



## December 2018 NAAFA Newsletter

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### Video of the Month



#### NAAFA Webinar Series

No doubt you saw that NAAFA will have the fabulous Jes Baker as a keynote speaker at our 50th anniversary conference next June. For NAAFA's November webinar, we were blessed to have Jes share her time and the things that are on her heart with our very own Tigress Osborn. If you missed it, we have archived the webinar and you may view it here: [www.naafaonline.com/dev2/community/events.html](http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/community/events.html)

### Quick Links

## Surviving the Holidays

by Annie Strain



The holiday season is in full swing, and many of us will be getting together with extended family over the next month or so. This means a lot of us will be dealing with even more fat-shaming and food-policing than usual! I've read a few great posts and articles about how harmful it is to comment on people's size or what they are eating, and on how to deal with this inappropriate behavior.

Links to these articles are included here -- feel free to

read one or two, or even forward them to family members you think might be open to learning about how stressful this "concern-trolling" or overt fat-shaming behavior is.

One thing that has helped me to build up immunity to diet talk, or people who assign moral value to food and eating habits, is to strengthen my own conviction that I do not need to change, fix, or improve my body. My body is worthy of care, and dieting and care are two very different things.

At this time of year in particular, we are bombarded with ads for weight loss-programs and gym memberships, and besides dealing with family, we are already coping with friends and coworkers who are announcing that they are going to start XYZ diet, or lose X amount of pounds by a certain date.

All of this can be very triggering, and lead to internalized fatphobia. This can make it especially hard to stand up for ourselves -- in our head or out loud -- when our uncle or grandma decides to comment on what or how much we are eating, or when a cousin "jokingly" mentions that we've gained some weight.

Many of us have stopped dieting or restricting -- recently or many years ago. But diet culture is insidious and pervasive, and our healing process is nonlinear, so as we bolster our own convictions and sense of self, the following bears repeating. Taking a step back from the physical and emotional rollercoaster of dieting and weight loss, and starting to repair our relationship with our body, is gentle and effective self-care of which we are worthy.

Loosen your grip on your future, thinner/fitter/smaller self. Ask your body what it needs. Does it need to be still, or take a shower, or be outside, or be fed, or be held, or sleep, or just be accepted -- by you?

Be gentle.

Be kind.

Be patient and understanding with yourself, and the multi-layered healing process of moving away from diet-culture.

For many of us, it can take decades before we are able to fully opt out of diet culture and the body-size/fitness-based class system that exists in this country and elsewhere. But when we are ready, we're ready. It feels a little scary at first, I know. But we are stepping into our power, into our healing, and into freedom.

Now, back to these pesky relatives who feel they have the right to comment on our body size, or what's on our plate: remember that it is *\*always\** more than OK to set boundaries!

Holiday gatherings can feel like the perfect storm. We've been conditioned to respect our elders, to be courteous guests, and to never "make a scene". So when an elder, our host, or someone else says something to subtly or overtly fat-shame us, we sometimes just freeze up, and feel unable to defend ourselves or shut down this inappropriate behavior.

One of my favorite ways of dealing with microaggressions, or someone who is using coded language or innuendo to say something rude, is to turn and look at them directly, and ask bluntly: What do you mean? Forcing people to break down a joke or implied statement often makes them realize that it is not

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something they actually care to say directly to your face. And this is usually a good thing!

For me, reading the articles and posts that are linked here was validating, and they include several different approaches to dealing with fatphobia, in particular at the holidays.

Most importantly, remember that it is never OK for another person -- from a stranger on the street to your own mother -- to offer unsolicited opinions on your body, or the food on your plate. This behavior is rude at best, and emotionally abusive at worst.

The holidays are always a mix -- I think a lot of us would describe them as fun, but somewhat overwhelming. And even if you've spent the last 10, 20, 30, or 40 years putting up with fatphobic or body-shaming comments from your relatives during the holidays, it is never too late to create and enforce boundaries, or to start shifting your family dynamics to create a safer, more welcoming, and respectful environment.

<https://www.thisismeagankerr.com/fat-shaming-and-family>  
[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10155743525262127&id=147245337126](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10155743525262127&id=147245337126)  
<https://danceswithfat.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/handling-the-holiday-food-police>  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-you-should-never-comment-on-peoples-weight-or-eating-habits-at-thanksgiving\\_n\\_5bf2c7ace4b075738820a42a](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-you-should-never-comment-on-peoples-weight-or-eating-habits-at-thanksgiving_n_5bf2c7ace4b075738820a42a)  
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## Loss of a HAES Pioneer



It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of our dear friend and NAAFA Advisor, Joanne Ikeda. Joanne was a shining light in the world and that light will go on through the people that loved and respected her both professionally and personally.

Joanne was known for her role in the development of a new

approach to weight entitled Health at Every Size (HAES). Mid-career she came to the conclusion that subjecting large people to food restriction, body dissatisfaction, and size discrimination was futile and only resulted in physical, psychological and social damage to these individuals. She and others determined that rather than focus on weight, the focus needed to be on health.

Joanne cherished the awards she received from NAAFA, a civil rights organization for fat people and their friends, for her work advocating body size acceptance and fighting size discrimination. She testified before the San Francisco Board of Supervisors before they voted to adopt an ordinance banning size discrimination in employment, housing, adoptions, jury selection and other domains.

She was a member of the faculty in the Nutritional Sciences Department at the University of California, Berkeley, for close to 35 years. Joanne helped many students gain knowledge and skills in the areas of nutrition education and counseling. She served as President of the California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and was on more professional committees than she cared to count. In 2018 Joanne was honored by being presented the prestigious Helen Denning Ullrich Award for Lifetime Excellence in Nutrition Education.

A celebration of Joanne's life was held on Saturday, December 8, 2018 in San Leandro, CA.

We send our love and condolences to her husband, Roy, of forty-nine years and her daughters, Mindi and Jenny.

## Saucye's #fatandfree Year in Review



It's almost the end of the year, so you know what that means? It's time to see how you have been living #fatandfree without apology for 2018!

I know you may have had times when you didn't feel like your best self; we all do, but think about all the amazing things you did that you may have never done before. Did you buy that certain outfit or go dancing at the club you've always wanted to go to? Maybe you wore your first swimsuit!

No matter how big or small, your goal was to live #fatandfree and you did it!

So for 2019, set more goals, make more bold moves and create your own lane of self-love. Let your New Year's resolutions be things that are realistic and attainable so when you look back you can see all the wonderful things you accomplished in terms of body love.

So raise your glasses to 2019! Let's live and love our fat bodies even more. Cheers!

XOXO

Your favorite fat girl  
Saucye West

## Holiday Gift Suggestion

Super Early Bird prices start as low as only \$199.00. Register for yourself or someone else today: <https://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/community/index.html>



**Need a great gift  
idea for the holiday?  
Gift someone you love  
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for more information.**



## **To Delete or Not to Delete: Handing Fatphobic Trolls on Social Media**

***by Tigress Osborn, NAAFA Director of Community Outreach***

As many of you know by now, in mid-December NAAFA was the subject of an internet hoax that claimed we were working to get Waylon Jennings banned from radio for a line in his song, "Luckenbach, Texas." The line in question says life is only worth



living if you have a "firm feeling woman." The supposedly satirical article (which ends in an admission that the whole story is made up) includes quotes from an invented NAAFA representative. And, boy oh boy, did that make the internet trolls mad at NAAFA.

Internet trolls hating fat people is certainly nothing new. And NAAFA is no stranger to receiving "shut up and lose weight" messages from people

online. But the wave of comments we got on our NAAFA Facebook page within the first 24 hours of the article's publication were intense, disrespectful, and disruptive. And we deleted every single one.

"Don't feed the trolls" is common advice for internet users. The thinking goes that ignoring people who act out online starves them of the attention they crave, leaving them to slink off elsewhere. It can be frustrating to turn the other cheek when a stranger lashes out, especially when you know you can logically out argue them. But trolls don't use logic, and neither do the people egging them on. They just keep coming. So ignoring them can work . . . sometimes. But sometimes trolls feed each other, commenting back and forth, building on each other's nasty comments and e-patting each other on the back for each dig. You can be left with a page full of garbage to wade through for everyone who wants to interact with you.

At some stages of my activism, I have made the choice to leave troll droppings on my pages and posts as evidence of the fat hatred that many non-fat people (and even some self-proclaimed fat guys who troll us) don't believe exists. I've invited disbelievers to check out the hate that they think fat people exaggerate. But I rarely do that anymore, and I certainly will not do it in NAAFA's social media spaces. Transparency is fine for respectful conversations disagreeing with NAAFA's stances, policies or actions. But that's not what trolls do. Trolls just show up and crap all over everything, gleefully. Fat people have enough crap to deal with. Anyone who needs evidence of fatphobia can find it running rampant all over the internet. And anyone who truly wants to be an ally could just, you know, listen to fat people when we talk about how the world treats us.

No fat person seeking NAAFA for support or for camaraderie needs to see a bunch of immature hypocrites attacking fat people who demand to be treated equally. In the case of the Waylon Jennings situation, we actually have not one care in the world if that man liked firm women. But what if we had been protesting the song? What then? Every person who's ever commented on NAAFA's page now gets notification of a response to their comment from a troll calling them names? Everyone who looks at NAAFA's page for the rest of time is treated to insults and disrespect? No way. We screenshot and report as necessary--not that we expect Facebook to actually do anything about anti-fat trolls at this point--and then we block and delete. #TrollsBeGone! And we are 100% unapologetic about doing so.

The trolls cry out within their circles. "Those crybabies deleted me!" "What about my free speech?" And they are welcome to their free speech . . . on their own pages.

## NAAFA Chronicles #35

For our monthly NAAFA Chronicles feature, here's NAAFA's 35th newsletter, June 1978:

[https://www.naafaonline.com/newsletterstuff/oldnewsletterstuff/Chronicles/June\\_1978.pdf](https://www.naafaonline.com/newsletterstuff/oldnewsletterstuff/Chronicles/June_1978.pdf)

For more, click the "Chronicles" tab in the newsletter section of the NAAFA website.

## Knee Friendly Sex?

by Cinder Ernst



*Editorial Note: Our beloved Cinder has generously contributed to the NAAFA Newsletter without complaint every month from October 2011 to this year. Since she is taking a much deserved break, we are looking back at her body of work and featuring "encore" articles that you might find helpful. This article was first published in August 2012.*

It's Sunday August 5, 2012. I just got home from the NAAFA Conference. We had the best time! Today between workshops we had a fitness free-for-all. Deb Burgard (<https://www.bodypositive.com>) taught us how to hula hoop. Marilyn Wann brought a small trampoline with a 400 lb weight limit for us to play on, and we danced to soul music. Deb even hula hooped while bouncing on the trampoline!

Earlier this morning I attended a self-defense workshop with Erica Neuman (<https://ericaneuman.com>). She was amazing. We learned to use our voices and body language to stop someone from approaching, and we did a few actual offensive maneuvers and kicks. She even taught us

to use a kick from a lying down position. It was a powerful experience to use my voice and body in these ways.

But the most fun? The most fun was in the Sex, Attraction and Size workshop on Saturday. I was on the panel with Virgie Tovar (<https://www.virgietovar.com>). We had a lively discussion that jumped around in several directions. One person asked about knee friendly sex positions. The best answer came from the floor: You know the wedges that you can use to elevate your upper body? You can turn that around and use it under your belly to support your lower body for doggie style. Just relax, turn your head to the side and bring it on! Can I say that in the newsletter? The sex wedge was talked about all weekend. You better make sure you come next year because you never know what great knee friendly fitness tips you'll miss!

And don't forget to pick up your free Starter Kit at [www.lesskneepain.com](http://www.lesskneepain.com) so you can be ready for anything where ever you are!

Love, Cinder

## Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

November 1, 2018: Virgie Tovar is interviewed for an article about how fatphobia is not only career limiting but also permeates every level of life, causing psychological harm.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/fatphobia-in-the-workplace-can-be-career-limiting-and-psychologically-harmful-1.4878398>

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2015.01.002>

November 14, 2018: Researchers find low-carb diets may increase the risk of death from all causes as well as those due to cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, and cancer according to a (non-peer reviewed) study presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress 2018.

<https://www.mdlinx.com/gastroenterology/article/2973>

November 19, 2018: A study finds that workplace bullying and violence are coupled with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Further, the study shows that workplace bullies are coworkers, not clients or other individuals.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/heart-health/workplace-bullying-violence-tied-higher-risk-heart-problems-study-finds-n938216>

<https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehy683>

November 19, 2018: Writing about why so many Americans are fat, Gina Kolata understands that diets and drugs do not work. Unfortunately, she thinks bariatric surgery does work. She ignores the terrible toll the surgery takes on a body and the fact that many survivors put the weight back on.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/19/health/obesity-genetics-surgery-diet.html>

November 26, 2018: Velvet d'Amour suggests fat folks stop begging Victoria's Secret to be size inclusive and start appreciating the many companies out there that do provide sexy lingerie to fit all kinds of bodies, and she includes the photos to prove it.

<https://www.volup2.com/blog/kissthis>

November 27, 2018: As we say farewell to Joanne Pakel Ikeda (see article above), here's a deeper look at her life and work.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sfgate/obituary.aspx?n=joanne-ikeda&pid=190873802>

December 2018: Dr. Marvin J.H. Lee believes that fat acceptance and the physician community are in a cultural battle that is inflamed in part by naming obesity as a disease. Dr. Lee gets several things wrong (like calling fat acceptance a lifestyle choice movement), but seems to arrive at the right conclusion.

<https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/why-naming-disease-differs-naming-illness/2018-12>

December 2018: As Tigress discusses above, NAAFA is not trying to ban a Waylon Jennings song. Here's some more background from Snopes.

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/was-waylon-jennings-banned-from-country-radio>

December 3, 2018: This month's *Fat Studies* includes an essay concerning fat people and physical pursuits, from gym class to adult athletes across time and how fat bias has tried to either erase or mark as anomalies these athletes.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/xWVHMk2IGICPwH8HP9ik/full>

December 3, 2018: With outfits donated by King Size, Swimsuits for All, Roaman's, and Woman Within, plus-size model Khrystyana Kazakova staged The Real Catwalk in New York's Times Square with models of all sizes, ages, and genders.

<https://nypost.com/2018/12/03/plus-size-models-stage-runway-response-to-victorias-secret>

December 5, 2018: Because there's no law against size discrimination where she works, when Sarah Bramlette realized that the real problem with her supervisor's demand for her to look more "professional" was not her clothing but her size, she could not hold her employer accountable for its discrimination.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/employer-weight-discrimination-women\\_us\\_5bd755d7e4b017e5bfd4a12a](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/employer-weight-discrimination-women_us_5bd755d7e4b017e5bfd4a12a)

December 6, 2018: Why do scientists continue to do research and reach conclusions that fly in the face of reality (something prevalent in much research concerning obesity)? It may have to do with tenured scientists favoring tenure candidates that adhere to the paradigms of their mentors. And where experimental evidence is thin (such as social sciences), the false paradigm may prevail.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1816454115>

December 8, 2018: Comedian Hannah Gadsby and writer Roxane Gay discuss trauma, fat-shaming, and fan encounters in this conversation for *The Guardian*.



<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/dec/08/hannah-gadsby-roxane-gay-in-conversation-body-image-fan-encounters-trolls>

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*Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.*

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