

# STRIPED

A PUBLIC HEALTH  
INCUBATOR

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

A Collaboration of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Boston Children's Hospital

Newsletter Fall 2020

## From the Director



S. Bryn Austin

What a year this has been so far, with no sign of the tumult abating anytime soon. The triple pandemics of COVID-19 infection, mental distress, and racist injustice are reverberating through

our society. In the public health community, current times have all of us asking ourselves, What is our role in the movement toward social justice and health equity? How can we best leverage that role to do more and do it better and faster?

For STRIPED, social justice has always been core to our mission. But what is STRIPED's unique role in the movement toward health equity?

I recently stumbled across the concept of *boundary spanning* in an article by scholars and practitioners in the environmental field. It immediately resonated. Bednarek and coauthors explain boundary spanners as people or organizations working at the interface of science and policy to "enable exchange between the production and use of knowledge to support evidence-informed decision-making."

The value proposition for boundary spanning, they argue, is that it "has the potential to increase the efficiency by which scientific evidence informs policy, foster the capacity to absorb new evidence and perspectives, enhance research relevance for societal challenges, and open new policy windows."

If STRIPED's role is boundary spanning, what exactly does that look like?

- ◆ On pg. 2, read about our soon-to-be released *STRIPED Policy Playbook*, a first-of-its-kind how-to guide on evidence-informed, legislative advocacy for eating disorders prevention. Also read about our latest report, which melds the wisdom of health economists, policy specialists, and experts with lived experience, on the enormous social and economic costs of eating disorders in the U.S.
- ◆ On pg. 4, read about our Delphi study on weight stigma in public health. Drawing on expert consensus across a diverse array of stakeholders, our *Roadmap* offers a range of practical steps practitioners can take to make change in their own workplaces, programs, and studies.

At STRIPED, we have long known that solving the complex problems that stand between us and achieving health equity demands a new approach to research and a new cadre of prevention scientists who are as skilled as they are nimble in working at the interface of science and policy. In boundary spanning, we've also found our role in the movement toward health equity.

With gratitude,

S. Bryn Austin, ScD

## What Our Trainees Say About STRIPED



Tammy Yan

“STRIPED connects people with a shared passion for prevention. Given the limited resources for eating disorder prevention in China, my goal was to adapt an internet prevention program for universities attuned to the unique sociocultural forces there. I'm so grateful to be able to connect with people on the frontlines of eating disorder prevention through STRIPED.”



Todd Liou

“Collaborating with the Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association, I designed and modeled a program evaluation for their pilot telemental health program seeking to increase access for those affected by eating disorders. As a future mental health professional, I am so grateful to STRIPED for providing me the mentorship, resources, and networking to pursue an enriching project for my MPH.”

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# Introducing the STRIPED Policy Playbook

A first-of-its-kind, how-to guide for legislative advocacy for eating disorders prevention

For most public health professionals, scientific evidence is the holy grail of our work. We spend years learning how to generate evidence, how to vet it, and how to communicate with other scientists about it. But how do we translate evidence in a way that gets it out of the hallowed halls of academia and into the halls of power where laws and policies are crafted to improve the health communities? **That is a different story altogether.**

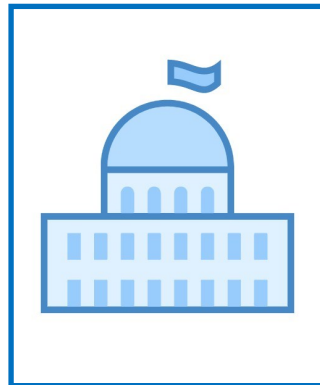
Evidence plays a crucial role in informing sound policy, but that is just one of the three essential ingredients for successful policy advocacy: evidence, practical policy options, and political will.

After several years of honing our policy translation chops and seeing legislation based on our research advance in state legislatures in Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, and California, STRIPED is now turning all we have

learned and the strategies we've developed into the creation of the *STRIPED Policy Playbook*, a **first-of-its-kind how-to guide** on legislative advocacy for eating disorders prevention and promotion of healthier environments for young people to grow up at home in their own bodies.

Collaborating with a dream team of policy, communications, and advocacy strategy partners — Center Road Solutions, GQR, 1235 Strategies, and My Power People — to research, message frame, and provide practical tools, the *STRIPED Policy Playbook* promises to be an invaluable resource for public health professionals, community advocates, and policymakers dedicated to eating disorders prevention

and to creating healthier environments for young people around body image. Stay tuned for news on the release of our playbook and webinar training opportunities to launch STRIPED-informed advocacy campaigns in your state.



## Thousands of Lives, Billions of Dollars Lost

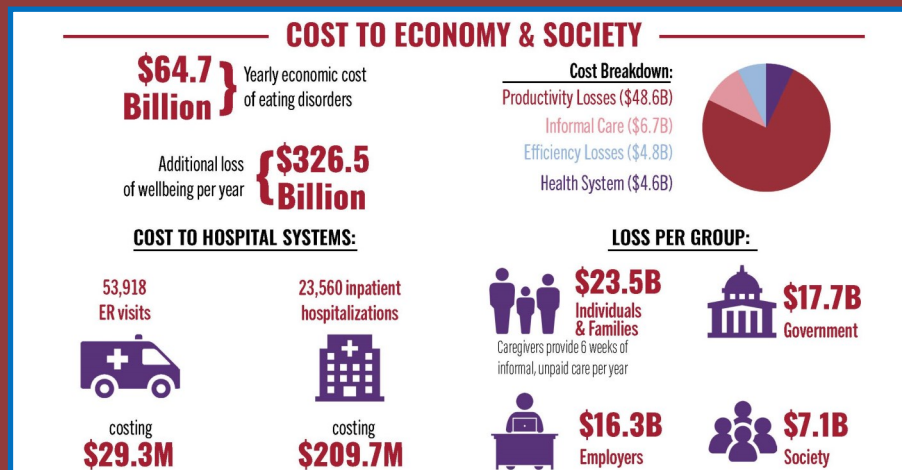
Adding up the devastating impact of eating disorders on the U.S.

The cost of eating disorders for the American economy is profound, with estimates from our newest study reaching an astounding \$64.7 billion per year, and \$23.5 billion of these costs fall on individuals and families. Even more devastating is the estimated **10,200 lives lost each year due to an eating disorder**. Every 52 minutes, someone's loved one needlessly dies from this preventable and treatable condition. These and other results can be found in our new report, published in June 2020 in collaboration with the Academy for Eating Disorders and Deloitte Access Economics. Our report offers **the most comprehensive examination to date** of the social and economic

impact of eating disorders on individuals, families, and society in the United States. The need is irrefutable for increased eating disorder treatment and prevention to lessen the economic strain on already-burdened

individuals, families, and the economy. STRIPED is working side by side with our many community partners to bring these findings to key decision makers in government and healthcare. To help local advocates leverage our findings and motivate decision

makers to take action in their own communities, we are also creating fact sheets with the key findings tailored for each state. **Find your state's data and read the full report and media coverage [here](#).**



## Welcome to New STRIPED Fellows!



Amanda Raffoul

**A**manda Raffoul, PhD, spent the last six years in Ontario, Canada, at the University of Waterloo in the School of Public Health and Health Systems, where her dissertation focused on the unintended consequences of weight and nutrition policies (such as calorie labelling) on disordered eating. We are thrilled that Amanda was able to **garner a highly competitive three-year**

**Canadian Institutes of Health Research fellowship** to join STRIPED as a postdoctoral fellow. Amanda will lead trailblazing policy analyses using microsimulation modeling and a Delphi study of leaders in the fields of eating disorders, weight studies, nutrition, and mental health to identify gaps in eating disorders prevention. Her end goal? To offer recommendations for novel approaches to prevention to the benefit of all Canadian youth. **Welcome, Amanda!**



Lesley Williams

**L**esley Williams, MD, is a board certified family medicine physician and eating disorder specialist with over 16 years of experience in the field. She currently serves as the Medical Team Lead for Banner Behavioral Health Hospital in Scottsdale, AZ. **A passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in healthcare**, Lesley is interested in health equity and Health at Every

Size advocacy. She serves as a member of the Academy of Eating Disorders' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors and is an executive co-sponsor for Banner Health's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Multicultural Team Resource Group. Lesley recently authored the engaging children's book *Free To Be Me: Self Love for All Sizes* celebrating body diversity.

**Welcome, Lesley!**



Trine Tetlie Eik-Nes

**T**rine Tetlie Eik-Nes, PhD, is an associate professor at Department of Neuroscience and Behavioral Medicine at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. She works with both registry data and clinical data on eating disorders and weight disorders. Trine comes to STRIPED with **vast experience in the mental**

**health sector**, working as a clinician and researcher with an interest in adult psychopathology for the past 20 years. Trine is interested in epidemiology of weight disorders, eating disorders, body image, and stigma. She is currently the principal investigator of the nationwide Mental Health and Obesity Study in Norway and is currently working on development and testing of integrated treatment approaches for patients with weight disorders and binge eating disorder. **Welcome, Trine!**

## Thank You, Funders!

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National Eating Disorders Association, Feeding Hope Fund  
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Willamette Nutrition Source

**STRIPED Faculty**  
S. Bryn Austin, ScD, Director  
S. Jean Emans, MD  
Erica Kenney, ScD, MPH  
Tracy Richmond, MD, MPH

**Collaborating Mentors**  
Jerel P. Calzo, PhD, MPH  
Allegra R. Gordon, ScD, MPH  
Michael Long, ScD, MPH  
Nicole E. Negowetti, JD, MA  
Jennifer Pomeranz, JD, MPH  
Katherine Record, JD, MPH, MA  
Rachel Rodgers, PhD  
Mihail Samnaliev, PhD  
Kendrin Sonnevile, ScD, 3RD, LDN  
Alvin Tran, ScD, MPH  
Davene Wright, PhD

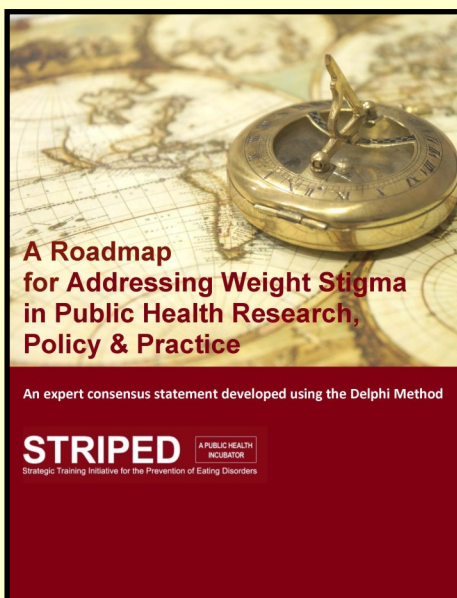
**International Expert Advisory**  
Debra Franko, PhD  
Jess Haines, PhD, RD  
Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, PhD, RD  
Susan Paxton, PhD

# Weight Bias in Public Health

## STRIPED Delphi study offers roadmap to address weight stigma

What do a diverse group of experts from the fields of public health, eating disorders, fat activism, and obesity all agree on when it comes to weight stigma? Over the past year and a half, a team of STRIPED fellows and collaborators led by STRIPED Visiting Scholar Laura Hart, explored this question using the **Delphi method**, a consensus-building process to identify points of agreement across diverse stakeholders. Research has made it clear that weight stigma and discrimination negatively affect the health of all people and are particularly harmful for those living in larger bodies. But these **negative forces are pervasive** both in healthcare and our larger

society, and there are few laws to protect people from its affects. **So is there anything public health professionals can do?** Experts in our study agreed that yes, in fact **there is a lot that we can do**, and they offered some concrete guidance on where to start. Weight stigma is an important social justice issue that intersects with racism and other drivers of inequities. STRIPED is committed to working together with our colleagues in public health toward ending this and other pernicious drivers of inequities. Our new Roadmap, based on the results of the Delphi study, will give professionals the tools to address this critical health equity issue. **Read our Roadmap [here](#).**



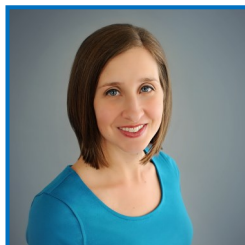
## Taking on Harmful Supplements Worldwide & in Armed Forces



Sarith Felber

**P**edaling an endless array of products, most of them snake oil, with promises to cure all that ails consumers worldwide, the global dietary supplements industry is on track to draw **USD \$295 billion in revenue by 2027**. Unfortunately weak regulation in the U.S. has

created a marketplace rife with risk for consumers, particularly with supplements promising weight loss. In response, STRIPED teamed up with STRIPED Fellow Sarith Felber, a legal expert in the field of consumer products regulation, and STRIPED Collaborating Mentor Nicole Negowetti, an expert in food law at Harvard Law School, to launch the first global policy scan on weight-loss supplement regulation. Modeled on similar databases on e-cigarettes and other harmful consumer products, our new database will be **an invaluable resource** for researchers and advocates globally seeking to advance better protections for consumers worldwide.



Nicole Negowetti



Kendall Sharp

**A**n otherwise healthy 22-year old soldier lost consciousness while running with his unit. Four hours later, he was **dead**. **The cause? The dietary supplement he thought would help him get fit for service.** Despite the efforts of the U.S. Dept. of Defense's Operation Supplement

Safety (OPSS) program, use of supplements by military personnel is still widespread, and there is no ongoing system to monitor use, making it hard to get a full picture of the harm caused by these products. Not one to shy away from a challenge, STRIPED Trainee Kendall Sharp **set out to uncover new insights** into the use of dangerous supplements by service members by doing a deep dive into the social media platform Reddit. This innovative pilot study is teaching us a lot about the pressures driving our nation's service members to use these harmful products, misconceptions they have about them, and how surprisingly easy they are to buy on bases. You can be sure that STRIPED will share our findings with our OPSS colleagues working to keep service members safe from harmful supplements.

Check out our website at [www.hsph.harvard.edu/striped](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/striped)



Newsletter by: S. Bryn Austin and Julia Vitagliano