some ways to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors in children, without making them feel ashamed or embarrassed about their weight?

REVIEW: KEY STRATEGIES

- Be Aware.** Be alert to incidences of weight bias, understand your own attitudes, and those of your children and/or students.
- Educate Yourself.** Understand the multiple complex causes of obesity so you don't make false assumptions about people who are overweight or obese.
- Avoid "Fat-Talk".** Be careful of how you discuss weight in the presence of children. Use sensitive and appropriate language.
- Intervene.** When you see teasing and bullying happen, intervene to stop the behavior. Encourage children to do the same and support their friends and classmates.
- Include Positive Role Models.** Identify role models with diverse body types and help children to understand that people of all shapes and sizes can be successful.
- Be Sensitive.** Avoid situations of potential embarrassment for overweight and obese children, where they may feel singled out or excluded.
- Advocate Weight Tolerance.** Be a role model by enforcing a zero-tolerance policy of weight-based teasing.
- Emphasize Health,** not appearance. Encourage healthy lifestyle habits for all children, regardless of their body size.

For additional free resources on **WEIGHT BIAS** for parents, teachers, kids and teens, please visit:

www.yaleruddcenter.org/weightbias

