



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

**National Association
to Advance Fat
Acceptance**
September 2015

Dear William,

Suggestions for the newsletter? We'd love to hear them! pr@naafa.org

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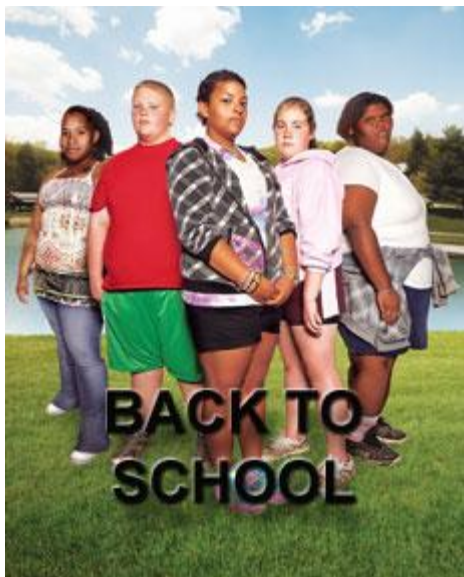
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Back to School: Confronting Bullying of Children



by Darlene Howell

September rolls around with back-to-school and the end of summer in everyone's thoughts. September is also National Childhood Obesity Awareness month, highlighting the "need" to slim down our children as school starts in the US. Programs paid for by our tax dollars go to making our kids more aware of their bodies and how they measure up to statistical norms. But what real impact are these programs making?

Three studies in 2015 show that programs instituted to reduce obesity in children have not "made the grade," resulting in more body dissatisfaction, bullying, and discrimination.

- Evaluation of the impact of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program (HSP) in California showed "no difference between HSP schools and control schools in overweight or obesity prevalence."
- A program in Arkansas that screened BMI (body mass index) and sent out parental notifications was not associated with adolescents' health outcomes.

A Dad Responds

[September Video of the Month](#)

Just in time for "back-to-school", this month's video clearly demonstrates a parent that is involved in his child's life. His daughter told him she was being bullied and he created an anthem that should be shared with everyone. This should be the new theme song for our End Bullying Now program.

www.faithtap.com/4057/dad-sings-anti-bullying-song-to-daughter

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- The Texas Fitness Now (TFN) program that spent \$37 million from a 4-year grant "increased strength, especially among girls, but did not reduce obesity."

Greater awareness of what the government says a child should weigh has biased other children and increased bullying based on body size. Additionally, a recent longitudinal study of students from 5th - 8th grade shows that an increase in students' BMI is associated with worsening teacher perceptions of academic ability for both boys and girls.

How do we help our kids in battling these negative attitudes and perceptions?

- Be an example to your child of how others should be treated. They learn through watching you and how you treat others. If you show respect for yourself and others, they will learn to do the same.
- Talk to your child. Let them know that bodies come in different sizes, shapes and abilities. Because your body may be different than others, that doesn't make it wrong or bad.
- Boost your child's self-esteem by getting them involved in activities that will encourage your child to build friendships and develop their social skills.
- Very often children don't want to admit they are being bullied and remain quiet out of fear, shame or embarrassment. Make sure you take time every day to check in with your child. Ask them about their day at school. Listen to them. Ask probing questions if you feel there may be more to the situation than they are saying.
- If your child admits to being a target of bullying, REMAIN CALM. Do not react out of anger or a need to defend your child. Remember that you are your child's first and best teacher. They will learn how to react in situations from you.
- Learn as much as you can about the situation. Ask them to describe the "who, what, when and where". Find out how often the bullying takes place and how your child reacts to the situation.
- Let your child know that you are there to help them through the situation. Sit down together and develop a plan to respond to the bullying. Don't promote retaliation or fighting back against the bully. Instead, encourage them to remain calm. He or she might say to the bully, "I want you to stop now," and then walk away. The main thing for them to know is that they need to get away from the bully if they are being threatened. Have your child go to a teacher or other adult that they trust and tell them about what happened. Encourage your child to find a "buddy" for lunchtime, recess or walking to and from school. There is safety in numbers.
- Contact school officials. Talk with a teacher, counselor, or a school administrator. If your child has been physically attacked or threatened, talk to school officials immediately to determine if the police should be involved. DO NOT contact the parents of the bully.
- If the bully is a teacher or other adult in a place of authority over your child, talk with the administrator immediately. Suggest they read NAAFA's Child Advocacy Toolkit. If necessary, go to the school board.
- Follow-up with school officials. Keep in contact with them to find out the disposition of the problem. If the bullying continues, be persistent.
- Watch for eating disordered behaviors. Talk to your child about intuitive eating and Health At Every Size.
- Know when to get professional help. Sometimes talking with a counselor or therapist will help your child with their fears and anxieties. Don't ignore the problems thinking that they will just go away. Early intervention can help prevent long-lasting problems with low self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

And, as always, lots of love and big fat hugs help kids and adults alike!

Resources:

NAAFA's Child Advocacy Toolkit - http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/about/Brochures/NAAFA_Child_Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf

Everybody in School HAES Toolkit -

<http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/education/haesschool.html>

Food Allergy Awareness Month

by Peggy Howell



Do you have problems with allergies? Seasonal allergies hit me harder this year than ever before. The local news reported that this was the worst season in a while for allergies. Sneezing and swollen watery eyes are never pleasant, but it's relatively easy to pick up an over-the-counter remedy at the local drug store. I'm just thankful that I'm not allergic to bee stings or shellfish or nuts, because if I were allergic and was exposed, the chances are I'd go into anaphylactic shock and possibly die. Why? Because the life-saving emergency treatment available on the market today won't work for me and millions of others around the world.

Over the last few months, we've shared with you about EpiPen and Auvi-Q, prescription epinephrine auto-injectors for anaphylaxis treatment. We've shared with you that these injectors do not work for many women or anyone with a BMI above 30. According to the study, women are 6.4 times more likely than men to be at risk of injection failure.

If you are a patient with a prescription for either of these products and have thick thighs, please call your doctor and tell him about your concern. Inadequate needle length is a life or death issue for you.

If you haven't done so already, we still need your signature on our petition on Change.org demanding that these pharmaceutical companies take action and provide a product choice that will work for women and all people of large body size. Please support these efforts by signing our petition today at <http://tinyurl.com/nt3wskn>

I'd also like to share about another food allergy that many of us have to some degree, but may be unaware of: lactose intolerance. As we age, our body produces less lactase, the enzyme needed to digest whole milk. For years we have used lactose free milk for our cereal and only occasionally consume cheese, sour cream or ice cream. Since I rarely consume food with much lactose, it wasn't a problem.

A couple of week ago I saw a recipe on Facebook for homemade ice cream. It involved only three ingredients; heavy whipping cream, sweetened condensed milk and fruit (I chose raspberries and threw in some shaved dark chocolate for good measure). Needless to say, it was delicious. I ate a serving a day for four days before I realized that the growing feeling of discomfort in my abdomen was a reaction to the lactose. My entire ascending colon, from the bottom to the top, was inflamed. I stopped eating entirely and did only clear liquids until the inflammation was soothed, then slowly added food, beginning with soft food, until I was back to health.

I share this as a warning to others. Pay close attention to your body and its needs. Food is fuel, but if our body is allergic, the wrong food can gum up the works.

No Need to Justify

by Darliene Howell

Earlier this month a fat-shaming video went viral. The individual that made the video is a self-proclaimed internet comedian who was attempting to create their 15 minutes of fame and, no doubt, make some money.

If you have not seen this video, I am not going to name the individual and bring more attention to the offensive, hateful things they said. I am, however, going to make some observations.

First, there was a good deal of countering of this video, which I am happy to see. Several people created videos sharing their stories and how this attack made them feel. A lot of people were very hurt by the vitriol used to make us feel bad about our bodies. I can understand that hurt and empathize with the pain it caused them.

Second, many of the people responding to the video felt a need to justify their body size, whether as a result of an illness or whatever the case may be. Most of



those that responded in this manner still have some self acceptance issues because they talked about how they didn't want to be their current size and would change it if they could.

It's the second group that I hope to reach. To those, I would like to say that I understand that you struggle with body acceptance. I realize that society works hard to make us feel we are unacceptable and that we need to change. I really do get that. What I would wish for each of you is the realization that you do not have to justify your body to anyone.

We are witnessing oppression every day in our county in a number of ways. But people can only take oppression for so long

before they fight back. Living in the United States, at least up until now, allows us the freedom to choose how we live and the right to pursue happiness. But whether their government recognizes it or not, people everywhere have the right to say, "This is my body and you have no right to oppress me because it's different from yours." THIS is what NAAFA is about: size diversity, size acceptance, equality at every size.

NAAFA Survey Overview



by Tigress Osborn

Back in April, the NAAFA Board met to work on a five year plan. As we brainstormed and processed, one thing that became clear was the need to have a better understanding of what our current and prospective members think about our organization, the state of fat life in the United States, and the future of size acceptance. We decided to gain insight by creating and distributing a survey to members and our general interest list (friends, supporters, past members, etc). The survey included ten questions about past participation in NAAFA, familiarity with NAAFA projects, preferred terms for people of size, and perspectives on what NAAFA's priorities should be in supporting fat

people. We also included seven optional demographic questions.

The survey closed with 232 respondents representing thirty US states, one US territory and five countries. The majority of respondents (over 65%) are over age 50. Most of those identify as white/European-American (79.9%), female (75.8%), heterosexual (72.5%), and college-educated (69.2%). Forty-five percent identify as middle class. The optional demographics were answered by the vast majority of those surveyed, with no more than a dozen people opting out of any demographic question. (Every single respondent self-reported education, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.) We asked these questions to better know who makes up NAAFA and why. As we continue to examine the survey results, we will look for patterns relating to how different demographic groups experience or would like to experience NAAFA.

More past members responded to the survey than current members (54.3% compared to 28%). A little over seventeen percent of respondents have never been members of NAAFA. This monthly newsletter edged out the NAAFA convention as the project most identifiable (86.5% to 84.4 %). Forty-four percent of respondents have never attended the convention, but 35.9% have attended more than once.

We asked participants a bit about their relationship to the word fat and to fat community. Nearly three quarters of responders said, "I am fat, and I prefer to use the word fat to describe myself". Twenty percent said they do not participate in fat community, and of those who do participate, size acceptance blogs and online forums/groups were the most utilized methods of participation. Medical and civil rights discrimination were the areas of fat acceptance most important to responders.

Although open-ended questions are harder to quantify, we asked three, netting 259 responses about what would improve the lives of fat people and which specific projects people would like to see NAAFA working on. We also included a comment field on all questions. We appreciate the time responders took to do more than just check boxes. We are still discussing those many responses, and next month's newsletter will include some analysis of and follow-up. In the meantime, our new Social Media Director will start drafting some question-of-the-day and mini-survey tools to help further communication with the Board and other NAAFA members. Questions about this summer's survey or suggestions for future surveys can be sent to Tigress Osborn at tigress@naafa.org.

Move, Breathe, Laugh



by Cinder Ernst

Hello NAAFA Friends,

This month I want to talk to you about the lymph system. Through my decades of fitness coaching I've run into many women who have lymphedema. After an unexpected surgery last month someone I love dearly is at risk for it in her lower body, so I have been looking into how best to handle it.

The best things for your lymph system (which is worth taking care of no matter what) are to move, to breathe and to laugh.

You know there are many ways I have taught you to move, you can find more here:

<http://cinderernst.com/heal-your-knee-mini-course>

This mini course consists of eight (8) emails describing movement meant to be done every other day or so. Check it out I think you'll like

it.

For the breathing part, big belly breaths are the best. Do a couple right now. Place your hands on your belly, breathe in and feel your belly expand, then breathe out fully. Do these three times if you're willing.

As far as laughter is concerned, that's been the hardest for me lately. Got any good jokes? Share them with me please, coach@cinderernst.com

Love,
Cinder

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Check <http://naafa.org> and

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/naafanews/conversations/topics> for the latest news.]

August 4, 2015: Researchers found that many fat people have a lower risk of death by cardiovascular disease, even those who aren't receiving preventative

medical therapy such as statins and ACE inhibitors.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehv347>

August 5, 2015: Fat people don't always think of themselves as fat, but a recent study shows that this may be a good thing. The study finds that people who are aware of being overweight have an increased risk of weight gain in the future.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/finally-a-study-that-confirms-what-i-knew-all-along-fat-acceptance-is-good-for-our-health-10440615.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/05/obesity-awareness-may-be-causing-overeating-finds-international-study>

<http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/ijo2015143a.html>

August 15, 2015: A small study of five-year-old girls and their mothers finds that while most girls were satisfied with their body size, half showed some internalization of the thin ideal and thirty-four percent reported at least a moderate level of dietary restraint. Five-year-old girls.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eat.22432/abstract>

August 17, 2015: A study looks at how fat people, divided into four categories (hopeful, despairing, resigned, accepting), deal with the stigma and lived experience of being fat. Not all fat people cope in the same way, and in fact one person can switch categories as circumstances change.

<http://news.cision.com/taylor---francis/r/dealing-with-the-stigma-and--lived-experience--of-obesity,c9814412>

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14461242.2015.1045919>

August 18, 2015: Jon Robison takes apart the concept of food addiction (in particular, sugar), and explains how the demonizing of any food can lead to disordered eating. Unlike drug addiction, restriction of food is not likely helpful.

<http://salveopartners.com/a-little-nutrition-sanity-sugar-the-other-white-powder-rhetoric-vs-reality>

August 19, 2015: Researchers believe they have found a link between fatness and the FTO gene (the "obesity gene"), in that a faulty gene can lead to the body storing calories as fat rather than expending the calories as energy. Although promising, experience shows that the reality is far more complicated than one gene "causing" fatness.

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/67cec7e35be14506ad51c79d4c53ad00/scientists-find-how-obesity-gene-works-clue-treatment>

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1502214>

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMe1508683>

August 24, 2015: While linking Jared Fogle's fame for weight loss to his pedophilia is a stretch, Audra Williams makes a valid point that connecting weight loss with morality is ridiculous.

<http://www.thefrisky.com/2015-08-24/the-soapbox-did-fatphobia-enable-jared-fogles-predatory-behavior>

August 27, 2015: In this article, Caroline Weinberg says that weight loss should be treated with intensive weight-loss regimes that she knows don't work, along with unhealthy behaviors that hurt people irrespective of size. Yet the final sentence recommends that the medical community find ways to help people stay healthy regardless of their size, which is actually the same HAES approach that she says she disagrees with.

<http://aeon.co/magazine/health/can-the-two-sides-of-the-obesity-debate-ever-see-eye-to-eye>

August 27, 2015: Dr. Lucy Aphramor provides a well thought out explanation of how intuitive eating and a weight-neutral approach to health is a science-driven and supported concept that helps every body.

<http://www.disruptivewomen.net/2015/08/27/body-respect-disrupts-business-as-usual-to-advance-nutritional-wellbeing-for-all>

August 28, 2015: Dr. Michelle May has her own mindful eating program to promote. She understands that diets do not work and that if you call a diet a lifestyle, it is still a diet. And while her general attitude is HAES friendly, she still seems to have a goal of weight loss at the end.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/diets-like-antacids-we-need-paradigm-shift-michelle-may-md>

August 29, 2015: An article in *The New York Times* discusses why diets fail and how the power of hunger cannot be ignored if the goal is weight loss. The author includes some of his own nutritional/diet theories, but overall does a good job explaining that hunger has physical and psychological effects on the human body.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/30/opinion/diet-advice-that-ignores-hunger.html>

September 2, 2105: *Bustle* has a practical list of ways to support someone whose photo is hijacked for fat shaming purposes.

<http://www.bustle.com/articles/106375-9-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-plus-size-people-when-theyre-fat-shamed>

September 3, 2015: A recent study finds that if you force children to engage in physical activity, they are less likely to embrace activity as they grow older.

<http://www.newkerala.com/news/2015/fullnews-113686.html>
<http://europepmc.org/abstract/med/25628178>

September 4, 2015: As the fat community reels from a fat shaming, fat-phobic video that went viral, singer-songwriter and podcaster Meghan Tonjes responds with a heartfelt video of her own. Blogger Sam Dylan Finch also responds with a moving and personal post. Once thin and anti-fat, Sam changed when his life was saved by a medication that also caused significant weight gain. He now takes pride in having learned an important lesson in body acceptance and health.

<http://www.mtv.com/news/2261732/meghan-tonjes-response-fat-shaming-nicole-arbour-video>
<http://letsqueerthingsup.com/2015/09/05/nicole-arbours-video-didnt-motivate-me-to-be-healthy-but-body-positivity-did>

September 9, 2015: Blindfolded, fat and beautiful, Amy Pence-Brown stands in the middle of an open-air market wearing only a bikini, with a sign at her feet asking that people who support body acceptance to draw a heart on her body. This video will help renew your faith in human nature.

<http://www.hlntv.com/video/2015/09/09/self-acceptance-self-love-bikini-public>

September 10, 2015: Eloise LeBel talks about her attraction to fat people and why this is not a fetish. She also talks about how body acceptance for herself and for her partners is an important part of her relationships. (Warning - the post contains adult language.)

<http://millihelen.jezebel.com/i-fuck-fat-people-1729648745>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA 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: <http://www.naafa.org>

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