



**BITE  
SIZE**

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**



# LETTER FROM THE PRODUCER

Shortly after my 20th birthday, my dad told me he had been diagnosed with Type II Diabetes. A few days earlier, I had stepped on a scale for the first time in years, and the number hit me in the face. I had gained nearly 50 pounds since my high school graduation. All at once, I saw my future laid out before me – diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension – all amounting to less time on this earth.

I was terrified.

I had become a statistic – another figure among the 60% of Latinos who are overweight and obese. I knew it all needed to change. I needed to change.

Two years later, I had dropped the weight. I was the healthiest I had ever been in my life. But more importantly, I was seeing my changes ripple through my family and friends. My mom and two brothers, who were all obese, were starting to eat better and exercise more. In that moment, I realized that I had the power to change not only myself, but my family, friends, and the world as well. It was from this idea that the seed of *BITE SIZE* grew into the empowering film that it has become.

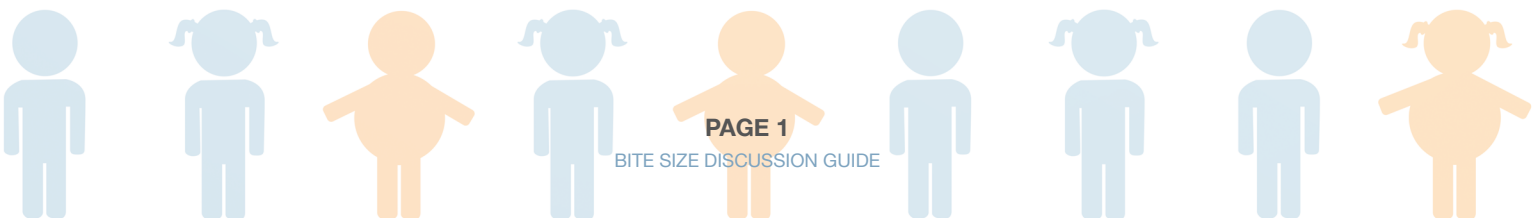
With *BITE SIZE*, I wanted to make a film that was truthful to the experiences of children and families like my friends' and my own.

I wanted to make a film that gave an honest picture of the problems we face and proved that change IS possible. I think we have done that. Every time I watch the film, I am newly inspired by each of these amazing kids and their families.

They motivate me to be healthier and happier every day, and I believe that by the time the credits roll, they will have done the same for you.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE... ONE BITE AT A TIME.

ERIC GALLEGOS, **PRODUCER**



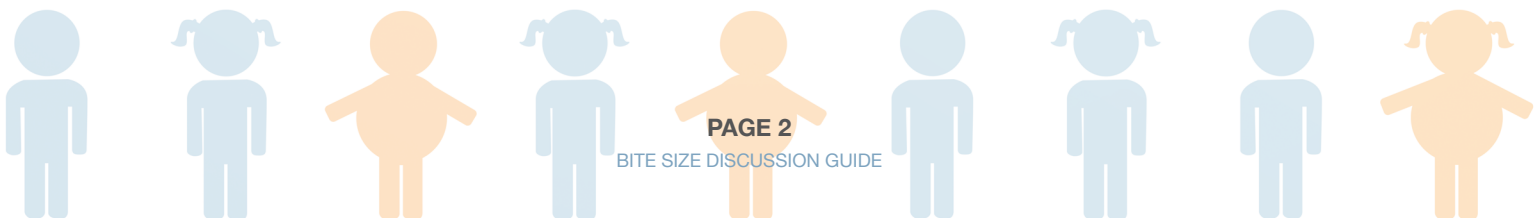


# ABOUT THE FILM

America's battle against childhood obesity is an issue too big for many to fully comprehend. With one in three children overweight, this health crisis is sweeping our nation at an unforgiving rate. *BITE SIZE* takes an intimate look at the obesity epidemic through the eyes of the children most at risk. They show us that losing weight is not just about changing the number on the scale, but also about asking ourselves who we are, and what we want to become.

The film presents a new perspective on this critical issue that transcends the data and statistics we hear every day, asking us to consider the consequences of our actions and the legacy that we intend to leave for our children.

This guide was created for young people and adults alike, with the purpose of generating real changes in attitude and behavior when it comes to nutrition and health, just like the young people featured in *BITE SIZE* are trying to do. Get together with your family and friends and talk about the issues the film raises. Then, find ways in your own life to make positive, lasting change.





# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE WATCHING BITE SIZE

*BITE SIZE* follows four young people, along with the stakeholders in their lives, as they struggle to make healthy change. Use the following discussion prompts to enhance your appreciation of their individual stories – and to help you apply their lessons to your own personal choices.

- What role do your family, friends, and teachers play in your own efforts to stay healthy?
- What do you know about the importance of nutrition on a person's general health? What do you know about the importance of exercise on a person's general health?
- What do you know about Type 2 diabetes? What do you know about heart disease? Do you or anyone in your family have either of these health problems?
- Is body image important among your friends? How is body image tied into popularity, bullying, and perceived success among your friends? How is body image treated in popular culture?
- Have you ever been mistreated because of how you look? Have you ever mistreated anyone because of how they looked?
- Describe a typical evening meal at your house. Do you eat together at home? Who does the grocery shopping? Who does the cooking? What are some of your favorite meals?
- Do you think about the food you eat on a given day, or the exercise you do? What sorts of foods do you eat regularly? Why do you eat those foods and not others?
- What does it mean to be healthy? How are happiness and healthfulness related?
- Have you ever tried to make a big change in your behavior, attitudes, habits, or lifestyle? Describe the process. How was it challenging? What made it harder/ easier? How did you go about making the change? How did you feel once the change was complete?

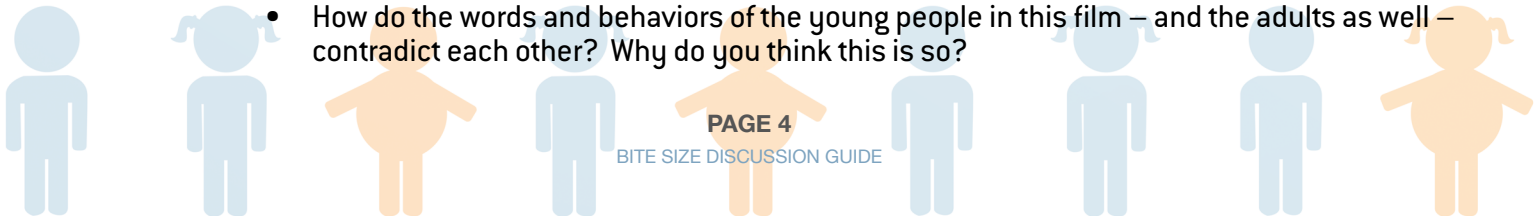


# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## THINGS TO CONSIDER AFTER WATCHING BITE SIZE

Use the following prompts to conduct a discussion about *BITE SIZE* and to broaden your thinking about the film and the issues it depicts.

- Give examples of how adult role models (parents, coaches, counselors) affect the young people in this film.
- What do all the young people in this film have in common?
- How are the young people in the film impacted by the choices and behaviors of the adults in their lives?
- Using examples from the film, discuss how a group can be both a positive and a negative influence on an individual who is trying to change.
- How do happiness and fun play into healthy lifestyle choices?
- What role, besides sustenance/survival, does food play for the people in this film? What role does food play in your life?
- What roles do poverty and economics play in the health of communities? Explain.
- How are lifestyle and health passed down from generation to generation?
- Why do you think it is so hard for people to eat healthily? What makes it hard for people to make healthy lifestyle choices?
- How do the home lives and school lives of the young people in the film support and/or work against each other?
- What do the success stories in the film have in common?
- What are some of the long-term, negative effects of eating unhealthily that the film conveys?
- How have some of the adults in the film benefitted from their efforts to help the young people get healthy? How do these benefits show in the adults in the film?
- What lessons can you take away from the film that apply to your life?
- What did you find inspiring about the film? What did you find discouraging about the film?
- What are some of the self-defeating behaviors that the young people in the film exhibit? How do these behaviors relate to their struggles to become healthy and lose weight?
- How do the words and behaviors of the young people in this film – and the adults as well – contradict each other? Why do you think this is so?





# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## DAVION'S STORY

What does football represent in Davion's life? Why is it so important to him? How does his appreciation of this sport have a positive effect on his life and lifestyle choices?

How does Davion's knowledge of his diabetes diagnosis affect his outlook?

How is Davion's weight affecting him?

Why does Davion fight so much, even when he knows it could affect his ability to stay on the team? How does this behavior relate to his struggles with his weight?

## EMILY'S STORY

How did teasing and bullying affect Emily? What does she say was the cause of the bullying?

What did Mindstream teach Emily about losing weight and being healthy? Did she leave with the knowledge and attitude that would enable her to be healthy back at home? Why is the number on the scale so important to her?

How does Emily's self-perception change over the course of the film? Why do you think this is so?

How is food a trigger for Emily? How would you describe Emily's relationship with food?

## MOY'S STORY

How do Moy's interests work against his physical health at the beginning of the film? How does he use these same interests to his benefit by the end?

What did you notice about how Moy's father talks about him at the beginning of the film? How do his attitudes seem to change by the end? To what do you attribute these changes?

Why does the MEND program take Moy and his mom to a supermarket? Why is counting the number of ingredients on a package important? Why is it important to know what we are eating?

## KEANNA'S STORY

What aspects of her culture and community are working against Keanna's desire to get healthy?

Keanna's dad says that healthy choices are "up to the individual" and not due to bad influences. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

What message did the Si Se Puede dance performance send to the dancers, as well as their counselor?

Why does Keanna joke around so much? How does this relate to Keanna's struggle with her weight?





# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## THINGS TO DO NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN BITE SIZE

*BITE SIZE* is a complex and realistic exploration of an epidemic in this country – as seen through the eyes of four diverse young people. Two out of every three Americans are considered to be overweight or obese. Approximately \$190 billion is spent in added medical expenses per year due to preventable diseases associated with obesity, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer. As of 2014, about one-third of children and teens in the US are overweight or obese. For those viewers who wish to take action to change these dire statistics, as well as process some of their feelings and reactions after viewing the film, here are some great ways that you can get involved in improving the health, diet, and obesity rates among young people in our country:

- **TAKE THE \$4 CHALLENGE!** Check out Good and Cheap – a healthy cookbook for families on a budget. See if you and your family can eat healthy, save money, and lose weight for only \$4 a day! Go to <http://www.leannebrown.com> for more information.
- **HAVE A PARTY.** Invite your friends over for a private screening of *BITE SIZE*. Use the questions in this guide to facilitate a discussion about your own lifestyle choices and how, as a community, you can support each other in getting healthier together. Let us know how you're making changes as a community by emailing us at [info@bitesizemovie.com](mailto:info@bitesizemovie.com)
- **LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.** Go to <https://www.change.org/p/get-soda-off-kids-menus> and sign a petition to support taking soda off of kids' menus. Choose from the list of existing petitions that support healthy policy reform and accessibility to healthy choices, or start your own.
- **SUPPORT EXISTING CHANGEMAKERS.** Go to [www.mendfoundation.org](http://www.mendfoundation.org) and see how you can help the MEND program make positive changes in their communities.
- **Commit to Healthy Change.** Turn your family into healthy eaters – choosing local, sustainable, natural, whole foods. Find the local, sustainable, organic food purveyors in your own community at [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org).



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After viewing *BITE SIZE*, we find that many people are deeply motivated to make positive lifestyle changes to improve their well-being and avoid ill health. Research has shown that the single most important factor in fostering one's health is diet. We highly recommend educating yourself and your community on a proper diet, and we have provided links to resources below that will help jumpstart your research. What you find may surprise you, such as the fact that, contrary to what we have been told for decades, fat is not necessarily bad for us and is, in fact, vital to our health and prevents weight gain and disease. Based on evidence from the latest studies and respected health experts, we recommend eating a diet of whole foods, consisting mostly of plants and healthy fats, with a moderate amount of meat and fish. The following resources provide a gateway to learning more about food and taking action to make important changes in your life.

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INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE NUTRITION

[www.responsiblefoods.org](http://www.responsiblefoods.org)

DR. MARK HYMAN

[www.drhyman.com](http://www.drhyman.com)

TEDED -YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

[www.ed.ted.com/series/you-are-what-you-eat](http://www.ed.ted.com/series/you-are-what-you-eat)

HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION SOURCE

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource)

T. COLIN CAMPBELL CENTER FOR NUTRITION STUDIES

[www.nutritionstudies.org](http://www.nutritionstudies.org)

NUTRITIONFACTS.ORG

[www.NutritionFacts.org](http://www.NutritionFacts.org)

## ABOUT BIG PICTURE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Kimberly Birbrower founded Big Picture Instructional Design to get all the stakeholders in the educational space talking about — and watching — movies. As former classroom educators with extensive experience in nonprofit work, educational administration, and media literacy, BPID increases the reach and impact of issue-driven films, television projects, and documentaries by creating custom-designed campaigns and writing original collateral materials that always put the film at the forefront. Big Picture Instructional Design has spearheaded or contributed to the educational campaigns for numerous films, including those for *Selma*, *Fury*, *TEACH*, *Lincoln*, *ESCAPE FIRE*, *The Conspirator*, *The Soloist*, *The 11th Hour*, and *Thanks for Sharing*. For samples of our work and to learn more about our outreach campaigns, visit us at [www.bigpictureinstructional.com](http://www.bigpictureinstructional.com).

