

EXPERIENCES OF WEIGHT-BASED DISCRIMINATION & VIOLENCE

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Weight-based discrimination consists of stereotypes against people who are perceived as “fat” that harmfully and inaccurately portray them as lazy, unhealthy, or lacking self-discipline. Sometimes this is referred to as fatphobia or sizeism.

Weight-based discrimination intersects with and compounds various forms of violence including intimate partner violence. An intimate partner may target their partner’s weight as a tactic of power and control. For instance, a partner may ridicule a survivor’s weight and/or restrict their food.

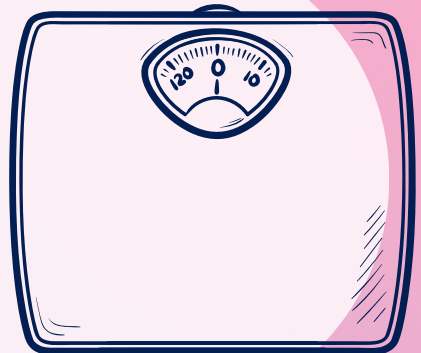
Since weight-based discrimination is normalized, survivors may face it even when seeking help from individuals and services.

Consider Sally’s experience:



Sally’s partner, Riley, told her how lucky she was to be with him because she was “so fat.” He often threw out her food or limited her meal portions. Riley started to hit Sally and locked her out of the house telling her to “go for a walk.”

Sally’s family often witnessed Riley’s behaviour and would reassure her that he was just concerned about her health. They encouraged her to try dieting since “she would be so beautiful if she just lost a few pounds.”



Sally went to see a doctor after Riley pushed her down the stairs and she began having intense migraines. The doctor asked if she tripped since she “doesn’t move around a lot” and said the real concern was getting Sally’s weight “under control.”

In what ways was Sally’s experience of intimate partner violence compounded by weight-based discrimination?

Find answers on the Learning Network website.



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