

Identifying Weight Bias

You may already be monitoring your child's media use for content related to violence, sex, or drugs, but what about content promoting weight bias? Movies, music, magazines, and other media sources reinforce prejudice and negative stereotypes about people with overweight. By learning to identify examples of weight bias in the media, you can challenge media's harmful messages about body weight.

Evaluate the *visuals*

Directions: Think about an image, photograph, or video that featured a person with overweight. Examples might be from magazines, billboard ads, TV shows and commercials, or internet. Carefully read each of the statements below and check "yes" or "no" for each statement.

	Yes	No
1. Is the person with overweight being ridiculed and teased?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the person with overweight engaged in negative stereotypical behaviors (e.g., eating junk food or watching too much tv)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is the person with overweight shown less intelligent than others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is there an emphasis on certain body parts (e.g., stomach or buttocks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is the person with overweight dressed in clothes that do not fit well or are disheveled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. In comparison to thinner people, is the person with overweight shown to be less popular with fewer friends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Evaluate the *language*

Directions: Now, think about weight-related content you have heard or read in the media. Examples could be from online news or comments, music, or quotes from movies or ads. Carefully read each of the statements below and check “yes” or “no” for each statement.

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are the words that describe weight stigmatizing (e.g., “fat,” “weight problem,” “morbidly obese”)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are there jokes or derogatory comments made about being affected by overweight? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are there words or comments that are judgmental about the character of the person with overweight? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Is there blaming or shaming of the person with overweight or the parent of a child with overweight because of weight? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- ✓ If you checked “yes” to any of the above questions, you’ve likely noticed weight bias.
- ✓ Try repeating these questions with a few more examples...you may be surprised by just how common weight bias is present in the media!

Remember to look for **weight B.I.A.S:**

Blaming. Media often ignores the complexity of obesity and can blame parents or kids.

Images. You might have heard that “pictures are worth a thousand words.” Be sure that images add positive value to the content, rather than reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Appropriate language. Listen and read carefully to the words used and comments.

Stereotypes. Weight bias is unfortunately accepted in our culture today in part, because of the negative stereotypes so commonly found in the media.

