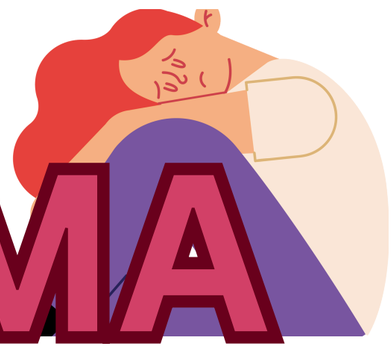
Understanding WEIGHT STIGMA Among Diverse People in Canada



AIM OF STUDY

To better understand how higher-weight people in Canada experience weight stigma alongside different marginalized identities.

WEIGHT STIGMA, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

- **Weight stigma**: the negative attitudes and stereotypes directed at individuals with higher body weight. In Canada, weight stigma is prevalent in healthcare, education, and interpersonal relationships.

- **Issue:** Weight stigma has emerged as a significant social justice and equity issue. Despite the Public Health Agency of Canada's acknowledgement of weight stigma as a barrier to health equity, there has been little to no action in addressing weight-based discrimination.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- **Online survey** with open-ended questions for participants to share a story about their lived experiences and perspectives on weight stigma.

Example question: "When you think about this event, what made it feel like you were being treated differently or unfairly?"

- **Thematic analysis** was used to identify the overarching patterns in participants' stories.

References

This research was supported by the Valerie Kuehne Undergraduate Research Awards, University of Victoria, and is supervised by Dr. Sarah Nutter in the Department of Education. This work was also supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant.

Infographic by: Haoyue (Cici) Chen, Department of Psychology, September 9, 2024

I was getting a physical exam. I told the doctor I was uncomfortable with some of the touching because I don't like having pressure on my bones as I have sensory issues from ADHD and autism. **[40 year old, European & Japanese]**

Out of 438 participants, 154 have a disability

Invisible: 102

Visible: 25

Both: 27

White: 61%

BIPOC 38.3%

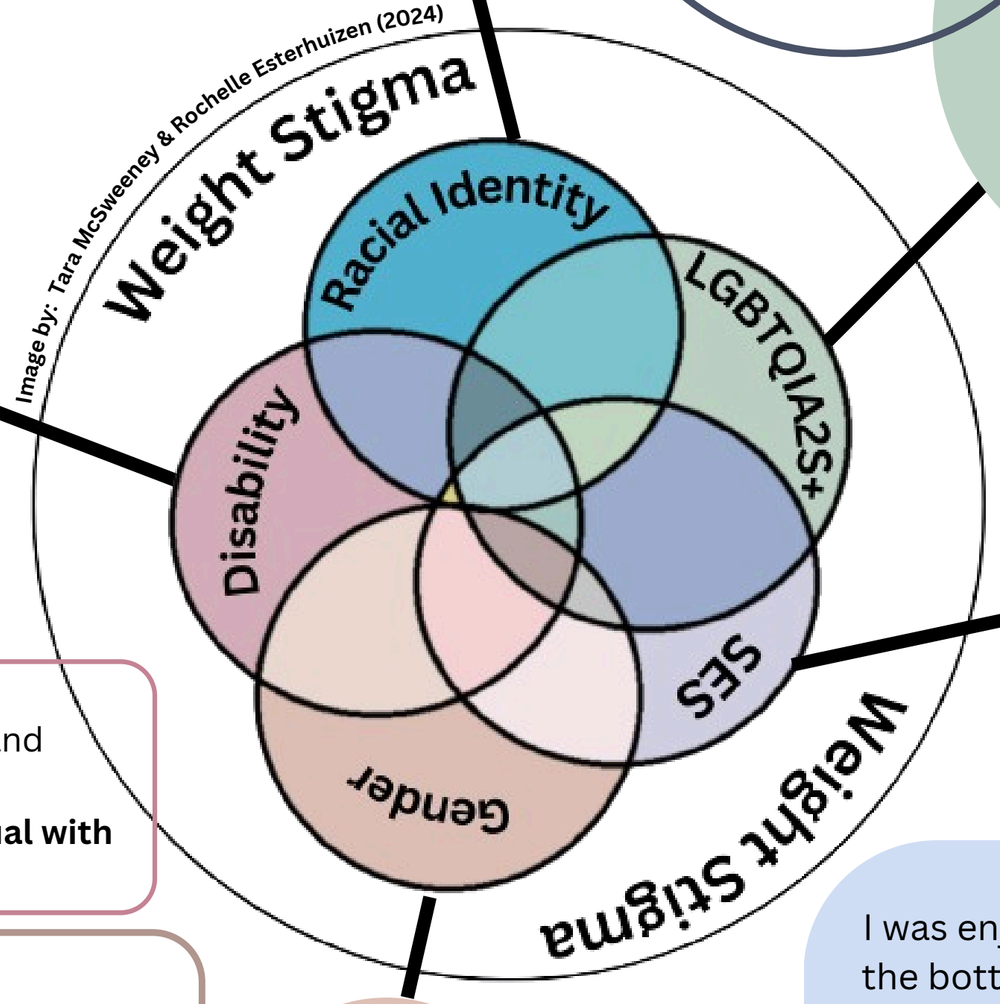
Ex. Asian, Black, First Nation, Middle East, Biracial etc.

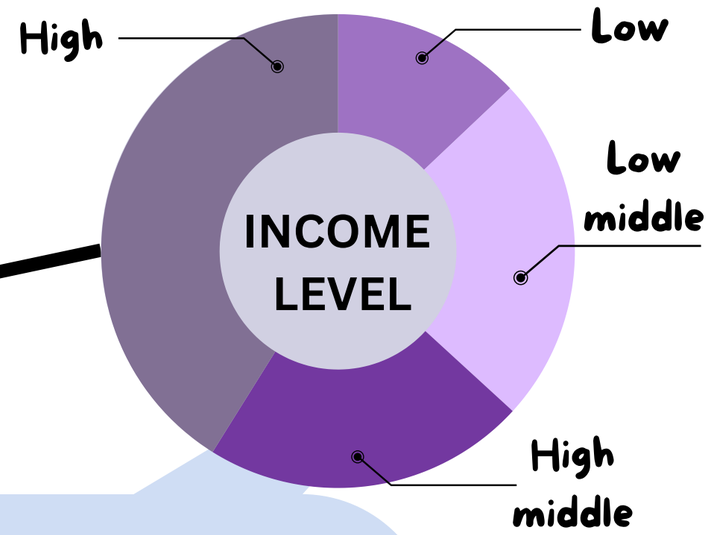
No response: 0.7%

"Family members chastising me for low weight, looking skinny, comparing me to a twig, etc. **[24 year old, Chinese, bisexual]**"

26.9% LGBTQ+

Some of the most common sexualities are...





My doctor misdiagnosed me and withheld the fact that I had gallstones. **[29 year old, asexual with invisible disability]**

Me along with 2 dozen other kids started hating ourselves despite the fact we didn't before. My confidence was shot and destroyed. I have no self worth 13 years later. **[26 year old, non-binary with an invisible disability]**

F: 67%

M: 29%

Trans/ Nonbinary: 4%

I was enjoying the last cookie in the bottom of the box when my older brother called me a blue whale. Then he said the blue whale is the largest whale in the world. **[Norwegian, female, from a low income household]**

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