

Good afternoon all,

This week, February 21-27, is **Eating Disorder Awareness Week, we will advocate, educate, and spread awareness** for eating disorders -- which have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses. Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 with anorexia have 10 times the risk of dying compared to their same-aged peers, and it is estimated that 8 million Americans have an eating disorder – seven million women and one million men. This week is an annual campaign, recognized nationally, to educate the public about the realities of eating disorders and to provide hope, support, and visibility to individuals and families affected by eating disorders. Take the opportunity to #seethechange and #bethechange; let us make it part of all of our missions this week to spread awareness and make sure that those who are currently struggling know they are not alone.

See the attached pdfs for more information!

The events this week are as follows:

 date : **meeting** with a PowerPoint discussing the stigma, eating disorders, and how we can stop misinformation; while we eat **snacks, discuss, and write positive affirmations on index cards!**

 date : **wear blue or green** to advocate and spread awareness this week, and post with #seethechange and #bethechange. Tag us @bc2m_sia and @publichealth.phc!

 date : **wear/write a positive affirmation and grab a treat!** Special markers will be provided, so you can write a positive affirmation on your body or grab a positive affirmation from a stack of cards. Then, receive a treat and take a picture with your remark!

YOU CAN STOP THE EMAIL HERE, OR ADD THE FOLLOWING INFO AS WELL

READ:

#see the change:

as we celebrate progress and look ahead to new opportunities for growth within the eating disorders field, ourselves, and our communities. The NEDA Helpline has experienced a **107% increase** in contacts since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, nearly **755,000 people** have used NEDA's online screening tool since 2017.

#be the change:

let's **#BeTheChange** together through legislative advocacy, building lightings, local events, and more. Whether you have been personally affected by an eating disorder or care about someone who has, you have the power to help us pave the way for a world without eating disorders.

Eating Disorders Myths, Facts, Stigma

The Stigma: The Wall

"An eating disorder is difficult enough to battle on its own, and the stigma associated with them makes the journey to becoming a warrior that much harder. The stigma that accompanies eating disorders strips an individual of their quality of life and causes them to have low self-esteem resulting in more isolation. You can think of a stigma as a wall between the individual and the help that they need" (Kroudis).

"Eating disorders go beyond just sexuality, age, and gender and affect people of all races, ethnicities and social status" (Kroudis). -- **FACT**

EATING DISORDERS DON'T HAVE ONE LOOK

- a common misconception is that most girls, especially homosexual and bisexual women, have eating disorders HOWEVER "15% of gay or bisexual men have had an eating disorder at some point in their life."
- eating disorders don't have one look comments like "oh you're too fat to have an eating disorder" are utterly ungrounded and highlight the stigma -- eating disorders don't have one look. there are many types of disorders such as bulimia, binge eating, and anorexia. you are the one who is uneducated if you are making these comments.

You chose to have an eating disorder -- **MYTH**

- "Eating disorder are not a 'lifestyle choice,' they are mental health disorders with socio-biological influences. Many people often say that they could never have an eating disorder because they are not that 'self controlled.' An eating disorder is anything but control, it **CONTROLS** the person. People struggling often times fear disclosing the fact that they have an eating disorder, especially those with anorexia, because society praises thinnes" (Kroudis).

The Stigma and Threat to Health

- "Weight stigma poses a significant threat to psychological and physical health. It has been documented as a significant risk factor for depression, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction. There is still a commonly held view that an eating disorder is a lifestyle choice and that recovery means dropping some negative behavior" (Kroudis).
- "Research indicates that current access to treatment for eating disorders is alarmingly low, with only 22% sufferers receiving specialist treatment for their eating disorder" (Kroudis).

How Can You Stop The Stigma:

- Spread awareness
- By becoming more knowledge and spreading awareness, slowly, it will encourage more people to become confident in seeking help
- Rip down societal pressures and expectations on a so-called 'ideal' body shape

- Educate yourself and others that eating disorders “do not have a fixed gender, ethnicity, or sexuality” (Kroudis)

Resources:

(Kroudis) <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/remove-stigma-and-welcome-voices-those-who-are-struggling>

<https://www.state.sc.us/dmh/anorexia/statistics.htm>

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

Thank you in advance for advocating and spreading awareness,