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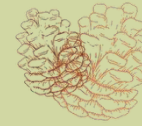
Learning Modules for Health Professional Programs on
Weight Stigma and Eating Disorders

Thompson-Okanagan Teaching and Learning
Conference, TRU, May 14, 2025

*presented by Dr. Sally Stewart, PhD, UBCO
Faculty of Health and Social Development*



Presenter Disclosure



Managing Bias

Presenter: Sally Stewart, Faculty

- No disclosures to report
- Funding made available through UBC
- TLEF Grant

- All content developed as part of this program was reviewed for potential bias by the members of the program planning committee
- Relationships have not affected choices in developing content.
- Financial relationships are unrelated to presentation.



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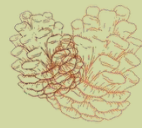
Continuing Professional Development

Faculty of Medicine

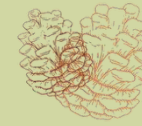
Learning Outcomes

- **1. Understand** the need for comprehensive ED education in healthcare profession programs in higher education.
- **2. Discuss** how e-modules can effectively increase overall knowledge of ED's and weight stigma in health professionals through efficient presentation of high yield, accessible information.
- **3. Determine** how integration of quality ED education into health profession programs would improve access to treatment and encourage early intervention.





The Research Team



Students

Faculty

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Jill Gerlof

Dennis Jasper

Dr. Jamie Piercy

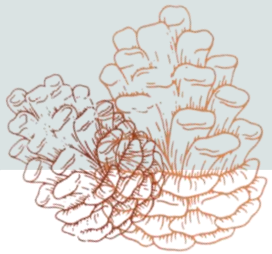
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Lakoda Thomas

Dr. Maya Libben

Dr. Sally Stewart

Dr. Sarah Purcell



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Nursing**

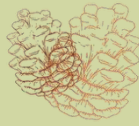
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Psychology

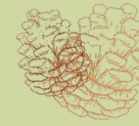
Why is this project necessary?

1. Overall increase in the prevalence of ED
2. Weight stigma and bias
3. Knowledge gap in health professional curriculum programs





Background



 **National Library of Medicine**
National Center for Biotechnology Information



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[J Adolesc Health. 2022 Jan;70\(1\):42-47. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.09.025. Epub 2021 Oct 22.](#)

Acute Care Visits for Eating Disorders Among Children and Adolescents After the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Alène Toulany ¹, Paul Kurdyak ², Astrid Guttman ³, Thérèse A Stukel ⁴, Longdi Fu ⁵, Rachel Strauss ⁵, Lisa Fiksenbaum ⁶, Natasha R Saunders ³

Affiliations  expand

PMID: 34690054 PMCID: PMC8530790 DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.09.025

Free PMC article

Abstract

Purpose: Anecdotal reports suggest a significant increase in acute care visits for eating disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed to explore the perspectives and experiences of individuals with eating disorders, their families and health professionals: systematic review and thematic synthesis.

Review

Current eating disorder healthcare services – the perspectives and experiences of individuals with eating disorders, their families and health professionals: systematic review and thematic synthesis

Gemma Johns, Bridget Taylor, Ann John and Jacinta Tan

Background

Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of mental disorders and a high incidence of morbidity, but if diagnosed and treated promptly individuals can benefit from full recovery. However, there are numerous problems at the healthcare interface (i.e. primary and secondary care) for eating disorders. It

these papers, three dominant themes were identified, with additional subthemes. These included: 'the help-seeking process at primary care'; 'expectations of care and appropriate referrals' and 'opposition and collaboration in the treatment of and recovery from eating disorders'.

Conclusions

 **Government of Canada** **Gouvernement du Canada**

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> [Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada: Research, Policy and Practice](#)

> [Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada, Vol 40, No 11/12, November/December 2020](#)

Original quantitative research – Discrimination in the health care system among higher-weight adults: evidence from a Canadian national cross-sectional survey

Table of Contents

Next 

 ; Ismael Foroughi, PhD  1;

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada

[Download in PDF format \(572 kB, 7 pages\)](#)

[org/10.24095/hpcdp.40.11/12.01](#)

(Gupta et al., 2020; Johns et al., 2019; Toulaney et al., 2021)

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to assess the preliminary efficacy of an online evidence-based education platform (called 'EMPHASize') on knowledge and perceptions of EDs presentations and weight bias among university students enrolled in health-focused courses and health profession programs.

Study Aim:

To develop, implement and evaluate educational modules to increase knowledge regarding EDs, such as associated stereotypes, nuances of presentation, their harm, and impacts of weight bias. The aim of developing these modules is to improve awareness to enhance early access to effective care through education for healthcare providers.

Eating disorders **do not discriminate**, they affect all genders, ages, ethnicities, SES, and **are inclusive of the weight spectrum, despite** what may be perpetuated by **stereotypes** in healthcare and beyond.



The Modules



Module A

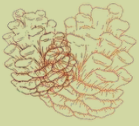
Psychological Aspects of Eating Disorders, Weight Stigma & Bias

Purpose: To provide relevant information addressing the stigma, stereotypes and biases prevalent within the acknowledgement, diagnosis, and treatment of eating disorders

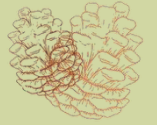
Module B

Clinical and Health Issues of Eating Disorders

Purpose: To provide relevant information addressing the types of eating disorders, clinical markers and diagnostic tools prevalent within the acknowledgement, diagnosis, and treatment of eating disorders.



The Making of EMPHASize



Identify learning objectives

Identify knowledge to be included in modules based on gaps

1

Review Literature

Compilation of recent advancements and updated literature

2

Design modules

Transform knowledge to learning modules suited for multidisciplinary learners

3

Implement into courses

Recruit participants to review modules and collect data

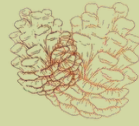
4

Data analysis and dissemination

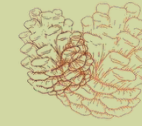
Summarize results, modify, and share

5





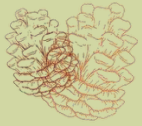
Methods



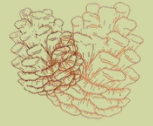
Survey based mixed methods design

Quantitative—perceived knowledge gain, daily applicability, professional applicability, learner experience

Qualitative—personal and professional applicability, prompts for further module development/suggested edits



Results: Demographics



$N = 424$

Age $M = 20$ $SD = 3.33$

Undergraduates ($n = 376$)

Students training in health professions ($n = 195$)

Students in unrelated disciplines ($n = 181$)

Faculty ($n = 12$)

Gender

Female
($n = 262$)

Male
($n = 131$)

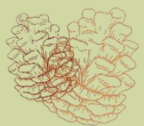
Non-Binary
($n = 7$)

Ethnicity

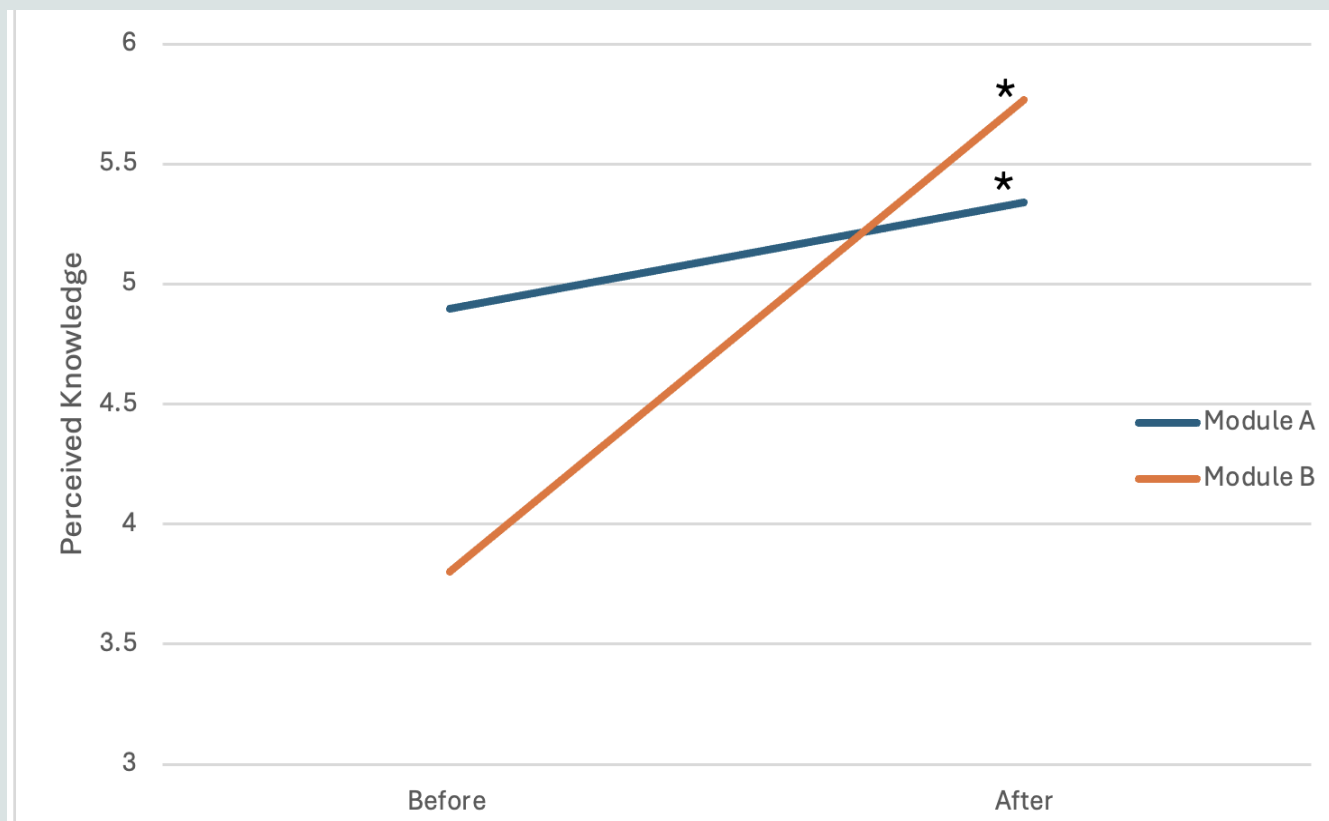
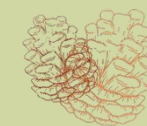
White
($n = 246$)

Asian
($n = 69$)

Other
($n = 77$)

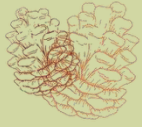


Results: Perceived Knowledge Gain

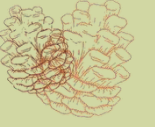


There was a significant change in participants' perceived knowledge for module A ($n = 288$; $t(287) = -3.60$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-\infty, -0.22]$, $d = 0.21$; one sided) **and module B** ($n = 260$; $t(259) = -17.06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-\infty, -1.78]$, $d = 1.06$; one sided)

There was a greater change in perceived knowledge after reading module B (clinical manifestations/presentations of EDs).



Results: Perceived Usefulness



Personal daily life

Module A

$n = 217$
 $M = 6.00$
 $SD = 1.17$

Module B

$n = 209$
 $M = 6.08$
 $SD = 1.15$

Were modules most
applicable in a
daily life or healthcare
setting?

Healthcare

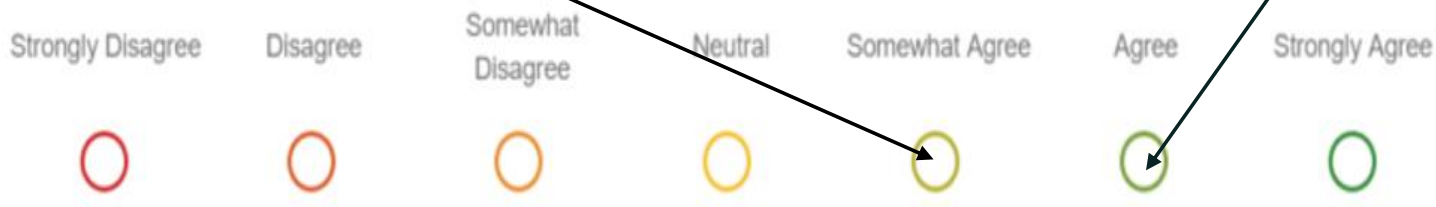
Healthcare professional role

Module A

$n = 279$
 $M = 5.19$
 $SD = 1.3$

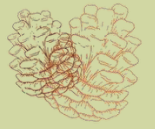
Module B

$n = 273$
 $M = 5.19$
 $SD = 1.3$

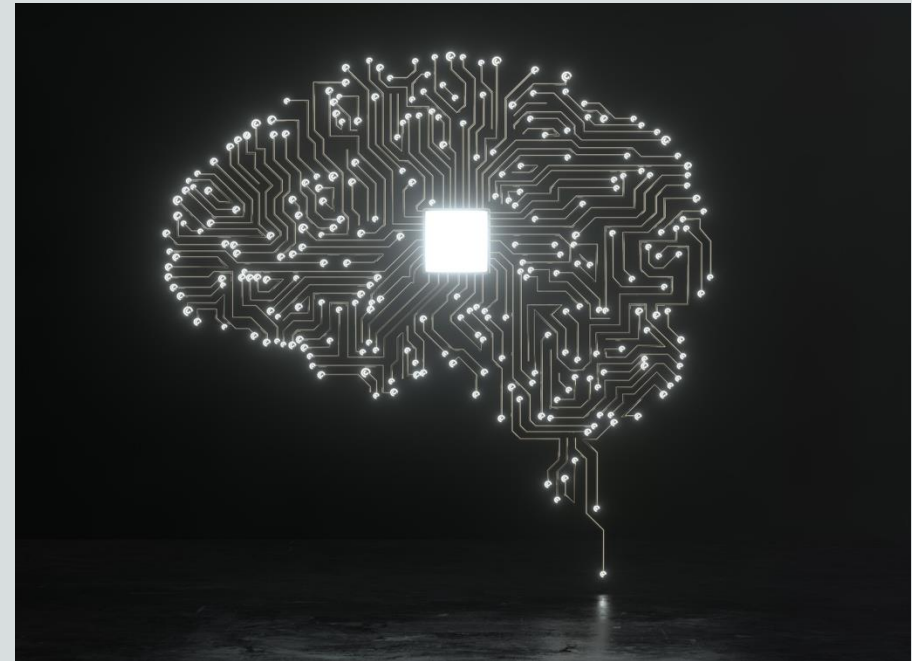


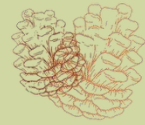


Results: Neurotransmitter Module

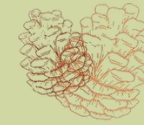


- In addition to the Psychological Aspects Module (A) and the Clinical Aspects Module (B), a later module on the role of neurotransmitters in eating disorders was developed.
- Pilot testing of this module shows results congruent with data from testing of modules A and B, with increased perceived knowledge gain and usefulness.
- 2 other modules have been developed; Intuitive Eating, and a modified version of the first 2 modules for general university student awareness





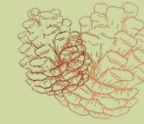
Discussion



- Existing literature shows that a lack of education on EDs and weight stigma/bias in healthcare providers is a significant barrier to accessing care
- E-modules are effective at increasing healthcare provider knowledge of EDs and weight stigma with efficient, high yield information
- **Next steps underway:** currently collecting feedback regarding the general student module and from practicing health care professionals on the suite of the 4 modules developed
- **In the future:** explore the effectiveness of e-modules on additional topics relevant to the field (i.e. physical activity, EDs and neurodiversity, EDs in LGBTQIA2S+ population)



Future Directions



Implement the modules in diverse health related curriculums across UBC and other campuses; provide access to the general student module through student campus wellbeing resources



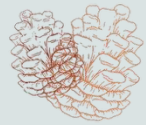
Offer modules as a stand-alone or combined learning (pick and choose) allowing for a tailored experience that fits the unique needs of various health professions.

Implementation of continuing education material/credits for professionals.

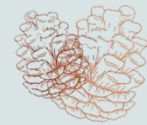


Dissemination of modules to the public through a central website; modify modules targeted for specific health professions (e.g., dentistry).

Thank You



Follow the QR code below to view the 1st
2 modules. Please share broadly!



Contact: sally.willis-stewart@ubc.ca

References

1. Gupta, N., Bombak, A., Foroughi, I., & Riediger, N. (2020). Original quantitative research – Discrimination in the health care system among higher-weight adults: evidence from a Canadian national cross-sectional survey. *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada*, 40(11). <https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.40.11/12.01>
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