PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE FOR OBESITY

OAC
Obesity Action Coalition

Bias and discrimination can be shown in many ways, but one of the most popular ways it is shown is through the absence of people-first language. Labeling individuals as "obese" creates negative feelings toward individuals with obesity and perpetuates weight bias. It is time to recognize the importance of people-first language and the influence it has on people who are affected by obesity.

The rules of APA Style calls for language in all publications to **"put people first, not their disability"** and to **"not label people by their disability."**
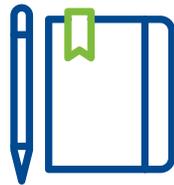
Feldman and colleagues[1] found that people-first language affects attitudes and behavioral intentions toward persons with disabilities.

Referring to individuals as "obese" has been shown to influence how individuals feel about their condition and how likely they are to seek medical care.

19%
of people report that they would avoid future medical appointments if their doctor stigmatized them about their weight.[2]

21%
of people report that they would seek a new doctor if they felt a doctor has stigmatized them about weight.[2]

Example of using people-first language:

"The woman was affected by obesity." instead of **"The woman was obese."**

We call upon authors and editors of scholarly research, scientific writing, and publications about obesity to use the same rules that are the norm for referring to individuals with other disabilities, diseases, and health conditions: **the use of people-first language.**

STOP WEIGHT BIAS

Using first person-language can help prevent bias and discrimination. For more information on why weight bias is harmful, please visit **StopWeightBias.com.**

References:

[1] Feldman D, Gordon PA, and Weber C. The Effects of People-First Language and Demographic Variables on Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intentions Toward People with Disabilities. J *Appl Rehab Counsel.* 2002;33(3):18-49

[2] Puhl, R., Peterson, J. & Luedicke, J. Motivating or stigmatizing? Public perceptions of weight-related language used by health providers. Int J Obes 37, 612–619 (2013). https://doi.org/10.1038/i-jo.2012.110

ABOUT THE OAC
The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a more than 75,000 member-strong 501(c)(3) National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to the individual affected by the disease of obesity and helping individuals along their journey toward better health through education, advocacy and support. Our core focuses are to raise awareness and improve access to the prevention and treatment of obesity, provide evidence-based education on obesity and its treatments, fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination, elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health and offer a community of support for the individual affected.

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