



Dear MEDA community,

As you may recall, we reviewed our Hope and Inspiration speaker series. Over the summer months, MEDA organized a Hope and Inspiration Task force to analyze the recent survey results and brainstorm for the future. These meetings included professionals who are treating individuals struggling with eating disorders and representation from local eating disorder treatment programs. MEDA is so appreciative for the collaboration and thought-provoking discussions that were held and for helping to create a new vision. Thank you to everyone who completed the surveys and participated in the process!

In summary, the outcome is that MEDA will continue a revised version of Hope and Inspiration programming but with less frequency. Instead of once per month, the program will take place, on average, once per quarter. In addition, we will be making some revisions to the speaker guidelines and the format of the program. Speakers will be asked to focus more on how they got better and what life is like now versus why they developed an eating disorder and what life was like when they were sick. This is a subtle yet important change in focus that all involved agree will make for a more meaningful impact. Finally, we plan to advertise for programming in advance while providing a description of the event (such as topic, population, etc.) so attendees will have a sense of what they may hear.

One question that the taskforce committee thought hard and long about, was the eligibility of a speaker related to number of years in recovery. Unfortunately, we were unable to come up with a good answer for this. Rather than asking for a specific number of years in recovery, we will be doing a thorough screening process in which we want to get to know you and understand your reasons for wanting to share your story at this time. One thing we do know is that we are not seeking perfect stories of recovery. Rather, we are aiming for authenticity, growth, connection and support. This allows for space for different phases of recovery and for transparency about where folks are in their process.

For purposes of consistency, all current MEDA recovery speakers are going to be asked to reapply so we can get a good sense of where they are in recovery now. In

addition, we are seeking new speakers and themes with the hopes of creating more diversity and inclusion within our programming. Some examples of potential populations, topics and themes of interest are as follows:

- Marginalized voices: people of color, men, LGBTQ+ community
- Recovery that required a medical leave from college/job
- Recovering into a larger body
- BED
- Eating disorders and co-occurring illnesses (e.g., ED's and substance abuse)
- Uncovering the eating disorder (e.g., social anxiety, OCD, trauma, etc.)
- Siblings
- Family Systems and the benefits of family therapy
- Parent/child
- Recovered therapist
- Parent in recovery with child with ED
- Transparency around underlying triggers: transitions, making a mistake, perceived failure, perfectionism (the why and how it served you)
- Therapist and client (or dietician and client, etc.)

Lastly, we are excited to announce that our next Hope and Inspiration program will take place at MEDA on Saturday, October 19th, from 10AM – 11:30AM. This will be an Art Show featuring MEDA recovery speaker and artist, Therese Roeser, who will share her story of recovery and showcase her artwork from Healing Crayons. Therese is a stay at home mom with a master's degree in social work, a lot of art supplies and a bone to pick with our culture's ideas regarding health, beauty and wellness. She has been recovered from an eating disorder for several years. She began making collages or protesting art as a way to talk back to diet culture and reaffirm her own recovery. In January 2018, she decided to share her art on Instagram under the name healingcrayons. Please come join us on October 19th at 10AM at the MEDA offices in Newton for this exciting event. Hope and Inspiration remains a free event with a suggested donation of \$10 - \$25 per person to continue fighting this fight! Registration is not required but encouraged – please rsvp at office@medainc.org

Additional future Hope and Inspiration dates include January 25, 2020, April 25th, 2020 and July 18th, 2020.

Warmly,
Amanda DeStefano, Chief Clinical Director at MEDA