



Women's  
Health Clinic

## Women's Health Clinic (WHC) Weight Neutral Value Statement

Our Weight Neutral value statement replaces our previous Health at Every Size (HAES) value statement. We acknowledge that HAES principles are a direct result of decades of advocacy by grassroots social movements. Rooted in weight-neutral and body liberation frameworks, they identify and challenge the social harms and negative health outcomes created by anti-fat bias and weight stigma.

We engage in critical conversations about the language of HAES. We critique how the mainstream health care system's emphasis on a broad pursuit of health, ignores how intersecting systems of oppression come together to create negative health outcomes. At WHC, we provide services from a weight-neutral approach.

### What is weight neutrality?

We believe that all people should be free of discrimination. People of every weight, size, ability, and health status deserve acceptance, dignity, and respect. All have the right to appropriate, high quality health care. Body weight alone is not considered a valid measure of overall health or wellbeing. Our holistic approach to health and wellbeing also considers physical, mental, emotional, economic, spiritual, and cultural factors.

Our weight neutral practice promotes:

#### Social justice

- » We strive to better understand how anti-fat bias and weight discrimination intersects with other oppressions: racism, colonialism, ableism, sexism/misogyny, classism, homophobia, capitalism, and transphobia.
- » We actively challenge anti-fat bias. We critically engage with others so they understand how people are harmed by weight discrimination in health care policy and practice, and by fitness, nutrition, wellness, pharmaceutical, and diet industries.
- » We advocate for weight neutral education and training in health care, education, workplaces, and other settings.

#### Client-centered care

- » We listen and hold space for people to share their unique lived experiences. We value their experiences and regularly seek their feedback to improve our services.
- » Bodily autonomy is a human right. We offer information and support to help people make informed decisions about their wellbeing from a weight neutral perspective.
- » Our holistic view of health considers how various factors – the social determinants of health - contribute to health outcomes.

#### Inclusion and access

- » We educate our staff and others about the harms of weight bias and dieting, and of the benefits of weight neutral care.
- » We work to maintain a diverse staff to reflect the populations we serve.
- » We are committed to creating an accessible environment. Our chairs and medical equipment support a wide range of body sizes.

- » We use inclusive, non-stigmatizing language and diverse images in our educational, promotional, and organizational materials and communications.
- » Systemic oppressions prevent many people from getting the health care they need. We work to reduce all forms of oppression and discrimination, to promote weight neutral health policy and practice, and to reduce systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing high quality health care.

### Rationale for weight neutral care

- » Weight bias deeply impacts social, economic, psychological and physical health.
- » Body size is primarily determined by genetics. Weight modifications – through weight loss diets, medications, and surgeries – are not long-term sustainable for most people.
- » Changes in health behaviour can reduce risk and treat chronic disease for people of all body weights and sizes.
- » Weight discrimination stops some people in large bodies from seeking health care. It also prevents some health care providers from making appropriate recommendations or investigations.
- » Physical activity may increase muscle strength and improve balance, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness. It may offer pleasure, social connections, and a greater sense of general wellbeing. It may or may not change body shape, size, or weight.
- » Dieting can lead to weight cycling, poorer health outcomes, disordered eating or eating disorders, anxiety and depression. The health risks of repeated weight loss and gain are often greater than the risk of maintaining a stable, higher weight.

**Sources and Recommended Readings, Videos, and Podcasts****Websites and Articles:**

- » Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH) ([www.sizediversityandhealth.org](http://www.sizediversityandhealth.org))
  - ASDAH Abolish the BMI Coalition: <https://asdah.org/abolish-bmi/>
  - Statement on Health at Every Size from ASDAH, including a reference list: <https://asdah.org/health-at-every-size-haes-approach/>
- » Jackson-Gibson, A. (2021, February 23). The Racist and Problematic History of the Body Mass Index. Good Housekeeping. <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/a35047103/bmi-racist-history/>

**Books:**

- » Harrison, D. L. (2021). *Belly of the beast: The politics of anti-fatness as anti-Blackness*. North Atlantic Books.
- » Strings, S. (2019). *Fearing the Black body: The racial origins of fat phobia*. NYU Press.
- » Kinsey, D. (2022). *Decolonizing wellness: A QTBIPOC-centred guide to escape the diet trap, heal your self-image, and achieve body liberation*. BenBella Books.
- » Taylor, S.R. (2021). *The body is not an apology: The power of radical self-love*. (Second Edition). Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- » Rothblum, E. D., Solovay, S. (2009). *Fat Studies Reader*. NYU Press.

**Research articles:**

- » Cyr, M., & Riediger, N. (2021). (Re)claiming our bodies using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach: Health-At-Every-Size (HAES®) and Indigenous knowledge. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 112(3), 493–497. <https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-020-00445-9>

**Videos/podcasts:**

- » Tovar, V. (2018). Virgie Tovar tells us the difference between body positivity and fat activism. Youtube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_OoS\\_hgXfQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_OoS_hgXfQ)
- » Harrison, D. (2021). The intersections of healthism and anti-fatness as anti-Blackness with Da'Shaun Harrison. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNAd4MFAAEU&t=660s>
- » La Cura Podcast (2021). Healing Eating Disorders - hosted by Francisca Porchas Coronado, Interview with Gloria Lucas (Nalgona Positivity Pride). <https://lacura.podbean.com/e/healing-eating-disorders/>

**PEDPRP Community-Based Resources/Workshops:**

- » <https://womenshealthclinic.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Final-PEDPRP-Resource-List-print-Jan-2022.pdf>
- » <https://womenshealthclinic.org/what-we-do/pedprp/workshops/>