



January 2021 NAAFA Newsletter

Changing Perspectives for Medical Students

by Alexis Wildman, MS2



As a second-year medical student and long-time devotee of the "clean eating" diet, stumbling upon *Anti-Diet* by Christy Harrison shook my foundational understanding of nutrition and what it meant to eat healthy. It made

me realize how I, as both a member of society and as a medical student, had been perpetuating a

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Video of the Month

Reducing Anxiety

system that values and respects smaller bodies under the snooty guise of health monitoring.

Having witnessed this side of the diet industry and its enabling cousin, the medical establishment, there was now no denying that people in larger bodies had a vastly different, and often problematic, experience as they sought out healthcare as compared to their smaller bodied peers.

As I moved along in my medical education, it became clear that while people might have preconceived notions and biases about weight going into the field of medicine, it is nearly impossible to come out without them. It seemed that diet and exercise were the answer to so many different diseases and it would be remiss to not include a quick chat on "lifestyle modification" when discussing a course of treatment. While certain conditions may benefit from this "lifestyle modification" (whatever that may mean), diet, exercise, and especially weight loss are not the panacea they are prescribed to be.

This journey of identifying and challenging fatphobia began as a personal one, but I realized that this was knowledge that my fellow medical students needed too. We are the next generation of health professionals, but our education on the treatment of larger bodies is being informed by the current establishment. If something is to change, it needs to start with us.

Knowing that I would encounter a minefield of criticism by challenging the medical establishment's attitudes towards weight, I wanted to bring as much authority and knowledge to this topic as possible. I wanted an expert in the field because I knew this message would be better delivered and received if done by a well-versed, reputable source. During my search, I came across NAAFA. At first I was nervous because these were true experts in a field that I was only beginning to scratch the surface of, but I was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm.

NAAFA connected me to Dr. Lily O'Hara PhD,

and Stress

It's a stressful time for all of us. Much of that stress is due to circumstances that are out of our control. What we can control is our response to that stress. Taking time for oneself is essential. Guided meditation is a valuable tool that does not require any investment from you other than your time. The more time you take for your meditation, the better, but there's something for everyone, even for those of you who have only short periods of time to yourself. Make yourself and your health your top priority!

20-Minute Guided Meditation for Reducing Anxiety and Stress:

[youtube.com/watch?v=Mlr3RsUWrdo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlr3RsUWrdo)

15-Minute Meditation for Stress Relief and Building Confidence: [youtube.com/watch?v=-KMngzCWgTw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KMngzCWgTw)

10-minute Guided Meditation Release Anxiety, Stress &

MPH and an associate professor at Qatar University. She was exactly who I had been looking for. Despite an 11-hour time difference, Dr. O'Hara agreed to speak to our students during a lunch hour talk. Her lecture offered a brief overview of many topics surrounding fatphobia and medicine including the over reliance of BMI as a marker of health, the social determinants of health and Health at Every Size principles. With over 50 students from all levels of training in attendance, it was clear that this was a conversation we not only needed to have but wanted to have.

While we couldn't solve fatphobic medicine in a lunch hour, Dr. O'Hara provided a new perspective and some action items to carry forward into our budding medical careers. Most importantly, we started a dialogue. I had numerous conversations about how eye-opening this lecture was for both their professional and personal lives. People were starting to see the harmful effects of fatphobia and question their assumptions of what health looks like. There were also critics who came to the talk armed with research papers backing their preconceived notions, but I'd like to think that while we might not have changed their mind, we added some nuance and empathy to their world-view. I hope these conversations will continue and that my colleagues and I can move into our careers focusing on helping patients of all body sizes feel comfortable and welcome to receive medical care.

Alexis is currently a medical student in California. She was born and raised in the Golden State. She has wanted to be a doctor for a long as she, or her parents, can remember. Her dream career is working with underserved populations as an OB/GYN in an urban/suburban setting. She wants to make her practice inclusive to all folks that seek medical care, especially those living in larger bodies, those with disabilities, and those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

January Anti-Racism Resources

Getting to know your own implicit biases is step one

Overthinking:
[youtube.com/watch?v=EpVFSti0Ydg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpVFSti0Ydg)

8-minute Stress Relief Guided Meditation:
[youtube.com/watch?v=zYzFUBMJO9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYzFUBMJO9E)

5-minute Stress Relief Guided Meditation:
[youtube.com/watch?v=L1QOh-n-eus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1QOh-n-eus)

3-minute Mindful Breathing Meditation:
[youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk)

Quick Links

[NAAFA.org](https://www.NAAFA.org)

[Facebook Main](#)
[Members Community](#)
[End Bullying Now](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

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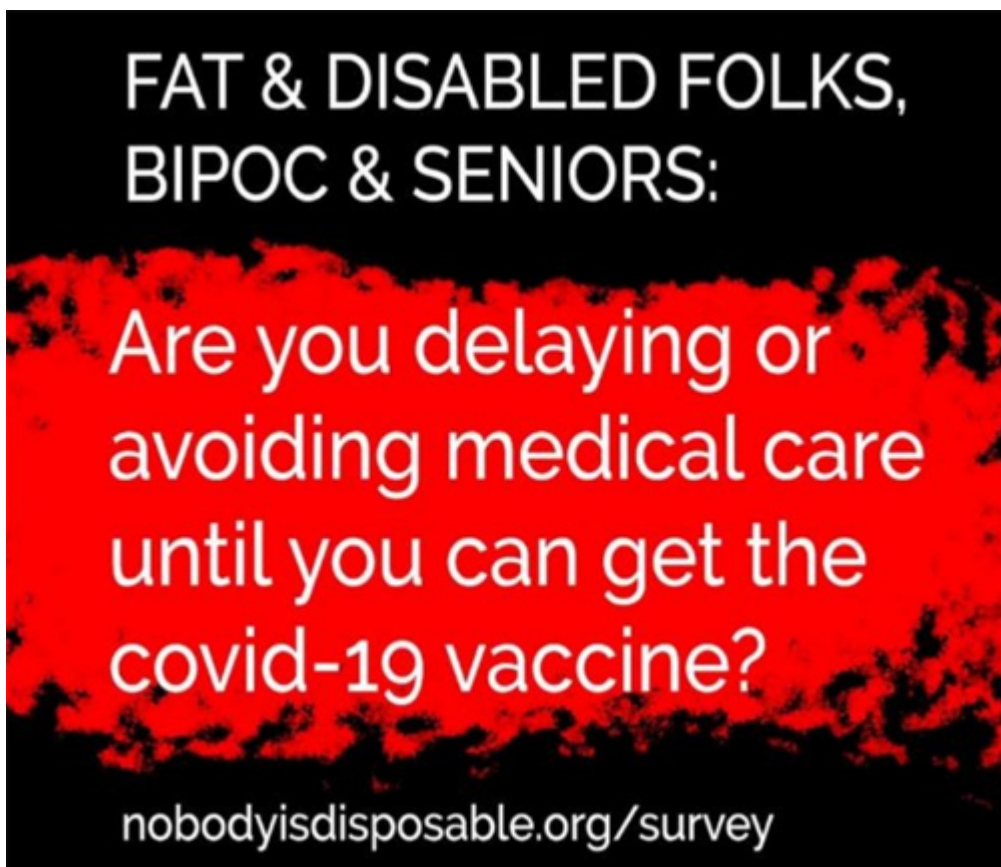
of becoming an anti-racist ally to other marginalized communities. That's why Harvard's [Project Implicit Social Attitude Assessment](#), a free online tool that unravels the workings of racist thinking, is well-worth its 10-minute commitment for anyone who wants to confront their own racist thoughts and beliefs.

[The Urgency of Intersectionality-TED talk with Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)

TRIGGER WARNING: Talk ends with pictures of violence against black women.

Ms. Crenshaw is the author of the term "intersectionality" and discusses how combined biases create even more harm for marginalized people.

Share Your Story!



There are concerns that the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to disabled and/or higher weight people are a low-priority. Although this survey is focusing on residents of California, the NoBodyIsDisposable Coalition would like to gather stories from disabled and/or higher weight folks in all geographic locations. If you are disabled and/or higher weight and are delaying medical attention until the COVID-19 vaccine is distributed, please

take this short survey!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfW0T3B58_brWx_9zl2TgAq7eQkwi3zxrjh4oMaNFggYEbsIg/viewform

#NoBodyIsDisposable #EqualityAtEverySize #COVID

NAAFA Chronicles 60

Our latest entry in the NAAFA Chronicles is our 60th newsletter, [July 1984](#).

For more, check out the "Chronicles" page of NAAFA's website,

<https://naafa.org/chronicles>

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

May 26, 2020: A two-year study on the effectiveness of workplace wellness programs finds no significant effect on biometrics, medical diagnoses or medical use after 12 months or 24 months.

<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.1321>

August 26, 2020: Researchers find that Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and gastric sleeve surgery both result in significant long-term bone loss.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41366-020-00660-x>

September 29, 2020: A study looking at the risk obesity plays in Alzheimer's disease finds that higher BMI correlates with decreased cerebral blood flow for all ages (young adults to late life). However, the study did not connect decreased blood flow with Alzheimer's.

<https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-200655>

November 2, 2020: Equality Matters calls out companies who now (grudgingly) offer limited plus size choices because they are only interested in dollars and not truly interested in supporting and serving the fat fashion community.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200211-selling-plus-size-clothing-isnt-only-about-pleasing-shoppers>

December 30, 2020: Every Monday of 2020 Leslie Living Large was able to post a video of a visibly fat musician to the Facebook portion of her blog; and she has gathered all of those video links under the link provided below.

<https://learning-curve.com/2020/12/30/another-50-visibly-fat-musicians-musical-monday-posts-from-2020>

December 31, 2020: Ragen Chastain explains how all bodies may be subject to negative feelings due to a fatphobic society, but only fat people are also dealing with oppression based on body size.

<https://themighty.com/2020/12/body-positivity-fat-liberation-insecurities>

December 31, 2020: Here's a New Year's tradition we can all enjoy. Ragen Chastain presents "Twas the Night Before New Years", calling for a diet-free new year for one and all.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_Av_NValrw

January 2021: The new issue of Fat Studies is now available, focusing on fat people as depicted on television and other forms of media.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ufts20/10/1?nav=tocList>

January 11, 2021: Chrystal Bougon shares her horrifying experience at the hands of healthcare professionals and offers some advice on how to take care of yourself in a healthcare setting.

<https://medium.com/ample-room/tips-for-advocating-for-your-fat-self-at-the-doctors-office-c55a1b9874ec>

January 15, 2021: Speaking with Dr. Katja Rowell, a family physician and childhood feeding specialist, the *New York Times* reports that during a pandemic is not the time for parents to start stressing themselves, or their children, about weight gain.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/15/parenting/childrens-weight-gain-covid-pandemic.html>

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.

On the web: <https://naafa.org>

Comments: pr@naafa.org

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