



Obesity: Addressing a National Crisis

Melinda J Watman, RN, BSN, MSN, CNM, MBA
mjwatman@thefwordfat.com



MCAO

MA Coalition for Action on Obesity

The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of orange and red. On the left, a solid orange trapezoidal shape points towards the center. On the right, a complex composition of overlapping, semi-transparent triangles in various tones of red and orange creates a layered, dynamic effect. The word "IMAGINE" is centered in a bold, dark blue font.

IMAGINE







The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of orange and red. On the left, there is a solid orange trapezoidal shape. On the right, there is a complex arrangement of overlapping, semi-transparent polygons in various shades of red and orange, creating a layered, geometric effect.

THE F WORD FAT: WEIGHT BIAS

WHAT IS WEIGHT BIAS

- Negative attitudes towards those with obesity
- Can take the form of verbal, relational, cyber, physical, bullying
- Both subtle and overt
- Internalized weight bias

Identify personal biases

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

- What assumptions do I have about people with obesity - character, personality, lifestyle, health based on their body weight?
- How do I feel when I interact with people with obesity?
- What do I do if I'm with people who make disparaging comments about people with obesity

BEHAVIOR MATTERS: THINKING VS. DOING

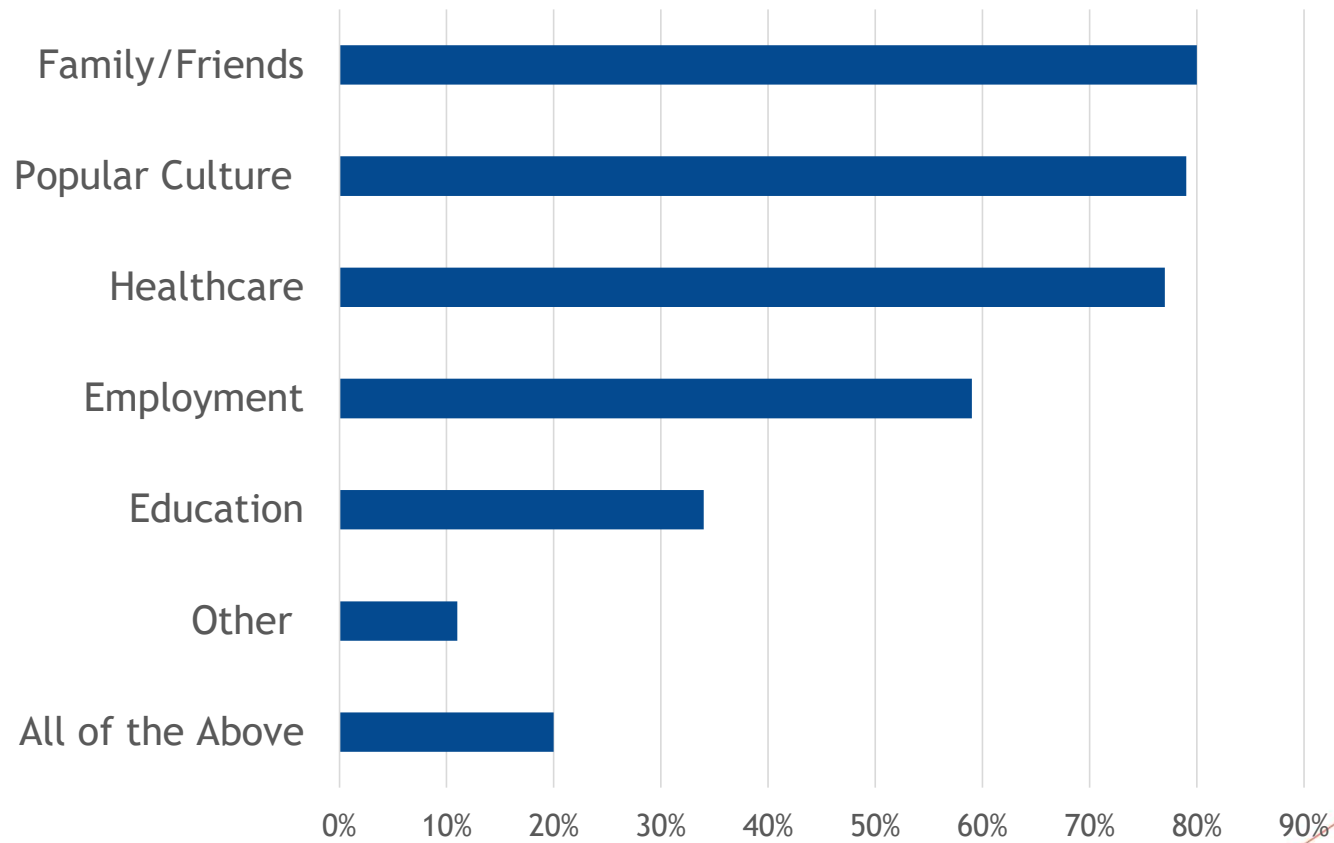
THOUGHT AND
SAID TO FLIGHT
ATTENDANT

VS.

THOUGHT THE
ABOVE AND SAID
“EXCUSE ME,
THAT’S MY SEAT IN
THE MIDDLE”.



EXPOSURE TO WEIGHT BIAS



LANGUAGE MATTERS

- Respect all people
- Use People First Language
- Look for teaching moments on bias





WEIGHT BIAS IN HEALTHCARE

PERVASIVE ACROSS PROVIDERS

- Physicians
- Nurses
- Medical students
- Psychologists
- Dieticians
- Fitness professionals



QUALITY OF CARE

- Less likely to take patient seriously
- Less time spent during appointments
- Reluctance to perform certain screenings
- Stigmatization
- **Excess weight is the cause of all problems**



DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT...



COVID-19 AND OBESITY

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Shame & blame results in avoidance of care

Worsening of symptoms

Delayed care results in late stage treatment and worse outcomes

- Having obesity increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- Having obesity may triple the risk of hospitalization due to a COVID-19 infection
- As BMI increases, the risk of death from COVID-19 increases

HAVE A SOCIETAL IMPACT

- Support and pass legislation to protect those with obesity
- Support and pass legislation that provides equal access to and parity of care
- Be conscious of weight bias and conscientious about stopping weight bias
- Add weight bias sensitivity training to employee hiring requirements, public health initiatives, school systems, etc.

The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of orange and red. On the left, there is a solid orange trapezoidal shape. On the right, there is a complex arrangement of overlapping, semi-transparent polygons in various shades of red, orange, and brown, creating a layered, crystalline effect.

**IT'S NOT YOUR CHARACTER,
IT'S YOUR CHEMISTRY**

Angela Fitch, MD



THANK YOU

Melinda J Watman
mjwatman@thewordfat.com