

AdvocacyNews AdvocacyAction

Obesity and Stigma

Obesity discrimination is one of last forms of acceptable discrimination in today's society. Quite often obese individuals find themselves the target of discrimination in a variety of settings such as employment, healthcare, education and much more.

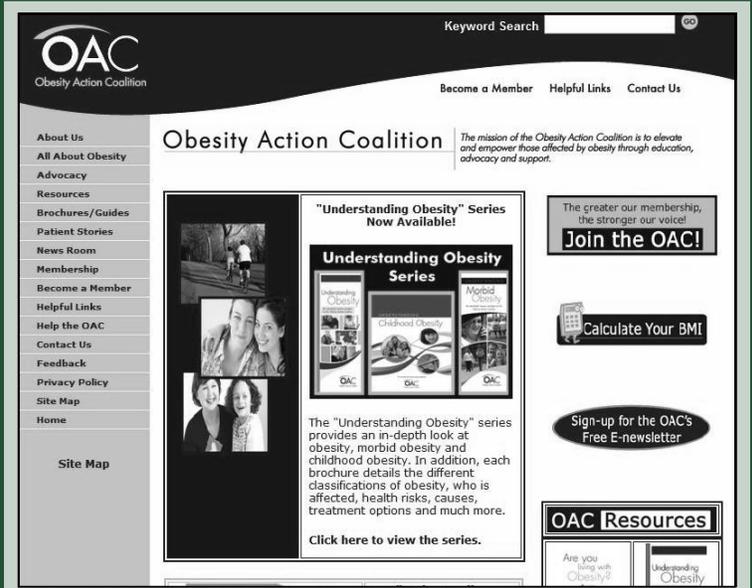
Consequences of Weight Bias

Taken together, the consequences of being denied jobs, rejected by peers, or treated inappropriately by healthcare professionals because of one's weight can have a serious and negative impact on quality of life. Obese individuals suffer terribly from this, both from direct discrimination and from more subtle forms of bias and stigma that are frequently encountered.

Weight bias can have psychological, social and physical health consequences on those affected by this disease. Psychological outcomes can include depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor body image and much more. The social effects can be social rejection by peers, poor quality of interpersonal relationships and potential negative impact on academic outcomes. The physical health outcomes can include binge-eating and unhealthy weight-control practices.

Reducing the Weight Bias

Given how pervasive and acceptable weight stigma is in our society, transforming societal attitudes and enacting laws that prohibit discrimination based on weight are needed in order to eliminate the problem of stigma toward obese individuals. Although this requires enormous efforts, there are other important steps that can be taken by both patients and their healthcare providers to help improve the daily functioning and well-being of obese individuals. Patients who are struggling with weight stigma can begin to approach this problem by becoming advocates for themselves. This includes identifying situa-



The screenshot shows the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) website. The header includes the OAC logo, a keyword search bar, and navigation links for 'Become a Member', 'Helpful Links', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area features a sidebar with a menu: 'About Us', 'All About Obesity', 'Advocacy', 'Resources', 'Brochures/Guides', 'Patient Stories', 'News Room', 'Membership', 'Become a Member', 'Helpful Links', 'Help the OAC', 'Contact Us', 'Feedback', 'Privacy Policy', 'Site Map', and 'Home'. The main content area is titled 'Obesity Action Coalition' and includes a mission statement: 'The mission of the Obesity Action Coalition is to elevate and empower those affected by obesity through education, advocacy and support.' Below this, there is a section for the 'Understanding Obesity Series' with a 'Now Available!' banner. It features three brochures: 'Understanding Obesity', 'Childhood Obesity', and 'Morbid Obesity'. A text box explains that the series provides an in-depth look at obesity, morbid obesity, and childhood obesity, detailing classifications, health risks, causes, and treatment options. A 'Click here to view the series.' link is provided. To the right, there are several promotional boxes: 'Join the OAC!' with the tagline 'The greater our membership, the stronger our voice!', 'Calculate Your BMI', 'Sign-up for the OAC's Free E-newsletter', and 'OAC Resources' with a link 'Are you living with Obesity?'. At the bottom of the screenshot, a text box reads: 'Visit the new Obesity Stigma page, located under the "All About Obesity" section of the OAC Web site, at www.obesityaction.org.'

tions in which they have been stigmatized because of their weight and deciding how best to handle the situation to achieve positive emotional health to help prevent additional stigma from occurring.

How You Can Help

The OAC has recently developed a stigma section devoted to education and awareness of the stigma associated with obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. The section discusses the negative stigma often associated with obesity and details ways to reduce the stigma associated with this disease.

If you see any examples of the negative stigma associated with obesity portrayed in your daily life, we encourage you to share them with the OAC by e-mailing info@obesityaction.org.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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