

MEDIA RELEASE

Eating disorder groups across Canada to mark Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2017 with #NotAChoice campaign

January 30, 2017 (Toronto, ON) – With eating disorders having a higher mortality rate among girls and young women than any other mental health condition, eating disorder groups across Canada will mark Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2017 with a new campaign to reinforce the message that eating disorders are *not* a choice.

From February 1 to 7, the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) and other groups across the country will host a variety of awareness-raising and educational activities to help dispel the myth that eating disorders are just a phase or a diet gone too far. Using the hashtags #NotAChoice and #EDAW2017 (or #SEMTA2017 in French), they will spread the message that eating disorders are serious biologically-influenced mental illnesses with potentially life-threatening consequences — and they can affect people of all ages, genders, classes, ethnic backgrounds and abilities.

Six provinces and more than 50 municipalities across Canada will participate in Eating Disorders Awareness Week activities. Dozens of notable landmarks will be lit up in purple throughout the week to raise awareness of this important cause, including the Peace Bridge in Niagara Falls, the High Level Bridge in Edmonton and City Hall in Vancouver.

“By generating awareness, we can promote public understanding about these illnesses while also spreading hope to those affected,” says Marbella Carlos, Outreach and Education Coordinator at NEDIC. “We know that open, supportive dialogue can help break the shame, stigma and silence that affect those living with an eating disorder as well as the millions of others who struggle with food and weight preoccupation.”

An estimated 600,000 to 990,000 Canadians are living with an eating disorder at any given time — a number greater than the combined populations of Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, Yukon, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Those seeking support can contact the NEDIC Helpline toll-free at 1-866-633-4220 from 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. EST, Monday to Friday.

For more information about Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2017, visit www.nedic.ca.

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The National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1985 to provide information and resources on eating disorders and food and weight preoccupation. NEDIC’s main goal is to inform the public about eating disorders and related issues as mandated by the Mental Health Programs and Services division of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. NEDIC is a program of the University Health Network in Toronto, Canada.

Media enquiries:

Suzanne Phillips, Program Manager, NEDIC
416-340-4156 or suzanne.phillips@uhn.ca