

Weight Prejudice: Myths & Facts

ABOUT THIS VIDEO

This 17-minute video, features Bene, a camcorder-toting teen who turns a class biology assignment into an important lesson about weight prejudice. She opens up about her own personal experiences being overweight and uses some expert commentary to set the record straight about common myths surrounding weight prejudice. Brought to you by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, this video uses a youth-friendly format to increase awareness about weight prejudice and help kids and teens cope with weight-based teasing.

This video is ideal as an educational tool for use in middle school and early high school classrooms, and other youth group settings.

WHY WEIGHT PREJUDICE?

“Every single minute of high school was awful. I weighed 240 pounds when I was 14. I was spit on, pinched, teased daily. I was ridiculed and had no real friends.”

Because weight prejudice is often ignored, many overweight kids deal with teasing on a regular basis, and are left to endure the unfair treatment on their own with no real help from others.

Weight prejudice can be damaging to overweight youth both socially and emotionally. This video brings the issue out into the open, so kids will not only realize that weight prejudice is wrong, but they will learn how to help themselves and their classmates.

TIPS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

Before presenting this video, think about how it applies to your particular audience. You can ask your audience a few questions before you begin, so that they can think about their own reactions as they watch the video. Some examples of questions to ask before the video begins:

- ▶ *What are common stereotypes about overweight people? Do you think these are true?*
- ▶ *Have you ever seen anyone being teased about their weight on T.V. or in real life?*
- ▶ *Do you ever feel that it's wrong to make fun of someone about their weight?*

WEIGHT PREJUDICE: MYTHS & FACTS is available at:

www.yaleruddcenter.org/weightbias



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AFTER THE VIDEO: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ▶ Bene talks about many stereotypes and prejudices that overweight people face. Do you believe these stereotypes? Why or why not?
- ▶ What did you learn in this video about the causes of obesity? Was this different than what you thought before?
- ▶ In the video you saw Bene become very upset after a group of girls made fun of her while she was eating lunch. Was it fair for those girls to tease Bene like that? How would you feel if someone did that to you?
- ▶ Do magazines and T.V. put pressure on people to be thin? Does this make weight prejudice worse? Do these messages affect girls and guys in the same way?
- ▶ People think prejudice is wrong. Hardly anyone would say it's okay to be prejudiced against someone because of the color of their skin or if they have a disability. But, many people are still prejudiced about weight - meaning they don't like someone or treat them unfairly just because they are overweight. Do you think this is wrong? Is weight prejudice different than any other type of prejudice?

MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH: Obesity is only caused by eating too much and being lazy.

FACT: Obesity is caused by complex genetic and environmental factors.

MYTH: All overweight people are unhealthy.

FACT: Health comes in different sizes.

MYTH: Prejudice against overweight people is harmless and encourages weight loss.

FACT: Prejudice against overweight people is harmful, wrong, and can have a negative impact on health.

For additional free resources on **WEIGHT BIAS** for kids, teens, parents, and teachers please visit:

www.yaleruddcenter.org/weightbias

