



Death Is Not the Answer Premiere Comments

The following are comments we received after a private premiere of an early cut of the film *Death Is Not the Answer* as part of a 3-day conference on suicide hosted by metro Detroit non-profit Kevin's Song.

"Your premiere showing of "Death is Not the Answer" was a tour de force. Thank you for creating something that was riveting, personal, poignant, painful...and educational. On the day you decided to tackle what is arguably the most profoundly difficult topic we face as humans—the prospect that each of us can end our own life—you ventured into an existential nightmare. A huge documentary challenge. Happily, you were not deterred. "You came, you saw, and you conquered." In the process, you delivered a wonderful gift to our society—the gift of understanding.

*We need to understand the deep and despairing roots of clinical depressions that lead those with depressions to contemplate ending their lives. We need to understand that none of us are exempt. We need to understand that we have solutions. "Death is Not the Answer" provides an accurate portrayal of the suicide epidemic we are striving to overcome. It provides a summary of the progress that is being made. It also is honest about how much more we still have to do. It gives us tools to help save lives. It will help our veterans in re-entry efforts. It will give thousands a reason to hope and to understand. To understand that death is **not** the answer. Life is the answer.*

Thank you so much for inviting me to participate and share my knowledge of the latest scientific and clinical advances. As a nation, we are burying stigma. We are unraveling the puzzles of the brain. We are understanding the evils of persistent stressors. And we are developing better treatments. But we need to do more. And rapidly. We will. Your creative talents have helped. Again, thank you for permitting me to be part of it."

John F. Greden, M.D.

Rachel Upjohn Professor of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences

Executive Director, University of Michigan Comprehensive Depression Center

Founding Chair, National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC)

Research Professor, Molecular and Behavioral Neurosciences Institute

Past President, Board of Directors, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

University of Michigan

My wife, Jennifer Chiriboga, Ph.D., is a child psychologist who is very interested in the role of meditation, listening and understanding physical and emotional cues and taking a holistic, energy-based approach including healthy eating, exercise, socialization, nurturing our body and soul with nature. We both believe this is a very important and timely film. It is especially important and relevant to children and adolescents with mental health problems like depression who have been diagnostic and therapeutic orphans. Most of the adults whose stories the film tells who have suffered from depression and suicidal thinking, first had onset - not necessarily diagnosed - in childhood and adolescence. This film is, therefore, important to the general public as it sheds light on a problem that many are either not aware of or when confronted with depression and risk for suicide do not know where to turn, do not know if there is a way out. The answer as Rabbi Syme says so eloquently is that death is NOT the answer...life is. But more than that, your film shows various paths to wellness and how to fight vigorously against depression. Your film can do enormous good and help defeat the ignorance and stigma that so often gets in the way of healing and recovery. This comprehensive knowledge and understanding including integrated approaches, medical and holistic, exercise, meditation, the food we eat - and don't eat - meditation, listening to emotional and physical cues, being given the license to fight back, because depression and suicidal behavior is beatable and people can recover.

David R. Rosenberg, M.D.

Professor & Chair, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Neurosciences

Miriam L. Hamburger Endowed Chair of Child Psychiatry

Psychiatrist in Chief

Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center

"When we first met with Keith Famie to discuss a film about the epidemic of suicide sweeping our country, and indeed, the world, we realized that a daunting task lay ahead. What we saw during the premiere of "Death is NOT the Answer" is a film that has tackled the difficult subject of suicide by throwing a wide net over the many facets that compose the problems and strides being made in the field with sensitivity and intelligence. There are no easy answers, as the film points out. There are excellent researchers and clinicians studying the problem and there are committed individuals striving to bring the issue of suicide to the public. It's only when the public realizes the scope of the epidemic of suicide and research is adequately funded, that answers will be found. Meanwhile, the public airing of this film will go a long way to disseminate information, raise public awareness and help save lives."

Gail and John Urso
Cofounders, Kevin's Song

"I thought the film was powerful and I'm honored to be a part of it. The film beautifully captures the effects of suicide and, in particular, how it affects the family of suicide victims. My hope is this film helps to inform the general public about how common and devastating suicide is in America and motivates people to push researchers, clinicians and policy makers to come up with solutions to this urgent crisis."

Srijan Sen, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School
Research Associate Professor, Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience Institute
Associate Chair for Research and Research Faculty Development
University of Michigan

"Assurex Health is privileged to be a part of the documentary "Death is Not the Answer." Thanks to the National Network of Depression Centers, Keith Famie and the Kevin's Song organization for this important effort to increase awareness of depression, address the stigma associated with mental health, and save lives. The documentary is extraordinarily personal and moving. It will bring much needed attention to the tragedy of suicide, the fact that help is advancing, and together we can find new ways for people to achieve mental wellness."

Virginia C. Drosos
President and CEO, Assurex Health



"Excellent! A difficult topic to tackle, but Keith has created a film in Death Is Not The Answer that is powerful, personal, informative, compassionate and hopeful. An important and moving production that everyone should see and discuss. We have all been touched in some way by depression or suicide and I have high hopes that this will open hearts, minds and conversations for everyone who sees it."

Dennis Liegghio
Founder, KnowResolve

"Keith, you have done a great job with an incredibly difficult and sensitive subject. It's one we must all talk about and work together to find solutions. The tragedy of suicide touches each and every one of us, and together we will help those suffering turn towards the light."

Sheriff Michael Bouchard
Oakland County Sheriff's Office

"Congratulations, it's a tough conversation to get through and you are getting through it, with the beauty of your work. I look forward to see what more your creative process can bring forth to clarify this highly confusing topic."

Gigi Colombini, LMSW
G. Colombini Counseling, PLLC
Psychotherapist – Suicide Prevention Specialist

"Death is Not The Answer will save lives. How many of us get a chance to be part of supporting something that important during our years on earth? Thank you Keith, for giving each of us that incredible opportunity."

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme
Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI



"Depression and suicide are devastating to families. They create feelings of loss, but even worse, guilt in those that are left behind. Like so many complex aspects of the human condition, suicide is a behavior that happens to be self-injurious. Can modern clinical neuroscience inform us on how to deal with suicide? This is the hope under which all clinical neuroscientists operate. They hope that their experimental research is foundational enough that some day it may inform humankind of how to preempt suicidal ideation and tendencies in those who are depressed. Clinical neuroscientists often operate in the vacuum that the university ivory tower creates for them. However, it is in partnering with filmmakers like Mr. Famie, that clinical neuroscientists might hope to breach the vacuum and reach out

to the public, who in fact are our real constituency. Films like Mr. Famie's have an influence that extends beyond the 90 or 120 minutes of their running time. Their running time in fact extends into the complex cycle of life and they have the power and influence to unite, inform and heal. I commend Mr. Famie for tackling this difficult topic with such an acute sense of taste, aesthetic and respect."

Vaibhav A. Diwadkar, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry & Behavioral Neurosciences
Co-Director, Brain Imaging Research Division, Wayne State University School of Medicine

"It was an amazing experience to see this film coming together and to be a part of something that I believe will make a difference for other families and save lives. Depression and the resulting suicides from it take a devastating toll on families and our society. This film is a critical tool to drive much needed national conversations and awareness of the impact of suicide and to help us to better understand how we can all make a difference to change that."

Kathleen A. Stevens
Survivor of Suicide, Bipolar Depression Lived Experience
Director of Marketing and Development, National Network of Depression Centers

"I really enjoyed this film about depression and suicide. It is such an important topic in this country, unfortunately, and people seem to not want to talk about it, which clearly will not help solve this problem. Death is NOT the Answer addresses this societal issue very well! However, there is more that can be looked into and discussed further because this is a serious epidemic that is affecting so many individuals and families. The film portrayed very clearly how one's suffering can have a ripple effect on others close to them. The message was emotional, but light-hearted wherever it could be, giving the viewers a break from so much of the sadness this topic involves. It was very well done, and I hope to see more from this project."



J'aime Hill
President and CEO, Worry-Free Critter Care, LLC

"'Death is Not the Answer' brings the subject of suicide out of the darkness and sheds light on how we as a society need to treat it... not with shame but with empathy and a better understanding of the true nature of this disease. Ultimately, Keith Famie's film gives us hope that together we can find our way out of the darkness and solve this most tragic of problems."

Jim Burnstein
Screenwriter, Director of Screenwriting Program, University of Michigan