

# Addressing Weight Bias: Improving Patient Engagement & Retention

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Addressing weight bias is essential in clinical development. Weight stigma in healthcare creates barriers to care, undermines health outcomes, and discourages patient engagement – including participation in clinical trials.

When surveying U.S. adults, **90%** feel that weight bias exists, and **43%** report they have experienced it.

With informed trial design and operations, we can improve enrollment and retention. Obesity affects over 1 billion adults globally, making this a critical health challenge. Understanding and eliminating weight bias is key to optimizing care and advancing clinical research.

## What are the Patients Saying?

### Weight Bias in Healthcare

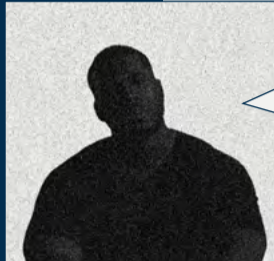
- There are innumerable reports available in blogs and forums, all with individuals sharing the impact of weight bias on their health care.
- Patients living with obesity often internalize the biases they experience, leading to decreased self-esteem and a reluctance to engage further with the healthcare system.
- This emotional toll can contribute to mental health challenges and poorer health behaviors, such as binge eating, increased overall food consumption, and decreased physical activity.



*"As a really fat man, doctors tend to ignore other causes of issues and focus on the fat being the cause. I get that my weight isn't healthy and may be contributing, but it's not always the fat's fault... I feel like my doctor judges me even more. Every time I leave the office I always feel so bad about myself."*



*"Honestly, the majority of health professionals will not look past your fatness to seek other issues that should be addressed."*



*"I'm 24 years old and I'm 5'4, 210 lbs. Every time I go for a general check up my doctor always seems to focus on my weight. It's to the point where I keep rescheduling because I'm tired of being told to lose weight."*



## Weight Bias in Healthcare

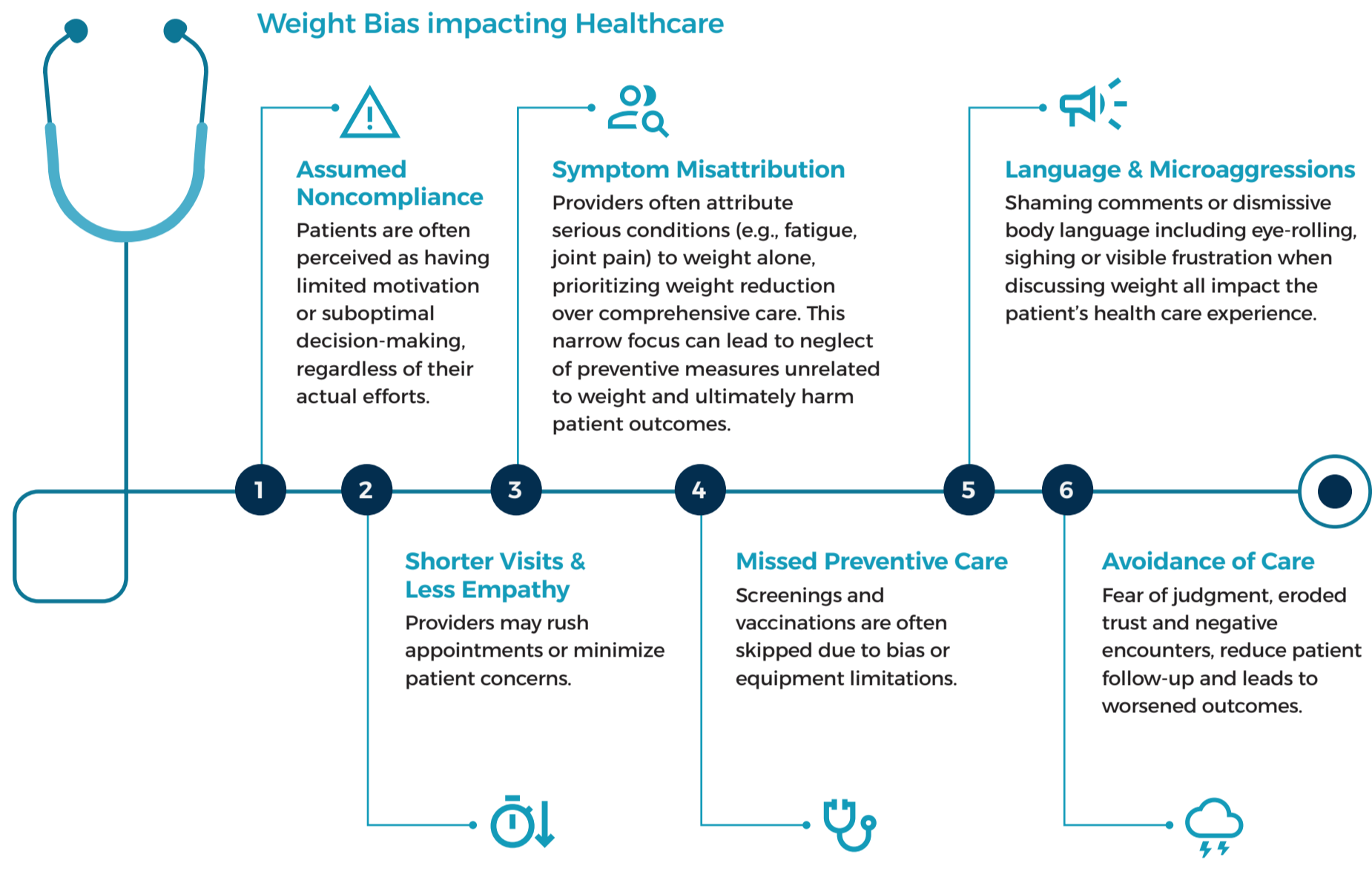
### The Impact on Patient Experience

People with living with obesity report experiencing discrimination at work and in healthcare. A foundational study reported that:

**24%** of nurses reported that they felt "repulsed" by patients who were obese

**12%** reported that they did not want to touch these patients.

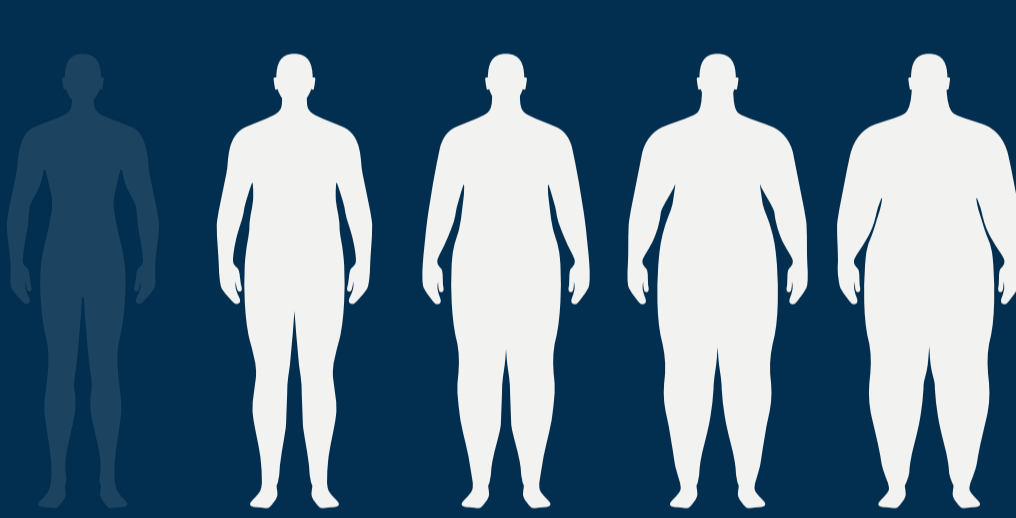
### Weight Bias impacting Healthcare



## Impact on Patient Engagement

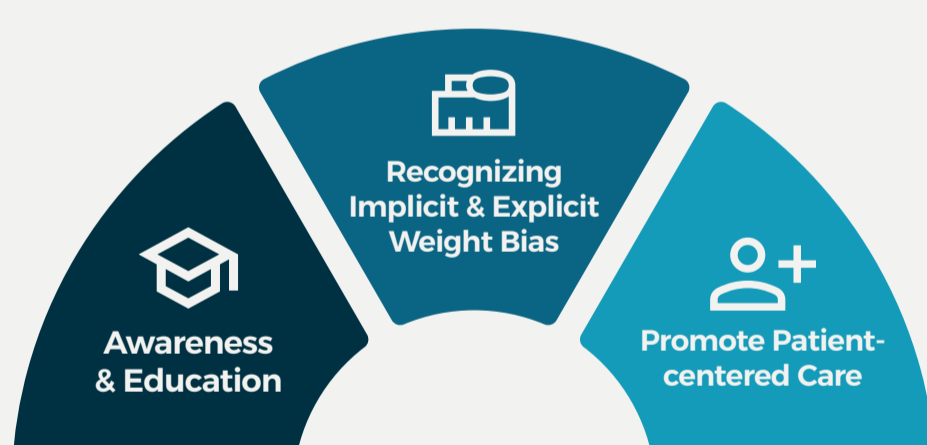
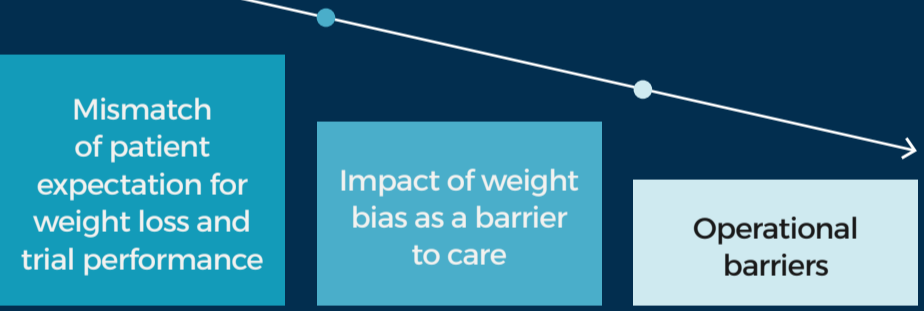
### Where We Fall Short on Body Diversity

- There is a systemic underrepresentation of people with obesity in clinical trials.
- Researchers exclude participants above a specific BMI, fail to recruit or retain people with obesity, fail to report obesity rates in study samples, or fail to perform relevant sub-analyses.
- This systemic oversight limits the generalizability of clinical trial outcomes.
- Even if enrolled, retention is a critical challenge.



### Drop Out Rate in Weight Loss Trials

- Patients may go to a trial expecting rapid weight loss and grow frustrated if progress is slow or doesn't happen, which is often pronounced in trials with a placebo arm.
- The impact of how physicians treat a person at the site is a significant factor in both a logistical and operational trial aspects.



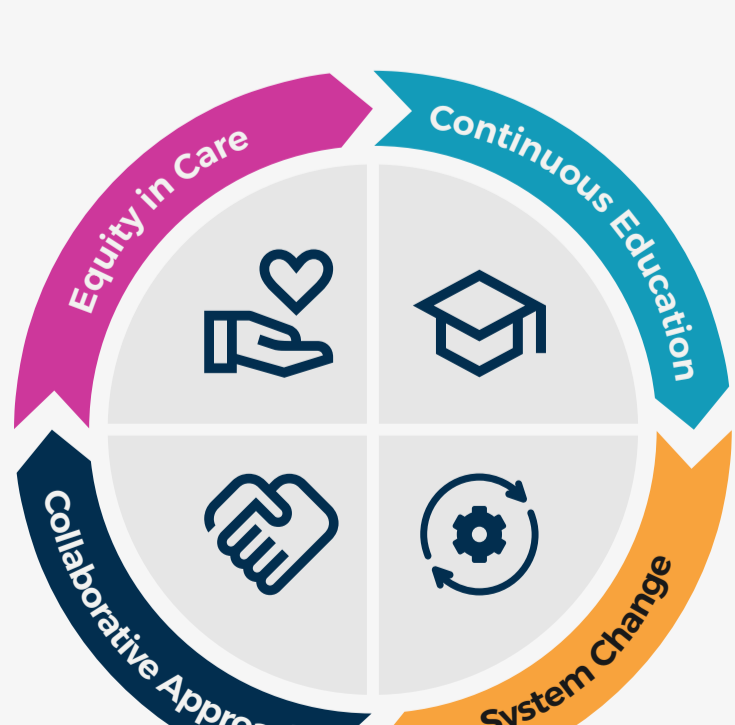
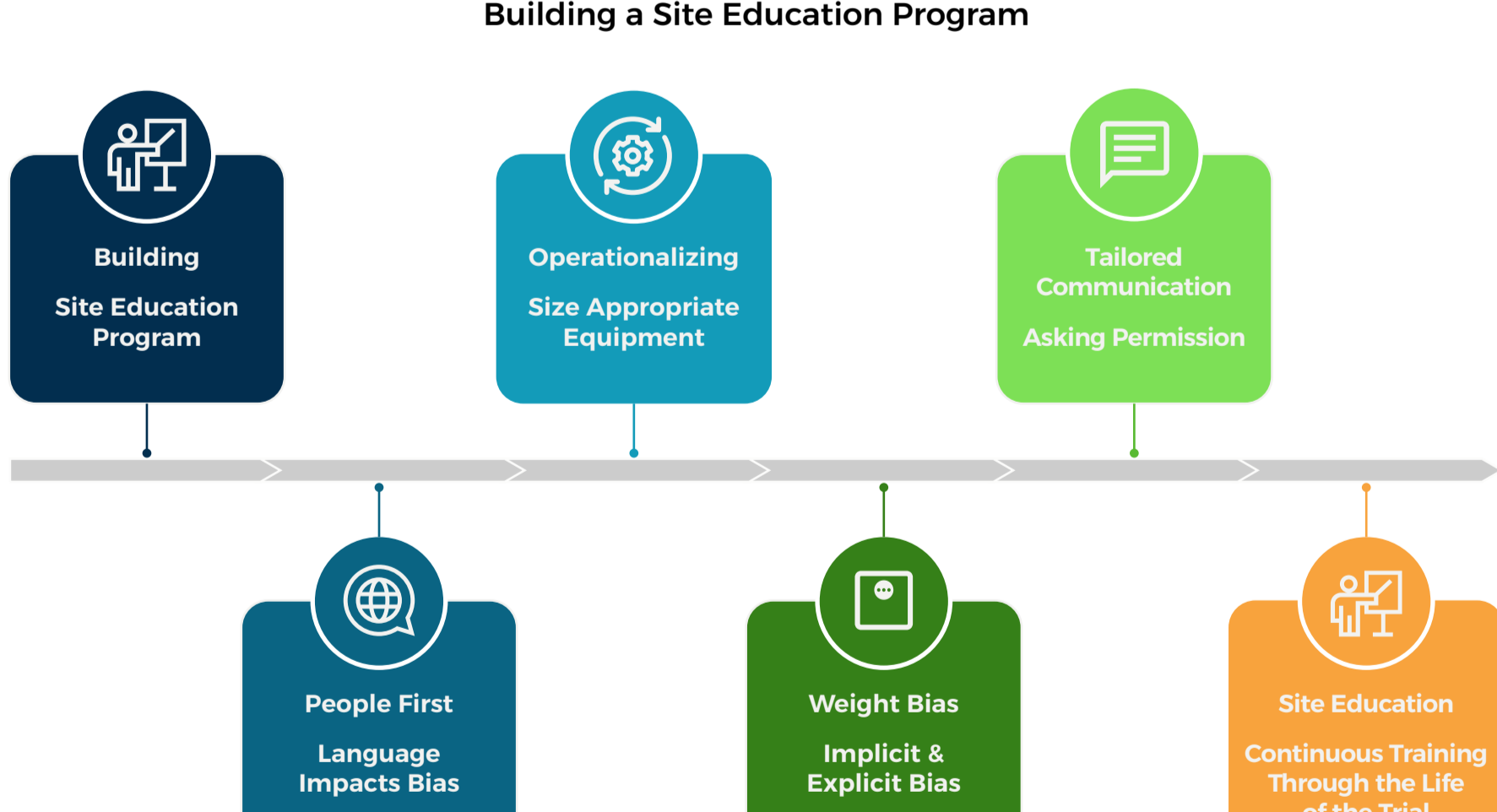
## Worldwide Has the Expertise to Mitigate Weight Bias in Clinical Trials

Worldwide implements weight bias training at the outset of a trial, which is reinforced throughout the trial life cycle, focusing on awareness and empathy for all CRA, CRCs, Pls, and other professionals.

## Creating an Inclusive Environment at Worldwide – First Steps

- Identify bias in ourselves & our environment.
- Reduce bias for all patient interactions.
- Develop best practices for unbiased data analysis & reporting.
- Practice role-playing exercises with scenarios, feedback, and discussion.

### Building a Site Education Program



## Doing Better

### Addressing weight bias will

- Improve patient engagement
- Increase retention
- Deliver better health outcomes
- Engage patients, investigators, research staff, and sponsors in creating a stigma-free healthcare environment and developing local policies and procedures to promote inclusivity

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