

YOUUnite

Health/Medical Module

Holistic Programme Fostering The Integration of Overweight and Adipose Youth Into the Labour market

HEY.
I'm getting
healthier!

HEY.
I'm doing
sports!

HEY.
I'm prepared!



About the YOUnite training programme

This module was developed in the context of the ERASMUS+ co-funded YOUnite project, executed from October 2022 to October 2024, which brought together five organisations from Austria, Finland, Hungary, and Poland to collaboratively address challenges faced by youth with obesity and overweight with a special focus on their labour market integration. It is part of the YOUnite training programme, consisting of six modules covering Health/Medical aspects, Nutrition, Sports, Stress Management, Awareness, and Employment. Each Module targets essential aspects of managing obesity and overweight and promoting overall well-being. The Health/Medical aspects and Nutrition Modules provide basic knowledge for making informed dietary and lifestyle choices. The Sports Module encourages physical activity in a supportive environment. Stress Management and Awareness address mental health and coping strategies. Employment focuses on enhancing employability and addressing workplace discrimination, empowering youth to enter the labour market confidently and successfully. Together, these Modules offer a comprehensive toolkit for trainers, teachers, and youth workers and counsellors to support and empower young individuals to take the first steps in their journey towards a healthier, more balanced life.

The YOUnite training programme was designed in such a way that its components can be used very flexibly: Either by implementing the whole programme or only specific modules or activities. Thus, the modules can accommodate very diverse training environments. For each module, there is a module activity paper and instructions for trainers. These documents form an entity and should thus be consulted together. To ensure that the developed training is both effective and comprehensive, working groups were established in each country, bringing together experts from diverse fields, including doctors, medical workers, nutritionists, cooks, employment counsellors, youth workers, athletes, teachers, and psychologists. These experts shared their insights, helping to shape activities tailored to the unique needs of the target group.

Based on the outcomes of the working groups, a draft training programme for youth was developed and the partners conducted train-the-trainers events to equip future trainers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively deliver the new training. These trainers then led pilot sessions with youth where the modules were tested and refined through practical application. The iterative process of testing and refining allowed us to gather valuable feedback from trainers as well as young people themselves, make necessary adjustments, and confirm that the modules were both practical and impactful. The focus on disadvantaged youth ensures that those who need it most receive the support and guidance to adopt healthier lifestyles and improve their future employability.

Focusing on obesity is crucial given its alarming prevalence and far-reaching consequences. According to the World Health Organization, as of 2022, approximately 20% of children and adolescents (aged 5-19) worldwide are affected by obesity or being overweight (World Health Organization). This growing epidemic is not only a significant public health concern but also a burden on societies and public health systems. Obesity among youth is linked to numerous negative outcomes, including increased risks of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health issues. These health problems often persist into adulthood, contributing to higher healthcare costs and economic strain. Additionally, obesity can impact quality of life, academic performance, and employment prospects, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage. Tackling obesity is essential not only to improve individual health outcomes but also to reduce the economic burden on public funds and enhance overall societal well-being.

Addressing obesity requires a multifaceted approach, underscored by comprehensive health education. This involves implementing preventive measures and treatment strategies to counteract the pervasive effects of overweight and obesity, while raising awareness about balanced nutrition, consistent physical activity, mental wellness, and stress management. The YOUnite training programme takes a significant first step in this direction, particularly for disadvantaged youth who are further away from the labour market and have not previously engaged with the subject of healthy life habits.



Introduction: What is the goal of the Health/Medical Module and how is it relevant for a healthier lifestyle?

The primary goal of the Health/Medical Module is to deepen participants' understanding of medical and lifestyle medicine principles, empowering them to make the first steps towards informed lifestyle choices for effective weight management and overall well-being. Working within a supportive group setting fosters a sense of community, motivating participants to take action, build new relationships, and initiate positive changes.

Specific Goals and educational objectives are to:

- Understand the basics of overweight and obesity, including associated health risks and complications.
- Understand and develop strategies to overcome personal obstacles related to weight management and overall well-being.
- Promote healthy habits and explain the link to nutrition and physical activity.
- Encourage positive lifestyle changes
- Emphasise the importance of monitoring progress and fostering self-awareness.

Significance of the Module

This module provides an educational framework that fosters a supportive environment for understanding health and healthy habits. Group work helps mitigate feelings of shame and stigma, encouraging collaboration and mutual support. By addressing various aspects of overweight and obesity, from habit creation to marketing strategies, the module helps participants navigate their challenges and pursue their aspirations with confidence.

Anticipated Benefits

Participants will be supported to take the first steps towards improvements in physical and mental well-being. In addition to becoming more aware of better weight management and reducing health risks, individuals will be strengthened in their self-esteem and confidence. These positive changes facilitate better integration into professional life and greater opportunities for personal growth, empowering young people to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.



What are the issues addressed?

Activity 1: Expanding Health Perspectives

This activity aims to address the common issue of oversimplified perceptions of health, which often focus narrowly on weight loss. Participants explore health beyond physical fitness by examining its mental, emotional, and social dimensions. The goal is to challenge stereotypes and encourage a holistic approach to well-being, emphasising the importance of diversity and individuality in health.

Activity 2: Incremental Healthy Habits

Promoting obesity prevention, this activity encourages participants to adopt small, manageable healthy habits. Simple actions, such as eating a fruit daily or choosing healthier snacks, enable participants to gradually improve their overall health. This method supports self-esteem and well-being by fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy, providing practical tools for effective weight management, and boosting confidence in personal health.

Activity 3: Nutritional Awareness in Grocery Shopping

Participants engage in discussions and practical exercises to enhance their understanding of nutritional labels and make informed food choices during grocery shopping. By empowering youth to take control of their food choices, this activity fosters a positive relationship with food and aids in addressing obesity. It equips participants with practical skills for healthier eating and contributes to a varied, balanced diet, further supporting their self-esteem.

Activity 4: Critical Food Marketing Analysis

This activity focuses on educating participants about deceptive food marketing practices and improving their ability to make informed purchasing decisions. By developing critical thinking skills, participants learn to navigate misleading advertisements and make conscious food choices. This approach not only improves eating behaviour but also enhances self-esteem and well-being by promoting autonomy and informed decision-making.

Activity 5: Holistic Lifestyle Improvement

Aiming to enhance overall well-being, this activity encourages participants to recognize and modify unhealthy lifestyle habits. Through self-reflection on diet, exercise, and sleep, participants can support weight management and general well-being. This activity also prepares participants for the labour market by fostering discipline and resilience through healthy habits, contributing to their overall success.

Activity 6: Combatting Stigmatization of Obesity

Addressing the stigma associated with obesity, this activity promotes mental health and encourages engagement in physical activity and healthcare. Participants learn about the causes and effects of stigma, develop self-awareness, and advocate for inclusivity and empathy. By educating participants about the real causes of obesity and fostering a supportive environment, this activity combats discrimination and promotes a positive self-image.

Together, these activities provide a comprehensive approach to addressing obesity and improving overall well-being. They prepare youth for success in various aspects of life by promoting a holistic understanding of health, empowering informed decision-making, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

What special skills do trainers need for this module?

To effectively conduct the activities in the Health Module, a trainer needs a combination of essential skills. Strong facilitation skills are crucial; the trainer must be adept at guiding discussions, encouraging participation, and ensuring a respectful and inclusive environment. This involves active listening, managing group dynamics, and fostering open communication.

Equally important are empathy and sensitivity. Given the personal nature of topics such as health, weight, and stigma, the trainer must demonstrate a non-judgmental attitude, create a safe space for participants to share their experiences, and respond appropriately to their emotions.

A solid understanding of holistic health concepts is also necessary. The trainer should be knowledgeable about the interplay between physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being to effectively convey the importance of a balanced lifestyle. This expertise is essential for guiding participants through activities like holistic health mapping and mindful eating.

Critical thinking and media literacy are vital skills, particularly for activities like "Truth Behind the Label." The trainer should possess the necessary analytical skills to help participants scrutinise and question marketing tactics. Guiding participants in developing these skills will enhance their ability to make informed decisions about their food choices.

Motivational skills are important for inspiring and encouraging participants. The trainer should be capable of motivating participants to engage in self-reflection, adopt new habits, and make positive lifestyle changes. This involves helping them set realistic goals and supporting their progress towards achieving them.

List of Activities

1. Holistic Health Mapping
2. Small Steps, Big Changes
3. Nutritional Navigator
4. Truth vs. Tactics:
Unveiling Advertising
5. Habits Uncovered
6. Bias Buster

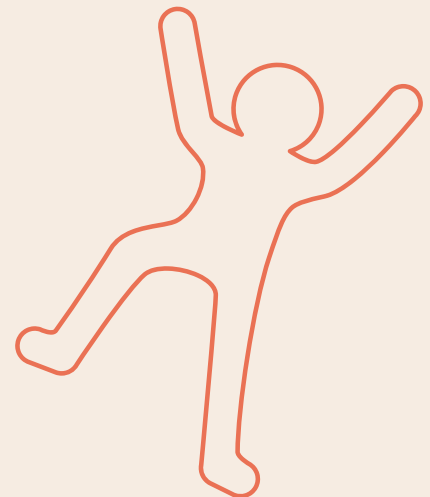
1. Holistic Health Mapping

Time required	Around 1 hour
Type of activity	Self-reflection
Key takeaway	This activity helps overweight and obese youth expand their understanding of health by recognizing the interconnectedness of various aspects of well-being, enabling them to articulate personal health values and develop strategies for a balanced, holistic lifestyle.
Worksheet	<u>Handout - Holistic Health Mapping</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large papers• Pens

Overview

This activity is designed to expand participants' understanding of health by exploring its holistic nature. Moving beyond the conventional focus on diet and exercise, participants will engage in self-reflection and group discussions to uncover how various aspects of life—physical, mental, emotional, social, environmental, intellectual, spiritual, and occupational—interconnect to influence overall well-being. Through visual mapping and personal values exploration, participants will gain a comprehensive perspective on what it means to be truly healthy, empowering them to make informed, balanced lifestyle choices.

Participants first reflect on and discuss their personal health values in small groups, identifying key factors like relationships, nutrition, and stress management. They then create a visual health map by outlining a human body on paper and marking various dimensions of health, considering how these aspects are interconnected. Finally, groups present their maps, leading to a discussion on holistic health and actionable steps to improve well-being.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin by discussing the concept of holistic health with the participants. Emphasise that health encompasses various dimensions beyond just physical well-being, including mental, emotional, social, and environmental aspects.

2. Defining Personal Values (15 minutes)

- In pairs or small groups, have participants reflect on their personal values related to health. Each group should discuss and list the values they believe contribute to a healthy life, considering factors such as relationships, nutrition, physical activity, stress reduction, and living environment.

3. Group Discussion (10 minutes)

- After the individual or group reflection, bring everyone together for a group discussion. Each group can share their findings, and facilitators can guide a conversation around common themes and differences in values identified by different groups.

4. Holistic Health Mapping (20-30 minutes)

- Distribute large sheets of paper and markers to each group. Ask them to draw the outline of a human body on the paper. Using the handout provided, guide participants to identify and mark various aspects of health on the body outline. Encourage them to think beyond just physical health and include elements such as mental well-being, communication, digestion, and self-expression.

5. Presentation and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Once the mapping activity is complete, have each group present their maps to the larger group. As each group shares, facilitate a discussion around the interconnectedness of the dimensions of health and actions individuals can take to support each aspect. Encourage participants to reflect on how these dimensions relate to their personal values identified earlier in the activity.

6. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Wrap up the activity by summarising key insights gained from the discussion and mapping exercise. Reiterate the importance of holistic health and empower participants to take proactive steps towards improving their overall well-being.



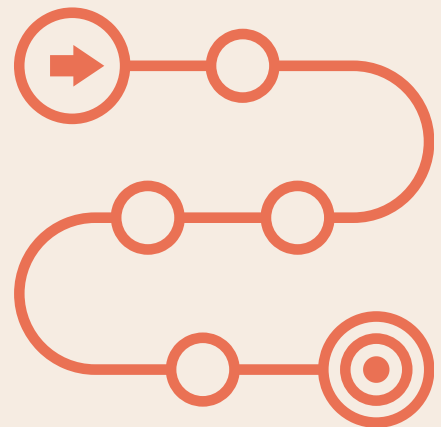
2. Small Steps, Big Changes

Time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First time: around 40 minutes• Follow up discussion: around 20 minutes in the beginning of each activity of this module
Type of activity	Self-reflection
Key takeaway	Participants will learn to integrate manageable, healthy habits into their daily routines, fostering long-term well-being and self-improvement.
Worksheet	<u>Handout - Small Steps, Big Changes</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Papers/ notebooks• Pens

Overview

The primary idea behind this activity is to help participants introduce and sustain new healthy habits into their lives. By selecting and implementing small, achievable changes each week, participants can gradually improve their health and develop sustainable routines. The activity emphasises the importance of making incremental changes to foster long-term well-being, and includes a structured follow-up process to support and reinforce these new habits.

During the activity, participants choose a new healthy habit to integrate into their daily lives for the upcoming week. They receive a list of suggested habits, such as eating a fruit each morning or drinking more water, and select one that aligns with their personal goals. Throughout the week, they implement this habit, track their progress, and note any observations or challenges. In the following session, they share their experiences and reflections with the group, discussing successes and obstacles in a supportive environment. This process is repeated weekly, helping participants gradually build and sustain healthier routines.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity

1. Preparations

- Print the list of suggested activities and provide participants with pen and papers to write down their own ideas

2. Introduction and Explanation (10 minutes)

- Begin by introducing the activity and its purpose, emphasising the importance of small, consistent actions in achieving long-term health and well-being. Explain that participants will have the opportunity to choose a new healthy habit to incorporate into their lives each week. Participants can choose from a provided list of ideas or come up with their own healthy habits. Clarify that each week, a small challenge related to the chosen habit will be given to the participants. Highlight that the activity will begin with a follow-up discussion in the subsequent session to share experiences, challenges, and successes.

3. Idea Generation (15 minutes)

- Provide a list of potential healthy habits to participants, such as eating a fruit in the morning, trying a new food, replacing a snack with something healthy, drinking more water, getting 10 minutes of exercise daily, etc. Encourage participants to think about their own goals and interests when choosing a healthy habit. They should select something that aligns with their personal preferences and is achievable within a week.

4. Habit Selection (10 minutes)

- Give participants time to choose their healthy habit for the week. They can write it down or share it with the group if they feel comfortable doing so. Remind them that the chosen habit should be realistic, specific, and measurable, making it easier to track progress and determine success.

5. Implementation and Tracking (throughout the training)

- Instruct participants to incorporate their chosen healthy habit and take on the challenge throughout the week. Encourage them to track their progress and make notes about any observations, benefits, difficulties, or modifications they make.

6. Follow-up Discussion (20 minutes) in each of the following sessions

- In the subsequent session, begin with a follow-up discussion on how the challenges went for each participant. Allow participants to share their experiences, challenges faced, and any adjustments made to their habits. Encourage a supportive and non-judgmental environment where participants can celebrate successes and offer suggestions or advice to one another.

7. Repeat and Progress (Ongoing)

- Repeat each of the following weeks, allowing participants to choose new healthy habits and face new challenges. Encourage participants to build upon their progress from previous weeks and continue incorporating healthy habits into their lives. Reinforce the idea that small steps, consistently taken, can create a big difference in their overall health and well-being.



3. Nutritional Navigator

Time required	2 hours
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	Participants will gain essential skills for making healthier food choices and managing their nutrition, while also developing practical life skills and fostering a more adventurous approach to food.
Worksheet	<u>Nutritional Navigator- Handout</u> <i>Further readings (eufic):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Food facts for healthy choices</u>• <u>Food labels</u>• <u>European national references to find information on dietary guidelines and advice</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shopping bags• Money

Overview

Participants take part in a hands-on grocery shopping experience designed to enhance their food choices and nutrition knowledge. Together, they explore the store, learn to read package labels, and discover healthier food options. This interactive activity aims to broaden their understanding of nutrition, foster healthier eating habits, and equip them with practical skills for making informed dietary decisions. Through group discussions and reflections, participants gain valuable insights into healthy eating and develop a proactive approach to their well-being.

The activity aims to educate participants about making healthier food choices through a guided grocery shopping experience. By exploring the store together and learning to interpret nutritional information, participants become more informed consumers. The activity also encourages trying new foods, enhancing their overall understanding of nutrition and fostering healthier eating habits.

Participants gather for an introduction and discussion on nutrition basics, including how to read package labels. They are then divided into small groups and provided with shopping lists or prompts. Each group explores the grocery store, looking for nutritious options and trying new foods. After shopping, they regroup to discuss their findings, challenges, and any new insights gained. The activity concludes with a summary of key takeaways and a reflection on how these new skills can be applied to their daily lives.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Preparations

- Venue Selection: Choose a nearby grocery store that has a good variety of healthy food options and is accessible to all participants.
- Health Materials: Prepare shopping lists and handouts
- Budgeting and Bags: Arrange money for the shopping activity and ensure that each group has reusable shopping bags.
- Healthy Snack Ideas: Decide on some healthy snack suggestions or recipes to share with participants during the introduction.
- Team Coordination: Ensure enough facilitators or staff are present to support each group during the store visit, answer questions, and provide guidance.

2. Gather Participants and Introduction to Activity (10 minutes)

- Start by gathering the group of participants at the designated meeting point where you can give an introduction and where you can easily go to the grocery store together.
- Provide a brief introduction to the activity, emphasising the importance of making healthy food choices and exploring new options.

3. Nutrition Education (15 minutes)

- Discuss the concept of reading package labels and understanding nutrition.
- Highlight key information participants should look for, such as ingredient lists, nutritional values, and serving sizes.

4. Healthy Food List (optional) (5 minutes)

- Share the list of healthy food items and recipe ideas with participants. These could be for example healthy snacks that participants will eat together on a break.
- Encourage them to consider incorporating these items into their shopping.

5. Group Formation (5 minutes)

- Divide the participants into smaller groups, ideally with a mix of individuals to facilitate collaboration and idea sharing.

6. Shopping Exploration (30 minutes)

- Provide each group with a shopping basket or cart and allow them to explore the store together.
- Encourage participants to actively search for items on their lists while considering new and healthier alternatives.

7. Group Discussion (30 minutes)

- Facilitate a conversation about the experience, asking participants to share new discoveries, challenges faced, and insights gained.
- Emphasise the importance of discussing and sharing their choices and discoveries within their groups.
- Be available to answer questions, provide guidance, and offer additional information on specific food items or nutrition-related inquiries.
- Reflect on the importance of incorporating healthier choices into their diets and maintaining these habits beyond the activity.
- Discuss the potential impact on overall well-being

8. Conclusion and Resources (5 minutes)

- Conclude the session by summarising key takeaways.



4. Truth vs. Tactics: Unveiling Advertising

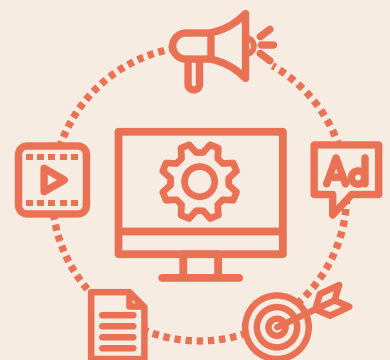
Time required	2 to 3 hours
Type of activity	Workshop
Key takeaway	Participants will develop the critical thinking and media literacy skills needed to recognize and question the tactics used in advertising, empowering them to make informed and healthier consumer choices that enhance their overall well-being.
Worksheet	<u>Handout: Truth vs. Tactics: Unveiling Advertising</u> Further readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>How to spot fake nutrition information online</u>• <u>European Commission: Nutrition claims</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tablets, computers or phones for research• Large papers• Pens and markers

Overview

In this engaging session, participants will explore the psychological tactics used in food advertising, learning how marketers create illusions that convince consumers their products will improve their lives. By examining examples of misleading health associations, participants will uncover how vibrant packaging and exaggerated health claims often sway consumer decisions. This exploration extends to online and television ads, where similar strategies influence behaviour.

Participants will actively research and analyse advertisements that appeal to them, critically evaluating the hidden motives and messages behind these ads. The session culminates in group discussions and the creation of posters that showcase their findings, helping them to develop the skills needed to make informed and conscious choices about the products they buy.

Participants begin by learning about the impact of advertising on consumer choices, particularly in the food industry. They then select an advertisement that appeals to them and conduct research to uncover the marketing strategies used. Through group discussions, they reflect on the true motives behind these ads, considering questions like the accuracy of health claims and the influence of packaging. Afterward, participants create posters to visually represent their findings, which they present to the group. The session ends with a discussion on how to apply critical thinking to everyday food choices, encouraging participants to remain aware of deceptive marketing tactics.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Introduction to the Activity (15 minutes)
 - Welcome participants and provide an overview of the session's focus on understanding advertising tactics in the food industry.
 - Emphasise the importance of critical thinking in evaluating the messages conveyed by advertisements.
 - Briefly discuss the impact of marketing strategies on consumer choices (find more information in the worksheets).
2. Reflection and Research on the Internet (20 minutes)
 - Instruct participants to reflect on advertisements that appeal to them and choose one product each for closer examination.
 - Facilitate a brief discussion on the chosen products, exploring why they find them appealing.
 - Allocate time for individual or group research on the internet to analyse the marketing strategies used for the selected products.
3. Group Reflection on Advertising (30 minutes)
 - Bring the group together for a reflective discussion on advertising:
 - What is the primary aim of advertising? Can advertising be trusted, and why or why not? What messages do advertisements convey? Why do individuals make specific purchasing decisions based on advertisements?
 - Encourage open dialogue and the sharing of diverse perspectives within the group.
4. Poster Creation (45 minutes)
 - Divide participants into smaller groups (2-4 members per group).
 - Instruct each group to create a poster about the products they have chosen.
 - The posters should include insights gained from internet research and group reflections.
 - Emphasise the importance of visual representation and concise messaging on the posters.
5. Group Poster Presentation (10 minutes)
 - Each group presents their poster to the entire group, highlighting key findings, insights, and reflections.
 - Encourage questions and discussions among the participants after each presentation.
6. Closing Discussion and Summary (15 minutes)
 - Conclude the session with a group discussion: What did participants learn about advertising in the food industry? How can critical thinking influence food choices? What strategies can youth employ to make informed decisions in the face of deceptive advertising?
 - Summarise key takeaways and emphasise the importance of making conscious and informed food choices.
 - Discuss how participants can apply their newfound awareness in their daily lives.
 - Encourage ongoing critical thinking about food choices and staying informed about marketing tactics.



5. Habits Uncovered

Time required	50 mins
Type of activity	Self-reflection
Key takeaway	Participants will gain a deeper awareness of their daily habits, empowering them to recognize areas for improvement and make informed decisions to enhance their overall well-being.
Worksheet	<u>Habits Uncovered Questionnaire</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper/notebooks• Pens

Overview

This activity is designed to increase awareness of participants' daily habits. By completing the "Habits Uncovered" questionnaire, participants will gain valuable insights into their nutrition, leisure, and health routines. This self-reflection encourages individuals to evaluate their lifestyle, either embracing their current habits or identifying areas for positive change.

The activity serves as a powerful tool for recognizing daily patterns that influence well-being. By examining aspects such as diet, physical activity, and health practices, participants can pinpoint areas for improvement and consider actionable changes to enhance their overall wellbeing.

Participants begin by filling out a questionnaire on their lifestyle and well-being. This process helps them reflect on their daily routines, including nutrition, leisure activities, and health practices. After completing the questionnaire, a group discussion is facilitated by the trainer, where participants share insights, discuss their findings, and explore potential changes to improve their lifestyle. The activity encourages self-awareness and provides a foundation for making informed decisions about personal health and well-being.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Introduction (5 mins)

- Welcome the participants: Start by explaining the purpose of the activity, which is to help them gain insight into their daily habits and how these impact their overall well-being.
- Set the context: Emphasise the importance of self-reflection in recognizing patterns and making positive changes to improve lifestyle and health.
- Distribute materials: Hand out the "Lifestyle and Well-being Questionnaire," along with paper/notebooks and pens.

2. Filling out the questionnaires (20 mins)

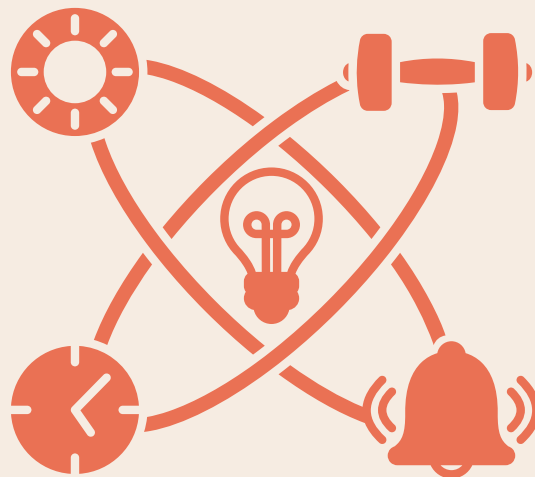
- Encourage thoughtful reflection: Ask participants to answer each question honestly, considering both weekdays and days off.
- Allow time for completion: Give participants ample time to complete the questionnaire at their own pace. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible, as this will aid in their self-reflection.
- Optional writing: If participants wish, they can take additional notes in their notebooks to further reflect on specific areas of their lifestyle that stand out to them.

3. Discussion (20 mins)

- Facilitate a group discussion: After the questionnaire is completed, bring everyone together for a discussion. Begin by asking participants to share any insights or surprises they discovered about their habits.
- Explore common themes: Guide the discussion to identify common patterns or challenges among the group. Encourage participants to discuss potential changes they might make based on their reflections.
- Focus on actionable changes: Help participants brainstorm realistic, small steps they can take to improve areas of their lifestyle that need attention.
- Encourage peer support: Promote a supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing and learning from each other's experiences.

4. Conclusion (5mins)

- Summarise key takeaways: Highlight the importance of ongoing self-reflection and making incremental changes to enhance well-being.
- Encourage ongoing reflection: Remind participants that this is just the beginning of their journey toward a healthier lifestyle. Encourage them to regularly revisit their habits and make adjustments as needed.
- Thank participants: Conclude the session by thanking everyone for their participation and openness during the activity



6. Bias Buster

Time required	2 hours
Type of activity	Self-reflection/ Workshop
Key takeaway	Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of overweight or obesity stigma on individuals and their well-being, and develop practical skills to confront and counteract such biases. This fosters a more empathetic and supportive environment, empowering them to advocate for inclusivity and self-acceptance.
Worksheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Questionnaire on weight-related stigma</u>• <u>Bias Buster - Role Play guide</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pens

Overview

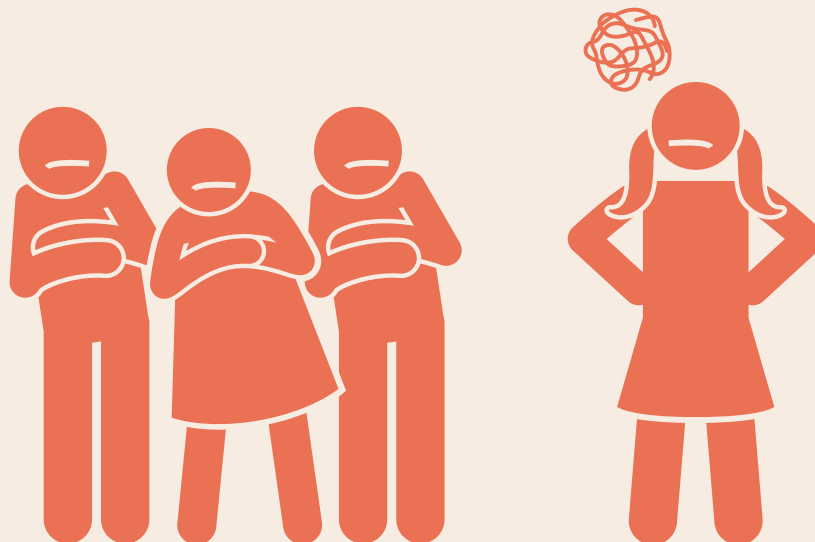
Participants will engage in stigma-reduction workshops designed to unveil the origins and impacts of stigma while fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Through interactive exercises, discussions, and role-playing, they will explore the social biases surrounding obesity and develop practical skills for confronting and reducing discrimination. By focusing on both personal self-awareness and societal attitudes, the activity empowers young people to challenge negative stereotypes and advocate for more empathetic communities.

Participants start by completing questionnaires to reflect on their own experiences and attitudes. Following this, they take part in discussions to deepen their understanding of stigma and its effects on mental health and well-being. Interactive role-playing exercises allow participants to practise addressing and managing stigmatising situations effectively. The activity culminates in a group reflection, where participants share insights and strategies for promoting inclusivity and empathy, ultimately fostering a more supportive and understanding community.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Welcoming and Atmosphere Establishment (10 minutes)
 - Welcome participants, setting a positive and friendly tone for the session.
 - Encourage icebreakers or interactive activities to foster a welcoming atmosphere.
2. Distribution and Completion of Questionnaires (15 minutes)
 - The trainer distributes pre-prepared questionnaires to participants.
 - Participants fill out the questionnaires based on their personal experience.
3. Discussion on Stigmatization (30 minutes)
 - Facilitate a discussion on participants' experiences with stigmatising situations.
 - Participants are invited to share stories when they felt discriminated against and how they felt.
4. Role-Playing Activity (50 minutes)
 - Based on these narratives, the group chooses 2-3 situations as examples to enact as a role-play. Alternatively, prepared scenarios can be chosen (see Role Play guide)
 - Ask participants to volunteer to act out examples of stigmatising situations and the whole group together explores ways to address them effectively (see Role Play guide).
 - The trainer moderates the role-playing activity to ensure a supportive and respectful environment for all participants.
5. Summary and Conclusion (15 minutes)
 - Participants reflect together on the key takeaways from this workshop, which the trainer summarises on a flip chart or white board.
 - Invite participants to share any final thoughts or reflections on the workshop and role play and how they felt about it.



Worksheets for Health/Medical Module Activities





Health/Medical Activity 1 - Holistic Health Mapping

1. Physical Health:

This dimension encompasses aspects related to the body's physical well-being, including nutrition, exercise, sleep, and medical care. It involves maintaining a healthy lifestyle through balanced diet, regular physical activity, adequate rest, and seeking medical attention when necessary.

2. Mental Health:

Mental health refers to emotional and psychological well-being. It involves managing stress, coping with challenges, maintaining positive relationships, and fostering resilience. Practices such as mindfulness, self-care, and seeking support when needed contribute to mental wellness.

3. Emotional Health:

Emotional health involves recognizing and managing one's emotions in a healthy and constructive manner. It includes expressing feelings appropriately, developing emotional intelligence, and nurturing positive emotions such as happiness and gratitude. Building healthy coping mechanisms and seeking help when experiencing emotional distress are essential aspects of emotional well-being.

4. Social Health:

Social health relates to the quality of relationships and interactions with others. It encompasses building supportive connections, fostering a sense of belonging, and engaging in meaningful social activities. Effective communication, empathy, and cooperation contribute to positive social relationships and overall social well-being.

5. Environmental Health:

Environmental health considers the impact of the surrounding environment on individual health and well-being. It involves promoting clean air, water, and surroundings, as well as sustainable practices that support ecological balance. Creating safe and healthy living environments, both indoors and outdoors, is essential for optimal environmental health.

6. Intellectual Health:

Intellectual health involves stimulating the mind and continuously learning and growing intellectually. It includes engaging in activities that challenge and expand one's knowledge, critical thinking skills, and creativity. Lifelong learning, curiosity, and open-mindedness contribute to intellectual well-being.

7. Spiritual Health:

Spiritual health refers to a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something greater than oneself. It involves exploring one's values, beliefs, and principles, as well as practicing mindfulness, meditation, or other spiritual rituals. Cultivating a sense of inner peace, harmony, and alignment with personal values contributes to spiritual well-being.

8. Occupational Health:

Occupational health relates to satisfaction and fulfillment derived from one's work or daily activities. It involves finding balance between work, leisure, and personal responsibilities, as well as pursuing meaningful goals and aspirations. Creating a supportive work environment, maintaining work-life balance, and finding purpose in daily activities contribute to occupational well-being.



Health/Medical Activity 2 - Small Steps, Big Changes

1. Start your day with a glass of water to hydrate your body.
2. Incorporate at least one serving of fruits or vegetables into every meal.
3. Replace sugary drinks with water, herbal tea, or infused water.
4. Practice mindful eating by savoring each bite and paying attention to hunger cues.
5. Take a 10-minute walk after each meal to aid digestion and increase physical activity.
6. Set a regular sleep schedule and aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.
7. Practice deep breathing or meditation for 5-10 minutes daily to reduce stress.
8. Keep a food journal to track your eating habits and identify areas for improvement.
9. Try a new healthy recipe each week to expand your culinary repertoire.
10. Limit screen time before bed and create a relaxing bedtime routine to improve sleep quality.
11. Schedule regular physical activity sessions, such as walking, biking, or dancing, at least three times a week.
12. Practice portion control by using smaller plates and bowls to help regulate food intake.
13. Incorporate strength training exercises into your workout routine to build muscle and boost metabolism.
14. Practice gratitude by writing down three things you're thankful for each day.
15. Plan and prepare healthy snacks, such as nuts, seeds, yogurt, or cut-up veggies, to have on hand when hunger strikes.
16. Take regular breaks from sitting by standing up and stretching every hour.
17. Limit processed foods and opt for whole, nutrient-dense foods whenever possible.
18. Practice good hygiene habits, such as washing your hands regularly and brushing your teeth twice a day.
19. Schedule regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor your health and address any concerns.
20. Practice positive self-talk and affirmations to boost self-esteem and confidence.
21. Engage in a hobby or activity you enjoy, such as painting, gardening, or playing a musical instrument, to reduce stress and improve mood.
22. Volunteer or participate in community service activities to foster social connections and a sense of purpose.
23. Limit alcohol consumption and opt for non-alcoholic beverages, such as sparkling water or herbal tea, during social gatherings.
24. Practice mindful spending by tracking your expenses and prioritizing purchases that align with your values and goals.
25. Take time to relax and unwind each day by engaging in activities such as reading, taking a bath, or listening to music.



Health/Medical Activity 3 - Nutritional Navigator Handout

Mastering the skill of reading and interpreting nutrition labels empowers you to make informed food choices that contribute to your overall health and well-being. By paying attention to serving sizes, calorie counts, and the content of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, you can optimize your dietary intake and support your nutritional needs. Use the information provided on nutrition labels as a guide for selecting foods that nourish your body and promote a healthy lifestyle. With practice, you'll develop confidence in navigating food labels and making choices that align with your health goals.

Understanding Nutrition Labels

Nutrition labels serve as crucial tools for assessing the nutritional content of packaged foods. By learning how to read and interpret these labels, you can make more informed dietary decisions, leading to improved health outcomes. Here's what you need to know:

Serving Size: The serving size is the first piece of information on the label, indicating the quantity considered one serving. All the nutritional information provided is based on this serving size. Be mindful that many packages contain multiple servings, and consuming more will increase the intake of calories, fats, and other nutrients.

Calories: The calorie count per serving tells you how much energy the food provides. For adults, a daily intake of about 2,000 to 2,500 calories is typical, but individual needs vary based on factors such as age, activity level, and weight goals. Trainers should advise participants to consult with a healthcare provider to understand their specific calorie requirements.

Proteins: Proteins are essential for building and repairing tissues, as well as supporting bodily functions like muscle repair and immune health. Aim for foods that provide 10–20 grams of protein per meal for most adults, depending on activity levels. The recommended daily intake of protein is typically 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight, although higher amounts may be needed for athletes or those looking to build muscle. Trainers should refer to this guideline when advising participants on protein needs.

Fats: Not all fats are equal. There are beneficial fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and harmful fats, such as trans fats and excess saturated fats. Look for foods low in saturated fats and with 0 grams of trans fat. Prioritize healthy fat sources, like avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil.

Carbohydrates: Carbohydrates provide energy, but it's important to monitor their type and amount. Pay attention to the total carbohydrates, fiber, and sugars. Foods high in fiber (aim for 5 grams per serving) help maintain healthy digestion, while added sugars should be minimized. Try to consume less than 30 grams of added sugar per day.

% Daily Value (%DV): The %DV helps you understand how much a nutrient in one serving contributes to your overall daily intake, based on a standard 2,000-calorie diet. For example, a food with 20% DV of calcium offers 20% of your daily calcium needs. Use this to choose foods rich in essential nutrients while being mindful of unhealthy elements, like fats and sugars.

Ingredients: The ingredient list reveals the content of the food, with ingredients listed in descending order by weight. Opt for foods with whole, minimally processed ingredients. Be wary of additives, preservatives, and artificial ingredients, and limit consumption of those with high levels of refined sugars or hydrogenated oils.

Tips for Making Healthier Choices

- **Calorie Control:** Align your calorie intake with your energy expenditure. A daily range of 2,000 to 2,500 calories is a general guideline, but individual needs vary based on factors like age, gender, and activity level.
- **Adequate Protein:** Ensure your diet includes enough protein for tissue repair and muscle support. Aiming for 10–20 grams of protein per meal is a good start for most people. If you're more active, consider higher levels.
- **Healthy Fats:** Prioritize healthy fats from nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fish while minimizing intake of saturated and trans fats. Foods with 0 grams trans fat and low saturated fat are preferable.
- **Carb Balance:** Focus on foods high in fiber (aim for 5 grams per serving). Limit foods high in added sugars; try to keep added sugar consumption below 30 grammes per day.
- **Nutrient Density:** Use the % Daily Value to identify foods rich in nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Compare similar products and opt for those with higher nutrient density and lower unhealthy components like sugar and salt.



Health/Medical Activity 4 - Truth vs. Tactics: Unveiling Advertising

What Is Misleading Labeling?

Food labels often use clever wording to make products seem healthier or more sustainable than they are. Understanding these tactics is key to making informed food choices. Food companies aim to meet packaging standards and, more importantly, convince you to buy their products. Misleading labels often use "trigger words" to make products appear healthier or more appealing, such as "sugar-free", "light", "low-calorie", "natural", or "organic".

Why Are Food Labels Misleading?

- **Sales Tactics:** The ultimate goal is to increase sales. Packaging is designed to grab your attention and make you pick up the product.
- **Consumer Trends:** Marketers follow trends like plant-based eating and gut health to shape their packaging and increase appeal.
- **Psychological Impact:** Just touching a product can increase the likelihood of buying it. Food labels are created to attract and keep your attention.

Most Misleading Label Claims

- **Sugar-Free:** Can contain up to 0.5g of sugar per 100g or 100ml and often includes higher fat content to compensate for the loss of sweetness.
- **Fruit-Flavored:** Typically flavored with chemicals, not real fruit.
- **Light:** This claim may only be made where the reduction in content is at least 30% compared to a similar product, but this does not necessarily mean that it is low in calories or fat. Thus, sugar- or low-fat products contain less sugar or fat, but the calorie content is often comparable to conventional products. It is therefore always advisable to also check the label indicating the nutritional value of the product.
- **Low-Calorie/Energy:** Must have 40 kcal (170 kJ)/100 g for solids or more than 20 kcal (80 kJ)/100 ml for liquids.
- **Low-Carb:** No official European regulation, allowing many products to use this label without specific requirements.
- **Low-Fat:** Must contain no more than 3g of fat per 100g of food or 1,5 g of fat per 100 ml for liquids in the EU.
- **Made with Whole Grains:** Can still be mostly made with refined grains.
- **Multigrain:** Indicates the presence of various grains, but can still be refined.
- **Natural:** Not strictly regulated, so it doesn't necessarily exclude artificial ingredients.
- **No Cholesterol:** Can still contain small amounts of cholesterol.
- **Organic:** Adheres to strict European organic farming standards but doesn't guarantee the product is healthier.
- **Zero Trans Fat:** May contain up to 0.5g of trans fat per serving.

How to Read Food Labels Without Being Tricked

- **Ignore Front-of-Pack Claims: Marketing buzzwords are often misleading.**
- **Study the Ingredients List:** Ingredients are listed by weight—focus on the first few. Watch for added sugars, fats, and sodium.
- **Pay Attention to Serving Sizes:** Some products might seem low in calories or sugar but have small serving sizes, leading to misleading impressions.

How to Read Sugar Content

- **Types of Sugar:** Sugar can appear under many names like glucose, fructose, or dextrose. There are at least 56 different names for sugar on food labels.
- **Added Sugars:** Watch for ingredients ending in "-ose" or syrups, as they indicate added sugar.

All this can be very confusing, so the best and simplest way to ensure that you are eating a healthy diet is to avoid as much as possible processed foods altogether, and instead seek out primarily whole foods and plant-based foods such as products made with 100 percent whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

How to detect fake health claims in advertising?

Here are a few simple tips for identifying reliable information:

- Always check the source: Is the source reliable? Who is the author? What qualification does she or he have?
- If a claim sounds too good to be true - it usually is. Quick weight losses for instance often lead to a yoyo-effect where people start losing weight but then regain all the weight they lost (and sometimes even more).
- Look for sponsored content and ads in health claims.



Health/Medical Activity 5 - Habits Uncovered Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help you understand your daily habits, lifestyle preferences, and overall well-being. Your answers will offer insights into areas where you might want to make changes to improve your health and quality of life. Please answer all questions honestly—there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

Daily Habits and Nutrition

1. At what time after waking up do you eat your first meal?
2. What do you usually eat for breakfast?
3. How many meals do you eat per day? At what times?
4. Is your eating mindful, or is your attention often elsewhere (e.g., talking to a friend, watching TV, reading on the internet)?
5. How often do you eat fast food or other unhealthy snacks?
6. Do you drink sugary drinks during the day? If so, how much?
7. On average, how much water do you drink each day?
8. What is your main meal of the day? At what time do you usually eat it?
9. When do you eat your last meal?
10. Do you have regular meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner)?

Physical Activity and Health

1. How many hours a day do you spend on physical activity?
2. What type of physical activity do you do most often? (e.g., home workouts, gym, swimming, outdoor activities)
3. Do you participate in sports activities or organized training? (Yes/No)
4. Do you find time each day for physical activity? (Yes/No)
5. How many hours a night do you typically sleep?
6. How often do you have difficulty sleeping?

Technology and Leisure

1. How many hours a day do you spend in front of a screen (phone, computer, TV)?
2. How often do you use social media?
3. Do you compare yourself to others on social media? (Yes/No)
4. Do you feel pressure to look or act a certain way because of social media? (Yes/No)
5. Do you have a hobby or interest that you enjoy? If yes, how much time per week do you devote to it?
6. How often do you take time to relax or unwind?

Emotional Well-being and Social Connections

1. How often do you experience negative emotions such as sadness, anger, or frustration?
2. Do you feel stressed because of school/work? (Yes/No)
3. Do you think you handle stress well? (Yes/No)
4. Do you feel overloaded with responsibilities? (Yes/No)
5. Do you feel that you have support from family and friends? (Yes/No)
6. Do you feel accepted by your peers? (Yes/No)
7. Do you have someone with whom you can talk frankly about problems? (Yes/No)
8. How often do you meet with friends outside of school/work?
9. How often do you participate in volunteer or community activities?
10. How often do you experience moments when you feel happy and satisfied?
11. How would you rate your well-being on a scale of 1 to 10?

Health-Related Behaviors

1. Do you smoke cigarettes or use e-cigarettes? (Yes/No)
2. How often do you consume alcohol?
3. Have you ever tried drugs? (Yes/No)
4. Do you think you have a healthy balance between your personal life and school/work? (Yes/No)

Personal Development and Goals

1. Are you interested in your personal development? (Yes/No)
2. Do you have a goal that you are working towards? (Yes/No)
3. Do you feel that you have control over your life? (Yes/No)
4. Do you have difficulty expressing your emotions? (Yes/No)



Health/Medical Activity 6 - Bias Buster Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to help you assess your experiences with weight-related stigma and its impact on various aspects of your life. By reflecting on these questions, you can gain insights into how often you encounter stigma and how it affects you.

Please indicate how frequently you encounter each situation by selecting the appropriate response:

Response Scale:

- 1 - Never
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Sometimes
- 4 - Often
- 5 - Very Often

1. I feel judged by others because of my weight.
2. I have received negative comments about my weight from family or friends.
3. I avoid social situations due to fear of being judged for my weight.
4. I have experienced discrimination in the workplace or at school due to my weight.
5. Health care workers have treated me differently because of my weight.
6. I feel that media portrayals of body ideals negatively impact my self-esteem.
7. I have encountered jokes or ridicule about my weight.
8. I feel excluded from physical or recreational activities because of my weight.
9. I struggle to find clothes that fit well and feel comfortable, which affects my self-image.
10. I feel that my weight is the primary way others perceive me, limiting their view of who I am.

Now, think about and describe in a few words a situation where you felt discriminated against and felt unable to defend yourself:



Health/Medical Activity 6 - Bias Buster: Role Play guide

Instructions:

- The goal of this role play is to demonstrate potential ways of dealing with discriminating situations and address the feeling of being powerless that often accompanies them.
- Ask the group for volunteers to form a small team to enact the role play. Preferably, the examples chosen to be enacted are based on actual experiences from group members. Alternatively, the group can choose one of the bias scenarios briefly described further below.
- The acting team briefly discusses the situation to be presented.
- The team enacts the example in front of the whole group. At the end of each role play, ask the class to describe the type of discrimination illustrated and to report on the impact of this discrimination on the character(s) involved.
- Brainstorm in the whole group about strategies to bring the situation to a good ending, where the victim of discrimination feels empowered.
- Summarise the responses on a flipchart or white board.
- Ask the acting team to choose a strategy and to enact the whole situation again with the chosen positive ending.

Bias Scenarios

1. Fitness Class Assumption

- Scenario: A new member joins a group fitness class. The instructor greets them but assumes they are inexperienced because of their larger body size, offering them only beginner-level modifications. Meanwhile, another participant who appears thin is given advanced modifications without asking about their fitness level.
- Roles: Instructor, two new members .
- Learning Objective: Explore assumptions made about fitness abilities based on body size.

2. Doctor's Office Dismissal

- Scenario: A patient with obesity visits the doctor to address persistent knee pain. The doctor focuses solely on the patient's weight and advises them to lose weight, ignoring other potential treatments or underlying causes. The patient feels frustrated that her/his concerns aren't taken seriously.
- Roles: Doctor, patient, and another healthcare professional (optional role for nurse or family member).
- Learning Objective: Understand how weight bias in healthcare can lead to oversimplified solutions and neglect of individual needs and to find solutions for making ones voice heard.

3. Grocery Store Judgments

- Scenario: Two friends with different body sizes go grocery shopping. When the larger friend picks up a bag of chips, the other friend makes a joking comment like, "Should you really be eating that?" implying that the larger person should be dieting. The larger friend feels hurt and defensive.
- Roles: Two friends), a passerby who overhears (optional).
- Learning Objective: Highlight how casual, "well-meaning" comments can reinforce harmful assumptions about body size and eating habits.

4. Job Interview Discrimination

- Scenario: A qualified candidate with obesity is interviewing for a job that involves public-facing work. The interviewer asks questions that hint at concern over the candidate's appearance, like, "Our team is very active, and we have an image to maintain. How do you feel about representing our brand?" The candidate feels that their weight is a barrier, despite their qualifications.
- Roles: Interviewer, interviewee, observer (can debrief on body language and questions asked).
- Learning Objective: Identify how weight discrimination can affect professional opportunities and confidence.



5. Family Dinner Pressure

- Scenario: At a family dinner, a relative with obesity is urged by their family to eat smaller portions or try the "healthier" options. Another family member, who is thin, is encouraged to eat more. The relative with obesity feels embarrassed and pressured, even though they didn't ask for advice.
- Roles: Family member with obesity, a well-meaning but biased family member, and a neutral family member who observes the tension.
- Learning Objective: Explore how family dynamics can unintentionally reinforce body size stigma and unhealthy relationships with food.

6. "Good for You" Encouragement

- Scenario: A person with obesity is out jogging in the park when a passerby stops to give them an unsolicited compliment like, "Good for you! Keep it up!" implying that the person's exercise routine is only about losing weight. The jogger feels patronised and frustrated that their activity is viewed through a weight-loss lens.
- Roles: Jogger, passerby, bystander (optional).
- Learning Objective: Examine how seemingly positive comments can carry implicit bias and assumptions about body size and exercise.

7. Group Outing and Eating Judgments

- Scenario: A group of friends goes out to eat at a restaurant. When the larger-bodied person orders dessert, another friend remarks, "I thought you were trying to eat healthier." Meanwhile, the thinner friend orders dessert without comment. The larger friend feels judged for their food choices.
- Roles: Friends (one larger-bodied), waiter (optional).
- Learning Objective: Discuss how food policing based on body size can lead to discomfort and reinforce unhealthy body image perceptions.

8. Weight Loss as a Compliment

- Scenario: A colleague returns to work after time off and has lost weight due to illness or stress. Another coworker enthusiastically compliments them on their "amazing weight loss," assuming it's a positive change. The person feels uncomfortable, as the weight loss wasn't intentional and came from a difficult situation.
- Roles: Colleague who lost weight, well-meaning coworker, bystander (optional).
- Learning Objective: Discuss how assumptions about weight loss being inherently positive can lead to insensitive remarks.

9. School Gym Class Exclusion

- Scenario: In a gym class, a student with obesity is picked last for a team sport, despite being interested in participating. Teammates assume they won't be good at the game because of their weight, and the student feels excluded and discouraged.
- Roles: Student with obesity, gym teacher, classmates.
- Learning Objective: Explore how weight bias can manifest in school settings, particularly in group sports and physical activities.

10. Media Representation Critique

- Scenario: A group of friends watches a fitness advertisement that only features thin, toned people as examples of health. One person points out how this reinforces unrealistic body ideals, but another friend dismisses the comment, saying, "That's just how fitness ads are."
- Roles: Friends (one critical of the ad, one dismissive, one neutral).
- Learning Objective: Examine how media representation can reinforce stereotypes about what "healthy" looks like and dismiss conversations about diversity in body size.


References:

World Health Organization. (n.d.). Obesity and overweight. World Health Organization.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight> (retrieved 07/09/2024)

Acknowledgments:

YOUnite is a project aimed to help adolescents with overweight and obesity in overcoming challenges and improving their employability on the labour market. YOUnite project, supported by the ERASMUS+ programme is seeking to develop a new engaging and self-confidence building training programme to support young obese people to cope with socio-economic difficulties and any other potential source of discrimination.

The partnership is led by ÖSB Consulting (Austria) with partner organisations from Finland (ACR), Hungary (EMINA), Poland (Zdrowy Kształt), and Austria (ÖSB Social Innovation).

 www.younite-erasmus.eu

©YOUnite 2024

The content of this Instruction reflects the views only of the authors and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

YOUnite