

Reflection: Dietitian to Dietitian Episode 1

The webinar discusses the deep-rooted system of oppression within society in relation to body size and weight. People with larger bodies want to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in society and feel like the only way they'll gain respect is if they become slim. This is rampant everywhere and I've witnessed it in my country and even within my family. Something this webinar made me realize is that I've never thought the cause of people experiencing health benefits when they lose weight is due to behavior change specifically rather than weight loss. Until now, my mind always went "if I lose weight, I'll be healthier" or "it's because I lost weight that I'm healthier" etc. For me, the main goal of any behavior change was to lose weight rather than to feel empowered. It's something I never pondered deeply about which I most definitely will do going forward.

I really enjoyed the discussion on weight inclusive care which is basically defined as taking away the idea that weight is equivalent to health and instead focusing on the modification of behavior (1). Individuals tend to following the most popular diets for a while to slim down and then relapse back to their old dietary habits. What's important is to modify your dietary behavior and sustain it, rather than just following some "diet" oft and on. Changing your lifestyle and sustaining it will keep you empowered and doing so doesn't necessarily mean that you need to stop eating the foods you enjoy the most.

The webinar discusses an RD/RDNs role in when working with their patients. It's important to develop a rapport with your patient, help them unpack their desire for weight loss, and show compassion, which was one of the themes of the webinar. Patients want to feel heard and the best way to do that is by active listening and communicating with them. Weight stigma is common and needs to be addressed for the betterment of individuals in society.

I had no difficulty understanding any of the concepts and ideas they were discussing. It was informative and mind-opening for me in terms of power dynamics between RD/RDNs and Physicians, examining weight bias, really thinking about the well-being of patients and how vital it is to focus on overall health and behavior changes rather than just meeting the appropriate BMI requirements for weight loss. I could feel the passion the presenters had when discussing each topic and the different perspectives I heard from them made me realize that people have different ways of handling situations and how they work in their fields but at the same time, they can agree on certain topics by looking at them from a different point of view which is incredible.

References

1. HAES® & weight management. Dietitian Connection. Published July 30, 2021. Accessed January 19, 2024. <https://dietitianconnection.com/product/d2d-weight-management-haes-coexist/>