

## OCW - WEIGHT BIAS PRESENTATION 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021

### DISCUSSION POINTS

Very interesting presentation.

#### **Q. What training do GP's/healthcare professionals receive in supporting people living with obesity? Very little training given in 'raising the issue' with patients.**

Kath gave feedback on a forum group meeting where healthcare professionals were asked why they don't approach the subject opportunistically. Kath reported findings related to:

- Sensitivity of subject – personal/avoid conflicts
- Not good role models – practitioners reported they were overweight themselves so embarrassed to approach others
- Unsure what to say – lack of knowledge of obesity if people asked questions
- Nothing to offer – no services available to signpost to
- Time consuming – short consultations, know it will lead to lengthy conversations
- What's the point – endless task, why bother? – long term outcomes poor
- Obesity now an 'avoidant word' like cancer – fearful of reaction from patients

#### **Q. Can we campaign for further education to help us address this problem and increase awareness?**

Yes by simple short presentations like this and communication skills training across all youth workers and healthcare professionals.

#### **Q. Is there a 'duty of care' to address weight issues when there are potential health risks?**

Absolutely, but this isn't easy. We have referrals for young people with severe levels of obesity BMI > 99.6 > 3.5 & 4 SDS. That doesn't happen overnight. How many interactions will that child have engaged with over the years; health visitors, school nurses, teachers, GP's? Do we fail children and young people by being too afraid to raise the issue with them or their families?

#### **Q. Is there now more of a fear approaching people if afraid of using the wrong terminology? Or being accused of weight bias?**

I admit when this topic came to light I was more alerted to the terminology I used with our young people and considered more carefully the impact of what I was saying. I think in some way this made me more robotic and selective in my responses. I now find it's not the words that are offensive, it's more about how those words are used in context. For example, Obesity is a medical condition in which excess body fat has accumulated to such an extent that it may lead to other potential health risks. It is a diagnosis. It is not meant to be offensive when used in context to explain potential co-morbidities in a caring and sensitive way. None of our families have expressed concern about this terminology. Used as a headline in a newspaper with an image of a headless torso, now that is offensive.