

Wellness, Not Weight: Health At Every Size and Motivational Interviewing Edited by Ellen Glovsky, Cognella Academic Publishing

Wellness, Not Weight: Health At Every Size and Motivational Interviewing is a text for all dietitians and health professionals working in the weight loss field with functional and dysfunctional eaters as well as eating disorder clientele. This text is very appropriate for those interested in learning, better utilizing and/or instructing a course regarding the many aspects of the non-diet and Health At Every Size (HAES) approaches, including Motivational Interviewing (MI) techniques. An ED colleague with whom I shared the chapter titles and authors, stated “You will be well educated if you read the entire book!”

I believe this valuable text is unique as it is a collaboration of writings by 25 known experts in the multi-faceted arena of non-diet/HAES/MI (Molly Kellogg, Karen Koenig, Ellen Frankel, Jon Robison, Glenn Gaesser, etc.). The book’s main premise is well stated through its title (Wellness not Weight: Health at Any Size and Motivational Interviewing), which proposes that it is more beneficial to *guide* the client, *respecting* their self-knowledge, working *with* them on their health, rather than instructing them on diets or weight loss. Through my 35+ years as an RD, influenced by Francie White MS RD and Ellyn Satter MS RD LCSW BCD, I have shifted from “giving” diets to helping clients “gift” themselves with a healthy lifestyle. As I reviewed this text, I found that it further broadened and deepened my knowledge, as well as enhanced my counseling skills. Although I do not always agree with HAES, I certainly focus on healthy lifestyle when counseling; as these authors indicate, “95% of all diets fail.”

I found the text very well and clearly organized, easy to read, presenting exactly the information proposed in the chapter headings. In her introduction, Ellen explains her rationale for creating this book, clarifies terms, and concludes briefly by describing the three parts of the book. These sections include: an overview of the three basic ideas (non-diet; HAES; MI); further discussion of each concept; practical applications of the information.

As I read, I felt like I was attending a series of excellent seminars. I am pleased to now have, contained in one book, concepts and data that I can use when providing in-services to my colleagues (trying to shift their obesity stigmas!). As well, I found the tips, figures and resource links to be useful. Among the many topics: a comprehensive historical review of the non-diet approach; cultural influences regarding fatness; insightful discussions of studies that refute the obesity/health risk paradigm; working with athletes; feelings and food; competent eating. There is specific academic instruction, practical guidance and demonstrations using MI. Because I work with children, I really enjoyed Kathy Kater’s chapter on promoting self-esteem instead of size. She includes useful figures such as “Ten Essential Lessons to Build Body Esteem in Children and Adults.”

I do strongly recommend this book, especially for entry- and mid-level EDD, as well as any RD involved in client counseling. The seasoned EDD, accustomed to using non-diet, mindful eating, HAES and MI, may find this text a good review, with some updates. These EDD’s will find this text a great educational tool for upcoming RD’s, and other health professionals who work with their clients. I agree with Ellen’s suggestion that part three of this text would also be useful for clients wishing to know more about the non-diet/HAES approaches and MI.