Psychological Care in Severe Obesity
Psychological Care in Severe Obesity

A Practical and Integrated Approach

Edited by

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To my daughter, Anaiya, who I love even more than psychology.

—Stephanie E. Cassin

To Joanne, Keira, and Tayla, for their unwavering support and inspiration. My creativity could not be possible without the joy you bring me each day.

—Sanjeev Sockalingam

To Roula, for being there.

—Raed Hawa
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Preface

This edited book serves as a practical and comprehensive guide to psychological care in severe obesity. Obesity is a complex disease of multifaceted environmental, genetic, and physiological etiologies. Some of the complications of obesity include cardiovascular disease, non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, obstructive sleep apnea, reflux, and cancer. Given the excess mortality, substantial morbidity, and economic toll associated with obesity, it is a disease that warrants an integrated and long-term approach to care.

Beyond the use of antiobesity medications and bariatric surgery, it is imperative to consider the broad spectrum of psychological treatments within the continuum of treatments for severe obesity and its comorbidities. In this book we focus on evidence-based and emerging psychosocial interventions in the treatment of severe obesity, including motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness- and compassion-focused interventions, technology-enabled psychological interventions, family-based interventions, and support groups. The book goes beyond a synthesis of the evidence base and provides practical approaches to apply these psychological therapies within the context of obesity management. The contents of these chapters also address the many psychosocial comorbidities of obesity, including disordered eating and mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders.

The reality is that empirical literature examining psychosocial interventions specifically for individuals with severe obesity is still in its infancy. Many of the time-limited psychosocial interventions that have been examined to date result in only modest and short-term weight loss. A more comprehensive and long-term treatment approach is warranted in the management of severe obesity, which may necessitate numerous medical and psychosocial interventions in sequence or combination for sustained improvement over time. Currently, no clinical guidelines exist to determine which type(s) of psychosocial interventions should be offered to particular patients with severe obesity, how those interventions should be integrated or sequenced, how long each intervention should continue, and when each intervention should be offered in the course of obesity care. The chapters in this book are intended to serve as a practical guide to help healthcare professionals make decisions regarding the types of psychosocial treatments that may be beneficial for particular issues warranting intervention and to illustrate how those treatments may be applied in clinical practice through the use of case vignettes and clinical dialogues.

A book of this magnitude would not be possible without the help of many people. We thank our contributors, who devoted extensive time and energy to each of their chapters, as well as Samantha Leung for her editorial assistance. We also thank the editorial team at Cambridge University Press, including Catherine Barnes, Nigel Graves, Sarah Marsh, David Mackenzie, Charlotte Brisley, and Allan Alphonse, for transforming our idea into a tangible product. Finally, we thank our patients, who provided us with inspiration each day to produce a resource that we hope will improve mental healthcare for all individuals being treated for severe obesity.