

3 MINUTES CAN SAVE A LIFE

GET SCREENED. GET HELP. GET HEALTHY.



A GUIDE TO HOSTING AN EATING DISORDER SCREENING

Interested in Planning a NEDAwareness Week Eating Disorders Screening?

An event is a great way to raise awareness of eating disorders and meet other people who are passionate about the cause. Use this guide to get started: you'll find planning guidelines, suggested activities, outreach ideas and helpful resources.

About NEDAwareness Week

NEDAwareness Week puts the spotlight on the seriousness of eating disorders, improving public understanding of eating disorder causes, symptoms, triggers and treatment. Through increased awareness we encourage early detection and intervention, which can improve the likelihood of full recovery for millions.

NEDAwareness Week 2016

3 MINUTES CAN SAVE A LIFE. GET SCREENED. GET HELP. GET HEALTHY.

It only takes three minutes to take the eating disorder screening at screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/NEDA.

We're encouraging as many people as possible to get screened, get help and get healthy—and we need your help to get the word out. Share the anonymous, free screening with your friends and family, and ask them to pass it on— together, we can save lives.

Planning an Eating Disorders Screening

NEDA, in partnership with Screening for Mental Health, offers an easy-to-use online screening tool, perfect for holding an eating disorders screening event anywhere internet access is available. Since its 2013 launch, hundreds of thousands of people have taken the screening.

It's a quick, easy and potentially life-saving tool. This eating disorder screening is not diagnostic, but rather a self-assessment of whether an individual experiences symptoms consistent with an eating disorder. It includes follow-up treatment options and resources for an evaluation by an eating disorders specialist.

This is a low- to zero-cost activity that works well as either a standalone event or added to an existing activity, such as a film screening or life-size Barbie display.

Follow the steps listed in the Event Guide [Planning](#), [Outreach](#) and [Creating a Safe Space](#) sections to create a safe, effective and well-attended event.

Decide on your goal

At the beginning of your planning, ask yourself two questions: What is my objective? Who is my target audience? Use your answers to frame the rest of your planning.

It's important to start out with a clearly-defined purpose so that after your event you can measure your success. Set a 'reach' goal so that you have a target number to aim for on the day of your event; for example, if your goal is to get 25 people to take the eating disorder screening, you'll have a number to push for on the day of your event—and if you get 30 people screened then it will be even more successful than you had planned! Be sure to keep track of the number of people who take the screening.

Create an organizing committee

Creating an organizing committee is a great way to make sure that everyone's tasks are small and manageable, and to reach as many people as possible. Each member of the organizing committee has their own network, so by engaging them early in the planning process you can reach exponentially more people.

Specific committee member tasks could include attendee outreach and coordinating event logistics (e.g., securing space and equipment). If you are unsure of who to involve, create a list of local organizations that may be interested in supporting your event, and contact them to see if they would like to include a representative as a member of the organizing committee.

We strongly encourage you to include at least one mental health professional with expertise in eating disorders on your committee. A therapist, psychiatrist, nutritionist and/or medical professional can provide an expert voice, be available as a source of knowledge for event participants and offer information about local resources. To find area professionals who may be available to participate in your event, visit www.myNEDA.org/find-treatment.

□ Set the budget

Hosting an eating disorders screening can be low-cost or even free. Areas that you should consider when budgeting include space rental, equipment, printing costs (for flyers and signs) and materials.

Call the NEDA Helpline (800-931-2237) for free brochures, Helpline cards and handouts.

Depending upon your hosting location, the space and computers may be free as well—college campuses, libraries and offices may offer both the space and the technology free of charge.

If you do have event expenses, consider exploring sponsorship and donation options:

- Reach out to local companies about sponsoring your event. They may be able to provide funds, goods or services (such as printing, catering, media sponsorship and/or venue/equipment rentals) in return for recognition (such as thanking them before the event, acknowledging them on social media and/or displaying a sign with their name and logo). Only reach out to companies whose goals and messaging do not conflict with the message of your event—for example, you wouldn't want to promote a weight loss center, diet company or an organization that uses body insecurity as a marketing tool.
- Appeal to a business, alumni chapter or local physician or treatment center to help subsidize the event. Even if they can't provide monetary support, they may be able to help with securing a space and publicizing the event.

□ Choose a location

Pick a high-traffic location to reach as many people as possible. You'll want enough space to provide an eating disorder information table and at least one station with an internet-enabled computer (several stations would be ideal). Open screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/NEDA on each computer.

Ensure that the screening station offers privacy and confidentiality. If possible, use an adjacent semi-private area (such as a classroom or office space) to set up the screening computer(s). If you have multiple computers available, make sure that each computer screen can only be seen by the person taking the screening. If possible, set up a single row of computers separated by barriers.

Other factors to consider when selecting a space include ease of parking, access to public transportation and the distance your guests must travel to get there.

Possible locations include a university, library, community center, homeowners' association, alumni club or local restaurant/business. Reach out to the venue owner or manager to see if they will donate space.

□ Set the program

An eating disorders screening program is pretty straightforward, but make sure that you spend some time thinking about the event length, whether or not food and refreshments will be provided and any other questions specific to your location or attendees.

Get the word out

The first step in getting the word out about your screening is to complete the event submission form on the NEDAwareness Week website, www.NEDAwareness.org.

Before deciding which media to approach to promote your screening, spend some time thinking about who is most likely to understand and appreciate your event, and consider how you could let them know about it. Knowing your core audience helps you decide where to focus your efforts. For suggestions on groups, messages and outreach campaigns, see the [Event Guide Outreach](#) section.

Order materials and supplies

Order free NEDA brochures, Helpline cards and handouts from the NEDA Helpline (800-931-2237). Call a few weeks in advance to give the materials plenty of time to arrive.

You will also need a table or display for the available resources, and screening stations with internet-enabled computers. Your venue may be able to provide both.

Contact the venue before your event to confirm scheduling details and available materials. Do a walkthrough, imagining that the event is happening—you might notice new details that you hadn't considered before: think about how much privacy your screening stations offer, if you have all the materials you need and if you should put up directional signs.

If you'll be providing food and beverage, decide where you'll place them and confirm any deliveries.

Event day—enjoy!

On the day of your screening you get to see all of your hard work come to fruition! Make sure you take some time to appreciate your efforts; by raising awareness about the seriousness of eating disorders and campaigning for change, you're making a real difference in others' lives.

If you'd like to send out post-event thank-yous or a survey, keep a signup sheet for attendees to write their names and email addresses. Make sure they understand this is optional and the screening is anonymous.

Don't forget to take pictures! Be sure to get permission from attendees before photographing them. You can submit the pictures to newspapers and blogs afterwards, or post them on social media—by promoting the event after it's finished, you're getting the message out to even more people. Be sure to also submit your pictures to NEDA! info@myNEDA.org.

Keep in mind that an eating disorders screening may be stressful for some attendees. Keep helpful materials—like NEDA brochures, NEDA Helpline cards and contact information for a local counseling center—readily available for attendees.

The [Event Guide Creating a Safe Space](#) section offers more information on materials to provide and triggers to avoid.

Post-event followup

After your event (and after you've congratulated yourself on a job well done!) be sure to thank any event sponsors or partners, as well as your attendees. You can share photo albums with pictures of the event—your attendees may share those pictures with their networks, reaching exponentially more people!

Measure your success!

You can measure the outcome of your event based on the number of people who took the screening. Set a 'reach' goal so that you have a target number to aim for on the day of your event, and keep track of the number of people who completed the screening.

Now it's time to brag about your success! Tell NEDA (info@myneda.org), your organizing committee and any event partners about your outcomes—whether it's the number of people who attended your event or the post-event survey results, you should be proud and share your success!

Outreach

There are plenty of ways to get the word out about your event! After you've completed the event submission form on www.NEDAawareness.org, spend some time thinking about which audiences you'd like to reach and the best way to reach them. There are so many options—like blog posts, social media, flyers and radio stations—that choosing your outreach methods might be the hardest part!

Online Outreach

Email, listservs and blogs are quick, free ways to reach a lot of people. Prepare a small blurb about your event (you can use the template below) and send it to local organizations, such as universities, newspapers and community groups, to add to their listservs and social media pages. You can also post your event to community calendar websites such as Eventful or Patch. Ask your friends, family and the event's organizing committee to share event information with their networks as well.

Sample blurb:

Eating disorders affect 30 million people in the United States at some point in their lives. National Eating Disorders Awareness Week puts a spotlight on the seriousness of eating disorders, improving public understanding and encouraging early detection and intervention. Join us for a free, anonymous eating disorders screening on *[date and time]* at *[location]*. Please contact *[your email]* for more information. Together, we can raise awareness and save lives!

Social Media

Social media outlets are easy to use and allow you to reach new audiences. It only takes a few seconds to post a quick message that can reach thousands of people.

Once your event has been added to the NEDAwareness Week website, it will have its own webpage with the event details. You can make a short URL for the webpage by using a free service like goo.gl, bitly.com, or tinyurl.com.

Post on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram or whichever other network you use. If you don't use social media, send suggested posts to your friends and family who do.

Sample posts:

Did you know that eating disorders affect 30 million people in the US in their lifetimes? Get educated and screened at our #NEDAwareness ED screening - Learn more!: [URL]

Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness—but early intervention can save lives. Take the #NEDAwareness ED screening at [location] - Learn more!: [URL]

Three minutes can save a life. Bring your friends to our #NEDAwareness ED screening and spread the word – Learn more!: [URL]

Local Outreach

If your budget includes event flyers, postcards or signs, consider which local organizations would be the best points of distribution—you may decide to target gyms, doctor’s offices, community groups and/or colleges. It’s best to personally bring the materials to the locations; a face-to-face request to promote an event tends to be much more successful than a phone call or an email.

Radio stations can be a great resource; consider contacting AM radio stations, which are often more focused on community news than FM music stations. Many local TV stations have morning or noon shows focused on community news. Contact the shows’ hosts or producers about making a guest appearance. Be sure to invite local reporters to the event itself for follow-up stories.

Treatment Providers

Local treatment providers or clinics may help to promote your event by informing patients, displaying flyers in their waiting rooms or sharing information with other professionals. Visit www.myNEDA.org/find-treatment to find treatment providers in your area.

College and University Campuses

Many of the most successful NEDAwareness Week events have been on college campuses around the country. Schools can offer free space, built-in outreach networks and resources for those who may be struggling. If your event is on or near a college campus, take advantage of all the resources the school has to offer!

If college students will be attending your event, it is strongly recommended that you reach out to campus student health services or the counseling center to have a mental health professional at your event to provide information about eating disorders resources on campus. In order to promote your event, consider reaching out to university departments and student groups—they can advertise via email blasts and on their webpage. Professors might even offer students extra credit for attending your screening (it never hurts to ask!).

DEPARTMENTS		STUDENT GROUPS
Health services	Public health	Proud2Bme On Campus
Counseling center	Life sciences	Project H.E.A.L.
Residential life	Cognitive science	Active Minds
Nutrition	Exercise science	National Alliance on Mental Illness
Physiology	Education	To Write Love on Her Arms
Social work	Communications	
Psychology	Media studies	
Gender studies	Sociology	
Continuing education		

Creating a Safe Space

It is vitally important that your event is a safe space for all of your attendees, some of whom may be in recovery from or actively struggling with an eating disorder. Be mindful of any statements, images or messages that may be considered triggering. Please share this information with your organizing committee and anyone who may be helping out at the screening.

A trigger is an event that prompts a person to think or behave in a particular way. People with eating disorders, whether in recovery or not, may be triggered by internal or external stimuli to use eating disorder behaviors. Use the follow guidelines to minimize the possibility of triggers during your event. For more information please see www.myNEDA.org/guidelines-sharing-your-story-responsibly.

Set expectations

Open your event by sharing that this is intended to be a safe space. No one should engage in negative body talk, share numbers or comment on weight or shape. You should also advise attendees that their self-care should come first; while this is intended to be a safe space, it's possible that it might not feel safe for them—if at any point they do not feel comfortable, they should feel free to take a break or excuse themselves.

Avoid “talking numbers”

Using numbers (like weight, calories or clothing size) can be a very triggering experience for attendees. Speak generically about weight by saying things like “her weight was within healthy limits.” Remember not to talk about caloric intake; if someone with an eating disorder hears a particular calorie number, they might measure themselves against it. Numbers encourage comparisons, which can trigger a recurrence of eating disorder symptoms—it is always best to speak generally and avoid specific numbers.

Don't focus on graphic images or descriptions of the body at its unhealthiest point

Research strongly suggests that testimonies which dramatize dangerous thinness can provoke a "race to the bottom" among those struggling with or susceptible to an eating disorder (e.g., "She is thinner than I am and she's still alive. I should lose more weight."). Graphic images and descriptions should always be avoided; they are harmful to those who are struggling and counter-productive to your event's message.

Emphasize the seriousness of eating disorders without portraying them as hopeless

Always encourage people to seek help for themselves or for their loved ones who are suffering. Recovery is often a long and expensive process—but it is achievable and there are many options available. With treatment and support, those who are struggling can recover to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Always provide resources

Your event raised awareness and one of your attendees is concerned about their own or their loved one's eating behaviors—now what? Keep contact information for local and national treatment resources readily available throughout the event:

- NEDA Brochures and Helpline cards (call to request: 800-931-2237)
- NEDA Handouts (www.myNEDA.org/index-handouts)
- Information on local treatment providers. The NEDA website (www.myNEDA.org) and Helpline (800-931-2237) provide extensive resources nationwide.

Make it a Fundraiser

The purpose of your event is to educate and raise awareness, not to raise funds. If you're interested in hosting a fundraising event, please contact development@myNEDA.org.

However, if you are interested in adding a fundraising component (either to offset your own event costs or to donate to a nonprofit organization) to your awareness event, there are easy, no-pressure ways to do so. Always keep in mind that the purpose of your event is to educate and inform people—if your attendees think that you only want them in the door to raise money, they may choose not to attend. If you do choose to add a fundraising component, be mindful of maintaining an open and welcoming atmosphere.

Some fundraising options to consider:

- Add a donation jar, with a sign clearly indicating where the funds will be going.
- Provide donation forms for a nonprofit organization of your choice.
- Have a computer available and load the donation page for a nonprofit of your choice.

Thank You!

Hosting a NEDAwareness Week screening event can be a fun, inspiring and deeply impactful experience. Because of your hard work and efforts, more people will be educated on the dangers of eating disorders, the impact of negative body ideals and the importance of getting help.

It might be easy to get hung up on event planning details, but don't forget the big picture: all of the people you're helping. For someone in recovery from an eating disorder, just knowing that people like you are out there planning events, spreading awareness and inspiring action can help to create a sense of community and send the clear message that recovery is always possible.

For all of your hard work, and for making NEDAwareness Week possible, we thank you.

Don't forget to let us know how your event went!: info@myNEDA.org.

Want to keep the body-positive, pro-recovery momentum going?:

- Call the NEDA Helpline for resources, brochures and treatment options: 800-931-2237
- Download the NEDA Toolkits: www.myNEDA.org/toolkits
- Report praise- or protest-worthy media: www.myNEDA.org/media-watchdog
- Advocate for legislative change: www.myNEDA.org/star-program
- Plan or participate in a NEDA Walk: www.NEDAwalks.org
- Start a Proud2Bme On Campus group at your school: www.Proud2Bme.org/oncampus