

Project Tasks:

- Attended meetings with BIH team and partners, including NEDIC and CWS
- Examined and organized academic literature on weight-normative and weight-inclusive approaches
- Co-developed methodology for an environmental scan of weight-inclusive provisions



Purpose:

Using an environmental scan protocol, this study will aim to examine the breadth of online weight-inclusive resources and services within grey literature (internet, social media, experts); synthesize and evaluate the content within identified materials; and discover gaps in the environment

Methods:

Informed by the grey literature search strategies outlined by Godin et al. (2015), data collection will occur in four steps:

1. Conduct Internet searches on Google, Bing, and Yahoo search engines, scanning the first 5 pages of results for weight-inclusive websites and Instagram accounts, while using a predetermined list of search terms
2. Conduct social media searches on Instagram; scanning accounts associated with the top 600 posts for each search term
 - This step will also include snowballing through the “following page” of relevant users to find similar accounts
3. Conduct targeted searches and interviews with weight-inclusive experts to gather resources that may not have been found within initial searches
4. Remove all duplicates and review websites using the following inclusion criteria:
 - Values/mission statement explicitly mentions ‘weight-inclusive’ or uses similar terminology (i.e., ‘fat positive,’ ‘body neutral/inclusive,’ ‘body positive,’ ‘size inclusive’)

Data analysis will occur in SPSS



Background:

The weight-normative approach to physical activity – one in which weight loss and a personal onus for “maintaining a healthy weight” are central tenets – has plagued Western society and is associated with numerous psychological and physical health consequences. Arising from this approach is weight stigma, defined as “negative attitudes and behaviours directed primarily towards higher-weight individuals based on their weight, size, and/or shape” (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Experiencing weight stigma and discrimination poses as a significant barrier to physical activity participation (Pearl et al., 2021), can increase the risk of developing an eating disorder (Tylka et al., 2014), and contributes to worsened psychosocial outcomes (Zuest et al., 2022).

In recent years, the weight-inclusive approach to physical activity has gained traction in the academic community, as an alternative to the weight-normative approach. This approach emphasizes that health and well-being can be achieved by anyone, regardless of their size, if provided with accessible, non-stigmatizing environments and support (Tylka et al., 2014). It also removes the focus from weight loss and diet behaviour, while honing in on nurturing the body through engagement in enjoyable movement practices and other self-care behaviours. Despite the increasing prevalence of weight-inclusivity in research, little is known about the application of weight-inclusive approaches to physical activity in real-world contexts.

An Environmental Scan of Weight-Inclusive Resources

Other Lab Tasks:

- Attended bi-weekly lab team meetings
- Organized and coded survey data in Excel for further analysis
- Aided in research recruitment by conducting telephone screening interviews and creating a social media ad video



Implications:

Not only will this research allow for a better understanding of the current scope of online weight-inclusive resources, but it will provide insightful knowledge that may be used to inform the future creation of freely accessible, weight-inclusive physical activity provisions. This research, alongside associated projects, will advance us towards a society that supports the well-being of higher-weight individuals, and provides them with the necessary environment and resources to promote physical activity engagement, in addition to positive mental health.

