Managing Obesity in Youth and Young Adults

Individuals who are obese and have a serious mental illness face high levels of stigma, prejudice and discrimination, leading to several barriers in medical care, employment, housing, and relationships.¹

People with serious mental illness are more likely to be obese.²

In 2015, just 51.6% of high school students aged 14-18 attended physical education classes at least one day a week.

That year, 29.9% of high school students were overweight or obese.³

In the transition to adulthood (ages 18-25)⁴:

Females:
- At age 18-20, 33.9% were overweight or obese. At age 20-25, 39.1% were overweight or obese - a 5.2% increase.

Males:
- At age 18-20, 38% were overweight or obese. At age 20-25, 48.5% were overweight or obese - a 10.5% increase.

Discover ways that providers can Take Action on the next page!
Take Action  
(for medical, mental health, and substance use disorder providers):

- **Incorporate overall health and wellness** as part of the treatment plan, collaborating with primary care providers as needed

- **Deliver cognitive-behavioral and family-based treatments to address problematic weight-related attitudes and behaviors**

- **Address the role of negative emotions** found in people struggling with weight and obesity, such as depressive symptoms

- **Offer a comprehensive set of wellness services to patients that includes a combination of screening and risk assessment, nutritional education and weight management to support healthy habits**

- **Promote and encourage patients to engage in healthy lifestyle activities** (such as exercise and healthy eating) that are backed with peer support

- **Find innovative ways to engage caregivers and family members in a conversation about healthy lifestyle habits**

- **Support workforce training for providers to develop the skills and knowledge needed to work with youth and young adults and their families**

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