



# **Level II: Depression Awareness**

## **Lesson 4**

A Lesson Designed for Grades 5-9

Erika's Lighthouse is a not-for-profit depression and mental health education organization that educates upper elementary, middle school and high school communities about teen depression, eliminates the stigma associated with mental health issues and empowers teens to take charge of their mental health. For more information and other programs and resources, go to [www.erikaslighthouse.org](http://www.erikaslighthouse.org).

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This program was written for educators, professionals and other adults working with adolescents to educate them regarding the issues surrounding depression. While Erika's Lighthouse consults with clinical, therapeutic, legal, and child development experts, nothing in this program should be construed as specific or general medical or psychological advice. Erika's Lighthouse assumes no responsibility for any actions taken as a result of the material or information contained in the program. Every child's and family's situation is unique, and Erika's Lighthouse urges children, adolescents, parents, and educators to seek and find competent professional advice appropriate for specific individuals and actions.

**Welcome to Level II: Depression Awareness**  
**Lesson 4**  
**A Lesson for Grades 5-9**

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**In Lesson 4, students will have the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills developed in this program to practice. Based on the Student Mental Health Assessment results, students will self-select a few items to work on over the next week by journaling for seven days.**

**Students will:**

- Establish a plan for maintaining or improving their mental health

**National Health Education Standards Alignment:**

- Standard #7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.
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988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline  
(Text or Call 988 or Chat 988lifeline.org)

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PLEASE CONTACT US AT ANY TIME AT  
[info@erikaslighthouse.org](mailto:info@erikaslighthouse.org)

## Level II: Depression Awareness - Lesson 4

*A Lesson for Grades 5-9*

### TEACHER PREPARATION

Review all of the Level II: Lesson 4 facilitator guide script & make copies of the Student Workbook

### SCRIPT

“We can’t always control whether or not we will experience depression. As we have learned, sometimes it can be passed genetically. However, there are things we can do outside of treatment to make depression symptoms manageable and they are the same things all of us can do to help reduce stress and promote good mental health.

Many of the decisions we make every day about what we eat, how much we sleep, how active we are and the ways in which we manage our lives can make an enormous impact on the way we feel emotionally.”

### STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Ask the students to take a few minutes to complete the Student Mental Health Assessment in their Student Workbook. Once they are finished, share the point value for each answer. Ask them to add up the total for each category. Explain that a lower score shows healthier mental health choices. Higher scores in a category means there’s room for improvement.

Sleep	1. On average, I get 8 hours or more sleep per night.	T[0] F[1]
	2. I have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep more days than not.	T[0] F[1]
	3. Most days, I wake up feeling rested and energized.	T[0] F[1]
Exercise	4. I engage in at least 2½ hours a week of physical activity.	T[0] F[1]
	5. I spend more than two hours a day watching TV, playing video games or looking at my phone.	T[0] F[1]
	6. I walk or ride a bike most places.	T[0] F[1]
Nutrition	7. I eat a fruit or vegetable at nearly every meal.	T[0] F[1]
	8. I eat fried food, fast food or food packed in bags/boxes more days than not.	T[0] F[1]
	9. I eat three meals a day almost every day.	T[0] F[1]
Coping Skills	10. When I’m stressed, I know what I can do to manage it.	T[0] F[1]
	11. When I have a problem, I usually ignore it and hope it goes away.	T[0] F[1]
	12. If I had a problem too big to manage on my own, I have an adult in my life who I can go to.	T[0] F[1]

## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

Ask students to fill out this Checklist and explain that it is for their own self-reflection. It will not be turned in. Encourage students to consider choosing an activity from the same category as their highest score from their Student Mental Health Assessment.

<p><b>Sleep</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed with relaxing music (download the app Calm).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take a hot shower or bath before bed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read a relaxing book or magazine before bed instead of watching TV, playing video games, or looking at your phone.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have a cup of caffeine-free herbal tea instead of a sugary drink before bed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule between 8-10 hours of sleep per night (download the app sleepbot).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep your bed a "Sleep only" zone. Complete homework, watch TV, play video games, in other areas of the house.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exercise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wake up 15 min early and engage in a series of stretches or yoga poses (download the app iYoga).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you live close enough, begin walking, jogging, or biking to and from school each day (download the app Map My Run).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> During your favorite TV show, do jumping jacks or jump rope during commercial breaks.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While waiting for dinner, shoot baskets, kick a soccer ball, or play catch with someone.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put on music or a TV music program and dance for 15 minutes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Build in a 5-10 minute break for every hour of homework/study time and do a series of push-ups, crunches, or squats.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write down one thing you are grateful for each day.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engage in a mindfulness exercise (download the app Smiling Mind).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with a positive &amp; enjoyable person.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start using a day planner (download the app Evernote).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do something kind for someone who needs it. Help a grandparent with a chore, give a genuine compliment to someone having a bad day, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do what you love - journal, listen to music, jog, read, draw, watch a movie, cook, or bake, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nutrition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drink water instead of sugary drinks (download the app Waterlogged).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Journal everything you eat in a day (download the app fooducate).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have fresh snacks instead of snacks in bags or boxes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eat breakfast in the morning.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Try to limit my fried foods.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eat at least one fruit or vegetable at every meal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>

## MENTAL HEALTH JOURNAL

"Over the next seven days, you will try something that might help lower your stress and improve your mental health. You can choose a new activity to try each day or do the same activity over several days. A helpful tip is to pick an activity in the category with the highest score on the Student Mental Health Assessment. Each day, engage in the activity of your choice and respond to the questions in the Mental Health Journal. Make sure to answer the Wrap-Up Question after your seven days, "

## MENTAL HEALTH PARTNER

Students can choose someone in class to be their Mental Health Partner. Explain to students that each day in class they will spend a few minutes and report to their Mental Health Partner about their experience with the previous day's activity. Their Mental Health Partner will initial next to that day's journal entry indicating that they have completed the activity.

## CLOSURE

Explain how students might maintain their health plan/journaling. Teachers may assess students on completion of a plan and day-to-day maintenance rather than assessing student behaviors.

For additional resources and support materials, check out the Optional Program Additions and School Policy & Staff Development sections of our [Resource Portal](#).