



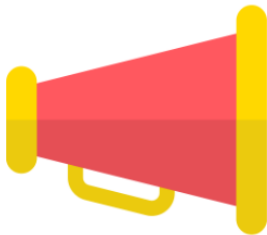
Erika's Lighthouse[®]

Empowerment Club

1

Getting Started

Start a Club (Official & Affiliate) Guidebook



RAISE AWARENESS

Recognize the signs of adolescent depression. It's only a problem if it's ignored.



BREAK STIGMA

Through campaigns, fundraisers and awareness initiatives, teens eliminate the shame and blame of depression, making it easier to get help.



SPREAD EMPATHY

No one should be outcast because of adolescent depression.

WELCOME

Thank you for expressing an interest in starting an **Erika's Lighthouse** Empowerment Club. We are excited for the opportunity to help you shift your school culture to be more positive, inclusive, and empathic on issues surrounding mental health. This guidebook was developed to help students, teachers, counselors, social workers, and others interested in starting an Empowerment Club in your school & understand the steps for success.



1 Understanding **Erika's Lighthouse** and Empowerment Clubs

- About Erika's Lighthouse
- Role of Empowerment Clubs
- Benefits of an Official Empowerment Club & an Affiliate Club
- Awareness into Action Activities

2 Recruit Your Club Champions

- Talk to the School Activities Coordinator
- Talk to Classmates/Students
- Find a Club Advisor

3 Cross Your 't's and Dot Your 'i's

- Next Steps
- Registration

4 Additional Resources

- **Erika's Lighthouse** Classroom Programs
- **Erika's Lighthouse** Family Workbooks

"The first thing that really helped me was empowering myself. I got involved in an organization that talked about mental health and taught people what mental health was.

It gave me a tangible way to fight back at something [depression] that was so intangible. Getting involved in things that matter to you, where you can see yourself making a difference in some way, really helped me a lot."

Mac, Former Teen Empowerment Club Member



1 Understanding **Erika's Lighthouse** and Empowerment Clubs



ABOUT ERIKA'S LIGHTHOUSE

MISSION

Erika's Lighthouse is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating and raising awareness about adolescent depression, encouraging good mental health, and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

VISION

To make sure no young person feels alone in their depression. To become the leading provider of teen depression awareness programs and resources in middle school and high school communities.

VALUES

We Believe In:

The Power of Programs with Impact

We are committed to de-stigmatizing depression and providing hope for young people who have it. Our innovative, evidence-informed classroom programs do more than raise awareness; they provide a structured model for youth to thrive and survive. Making a meaningful difference in the lives of teens with depression defines all we do and who we are.

The Power of Positivity

We believe in the power of positivity – it permeates our culture through our mission statement and how we engage with students, teachers, and administrators. Positivity, knowledge, and compassion create empowerment, and empowerment drives change and hope.

The Power to Change the World

We know that empowered teens can change cultures, even deeply rooted ones. Through education, modeling, and positivity, our programs provide proven foundations for teens to create a thriving culture of compassion, support, and hope.

The Power of Programs that Spread

We are determined to make every community a beacon of hope, which is why all of our activities – from programs to engagements – are designed to be easily replicated and customizable for schools across the country, and the world.

The Power of Trust and Integrity

We deeply believe in what we do, and we believe in others. In all we do, we operate with integrity, trust, respect, and authenticity. We are resourceful, we are good stewards of the gifts we are given, and we always hold ourselves accountable. What we do truly matters.

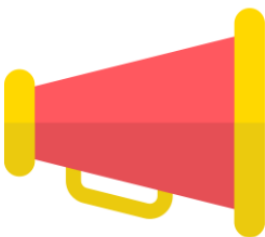
ROLE OF EMPOWERMENT CLUBS

Empowerment Clubs are designed to create a more positive, inclusive, and empathic school culture surrounding mental health. Dialogue is the best way to reduce the stigma of adolescent depression. Student-powered awareness is the most effective way to encourage communication.

When students talk, other students listen. When teens highlight the importance of learning about adolescent depression, it shows their peers that there is nothing to be ashamed of. It demonstrates that those suffering from depression don't have to hide. They can talk, they can get help, and they can live.

That's what awareness does. When it comes from other teens, it is our most powerful tool. We're proud to help students and educators start an Empowerment Club in their school, lead Awareness into Action Activities, and use their voice to *Get Depression Out of Dark*.

Empowerment Clubs are an important pillar to creating lasting cultural changes in school communities. These are opportunities for students to become leaders in their school to help:



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SPREAD EMPATHY

No one should be outcast because of adolescent depression.



“Getting involved with Erika’s Lighthouse was an amazing way for me and other teenagers to understand that depression was not something to be ashamed of, but rather a topic we must further discuss. Everyone deserves good mental health, and organizations like this one are giving hope to those who

need it. I will always be grateful for being a part of this organization that continues to impact many teenagers."

Edgar, Former Empowerment Club Member

Rolling Meadows High School

BENEFITS OF ALL LEVELS OF CLUBS (Official & Affiliate)

Erika's Lighthouse is dedicated to educating and raising awareness about adolescent depression, encouraging good mental health, and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Official Empowerment Clubs and Affiliate Clubs are an important piece of that journey. ***We believe teens can change the world.***

We are here to ensure your activities are powerful and generate awareness, dialogue and reduce stigma – all while creating a more positive and empathic school culture.

Benefit to Your School

Your school will benefit from an Official or Affiliate Empowerment Club by:

- Raising awareness of mental health, depression and other mental health challenges and supporting good mental health.
- Educating teachers/staff, parents and students about mental health and depression.
- Reducing stigma surrounding mental health and encouraging those experiencing challenges to seek help.
- Increasing the ability to have engaging and supportive dialogue surrounding mental health.
- Developing peer leadership for a more inclusive school culture.

Erika's Lighthouse Empowerment Club Choices

- Erika's Lighthouse **Official Empowerment Club**
- **Affiliate Club** (An already-existing school club that wants to use Erika's Lighthouse resources)

KNOW THE FACTS

1 in 5

youth experience depression by adulthood.

Only **30%** of teens are receiving treatment for depression.

Among teens, females are

2x more likely to

experience depression than males.

2 in 3

teens with severe depression also experience an additional mood disorder.

1 in 5

youth experience a mental health disorder in a year.

Official Erika's Lighthouse Clubs are mental health clubs that spearhead schoolwide campaigns to spread positivity and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. They carry Erika's Lighthouse in their name and are eligible for reimbursement funding from Erika's Lighthouse.

Affiliate Clubs can take many different forms. They might be an existing school mental health club, student council, Key Club, SADD chapter, etc. Regardless, Affiliate Clubs want to make promoting good mental health part of their work, so they are welcome to join the Erika's

Lighthouse community of clubs and use our resources to spread positivity and reduce stigma in their schools.

Benefits to Your Club

As an **Official Erika's Lighthouse Empowerment Club**, your club will have access to:

- Resources available for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools
- Access to a library of Awareness into Action Activities
- Monthly E-Newsletters with ideas from other clubs and ideas for activities
- Student-focused education trainings
- 2 student-centric virtual meet & greets between club members
- 2 advisor-centric virtual meet & greets between club advisors
- T-shirt designs and ideas
- Club Recruitment ideas and tools
- Support from Erika's Lighthouse staff (email, virtual meetings, webinars, etc.)
- Eligibility for a club member to join the Youth Advisory Board
- **Up to \$500 in grant money for meetings & activities (\$250 per semester and up to \$125 per activity)**

Check out the Official Empowerment Club Requirements for more information

As an **Affiliate Club**, your club will have access to:

- Resources available for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools
- Access to a library of Awareness into Action Activities
- Monthly E-Newsletters with ideas from other clubs and ideas for activities
- Student-focused education trainings
- 2 student-centric virtual meet & greets between club members
- 2 advisor-centric virtual meet & greets between club advisors
- T-shirt designs and ideas
- Club Recruitment ideas and tools
- Support from Erika's Lighthouse staff (email, virtual meetings, webinars, etc.)
- Eligibility for a club member to join the Youth Advisory Board

Affiliate Club Requirements for more information

AWARENESS INTO ACTION ACTIVITIES

Erika's Lighthouse has created over 70 Awareness into Action Activities (AAAs) for students to reduce stigma, raise awareness, promote positivity, and educate their peers on where to find help. The goal of these activities is to convey that depression is real, common, and treatable. Awareness into Action Activities can be found on the **Empowerment Club Page** of the Resource Portal under Section 6: Activate Your Club.

6. Activate Your Club

Create your own activities or pick from the dozens of **Awareness into Action Activities** created by Erika's Lighthouse and Empowerment Clubs from around the world.

Search

Type to search...

Showing 91 resources

TOPICS

All

LANGUAGES

All

GRADE LEVELS

All

USES

All

Reset All Filters

Awareness into Action Activity Report

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Start or Manage a Club

An activity report for Empowerment Clubs to track awareness-to-action initiatives in schools.

Tags: Good Mental Health, Plan & Implement

LINK (EN)

ID: EC112

Holiday Luminary Activity

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide holiday luminary activity for middle and high school students promoting mental health awareness.

Tags: Coping & Healthy Alternatives, You Are Not Alone Reminders

PDF (EN)* PDF (ES)*

CANVA (EN)

ID: MD5187

Welcome Back Care Packages

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide activity for Empowerment Clubs to create and distribute welcome back care packages.

Tags: Good Mental Health, Positivity Promoters

PDF (EN)* PDF (ES)*

DRIVE (EN) DRIVE (ES)

CANVA (EN)

ID: MD5151

Test Week Goodie Bags

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide activity providing goodie bags to support positive coping during student testing weeks.

Tags: Coping & Healthy Alternatives, Positivity Promoters

PDF (EN)* PDF (ES)*

DRIVE (EN) DRIVE (ES)

CANVA (EN)

ID: MD5135

DIY Mini Sand Trays

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide mindful moment activity involving DIY mini sand trays for healthy coping.

Tags: Coping & Healthy Alternatives, Mindful Moments

PDF (EN)* PDF (ES)*

ID: MD5171

Kindness Tree

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide activity promoting kindness and positive mental health for students in all grade levels.

Tags: Good Mental Health, Positivity Promoters

PDF (EN)* PDF (ES)*

DRIVE (EN)

ID: MD5192

Thanksgiving Gratitude Postcards

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide Thanksgiving gratitude activity to promote positivity and healthy coping skills for students.

ID: MD5135

Worry Jars

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

A schoolwide activity focused on creating worry jars to manage depression, stress, and anxiety.

ID: MD5171

Depression Out of Dark (Letter)

Mental Health - Depression & Suicide > Awareness Into Action Activities

Schoolwide advocacy posters for students to raise awareness about depression and mental health.

ID: MD5192

2 Recruit Your Club Champions

Recruiting your Empowerment Club Champions will be vital for your club's success. You'll need to speak with peers, teachers, social workers, counselors, and the administration to secure support prior to launch. You don't need to host a kickoff just yet – but gather 3-4 classmates or students, 1-2 adult advisors, and clear the club with your school administration.

TALK TO THE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Your first stop should be to the office of your school activities director and ask what you need to do to start a club. This person could be a school counselor, social worker, vice principal or someone else. Your school's main office should be able to direct you.

What to Ask

When learning how you get started, be sure to ask:

- What are the requirements for a club?
 - Likely items are:
 - A Mission Statement.
 - Proof that students will join (you may need to pass around an interest form).
 - A club advisor (a school employee who will work with you).
- Is there a formal application I need to complete?
- What challenges can I expect to run into?



"School was an incredibly supportive environment. I found love and peace and comfort in my teachers and coaches. I felt that I was in a safe haven within the walls of my high school, and I am incredibly grateful for that."
Callie, Erika's Lighthouse Program Recipient

TALK TO CLASSMATES & STUDENTS

Once you understand how you'll need to work with the school, it is important to recruit others to help get going. Having 3-4 students join you in getting started will make the process much smoother – and more likely to succeed.

How to Recruit

When recruiting students to join the club, it will be important to share:

- Your vision for the Empowerment Club.
- Why starting an Empowerment Club is important.
- Examples of potential activities (view ideas in the Erika's Lighthouse Resource Portal).
- What support you may need from them. Early on, your fellow classmates or students can help:
 - Collect petition signatures.
 - Locate a Club Advisor.

- Complete any paperwork your school may request to start a club.
- What role they can play once the club is started.

FIND A CLUB ADVISOR

After you have recruited a few fellow classmates or students, start searching for a club advisor that will champion the **Erika's Lighthouse** Empowerment Club with the school administration, educators, social workers and other adult influencers. It may be helpful to identify 2 adults that can co-advise the club and provide additional support.

What to Look For

These individuals will be helpful as you work to create lasting cultural changes within your school community. Consider asking the teacher who delivers the **Erika's Lighthouse** classroom program at your school.

Be sure that individuals who are interested in being a Club Advisor:

- Are school employees capable of advising your club?
- Have the available time to offer support and guidance (roughly 5-10 hours/month).
- Are respected by peers and willing to positively influence others.
- Can work with school administrators to keep the club in good standing.

How to Recruit

Similar to how you spoke with your classmates or students, use the same techniques to find an advisor by sharing:

- Your vision for the Empowerment Club.
- Why starting an Empowerment Club is important.
- Examples of potential activities (print out ideas from the Resource Portal).
- What support you may need from them, early on your advisor can help:
 - Collect petition signatures.
 - Complete any paperwork your school may request to start a club.
 - Speak with the school administration in support of the club.
- What role they can play once the club is started.

Once an advisor has been identified, that person, as well as you, should create an account on the Erika's Lighthouse Resource Portal.

Then you can move on to working with the school administration and registering your club with **Erika's Lighthouse**.

3 Cross Your 't's and Dot Your 'i's

You've completed the hard part of recruiting your school's champions for the Empowerment Club. Now, you simply need to complete the final steps.

(1) ADVISORS, CREATE A RESOURCE PORTAL ACCOUNT

If the advisor hasn't already, create an account on our FREE Resource Portal to look at all the available materials for Empowerment Club resources and Awareness into Action Activities.

- 1) Go to **www.ErikasLighthouse.org**.
- 2) Click on "Register for Free Access" at the top right of the page and fill out the necessary information
- 3) Review the materials. You will have access to all the materials currently available.

(2) CLEAR WITH YOUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

As previously discussed (see Talk to Your School's Activities Director), you should have been told the information you needed to be a recognized club at your school. At this stage you will want to complete any application the school requires, compile the necessary information and submit it for your school's administration to review.

One requested item may be a club Mission Statement. For example, "The Erika's Lighthouse Empowerment Club will help educate the school community about teen depression, good mental health and help destigmatize depression through various activities throughout the year."

(3) REGISTER THE CLUB

All club advisors must register their club on the **Club Registration Form** and sign the club agreement included in the registration.

(4) REVIEW THE MOBILIZE YOUR CLUB GUIDEBOOK

Review the **Mobilize Your Club Guidebook** to see how you can create a successful, engaging, and impactful club for your school. This Guidebook is available on the Resource Portal.

(5) SCHEDULE YOUR ONBOARDING CALL

Once we, Erika's Lighthouse staff, have approved your registration, we will reach out to you and the school advisor(s) to share helpful information and confirm some information from you. We will offer to set up a time to meet and help implement your club as well! At this point, your club should be ready to get started if it has not already.

Role and Responsibilities of Erika's Lighthouse (ELH) and Partner School Regarding Use of ELH Materials and Programs

Erika's Lighthouse: A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression (ELH), an Illinois not-for-profit corporation provides your school the following information regarding the Erika's Lighthouse Empowerment Club at your school.

Roles and Responsibilities of ELH

General Overview

- ELH will provide, at no cost, electronic format materials needed to implement the program. ELH is the creator and owner of the program materials and holds all necessary copyright and trademarks associated with the program materials. ELH hereby provides a one-time, limited use, fully paid-up license to use its proprietary program materials and intellectual property in connection with the program.
- ELH has shared the program materials with a number of organizations and is free to modify, change, or withdraw them at its sole discretion. ELH will make a best effort to notify of any changes to the program materials. Any such changes will be made available to your school at no charge.
- While ELH consults with clinical, therapeutic, legal, and child development experts, nothing in the program materials or any training or presentation provided by ELH should be construed as specific or general medical or psychological advice. ELH urges your school staff to seek competent professional advice appropriate for specific individuals or situations should the need arise.
- ELH assumes no liability for any damages, claim, or actions arising from program use, presentation, or communication of the program materials.

Awareness into Action Activities, Resources & Materials

- Erika's Lighthouse offers over 70 turn-key campaigns that clubs may use in their schools.
- Clubs are encouraged to also create their own campaigns and share those materials with Erika's Lighthouse for other clubs.

Grant Funds (Official Only)

- For Official Clubs only: ELH will provide up to \$500 in grant money for meetings, Awareness into Action Activities, and Erika's Lighthouse branded t-shirts.

Staff Support

- ELH staff will be available by phone, email, and for in-person meetings (based on ELH staff availability), to offer advice, guidance and support to assist your school in furtherance of the program.
- ELH will provide onsite/virtual support if requested (and based on ELH staff availability) and/or make periodic site visits.
- ELH will set up 2 club-centric virtual meet & greets between club members and invite all club members (for whom we have contact information)
- ELH will set up 2 advisor-centric virtual meet & greets between club advisors and will invite all club advisors

Roles and Responsibilities of Your School

Official Clubs

General Overview

- Clubs must embrace the mission, vision and values of Erika's Lighthouse.
- Clubs must hold at least 6 Empowerment Club meetings a year.

- All club advisors must create a Resource Portal account at Erika'sLighthouse.org.
- Clubs must watch their club education video and participate in school-wide awareness.
- Advisors are strongly encouraged to attend advisor-centric virtual meet & greets (2/year).
- Students are strongly encouraged to attend student-centric virtual meet & greets (2/year).

Awareness into Action Activities, Resources & Materials

- Host an Awareness into Action Activity per quarter (one of ours or a custom-created one) and complete the associated report (also used for reimbursement).
- Campaigns, resources and materials are designed to allow minor modifications and customizations. Significant changes need to be approved by Erika's Lighthouse.
- Share any custom-created Awareness into Action Activities or other campaigns with Erika's Lighthouse.

Club Name & Marketing

- Official Clubs must use an approved format of a club name that includes Erika's Lighthouse:
 - Erika's Lighthouse: Erika's Lighthouse + (Name of your own club)
- Make no modifications or alterations to ELH's trademarks or logos contained in or used in connection with the program materials. See Brand Guidelines.
- Refer any inquiries regarding ELH or the program materials from the media, agencies, or others to ELH.
- Tag Erika's Lighthouse on social media posts relating to club activities.

Reporting & Reimbursement

- Submit receipts to ELH for Empowerment Club grant reimbursement within 30 days of the purchase date using the Awareness into Action Activities Report.
- Reimbursements that fall outside the prescribed use may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Take the **Empowerment Club Pre-Survey** at the beginning of the school year and the **Empowerment Club Post-Survey** at the end of the school year in order to collect valuable data about how your club is impacting mental health in the school.

Contact Information for ELH Staff

Name: : Derick Elkin

Title: Empowerment Club Coordinator

Address: PO Box 616, Winnetka, IL 60093

Email: derick@erikaslighthouse.org

Phone: 847-386-6481