The role of weight stigma in parental weight talk

“Parental weight talk” is a general term that has been used to describe weight-related communication by parents with their children, for example parents encouraging their children to exercise, eat healthily, or lose weight. Parental weight talk also encompasses the way in which parents talk about the weight of themselves and other individuals, which children are perceptive to.

This review examined the role of weight stigma in parental weight talk, and whether internalised weight bias mediates the relationship between parents’ experiences of weight stigma and weight-based conversations and comments.

The study surveyed 453 parent participants to explore the topic of parental communication and comments around weight. Data was collected via an online survey. The survey included questions/scoring systems surrounding weight-related and health-related conversations, weight bias internalisation, and weight comments about themselves and others.

Overall, the results of the study found that weight stigma was indirectly associated with greater frequency of weight-based conversations and comments about oneself and others - via parents' internalised weight bias.