



NORMAL In Schools

NEWS RELEASE

NORMAL In Schools is a national nonprofit organization that educates about eating disorders, the therapeutic impact of the arts and related issues such as body image, self esteem and family communication.

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:

Date: February 15, 2011

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Normal in Schools (NIS) Debuts Online Educational Film During National Eating Disorders Awareness Week: “Speaking Out About ED”

New York, NY – February 15, 2011

NORMAL in Schools (NIS), a nonprofit organization dedicated to education about the three kinds of eating disorders (ED), self esteem and wellness, launched today an online educational film to coincide with national Eating Disorders Awareness Week (February 20-26, 2011). The powerful documentary-style film exposes the growing problem of eating disorders and obesity in our society, debunks myths, explores treatment options, and calls for better training of the medical community in managing this life-threatening condition.

Created by NIS Founder and President Robyn Hussa after five years of research while entrenched in schools, hospitals and working with families, the film sheds light on highly misunderstood mental illnesses, while shattering misconceptions about ED and obesity through in-depth commentary from physicians, psychologists and leading researchers. According to Dr. Stephen Hinshaw, Chair of Psychology at UC-Berkeley, “At least one-fourth of all U.S. teenage girls are suffering from self-mutilation, eating disorders, significant depression, or serious contemplation of suicide.”

“We need to be doing more in schools to recognize the illness, talk to the parents, and steer these people toward help,” says NEDA CEO Lynn Grefe.

Startling facts include:

- 25 million Americans struggle with an ED
- 30% of adults who are obese suffer from Binge Eating Disorder – at least 15 million Americans
- 40% of newly-identified anorexia cases occur in girls aged 15-19
- ED has the highest death rate of any mental illness
- Problems coping with ED can begin as early as ages 4-5
- According to the NIMH 35-40% of dieters will develop an ED
- The average gap is 10 years between noticing symptoms of mental illness and getting treatment



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The film cites the untimely deaths of three talented, award-winning students caused by the unrelenting destruction of eating disorders – and in doing so, reveals a healthcare system and medical community that is often woefully inadequate in providing solutions.

“In bringing our programs into schools, we’re seeing an alarming number of kids telling us that they are experiencing symptoms of ED,” says Husa, creator of the film. “Unfortunately, there are not nearly enough resources to help them.”

Multiple doctors affirm that people at highest risk for ED share specific genetic, biological, and physiological factors that together create a predisposition for ED. Yet the complexity of ED makes it very difficult to treat, adds Dr. Rick Bishop, founding partner of Eating Recovery Center. “If you know the field of ED, you know the field of mental health; you have to know it all to treat ED patients.”

The NIS film stresses the importance of prevention through improved self-esteem, media literacy and family communication to help kids build greater resilience.

The NIS educational film may be viewed online at: www.normal-life.org for a limited time, in honor and support of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

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NORMAL in Schools (NIS) is a national non-profit arts-and-education organization that educates about eating disorders, the therapeutic impact of the arts, self-esteem, body image and family communication. It offers an array of resources and programs – one of which brings a hip musical (“NORMAL”), a related curriculum, medical experts, and persons in recovery to schools, and that has clinically shown to inspire individuals into treatment. NIS was founded by Robyn Husa, a 2010 recipient of the Champion in Women’s Health Award by Sue Ann Thompson’s Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation.