

Disadvantaged young adults at risk for excessive weight gain

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Young adults are at particularly high risk for excessive weight gain. Although weight gain intervention for young adults attending two- or four-year colleges has been studied extensively, there has been little research into effective weight management programs targeting low-income, non-college bound young adults. A team of registered dietitian nutritionists from the University of Maine, in collaboration with scientists from multiple institutions from around the US, have now developed a weight management intervention program that is particularly relevant for disadvantaged young adults. Their results are published in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

Low-income young adults have immediate needs related to housing, employment, and financial security. "Since disadvantaged young adults may have to satisfy basic needs, they are not likely to focus on the future, which limits the effect of any attempts to create motivation for behavior change by emphasizing long-term health benefits," according to lead researcher Jennifer R. Walsh, PhD, RD, of the University of Florida.

Researchers used a lengthy planning model to be sure of success for their weight-management intervention program for low-income young adults at a vocational training center in Maine. By using a community-based participatory research approach, they hoped to develop a program that focused specifically on the needs of this underserved population. Quality of life and health-related topics were important, as were issues related to weight.

A steering committee of researchers and community members was assembled to guide the process. They also conducted focus groups and interviews to be sure everyone's voice was heard. The PRECEDE model (Predisposing, Reinforcing, Enabling, Constructs in Education/Ecological Diagnosis and Evaluation) was useful to identify or "diagnose" the concerns of these young adults. They also prioritized factors that the young adults were willing and able to change. These results were used to develop a [weight management](#) intervention truly made for low-income [young adults](#), taking into account their specific needs and the resources available. This program is the first of its kind developed using this model.

More information: "Using PRECEDE to Develop a Weight Management Program for Disadvantaged Young Adults," by Jennifer R. Walsh, PhD, RD; Adrienne A. White, PhD, RD; Kendra K. Kattelman, PhD, RD, DOI: [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2013.11.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2013.11.005), *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

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