

WEIGHT LOSS THAT WORKS...
FOR **YOU!**

SIX

FACTORS TO

FIIT

**Get Your
Personalized
Plan.**

Start Embracing
the Healthier
Habits that Fit
Your Life.

Robert F. Kushner, MD & Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN
with Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN



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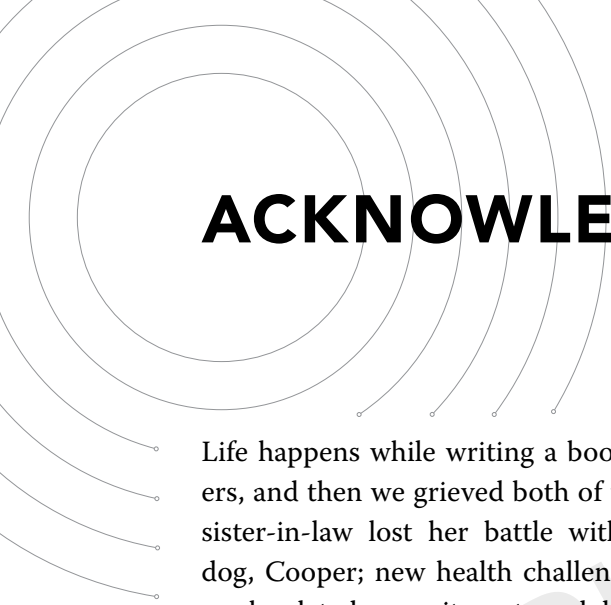
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Life happens while writing a book: we cared for our aging mothers, and then we grieved both of their losses 3 weeks apart; a dear sister-in-law lost her battle with dementia; we lost our loving dog, Cooper; new health challenges arose; and we faced ongoing work-related commitments and deadlines. Yet we also had so many life blessings to be thankful for: the celebration of 41 years of marriage; a newfound healthy obsession with ballroom dancing; a loving family that kept us grounded; grandchildren (who seemed just to have been born) turning 8, 5, and 2; and a tight group of close friends. We are thankful for the many blessings that helped us stay focused while bringing this book to life.

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With the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, we knew *Six Factors to Fit* found the right publisher; the Publications, Resources,

and Products team at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics all demonstrated perseverance and patience in helping to seal the deal and nurture the book along the way to its final publication and release. We owe a debt of gratitude to the team of dedicated peer reviewers who helped to improve the final manuscript with their attention to detail and passionate desire to get it right. We are thankful for the talents of Morgan Krehbiel, our book designer, and for Gwen Burda, for her skills in copy editing.

Our esteemed contributor, registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) Dawn Jackson Blatner, provided her thoughtful review of the manuscript and expert edits of everything nutrition-related (and more) and created superb meal-planning content. Readers are sure to benefit from Dawn's creative and practical solutions to finding the fun in healthy eating. Thanks also go to our daughter, Sarah Ahto, RDN, for sharing her ideas about healthy food products and meal planning—ideas that have found their way onto our kitchen table and into this book. We are indebted to Brad Saks, health psychologist, for his review of all psychology-related content and his smart edits. Brad's ability to explain complex psychological and emotional issues in simple terms, without question, improved the book. Dawn and Brad, who worked alongside Robert years ago, have been in both of our lives ever since we met, and we value our enduring friendships as well as our collegial relationships. We are also grateful to Melissa Mellady, exercise specialist, for her review and helpful editing of the exercise-related content. Melissa's insightful tips are sure to help readers find enjoyment in moving more.

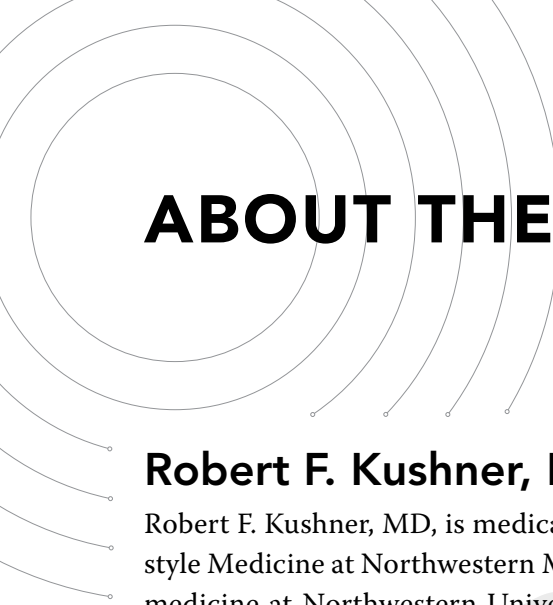
Robert F. Kushner, MD, and Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN

I owe particular thanks to the thousands of patients I have had the gratification of knowing and helping over my almost four-decade career, first at the University of Chicago and then at Northwestern University. *Six Factors to Fit* was born out of the multitude of personal stories and life events that these patients shared with me. I am also in debt to all of my friends and colleagues at the Northwestern Medicine Center for Lifestyle Medicine who share my passion and commitment to providing exceptional care to patients who struggle with weight management. I am also grateful to the hundreds of colleagues across the country and around the world who helped shape my thinking and approach to the challenging problem of weight management.

Robert F. Kushner, MD

I thank Robert F. Kushner, MD, and Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN, for inviting me to contribute to this book. Robert has been my mentor in lifestyle medicine and personalized patient care for more than a decade, and he has taught me to use science, listening, empathy, and compassion when working with clients. I don't believe in diets, but I do believe in helping people develop better habits for a healthier, happier, more energetic life. *Six Factors to Fit* presents a habits-based, individualized approach to weight management, not a diet. This book can help people get to know themselves, explore new ways of thinking, and use personalized strategies to lose weight, instead of generic advice. Most important, it can help people feel better.

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert F. Kushner, MD

Robert F. Kushner, MD, is medical director of the Center for Lifestyle Medicine at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago; professor of medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine; past president of The Obesity Society; author or editor of 12 books, 58 book chapters, and more than 200 articles on overweight, obesity, and nutrition; a founder of the American Board of Obesity Medicine, which certifies physicians in the care of patients with obesity; and an advisory board member of Livongo Health, pioneer in Applied Health Signals, empowering people with chronic conditions to live healthier lives. As a past member of the National Board of Directors of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), he remains dedicated to supporting the OAC's mission to fight weight bias and provide evidence-based education on obesity and its treatments.

Kushner is a passionate clinician, educator, researcher, and advocate in helping to improve the lives of those affected by being overweight or having obesity. He is recipient of the Clinician of the Year Award (2016) and the Atkinson-Stern Award for Distinguished Public Service (2011) given by The Obesity Society, and he was awarded a National Honors Award Honorary Membership (2010) by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association). As an international obesity expert, he lectures worldwide, teaching health care professionals about the latest trends in obesity care. Nationally, Kushner speaks regularly on obesity, lifestyle medicine, and nutrition at professional society conferences, educational symposia, and government agency meetings and to advisory boards and consumer groups.

After completing his residency in internal medicine at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Kushner completed a postgraduate fellowship in clinical nutrition at the University of Chicago Hospitals and received a master's degree in clinical nutrition and nutritional biology at the University of Chicago.

Kushner is coeditor of multiple professional texts, including *Obesity Medicine: An Issue of Medical Clinics of North America*; *Lifestyle Medicine: A Manual for Clinical Practice*; *Treatment of the Obese Patient*, second edition; *Nutrition and Bariatric Surgery*; and the *Practical Manual of Clinical Obesity*. He is also coauthor of *Counseling Overweight Adults: The Lifestyle Patterns Approach and Toolkit*; *Fitness Unleashed! A Dog and Owner's Guide to Losing Weight and Gaining Health Together*; and *Dr. Kushner's Personality Type Diet*.

Examples of Kushner's media coverage as an obesity expert and author include coverage in the *New York Times*; *USA Today*; the *Wall Street Journal*; the *Washington Post*; *Good Morning America*; *ABC World News*; *Weekend Today*; *Health*; *O, The Oprah Magazine*; *People*; *US News and World Report*; and WebMD.com.

Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN

Nancy Kushner is a nurse practitioner, a former health content writer for a weight-loss website, and coauthor of *Counseling Overweight Adults: The Lifestyle Patterns Approach and Toolkit* and *Dr. Kushner's Personality Type Diet*. Through her work, Kushner has been able to combine two life passions: health writing and spreading the word about the power of a healthy lifestyle.

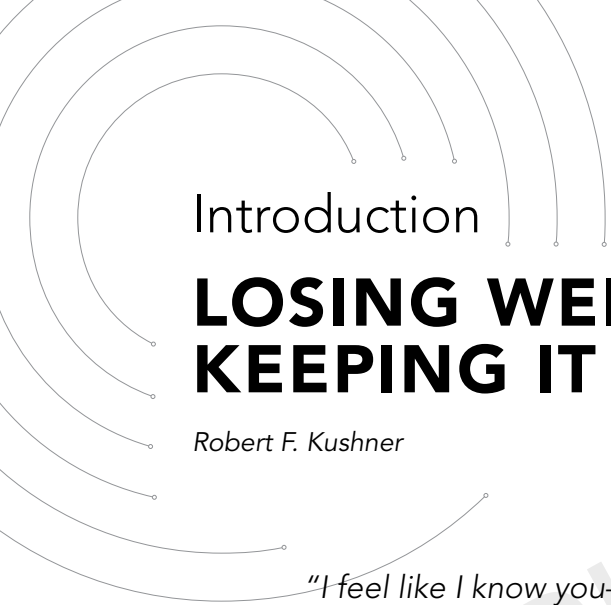
Nancy and Robert Kushner live in the Chicago metro area, where they can be found together walking the talk of a healthy lifestyle—walking their dog, Maggie; taking weekly ballroom dance lessons; doing bachata, rumba, and triple swing dance performances; and engaging in atypical Saturday-night activities, such as playing indoor sand volleyball or learning how to fence with their Fun Club social group of almost 35 years.

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN

Dawn Jackson Blatner is a registered dietitian nutritionist with more than 15 years of experience working with clients to help them lose weight and supercharge their health. She is a recipient of Lifetime Television's Remarkable Woman Award for her work in the field of nutrition and was a national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for 9 years. She is a coauthor of *Counseling Overweight Adults: The Lifestyle Patterns Approach and Toolkit* (with the Kushners) and the author of two award-winning books: *The Flexitarian Diet* (ranked a top plant-based diet by *US News and World Report*) and *The Superfood Swap*. She recently starred in (and won!) the hit prime-time ABC television show *My Diet Is Better Than Yours*.

As a certified specialist in sports dietetics, Jackson Blatner is in her 10th season as the nutrition consultant for the Chicago Cubs baseball team. She is the creator of the *Nutrition WOW* blog and weekly eblast, which was ranked the top nutrition blog by *Health* magazine. She is a trusted expert, appearing regularly in media outlets, such as *The Today Show* and *Good Morning America*, is a celebrity diet consultant for *People* magazine, and is on the advisory board of *Shape Magazine*.

When she's not traveling the world sharing her nutrition philosophy, you can find Jackson Blatner in her hometown of Chicago at farmers' markets, in the kitchen testing out new recipes, or jogging to pop music. She has an awesome stepson and lives with her handsome husband, Chris, and shih tzu, Mr. Nuts.

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Introduction

LOSING WEIGHT AND KEEPING IT OFF

Robert F. Kushner

*"I feel like I know you—even if I've never met you.
That's because I'm a good listener."*

ROBERT F. KUSHNER, MD

OVER NEARLY FOUR DECADES, I have counseled thousands of people who want to lose weight and get healthier. And I have spent countless hours compassionately listening to my patients, hearing their personal stories and supporting them through their weight-loss journeys. Though each person, just like you, was a unique individual—with differences in looks, where they lived, how they were raised, who their family was, and what they did for a living—their struggles with losing weight shared similar and familiar themes.

Going On and Off Diets

The themes look something like this: You decide to try a new diet plan, but since most diets are restrictive and hard to stick to, eventually you stop following the diet. With time, your old habits or patterns of behavior that feel familiar and comfortable creep back into your life. In essence, when you drift back to old habits, you inevitably end up putting weight back on and feeling frustrated. This

backsliding, so common among persons trying to lose weight, used to frustrate me too—until I discovered that the same patterns of behavior kept causing the backsliding. People seldom, if ever, learned new healthy habits from restrictive diets.

With this new insight, I found that helping people regain control of their weight became easier, as long as I could identify which behavior patterns were sabotaging their weight loss success. As the saying goes, “Once you name it, you can tame it.” This is where I have spent the bulk of my practice—in helping people just like you learn how to tackle these behaviors head on, shape their lifestyles into healthier ones, and ultimately achieve weight loss that’s sustainable over the long term. I have been studying these “default” behavior patterns of people for most of my career, and through my latest research, I discovered that these behavior patterns cluster into six “factors” that are major barriers to successful weight control. Once you know your factors, I can personalize a plan that will help you lose weight and keep it off.

It’s All About You

You can’t change your age or genetics, but you do have the power to change your lifestyle patterns or habits, which are often the most important factors for successful weight loss and maintenance.

If you’re like many people wanting to lose weight, you’re probably looking for a way forward—something that will work specifically for you—to help support your success with losing weight and keeping it off. Different from the one-size-fits-all diets you’ve tried in the past, the *Six Factors to Fit* program offers you a unique approach that’s based on *your* individual needs.

I have developed a tool that within 10 minutes gets to the heart of why you’ve been struggling with weight loss. Your score will reveal what’s been tripping you up, and then you’re guided through a program that targets your issues to help you take off the weight. It all begins with getting to know *you*.

As with any weight-loss program you are considering, you’re

probably wondering what the program is and whether it is something that you can follow. Know that there are no gimmicks with the *Six Factors to Fit* program, and it is not a restrictive diet that you go on and off. Instead it's a lifelong weight-management and healthy-living program all in one, personalized just for you. Here are a few highlights that distinguish the *Six Factors to Fit* program from the more familiar, one-dimensional, food-focused diets:

- *Six Factors to Fit* addresses all aspects of how you approach and live *your* life that can get in the way of losing weight and keeping it off (eg, unhealthy eating, inactivity, insufficient sleep, low energy, unhealthy stress response, neglected self-care, ineffective coping skills, a poor body image, or feeling stigmatized by your weight).
- *Six Factors to Fit* uses a progressive approach, taking *your* current diet and habits and guiding you with nudges and tweaks to make your lifestyle healthier. Think gradual changes in eating and living that are easier to implement and stick with.
- *Six Factors to Fit* shows you how to build your own healthy-eating meal plan based on *your* personal tastes and food preferences—a plan that can be altered whenever boredom sets in or your needs change.
- *Six Factors to Fit* offers you the latest breakthroughs in the changing fields of lifestyle medicine, nutrition, exercise science, psychology, biology, and behavior change and tailors them to *your* personal factors to support your success in losing weight and keeping it off.

With this program, you will:

- form habits that stick;
- make healthy eating the easiest choice at home and on the go;
- feel full on fewer calories;

4 SIX FACTORS TO FIT

- incorporate satisfying, treat-type foods into your weekly routine;
- build physical activity into your busy life;
- improve your mood;
- boost your energy level;
- better manage your stress;
- be more comfortable with your body; and
- find the fun in healthy living.

As you can see from this list—and this is only a partial list of what you can look forward to—*Six Factors to Fit* isn't a typical diet book, and I'm not your typical physician.

Physician Pioneer

My path to bringing you this program spans my nearly four-decade-long, nontraditional career as a nutrition, weight-management, and lifestyle-medicine physician expert. As a young doctor interested in diet, nutrition, and weight control, I learned that if I wanted to help my patients lose weight and keep it off, merely helping them adjust their carbohydrates, fats, or calories wasn't enough. I also needed to become an expert in helping them take control of other lifestyle factors that affected their weight, including physical activity, behavior change, stress management, and even sleep. While diet books promising one-size-fits-all solutions to losing weight were cropping up, I took an opposite approach. I was paying attention to the different habits causing weight gain that were emerging in my patients and began to create tailored treatment plans to meet the individual needs of each patient.

As a passionate clinician, educator, researcher, and advocate, I have dedicated my career to helping improve the lives of those affected by being overweight or having obesity. Now, with the publication of *Six Factors to Fit*, I can help you too.

What's in It for You

Here's a quick overview to help you get the most out of *Six Factors to Fit*.

Part I: A New Approach to an Old Problem

Chapters 1 through 3 lay the foundation and are best read in sequential order before you begin the program. Rest assured there will be no silly rules to follow or long lists of forbidden foods. You will learn in Chapter 1 how losing weight in a healthy way involves looking at many aspects of your lifestyle and not just the types of foods you eat. In Chapter 2, you will take the Six Factor Quiz, get your scores, and then find out how to interpret your results, prioritize your weight-loss plan, and begin your life-changing program. Once you understand the link between how your habits and stressors can trigger what contributes to your weight gain, you can start the *Six Factors to Fit* program with greater insight and self-empowerment. Chapter 3 offers a review of healthy-lifestyle fundamentals that apply to all factors and ensures that you have all the tools you need to lose weight, keep it off, and adopt a healthy lifestyle for life.

Part II: Your Targeted Treatment Plan

This is where the work of healthy weight loss begins. Based on your Six Factor Quiz results, you will be guided to the specific chapters that are pertinent to your individual needs. So you'll be diving right into targeted strategies that make the most sense for where you need the most help. Based on your personalized plan, you'll learn how to convert your weight-gaining factors into weight-losing habits. Using evidence-based recommendations based on the latest research, Chapters 4 through 9 share the secrets to helping you adopt and sustain behaviors that boost motivation and weight loss, build confidence, and put you back in control of what you thought was uncontrollable.

Part III: Your Successful Lifelong Journey

Here's where you discover exactly what you need to know to **keep weight off long-term**—one of the most challenging aspects of weight loss. In Chapters 10 through 12, you'll learn how to determine your lowest achievable weight, follow key mindset and behavioral strategies that are proven to help you stay motivated and boost success, and tap into a variety of practical resources available to make building your own healthy-eating meal plan easier. The game of keeping weight off really is a team sport. Here you identify the team members, treatment options, and support available to help you the most—especially when the going gets tough. If at any point during the program you want to leap ahead to prepare for the weight-maintenance stage or if you are looking for additional help with meal planning, preventing weight regain, or finding additional resources, be sure to access the useful information in these chapters.

Unique Features of This Book

The unique features of this book include the following:

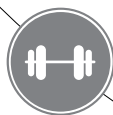
- the Six Factor Quiz—a 10-minute, 27-question, scientifically validated quiz that zeroes in on your weight-gaining factors with laserlike precision and provides a targeted treatment plan
- the Six Factor Bullseye Visual Tool—a tool that helps you visualize which factors need attention, which show room for improvement, and which you have under better control
- Self-Helping Tips—the most important take-home points to remember
- The Doctor Weighs In—empathetic guidance from me, Dr Kushner
- Factor Focus—helpful nuggets of information that shed light on the essence of each of the six factors
- Mindset Matters—suggestions for how to think differently as you approach your personalized program

- Take-Control Action Steps—easy-to-follow, evidence-based steps for each of the six factors that are tailor-made to fit your busy life
- Personal Profiles, Success Checklists, and Frequently Asked Questions to help you get the most out of each of the six factor chapters
- a meal-planning chapter with Dietitian Pro Tips—practical, expert tools and tips for making meal planning easier and finding the fun in a lifetime of healthy eating

Mystery Solved!

The secret to losing weight and keeping it off may be a mystery to you, but it's not for me. It's what I've been helping my patients do every day in my practice for nearly four decades. If you've ever thought that losing weight and keeping it off was unachievable, *Six Factors to Fit* is here to change all that. I'm excited to finally share my insights. As you embark on your *Six Factors to Fit* journey and start embracing the healthier habits that fit your life, I would love to hear from you. Please connect with me through my website (www.drrobertkushner.com), about your experiences. Stay engaged, read my blog, watch my videos, ask questions, get updates, be inspired, and increase your chances of success!

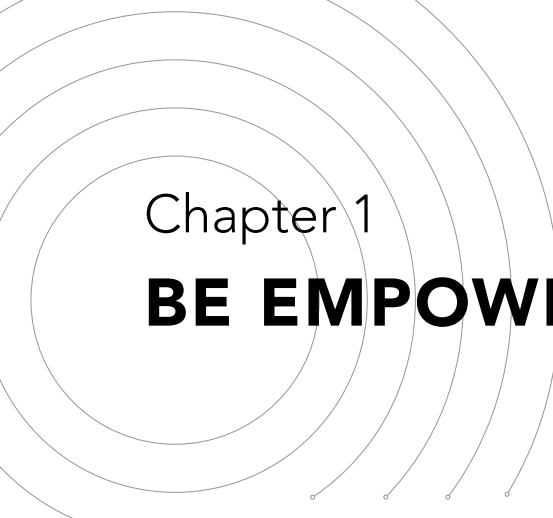
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PART I

A NEW
APPROACH
TO AN OLD
PROBLEM





Chapter 1

BE EMPOWERED!

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED why you haven't been able to lose weight and keep it off? Though your instinct may be to blame yourself for a lack of willpower, the *Six Factors to Fit* program will hopefully convince you otherwise. Dr Kushner's practice focuses on helping people just like you identify and overcome lifestyle-related issues that have led to weight gain and worsening health. We believe that focusing on willpower is the wrong way to think about obtaining improved health, whether you're trying to manage your weight, to eat better, to be more physically active, or to get a restful night's sleep. We live in a time-pressured society in which overeating, underexercising, and fast-paced living are the norm, and in such an environment, willpower just doesn't work very well.

The word *willpower* implies that you have an innate, internal driving force that generates self-discipline and determination and allows you to take on any battle or problem, regardless of the obstacles that fall in your path. It has a kind of "superpower" ring to it: "If I muster all of my inner strength, I can take on the world!" There is also an "all-or-nothing" quality that suggests either you have willpower (you are strong and confident) or you don't (you are weak and lazy). This just is not how real people successfully take control of their weight.

Your Personal Weight Story Matters

You have your own weight story to tell and your own personal relationship with food, physical activity, mindset, and emotions that

form the backdrop of your journey. In the next chapter, you will take our targeted 10-minute quiz, and after taking the quiz you will reflect on your weight story to discover the main challenges you need to address for successful, long-term weight loss.

The key to making changes to help manage your weight is to apply practical and sensible strategies that target those personal challenges. The *Six Factors to Fit* approach involves self-monitoring, increased awareness, adaptive problem-solving and coping techniques, deliberate practice, using prompts, setting realistic goals, and soliciting support from others. These are proven strategies to help you lose weight and feel better—without any need for superpowers!

One of the most appealing aspects of this approach is that it's personalized to you. People desire a personalized experience, whether it's a personalized book or song recommendation on your eReader or music app or a tailored advertisement you receive on your internet browser based on past purchases. Yet when it comes to weight loss, the more typical route is for people to seek out “one-size-fits-all” diet plans.

SELF-HELPING TIP

Whether you try a low-carbohydrate ketogenic diet, “eating clean,” or eliminating all gluten products, restrictive diets will never be the long-term solution to getting your weight under control. These plans don't take into account who you are as a person, how you live your life, the type of eater you are, or how stress affects your weight.

Personalization is not only a buzzword in consumerism and social media, it has also taken hold in medicine. Personalized medicine takes into consideration an individual's personal preferences, values, goals, and beliefs about health. It also reflects the individual's social support network, unique life circumstances, personality, and community in which he or she lives. In short, it provides a treatment plan that is solely tailored to the individual patient. Weight management demands the same personal attention.

How Life Challenges Affect Your Weight

You may wonder how Dr Kushner came to focus his treatment on the individual and target each person's lifestyle-related issues in order to make a difference. Dr Kushner has always been intrigued by hearing his patients recount their life journeys and tell how specific life events shaped their worldviews, health, and body weight. Although life events vary from patient to patient, a number of shared experiences are universally impactful, such as going away to college, getting a job, getting married, raising children, moving to a new home, caring for aging parents, experiencing a death in the family, and a change in one's health status, to name a few. Overlaying these life events are the behavioral, psychological, and social impacts that each of these experiences has on one's lifestyle.

SELF-HELPING TIP

It turns out that although life events are important "markers in time," it is primarily how a person responds to the challenging situations that sends them on a healthy or unhealthy life course.

Let's take starting a new job as an example. You may wonder what starting a new job has to do with managing your weight, but any time your daily routine changes, it can affect your eating, activity, and sleeping habits, as well as how you cope with stress, and this can ultimately affect your weight. A common feature of most new jobs is that they demand extra time and energy. One person may cope with the stress in positive and constructive ways, such as seeking out support and guidance, using adaptive problem-solving skills, getting a full night's sleep, asking for help from a significant other to assist with household responsibilities, batch cooking on the weekends, bringing lunch to work, and taking 10-minute walking breaks when possible. In contrast, another person may feel overwhelmed by the new responsibility, not ask for help, be unable to

shut down when it's time for bed, skip meals, and then overeat, choosing unhealthy food and spending extra time in sedentary activities. The first person feels energized and in control, whereas the second person feels stressed, exhausted, and out of control. The point is that willpower is not what's helping the first person; instead he or she has planned ahead, asked for help, and adopted some key health-promoting strategies.

Though most people fall somewhere between these two examples, this hypothetical contrast serves to illustrate how different coping styles can lay the foundation for different health trajectories. And when similar coping responses are used for other challenging life events, such as having a baby, starting graduate school while keeping your day job, moving to a new home with a long commute, or getting a divorce, you can see how some people might continuously struggle with their weight.

SELF-HELPING TIP

Weight gain can be an unintended consequence of well-meaning (but less helpful) responses to life's challenges. Once you make the connection between your responses to life's challenges and how they affect your weight, you will be able to take stock of how you cope and then plan for future life changes.

Pattern Recognition

Whether you realize it or not, you use pattern recognition in your daily life. Everyone does. Maybe you're a teacher who sees recurring patterns in how some of your students learn, and you adjust your lesson plan to better meet their needs. Or you're a salesman who adjusts your sales pitch to a client's temperament to get the best results. Or maybe you're a new mom doing sleep training with your baby boy, and you recognize his recurring patterns of behavior that signal he's tired, hungry, or sick. Whether you're fully aware of doing this or not, being able to pick up and identify recurring patterns of

behavior in the people around you helps you better manage your daily work and home life. This same process of pattern recognition is part of Dr Kushner's weight-management practice. After many years, he began to see recurring patterns in the stories that patients were telling him about their weight journeys.

⋮ **SELF-HELPING TIP**

⋮ Recognizing recurring patterns in your own weight journey is
⋮ a key to targeting treatment.
⋮

Although each patient's story has surely been unique, similar struggles, behavioral responses, and thought processes have emerged as these patients kept falling into the same unhealthy patterns of behavior and thought. This would typically occur after the strict diet regimen a patient was trying to follow became too hard to sustain. After listening to many weight-gain stories, Dr Kushner was often able to finish his patients' sentences. The patterns of behavior they had fallen into became very familiar, and he could even name them.

This observation was a revelation for two reasons. First, patients liked the fact that they were being heard and acknowledged for their personal experiences. Because weight management is often complex, patients were surprised at how quickly Dr Kushner was able to "get" them. Second, through lifestyle-pattern recognition, a new approach emerged for helping patients who struggle with their weight. Identification of lifestyle patterns, which encompass one's behaviors, thoughts, emotions, coping responses, and motivations, represented a novel, individualized approach to weight management. As Dr Kushner began using this approach in his practice, it allowed him to streamline his counseling and target the specific issues pertinent to each patient sitting in front of him.

The Lifestyle Patterns Approach

Dr Kushner's first effort to organize and apply this new approach to weight management was the development of 21 lifestyle patterns

that identified different eating, exercise, and coping styles. Patients completed a 66-item quiz (the Diet Personality Quiz) that produced numerical scores for each of the 21 lifestyle patterns. The scores served as the foundation for treatment. A higher score signaled a pattern needing intervention, and a lower score signaled a pattern that was more under control. Using targeted patient-education handouts that guided his counseling, Dr Kushner was able to help patients take control, lose weight, and attain better health. Another reinforcing feature of this program was that as patients lost weight, they were able to see their lifestyle-pattern scores improve. This unique model of care led Dr Kushner to publish his research in books and articles, as well as a manual titled *Counseling Overweight Adults: The Lifestyle Patterns Approach and Toolkit*, so professionals could use this approach in their practices. He also gave presentations on his Lifestyle Patterns Approach to both professional and community groups.

As a clinician and researcher, Dr Kushner is always looking for new ways to improve his program and better help patients; therefore, it also became evident that more data were needed to support his Lifestyle Patterns Approach and maybe even streamline it, as had been suggested by patients and colleagues. He had also noticed that clinicians in different settings were looking for more efficient ways to individualize weight-loss treatment recommendations for their patients. For these reasons, it became clear that a more simplified quiz and program were needed.

Research and Development of the Six Factors

In 2004 and for several years after, Dr Kushner posted his 66-item Diet Personality Quiz online, and more than 740,000 people from 200 different countries completed it. This treasure trove of information, which represented a diverse group of people from multiple cultures, communities, and lifestyles, allowed him to reorganize the approach.

Using this data, Dr Kushner teamed up with a biostatistician to take a deeper dive into the quiz responses. The idea was to “shake up” the 21 original patterns and see if different patterns emerged that would be easier to understand and convey. To do the work, his team used a statistical method called *factor analysis* to see how the 66 individual quiz items clustered together. Through this process, we were able to shorten the quiz from 66 to 27 items and simplify the lifestyle patterns from 21 down to the current 6 factors.

Confirming and Publishing the Research

Once we simplified the patterns and quiz, Dr Kushner confirmed the work with a group of volunteers who filled out the Six Factor Quiz online as part of a research study.

A group of 640 women and men, varying in age, race, education, and weight status, completed the Six Factor Quiz along with an impact of weight on quality of life (IWQOL-Lite) questionnaire. Dr Kushner found a striking relationship between the number of factors and the person’s weight status. In other words, the heavier a person was, the more likely he or she was to have a larger number of high-scoring factors. In addition, when Dr Kushner compared results from the quiz and questionnaire, someone who was found to struggle with exercise on the quiz also had low physical functioning, and someone who was found to have a negative body image on the quiz also had low self-esteem.

After the entire process was subjected to peer review, Dr Kushner’s article “Development of a Six-Factor Questionnaire for Use in Weight Management Counseling” was published in 2016 in the journal *Patient Education and Counseling*. This validation of the research methods and Six Factor Quiz confirmed the basis for his new approach.

Introducing the Six Factors

The six distinct factors that emerged from this research reflect the most important features of lifestyle and self-identity that are linked to weight gain. Because long-term weight loss is about more than just following a diet and exercise plan, the six factors focus not only on what people eat and how active they are but also on why and when they eat and how they cope with stress, handle emotions, and approach life's challenges. Each factor is assigned a name that will quickly resonate and aid in self-identification. Three of the six factors reflect challenges related to eating and physical activity patterns:



CONVENIENT DINER: This factor describes individuals who are challenged by eating healthfully while on the go.



EASILY ENTICED EATER: This factor describes those who struggle with eating temptations and their emotional connection with and love of food.



EXERCISE STRUGGLER: This factor describes those who struggle with beginning and sustaining an exercise program, an important component of any weight-loss plan.

The other three factors target mindset and coping style, which can ultimately determine long-term success:



FAST PACER: This factor describes people with hectic lifestyles who often put health last on their list of priorities.



SELF-CRITIC: This factor describes individuals affected by negative self-talk and poor body image, which can negatively affect self-esteem and ultimately the ability to lose weight.



ALL-OR-NOTHING DOER: This factor describes those who are challenged by behaviors and thoughts that may conspire against making the practical and moderate changes needed for long-term weight management.

What to Expect

You'll begin by completing the 27-item Six Factor Quiz (page 22) and using the Six Factor Scoring Grid (page 25) and Six Factor Bullseye Visual Tool (page 27) to identify the factors related to your personal weight gain and determine the strength of each factor. The Bullseye Visual Tool will form the basis of your personalized program and serve as a navigation aid for using the book. You will then be guided to read the factor-focused chapters that are relevant to you.

It is important to note that you are not being labeled or assigned to a rigid category. Almost all of us possess several different factor features to varying degrees at different points in time. However, as you will learn, the strength of your factor score will determine which factors have most influenced your weight gain and need the most attention.

The *Six Factors to Fit* Program

Why follow the *Six Factors to Fit* program? The *Six Factors to Fit* program is a refreshing and novel way of tackling your weight that starts with *you*. By targeting the life circumstances, emotions, thought processes, and behaviors that get in the way of losing weight and keeping it off, we provide an individualized treatment plan that is designed for long-term success. But you may also be wondering about the types of foods you will be “allowed” to eat. Based on solid nutritional principles, the *Six Factors to Fit* program is not about diet fads that eliminate entire food groups. As you will see in Chapter 3, Foundations of Healthy Living, and throughout the book, the eating plan prescription uses a progressive approach to healthier eating—shaping and guiding you toward an eating style associated with successful long-term weight loss and improved health. It emphasizes the foundational concepts of calorie awareness, calorie density, portion control, and learning to create a visual “fuel mix” of

lean proteins, healthy fats, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables to keep you feeling physically full and mentally satisfied.

This program is not a restrictive one with a long list of forbidden foods. Instead, you are empowered with the information needed to make the best food choices for you and your lifestyle. *Six Factors to Fit* is not a program you will be going on and off; it will be with you for life. Retaking the Six Factor Quiz at different points in time can quickly refocus your weight-loss efforts as you age and as your needs change. You can say goodbye to those highly restrictive diets that were too hard to sustain.

Healthy weight loss is not just about the foods you eat; it also entails moving your body and becoming a physically active person. Throughout the book, you'll learn about how physical activity and exercise do as much to improve your mood, energy level, and relationship with food as they do to help you lose weight and keep it off. You will also learn to cultivate a self-helping mindset using coping techniques for the stresses and sabotaging thoughts that commonly trip you up. With a healthy mix of self-compassion and self-care, you can start treating yourself better.

Let Us Be Your Coaches and Trusted Advisors

How many times has your health care provider told you that you need to lose weight? It may go something like this: "Your health condition would improve if you lost weight. You need to eat less and move more." Although some providers are becoming more educated about helping their patients who are overweight, for a variety of reasons this encounter usually falls short of providing useful, empathetic, and encouraging advice. What would be a more helpful response from your health care provider? Dr Kushner has devoted his career to providing an answer to that question.

As Dr Kushner tells his patients and the future health professionals he trains, the process of losing weight and keeping it off is not always smooth and easy. After applying the principles of the *Six*

Factors to Fit program, you will be able to tackle weight loss with more confidence and resolve because it will be *personalized* to you and your lifestyle. You also don't have to go it alone. As your personal coaches, we will do our best to be understanding, empathetic, and inspirational, cheering you on with encouragement, giving you trustworthy and credible information, and guiding you to choose the strategies that have the best chances of working. You will also learn when you might need more help, the type of help that will support your weight-loss efforts, and how to get it. Losing weight really is a team sport that includes health professionals, family, and friends. If losing weight and getting healthier is your goal, we are here as your coaches to help.

THE DOCTOR WEIGHS IN

As a professor of medicine, I tell students, residents-in-training, and experienced physicians that if they want to help their patients manage weight, they need to guide them on the “what, when, and how” of making changes. All too often, my colleagues focus on the “why”—why it's important to lose weight—and forgo the most important part of counseling: giving direction and helping patients navigate a pathway to success.

That doesn't mean that a health care provider needs to have all the answers. A good clinician is knowledgeable about a problem, is a good listener, is empathetic, and is willing to provide recommendations, guidance, and resources, including referrals to appropriate specialists when warranted, which in the case of weight loss means referrals to registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), health psychologists, or personal fitness trainers.

Over the years, I have learned that weight-loss counseling is *not* counseling on weight. Rather, it is a process of providing assistance and guidance in identifying and helping resolve the patient's lifestyle issues that get in the way of healthy weight loss. In this role, I view myself not only as a physician but also as a coach, cheerleader, and trusted advisor. And always, the patient and the patient's concerns are at the forefront. The *Six Factors to Fit* program was born out of this philosophy, and the results of the 10-minute quiz help readers zero in on the lifestyle habits that need to be addressed to achieve successful, long-term weight loss.

The
SIX FACTOR
Professional
Program and
Toolkit

Patient-Centered Weight Management

Robert Kushner, MD
Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN

Foreword by Linda M. Gigliotti, MS, RDN, CDCES, FAND



Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

5 A's	assess, advise, agree, assist, arrange
6FQ	Six Factor Questionnaire
ABC	antecedents, behavior, consequences
ABOM	American Board of Obesity Medicine
ABT*	acceptance-based behavioral therapy
ACE	American Council on Exercise
ACS	American College of Surgeons
ACSM	American College of Sports Medicine
ADL	activity of daily living
AHA	American Heart Association
APA	American Psychological Association
BAS-2	Body Appreciation Scale–2
BED	binge eating disorder
BID	twice daily
BMI	body mass index
BN	bulimia nervosa
CBT	cognitive behavioral therapy
CBT-OB	cognitive behavioral therapy for obesity
CCK	cholecystokinin
CFA	confirmatory factor analysis
CI	confidence interval
CoEQ	Control of Eating Questionnaire
CSOWM	Certified Specialist in Obesity and Weight Management

DSD	Do Something Different
EFA	exploratory factor analysis
FITTE	frequency, intensity, type, time, enjoyment
GLP-1	glucagon-like peptide-1
ILI	intensive lifestyle intervention
MI	motivational interviewing
MNT	medical nutrition therapy
NASM	National Academy of Sports Medicine
NEAT	nonexercise activity thermogenesis
NSCA	National Strength and Conditioning Association
OAC	Obesity Action Coalition
OPQRST	onset, precipitating events, quality of health, remedy, setting, and temporal pattern
OR	odds ratio
PCP	primary care professional
PDA	patient decision aid
PFS	Power of Food Scale
RD or RDN	registered dietitian or registered dietitian nutritionist
SDM	shared decision making
SDOH	social determinants of health
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
SOC	stages of change
STOP BANG	snoring, tiredness, observed apnea, pressure, BMI, age, neck circumference, gender
TID	3 times daily
TPB	theory of planned behavior
TTT	Ten Top Tips
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
WBI**	weight bias internalization
WBIS	Weight Bias Internalization Scale
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSQ	weight self-stigma questionnaire
YFAS	Yale Food Addiction Scale

*Note that the term *acceptance and commitment therapy* (ACT) is also used in the literature, but this book uses *acceptance-based behavioral therapy* (ABT).

**Note that the term *internalized weight bias* (IWB) is also used in the literature, but this book uses *weight bias internalization* (WBI).



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FOREWORD

The increasing rates of overweight and obesity are reaching epidemic proportions, leading to a public health crisis and introducing a wide range of associated health issues. While various treatment options have emerged, including metabolic surgery and second-generation obesity medications, the foundation for all obesity care interventions is personalized lifestyle management.

Though dietitians and other health professionals are well-equipped with *what* to address with patients—*how* to provide lifestyle interventions that help patients achieve better health outcomes is an ongoing challenge. The Kushner’s *Lifestyle Patterns Approach* and later *Six Factors to Fit: Weight Loss That Works for You* introduced me to behavioral and cognitive classifications that can be used to focus my counseling to address specific behaviors identified as barriers to successful weight management for each patient. This *Six Factor Professional Program and Toolkit* takes the concept to the next level by offering step-by-step guidance and a compilation of ready-to-use resources that help health professionals provide focused, success-oriented strategies for counseling patients with overweight and obesity.

Patient-Centered Weight Management brings readers up to date on the latest topics in obesity care, such as an understanding that obesity is a complex, multicausal, progressive chronic disease with many contributing factors. A unique and welcome aspect of this program is the emphasis on how to apply shared decision making, which highlights the importance of personalizing treatment to ensure that each patient plays a key role in their own care process. It is clear that interventions must go beyond usual physiology and address the effects of social determinants of health and weight stigma. Lifestyle modification encompasses a variety of activities, including food and physical activity patterns as well as the not-to-be neglected role of mindset. The primer on behavioral counseling is an essential resource, as this skill is often not included in the formal education of health professionals.

Clinicians need a structure for providing obesity care counseling and this book delivers. Dr Kushner draws from his research on phenotyping and his 40-year career treating patients with overweight and obesity. Using a scientifically validated and easy-to-administer questionnaire, the program begins by assessing six behavioral or cognitive

traits, or factors. The book's six factor-focused chapters include targeted lifestyle interventions with action steps that are designed to help patients overcome their personal barriers to managing their weight. The sample counseling dialogues and examples of patient reflections offer helpful insights on addressing behavior change as a process.

As a leader in the field of obesity medicine, Dr Kushner is a longtime advocate for health care teams. That philosophy is illustrated with weight management labeled as a "team sport" where many players have roles in treating this multicausal disease. Team members include registered dietitian nutritionists, exercise specialists, and behavioral health specialists along with primary care providers, obesity medicine specialists, and bariatric surgeons. All team members will find this toolkit to be a practical, user-friendly resource for efficient and effective patient-centered care.

The array of downloadable assessment tools and handouts offer various options for equipping patients with practical and doable steps that shift behaviors gradually towards more positive weight and health outcomes. While the authors acknowledge that all characteristics of a factor may or may not apply to every patient, the factors coupled with their evidence-based strategies will help clinicians focus their counseling for the individual patient's needs.

Linda M. Gigliotti, MS, RDN, CDCES, FAND

Speaker, Writer, and Consultant for Weight Management Programs

Coeditor, *Health Professional's Guide to Treatment of Overweight and Obesity*



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WE THANK Betsy Hornick, MS, RDN, Director of Practice Publications at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, for persistently gauging our interest in writing a professional manual to our consumer title, *Six Factors to Fit: Weight Loss That Works for You!* published by the Academy in 2020. Everything in life is about timing. And so, *Patient-Centered Weight Management: The Six Factor Professional Program and Toolkit* was born. Throughout the publishing process, we appreciated Betsy's continued editorial support and guidance, and we are thankful for the support of Ryan Baechler, the Academy's Senior Director of Product Strategy and Revenue Operations, their superb editorial team of Erin Faley and Emily Motycka, as well as the reviewers who took the time for peer review and to help improve the manuscript.

Robert particularly thanks the thousands of patients he has had the gratification of knowing and helping over his 40-year career, first at the University of Chicago and then at Northwestern Medicine. The origin of his targeted weight management approach was born out of the multitude of personal stories and life events that these patients shared. He is also indebted to all of his friends and colleagues at the Northwestern Medicine Center for Lifestyle Medicine who share his passion and commitment to provide exceptional care to patients struggling with weight and to the hundreds of colleagues across the country and around the world who helped shape his thinking and approach to the challenging problem of weight management. Their research studies on mindset and behavior change for obesity care and patient-centered weight management have been distilled into targeted counseling recommendations throughout this book.

We are so grateful for the loving support of our family, Sarah, Jeremy, Carter, Harper, Steven, Allyson, Levi, and Aden, who consistently remind us—through their love of pickleball, tennis, biking, swimming, kayaking, sailing, basketball, volleyball, flag football, soccer, ice skating, hip-hop dancing, dance parties, cooking, meditation, taking nature walks and caring for our four-legged furry friends, Tango, Rookie, and Charlie—of the importance of living a healthy and enjoyable life. This book is dedicated to you.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Kushner, MD

Robert Kushner, MD, MS, is a professor of medicine and medical education at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago and former Director of the Center for Lifestyle Medicine at Northwestern Medicine, which he led for 16 years. He is a past president of The Obesity Society and a founder and first chair of the American Board of Obesity Medicine. He is the author or editor of 15 books, 56 book chapters, and 230 original and review articles on obesity, obesity medicine, lifestyle medicine, medical education, and nutrition. Dr Kushner is coeditor of multiple professional texts, including *Primary Care: Evaluation and Management of Obesity*, *Creating a Lifestyle Medicine Center: From Concept to Clinical Practice*, and *Nutrition and Bariatric Surgery*. His most recent consumer title is *Six Factors to Fit: Weight Loss That Works for You!*

Dr Kushner is a passionate clinician, educator, researcher, and advocate in helping to improve the lives of those with overweight and obesity. He received a 2022 Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Award for *Once Weekly Semaglutide in Adults with Overweight and Obesity*, on behalf of the Step 1 Trial investigators and collaborators.^{1,2} As a past member of the National Board of Directors of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), he remains dedicated to supporting the OAC's mission to fight weight bias and provide evidence-based education on obesity and its treatments. Throughout Dr Kushner's career, he has been committed to educating both current and future health care professionals on the care of patients living with the disease of obesity. He is currently leading a two-year quality improvement project called FORWARD to develop, test, and disseminate obesity medical education curricula designed for medical schools. He is an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics National Honors Award honorary member (2010). As an international obesity expert, Dr Kushner lectures worldwide about the latest trends in obesity care. Nationally, Dr Kushner speaks regularly on obesity medicine at professional society conferences, educational symposiums, government agency meetings, and advisory boards and to consumer groups. After finishing a residency in internal medicine at Northwestern

University, Dr Kushner went on to complete a postgraduate fellowship in clinical nutrition and earned a master's degree in clinical nutrition and nutritional biology from the University of Chicago. Examples of Dr Kushner's coverage as an obesity expert include media such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Forbes*, WGN-TV, and NPR.

Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN

Nancy Kushner is a nurse practitioner, former health content writer for a weight loss website, and coauthor of *Six Factors to Fit: Weight Loss That Works for You!* as well as *Counseling Overweight Adults: The Lifestyle Patterns Approach and Toolkit* and *Dr. Kushner's Personality Type Diet*. Through her work, Nancy has been able to combine two life passions: health writing and spreading the word about the power of a healthy lifestyle.

The Kushners live in the Chicago metropolitan area, where together they can be found walking the talk of a healthy lifestyle: eating a plant-forward diet; walking their dog, Tango; approaching their 11th year of taking ballroom dance lessons; performing rhythm dances like bachata, hustle, nightclub two-step, rumba, and West Coast Swing; and enjoying active ways to socialize with friends and family.

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INTRODUCTION

At a Crossroads...

WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS where the advancements in obesity science and treatment outpace a workforce that is not fully prepared to embrace and apply these breakthroughs. For example, we now view obesity as a complex, multicausal, chronic progressive disease, and yet most health care systems still use an acute care model of disease management with inadequate patient visit times for providing optimal chronic-based care. At a time when we are shifting the goal of obesity care to improved weight management outcomes that encompass better health and quality of life, most patients and many health care professionals are still focused on weight loss as the primary goal. Although there are more effective second-generation pharmacologic therapies available that address the biological causes of obesity, health care professionals are left uncertain regarding the role and necessity for delivering adjunctive lifestyle modification counseling. *Patient-Centered Weight Management: The Six Factor Professional Program and Toolkit* was written to address many of these practice-based challenges to facilitate time saving and tailored foundational lifestyle management therapy.

As an obesity expert with specialized interests in lifestyle medicine and nutrition for more than 40 years, Dr Kushner has been at the forefront of developing and delivering innovative educational initiatives. Although he is a proud founder of the American Board of Obesity Medicine that, to date, has certified more than 8,000 diplomates in obesity medicine, the majority of health care professionals who will be engaged in overweight and obesity care in the future will not be certified as obesity medicine specialists. And they don't have to be. The good news is that all health care professionals can become more informed and use targeted strategies when working with patients with obesity (eg, physicians specializing in internal medicine, family practice, endocrinology, or obstetrics and gynecology, as well as advanced practice provider nurse practitioners and physician assistants, registered dietitian nutritionists, health psychologists, exercise specialists, bariatric surgeons). Through this book, we hope to fill the gap to help more health care professionals with varied

backgrounds become skilled in providing effective and efficient patient-centered weight management care within their existing practices.

Book Overview

Patient-Centered Weight Management: The Six Factor Professional Program and Toolkit is divided into three parts. We encourage readers to familiarize themselves with all of the chapters prior to initiating the program, so they will have the full array of background information and implementable strategies to use.

In Part I (Targeted Weight Management), we provide foundational information that supports the use of the professional program. Chapter 1 is devoted to reviewing important updates in the science of obesity and practice of obesity care that are pertinent for clinicians, including the concept of viewing obesity as a chronic biologically based disease, the multiple causes of obesity that involve social determinants of health, the fundamental role of lifestyle management, the physiological basis of metabolic adaptation, the detrimental effects of weight bias and stigmatization, the use and limitations of BMI, and the importance of personalization in patient care. In Chapter 2, we explore the benefits of using phenotyping, which is at the core of the program and the clinical research that supports development of the six factor types. In Chapter 3, we take a deep dive into examining the cognitive, behavioral, and habit-change principles and theories that underpin patient counseling—information that is often missing from most textbooks on obesity care. Examples are also provided on how these principles and theories relate to targeted lifestyle modification counseling. Building on this knowledge, we then turn our attention to specific counseling techniques in Chapter 4, including how to conduct a weight management–focused visit using motivational interviewing and shared decision making.

Part II (Using the Professional Program and Toolkit) begins with an overview of the Six Factor Professional Program, which enables clinicians to deliver efficient care with a suite of ready-to-use handouts and turnkey resources that help patients modify diet, physical activity, health behaviors, and mindset to achieve better health and improve weight management outcomes. Each handout is displayed in the chapters where they are discussed, and instructions for downloading the handouts for sharing with patients are provided in Part III. In Chapter 5, clinicians learn about the program features, which include the scientifically validated, short Six Factor Questionnaire (6FQ) to identify each person’s weight management challenges, scoring tools for objective patient assessment, and evidence-based strategies that form the basis for the program and downloadable patient educational treatment handouts. In Chapters 6 through 11, we review each factor in detail, using a unifying format that presents the factor characteristics and treatment overview, along with supportive research and patient educational treatment handouts. The counseling tools translate evidence-based fundamental behavior change theories, models, and techniques into factor-specific, bite-sized action steps that can be used as counseling aids, highlighting particular actions that patients can take to address or overcome behavioral or cognitive obstacles as they work toward improving weight management outcomes. Chapter 12 explores the use of the Six Factor Professional Program with other treatment modalities, including work with interdisciplinary teams, use with

pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery, and application to a group counseling format. The chapter also includes a discussion of the clinician's new focus and evolving role providing lifestyle counseling when treating patients taking the highly effective, second generation antiobesity medications.

In Part III, the Six Factor Downloadable Toolkit (pages 196–203) contains previews of the entire toolkit comprised of 5 assessment tools and 30 factor-based patient educational treatment handouts in both English and Spanish (with instructions for downloading), so clinicians can view in one place the entire program available to them and their patients. Selected Professional and Patient Resources (pages 204–207) highlight key clinical care, general obesity management, and Six Factor Program resources for easy clinician access.

Whether you are new to obesity care or a seasoned clinician looking to update your skills and knowledge, we hope this toolkit gives you new insights and interest in providing patient-centered weight management care.

Robert Kushner, MD

Nancy Kushner, MSN, RN

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