

9 Truths about Weight and Eating Disorders

- 1** Weight is influenced by multiple factors, including biological, psychological, behavioral, social, and economic factors.
- 2** There is a complex relationship between weight and health that is different for each person. Body mass index is an imprecise proxy measure of adiposity and is not a direct measure of health.
- 3** Weight is sensitive and personal, as it is determined and experienced uniquely for each individual and, when appropriate to do so, should be approached thoughtfully and respectfully. At the same time, weight is a highly politicized issue with social and economic linkages that intersect with social inequalities.
- 4** Weight bias and weight-based discrimination are prevalent and have pervasive negative consequences for health, social relationships, education, employment, and income. Weight bias is one facet of the cultural appearance ideals that emphasize and idealize thinness and are implicated in the development and maintenance of disordered eating behavior.
- 5** All people, irrespective of their weight, deserve equitable treatment — in healthcare settings and society. Weight bias and weight-based discrimination are never acceptable.
- 6** Weight is assessed by objective physical measurement; whereas, the threshold of body mass index used to classify obesity is based on arbitrary medical convention. Eating disorders are defined by thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and obesity is not an eating disorder.
- 7** Accurate judgments about a person's cognitions, personality, or behaviors cannot be made on the basis of their weight and appearance, and eating disorders cannot be diagnosed on the basis of a person's weight or appearance. Eating disorders affect people across the weight spectrum.
- 8** Dietary restriction can increase the risk for developing an eating disorder and can be harmful for many individuals across the weight spectrum. This risk must be considered during discussions and interventions relating to diet and weight.
- 9** Positive body image, regardless of weight, protects against disordered eating and other mental health problems and is associated with better physical health outcomes.