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How do you define health?: Incorporating health at every size (TM) principles into psychiatric appointments to enhance overall wellness

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Health at Every Size (TM) rejects the idea that one's overall health and one's body size are inherently connected. It respects the diversity of body shapes and sizes, encourages joyful movement, and promotes individualized eating based on hunger, satiety, nutritional needs, and pleasure. Emphases on dieting and thinness are an unfortunate part of US culture, but many studies show that diets do not work long-term in the vast majority of individuals. In a US medical clinic or hospital, medical professionals often have limited time and little to no training in providing meaningful therapeutic interventions to patients. However, a trusted medical professional has the opportunity to substantially improve overall wellness by beginning a conversation about health and body that is free of weight bias. It can take just a few minutes to introduce basic principles of Health at Every Size (TM), provide education about the data supporting it, and encourage a change in thinking or behavior. The goal is to leave patients feeling that 'health' and 'well-being' is so much more than the size of one's body. Following this presentation, attendees should be able to: Understand the concept of weight bias and how it affects us, particularly medical professionals. Understand how 'diet culture', which is particularly pervasive in the United States, can negatively impact one's mental health and well-being. During a patient encounter, take as little as 2-3 minutes to introduce a Health at Every Size (TM) principle, provide a brief education on it, and encourage a change in thinking or behavior.

Biography

Molly Hawke is an outpatient adult psychiatrist in Columbus, Ohio. She completed undergraduate studies at Ashland University in Ashland, OH. She completed medical school and psychiatry residency at The Ohio State University and is board certified in psychiatry. As is common for psychiatrists in the Midwest her appointments center around medication management for mental health disorders. This medication management model is similar to that of a primary care physician who manages medical illness. She strongly feels that cultural perceptions of health and body can impact one's mental health. As a result, she has worked to incorporate Health At Every Size (TM) principles into her patient appointments.

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