

Factors Affecting Obesity That Should Be Considered

PUZZLING PREDICAMENT. Weight is not a behavior. Rather, it almost always is a by-product of a series of behavioral choices. As such, when working with obesity, the focus should *be* on behavior — not weight. Change your behavior, change your weight.

THE TRAPPINGS OF SUCCESS. One of the first tasks when dealing with obesity is to redefine success. Too many individuals (obese or not) view success, with regard to obesity, as a consequence of reaching an "external" goal, for example, losing a predetermined number of pounds or sculpting the body to attain a particular shape. In reality, being successful could be perceived more appropriately as achieving an enhanced level of health or sense of well-being.

OUTSIDE THE BOX. The potential value of being creative with respect to increasing a person's level of daily physical activity should not be underestimated. The underlying goal should be to ascertain how a person could feel and actually be successful and then be as resourceful and creative as possible in making those opportunities become a reality. The most effective tool is often an inventive open mind.

CHANGING APPROACHES. Despite the fact that the obesity epidemic is a full-blown crisis that has been growing exponentially during the past three decades, the efforts to address it share at least one thing in common — they don't work. In reality, any attempt to provide a viable solution to it will require a new approach, based on new insights. All factors considered, coming to grips with the behavioral basis of obesity offers a very promising way forward.

FAD FASCINATION. If individuals are to make informed choices about their behavior, they need to receive advice and guidance that are based on science. Whatever assistance they are given should never be rooted in some "flavor-of-the-month" trend or craze. Not only will the empty promises attendant to such gimmicks waste their time and drain their wallets, it also can siphon off their resolve.

ONE OF A KIND. Just as two individuals are never exactly the same, the most effective way to treat obesity successfully is not precisely the same from individual to individual. Each intervention should be tailored to meet the unique needs, interests, and goals of a particular person.

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