

Fat Talk Free Week

Common Misperceptions Q & A

Are you against fat people?

Absolutely not! Just the opposite. We recognize genetic size diversity and therefore encourage “*health at every size*” verses society’s current message of “thin at all costs.” Unfortunately, there is a lot of very hurtful prejudice and ridicule of large people in our society, and this is wrong! People of all shapes and sizes should be treated with fairness and respect. Not engaging in “fat talk” is one way we can be more respectful to ourselves and others.

But, obesity is a major health problem. People SHOULD try to lose weight and get thin by any means.

Actually, research does not support the long-term effectiveness of restrictive dieting and other extreme weight loss methods. On the contrary, extreme weight loss methods can lead to MORE weight gain and/or the development of eating disorders. Poor eating habits and lack of physical activity (*at ANY weight*) lead to major health problems. Just because someone is thin, doesn’t mean they’re healthy; and just because someone is fat doesn’t mean they’re unhealthy. Not engaging in “fat talk” takes the focus off of weight, unhealthy dieting, and the media’s unrealistic “*thin ideal*,” and it puts the focus back on *fitness, living well*, and the “*healthy ideal*” which looks different for everyBODY.

So does this mean that I can eat a huge fast food burger, fries, and shake today and not feel guilty about it?

We are NOT encouraging gluttony. We are encouraging healthy eating and physical activity, along with self/body respect. Respecting your body means listening to and honoring your body’s hunger and satiety signals and not under- or over-eating. Respecting your body also means choosing a variety of nutrient-dense foods (for health) *most of the time*, while allowing yourself “fun foods” (for pleasure) *some of the time* without fear or guilt. Not engaging in “fat talk” helps discourage “black or white” thinking about foods, which can lead to extreme anxiety and shame about eating “bad foods” and subsequent disordered eating behaviors (like extreme restriction, binge eating, and/or purging).

For more information, contact Sheri.Barke@canyons.edu

SNAC Faculty Advisor , College of the Canyons Student Health Center