Obesity is a whole of society challenge. It is complex, sometimes contentious, and conflicted, and no one has all the answers. Considering the current evidence and the range of perspectives around obesity, the following principles have been developed. These principles are important to help maintain a respectful, balanced, and successful conversation.

- **Drivers of obesity**: There are different drivers and causes of obesity. Many incorrectly assume that it is only about personal responsibility and behaviour change. There needs to be recognition of the strong social, genetic, biological, and environmental influences which are beyond people’s control.

- **Stigma**: Weight and obesity stigma and bias is harmful, should be actively discouraged and steps taken to minimise risks/impacts. Obesity stigma is associated with considerable adverse physical and mental health consequences, including increased depression and anxiety, disordered eating, increased feelings of shame and decreased self-esteem. It also discourages people from seeking the appropriate care they may need for addressing their weight issues.

- **Individual risks**: Individual circumstances around contributing factors, timing and duration of weight gain are diverse. There is no one approach to weight/risk management that will work for everyone. Not all people living with obesity will have health risks, however on a population level, higher adiposity (particularly central) increases risk for a wide range of diseases and disability.

- **Care**: People’s individual wishes (or wishes as parents) and options for support in managing weight and/or behaviours must be respected in a person-centred approach. The challenges around weight management long term should be acknowledged to avoid blame and shame related to weight regain and/or unmet expectations.

- **Lived experience**: The lived experience (from a variety of perspectives) is essential to consider, include and protect.

- **Dialogue**: There is no one cause, solution or perspective for obesity and no one has all the answers. We need a range of experts and a respectful dialogue around the challenge that is professional and informed by evidence. We should work together to increase public understanding and reduce confusion, misinformation, and fear.

W: http://www.obesityaustralia.org/
E: the-collective.info@sydney.edu.au
https://www.facebook.com/ActionOnObesity
https://twitter.com/ActionOnObesity
https://www.linkedin.com/company/actiononobesity