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What does the word 'diet' mean to you?

Everything you need to know about holding your own Speak Out

## What is a Speak Out and why are we doing it?

A Speak Out is a gathering of people in a safe environment, where they are able to raise their voice to articulate their experiences of a situation, and, equally importantly, listen to the voices of others.

We are proposing a Speak Out about dieting because it is time that we recognize that dieting is not a trivial issue. We need to articulate boldly, honestly, and angrily, the way dieting **diminishes** people, **limits** their possibilities of becoming who they could be, and **causes millions of people deep anguish every day**.

Enough is enough. When we start to say no to all this we will finally hear what we actually *want, need, and desire*.

You can hold a Speak Out anywhere, with anyone. By all means aim for big – but if it is just a few of you in someone's kitchen, that is just as valid and powerful.

A Speak Out is not a therapy session – although there is nothing wrong with feeling better afterwards. In general, the aim is to become really aware of where dieting puts you, and to start making important choices about how much you want to play along with a game that is making you miserable.

It is about starting to listen to yourself, taking care of yourself, and daring to have desires.

It is about taking on the challenge to accept and understand how natural it is to recognize hunger and to eat happily, intuitively, and without guilt.

It is about recognizing that you are not alone in this struggle.

It is about remembering that with every personal choice you make, you are taking a stand in the world.

Whether there are 400, 40 or even 4 of you it is a radical political act and a defining moment not just for you: It will make waves through your life and the lives of those around you.

## THE EVENT

You may like to follow this basic structure for your Speak Out:

1. **Give some basic information** about the diet industry (some info, stats and a Powerpoint are included, that you can customize if you wish.)
2. **Speak Out: Use the five Ditching Dieting questions to begin.** Feel free to respond to as many or few of them as you wish – or add anything else that occurs to you. Try to keep every speaker to 3-4 minutes maximum so that many people can speak.
3. **Doing Things Differently** After an hour or so help each other to move forward to discuss what you can do now. If in a larger group, go into break-out sessions for this part, ideally placing people that live in similar areas together in groups:
  - Encourage people to get together again to create new opportunities for actions.
  - Start reading groups to become walking resources on the dieting industry.
  - Create planning groups to install a Ditching Dieting bin for your area (remember you may need to seek permission from the council).
  - Talk about how you can include your friends and family members.
  - Be innovative, play to your strengths, and dare to think big – we have a UK-wide network, all sorts of things maybe possible (see more info below).

#### Essential Equipment:

- FAQ sheet and Ditching Dieting handouts (included)
- Sign-up sheets to keep in touch (template included)
- Consent forms (template included)
- Camera/photo camera/webcam, so you can send us pictures

#### Optional extras:

- Hand out blank postcards/pieces of paper at the start of the session, and ask participants to write a positive message for another person on it. Collect these, mix them up, and then let everyone take one home to remind them of the day.
- Use our Ditching Dieting Powerpoint.
- Film the event, upload parts of it and send us the links.
- Optional equipment: projector and Powerpoint, mics
- If you plan to order t-shirts, we can provide you with the designs

#### What to consider

- Creating a safe space: make sure that the space is welcoming. People can choose to speak out when they are ready and all participants are aware that it is always ok to leave.
- Really really listen to the speakers, and be aware of the way you respond in your body language and verbally. Make sure you treat everyone's contribution as valid.
- Have resources ready and offer places to go for support for those who need it. Investigate services close to you in case someone asks you for help.
- Bear in mind that the notion that these things are radical political acts might be new, frightening, but also exhilarating to people. Do not patronize them – let them engage with it.
- Think about your context – what kind of people are coming.
- Enable people to stick to three or four minutes
- Know your FAQ's and background info (included in the pack)
- Film rights and consent forms (make sure you ask people for consent before you film them or take photos. We include a consent form template).
- Give time for breakout sessions that encourages further discussion

#### IMPORTANT

**You will be generating a fantastic energy with your Speak Out, which we would love to include in the overall UK campaign.**

**What we would like you to do for us to make you a recognized part of the campaign: Include a feedback form, send us photos, and send us links for videos.**

**Report back and let us know what worked and what didn't, and where you will take things next.**

#### How to encourage people to keep supporting the campaign:

- Get involved in Ditching Dieting by creating a Ditching Dieting bin, and an event in your local community to go with it. The idea is to have an interactive event (a party, a playful ritual, or even an interactive bin!) that encourages individuals and groups to dump their diet plans and books for good. Ideally, you would find a secure place for the bin to remain, giving people a chance to revisit the site of liberating themselves and to bring others along too.
- Create reading groups/meeting groups. Once you've ditched the dieting, you may find you have other things you want to do together. And we want to hear about it all!
- Mention the campaign on blogs. Blog about your experience of building a new relationship with your body. Tweet using the hashtag #ditchingdieting
- Write in to complain about advertising (let's make the Special K woman and her red dress a thing of the past).
- Do a virtual Speak Out via YouTube and post it to our Facebook page.
- Develop your own ideas – and tell us what you're up to!

### **Further reading**

To host a Speak Out you need to have certain basic knowledge of the subject matter. Key points are covered in the info included in this pack, together with the powerpoint. However, we think it is important that you take time to do your own research and build on this to be able to field questions confidently, especially on the subject of intuitive eating.

Here are some sources to go to:

### **The obesity 'epidemic' and body politics:**

*The Obesity Myth* by Paul Campos

*Fat Politics* by J. Eric Oliver

*Bodies (Chapter 4)* by Susie Orbach

*Rethinking Thin* by Gina Kolata

*Health at Every Size* by Linda Bacon

### **Intuitive eating:**

*Beyond Chocolate* by Audrey and Sophie Boss

*Overcoming Over-Eating* by Jane Hirschmann & Carol Munker

*On Eating and Fat is a Feminist Issue* by Susie Orbach

*When Food Is Love* by Geneen Roth

### **Any Questions?**

If you still have questions about any of the above, you can contact us via our website.

Have fun, and make it heard! x

Endangered Bodies UK

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This Pack is complete if you have received:

- A basic structure for a Ditching Dieting info speech, including the five Speak Out questions
- Powerpoint to accompany the speech
- A Ditching Dieting handout
- FAQs about ditching dieting answered
- A photo consent form template
- A sign-up sheet template
- A feedback form to be returned after the event with your own photos and a description of your experiences