

Body Size Discrimination in the US



Living in a larger body is a reality for the majority of people in the US

2 in 5 (39%) adults in the USA self-identify as ‘**living in a larger body**’ [S14]. This is 43% for women compared to 35% for men (within the general population) and 1 in 5 (20%) girls aged 10 - 17.

Despite it being common, people are more **uncomfortable** using terms that describe larger bodies than smaller bodies when it comes to describing other people’s body size, highlighting the need to break this taboo [S16].

Nearly all Americans have at least once in their life been subject to shaming and/or discrimination because of their weight.

84% of adults, 90% of women living in larger bodies and 88% of girls aged 10-17 have at least once in their life been **shamed because of their body size** [Q2].

And many have also been discriminated against because of their body size (at least once): 65% of adults, 78% of women living in larger bodies and 71% of girls aged 10-17 [Q2].

This starts from a young age with many saying body size shaming happened before they reached adolescence (before 13 years old): 45% of adults, 45% of women with larger bodies and 80% of girls aged 10-17 [Q5].

Women are more at risk of it, confirming the intersection with gender.

Whilst weight stigma is common for all, women in general and women living in larger bodies especially are two times more likely to regularly experience different forms of shaming and discrimination than men living in larger bodies.

Race also plays a key role, with non-white women living in larger bodies more at risk than white women.

Whilst the likelihood of experiencing name-calling / bullying is similar regardless of ethnic or racial background, the likelihood of being **denied of certain rights** (e.g., been denied treatment for ill health etc.) is 2 times higher for Hispanic non-white women living in larger bodies. This is also true for non-white men with larger bodies vs. white men [Q2].

Footnotes:

S14. Question: Which of the following best applies to you? Potential answers: Having a larger than average body size; Fat; Plus-size; Having a higher weight than average; Having an average body size; Having a smaller than average body size; Slim; Thin. Base: The Adult general population (n=2,060); Girls aged 10-17 (n=513).

S16. Question: How comfortable do you feel using the following words/ phrases to describe other people’s bodies? Base: The Adult general population (n=2060)

Q2 - Question: How often have you experienced any of the following because of your body size (or perceived weight), either online/on social media or offline? Potential answers: Received negative or mean comments; Been body shamed; Been teased or bullied; Been called names; Received advice that I had not asked for; Experienced mean actions against me; Experienced stereotypes / misconceptions. Base: The Adult general population (n=2060); Women with larger bodies (n=1224); Girls aged 10-17 (n=513)

Q5. Question: How old were you the first time you experienced body size (or perceived weight) shaming? Base: The Adult general population (n=626); Women with larger bodies (n=342); Girls aged 10-17 (n=471)