



The Anyone Program

We All Have Mental Health

Lesson 1

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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.

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Welcome to The Anyone Program We All Have Mental Health: Lesson 1

Maintaining good mental health is among the most challenging issues affecting today's youth, and the stressors young people face can be intense. Erika's Lighthouse has historically focused on teen depression, but this program for grades 4-6 provides a more introductory approach to mental health and focuses on the idea of being able to identify the differences between everyday feelings and overwhelming feelings. While many elementary students have already been engaged in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) exercises, it is important to continue the conversation so students can learn what to do if they are not feeling well. _____

This program was inspired by a young person named Erika.

Erika was a bright light who, sadly, lost her battle with depression in 2004 at age 14. Erika's Lighthouse was founded in her honor and is dedicated to helping other young people learn about depression and overcome the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. We All Have Mental Health was designed to be taught in classrooms for grades 4-6, led either by a teacher and/or a school mental health professional. The lessons provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in open and safe conversations about overall good mental health, identifying feelings, and knowing when to ask for help.

This standalone version of the program consists of an engaging and interactive lesson designed to be taught to provide students with increased knowledge of:

- knowledge key concepts related to good mental health
- the difference between everyday feelings and overwhelming feelings

- self-advocacy and peer-to-peer intervention to promote help-seeking
- awareness of how they can support their own mental health and well-being and contribute to a positive mental health culture _____

CLASS NORMS/GROUP AGREEMENTS

This curriculum addresses sensitive topics. In order for students to feel safe and be fully engaged in the lessons, it is important to establish group norms and/or agreements. Group norms are ways that groups of people can work together in a thoughtful, respectful, safe and productive way. If you have already established group norms, be sure that each of the following guidelines have been addressed.

If you have not developed group norms, here are some guidelines you may find useful in helping students come up with them:

- Everyone should be involved in creating the group norms.
- Use guiding questions to help students identify the norms that will achieve a safe and caring classroom:
 - How can we be sure that people will be able to safely share private information and feelings?
 - How can we be sure that everyone has a chance to freely share and that they are heard?
 - How can we be sure that people are not forced to say or do something that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe?

Some examples of group norms that are brainstormed may include:

- Listen to others' perspectives
 - Maintain confidentiality
 - Participate
 - Right to pass
 - Respect differences
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HOW TO ANSWER DIFFICULT QUESTIONS PROTOCOL

Sometimes when covering sensitive content such as emotions, social influences, and personal topics, questions may arise that are difficult to answer. Sometimes, the question may relate to personal values that are not universally shared. Or the question might have more than one answer depending on a person's values, beliefs, and personal history.

It may be helpful to follow this protocol when responding to difficult questions:

1. ***Affirm that the student's question is legitimate.*** Restate it for clarification and acknowledge that others might also wonder about this. "Thanks for asking that. I am sure other people would like to know about..."
2. ***Identify if there is a belief/value that is inherent in the question.*** Point out anything about the question that might be opinion-related. It is important to express the range of opinions without identifying that any single opinion is the right one. "Some people might believe...while others believe..."
3. ***Answer the factual part of the question.*** "Here is what is known to be true..."
4. ***Refer to a trusted adult.*** "This would be a great question to ask your (aunt, dad, caregiver, etc.)"
5. ***Check back.*** "Did I answer your question?"
6. ***Leave the door open.*** "If you have any other related questions, I hope you will feel free to ask."

SENSITIVE & PERSONAL ISSUES

Any time sensitive topics are addressed in class, it is important to ensure that all students are protected from potential trauma, particularly those who may have had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Social, emotional and mental health education may deal with issues of interpersonal relationships, suicide and substance use.

The teacher's capacity to listen non-judgmentally, with empathy, and to demonstrate a comfortable attitude in dealing with students' beliefs and feelings associated with mental health and emotions is crucial to the curriculum's successful implementation. Students come to the classroom with many different values, cultural and religious beliefs, and ideas about these topics. Teachers should keep in mind that because their students come from many backgrounds and traditions, some may have difficulty sharing ideas and discussing these issues with their peers.

When a student has experienced trauma of some sort in their life, it may have an impact on their ability to thrive and be healthy. These resources will provide guidelines and suggestions for helping to avoid further trauma to students affected by ACEs.

<https://www.weareteachers.com/10-things-about-childhood-trauma-every-teacher-needs-to-know/>

<https://www.weareteachers.com/video-every-teacher-needs-know-childhood-trauma/>

Teachers can go a long way towards helping a child who might be facing a mental health challenge by noting what they see, consulting with the school's health staff, and treating the child with respect and sensitivity.

But it is important to note that teachers are not responsible for either diagnosing or treating a child who has depression. Only a trained mental health professional can do that.

TEACHING THIS PROGRAM

Erika's Lighthouse wants educators to be successful when teaching this program. Here are a few suggestions to ensure that.

1. Review all of the materials before teaching: it is suggested that each teacher review all parts and the accompanying materials before teaching. All resources are available on the [Resource Portal](#).
2. While teaching the program, take notes on how the lesson went in different classes. Take notes on how you might adapt the lesson in the future. If you have a suggestion for an edit or adaptation, feel free to share with Erika's Lighthouse staff.
3. If you have student work samples that stand out from any worksheets, feel free to share with Erika's Lighthouse!

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
(Text or Call 988 or Chat 988lifeline.org)

PLEASE CONTACT US AT ANY TIME AT
info@erikaslighthouse.org

The Anyone Program

We All Have Mental Health:

Lesson 1

Slide 1: Introduction

Facilitator says: "Today we are going to be learning about mental health, how we can better understand it and our feelings, how to practice good mental health, and how, if we are struggling with our mental health or concerned about a friend, we can get the help we deserve. We are going to be learning about the difference between everyday feelings and overwhelming feelings. This information may help you or someone you know.

KEEP IN MIND: If anything shared today prompts a feeling that you need to talk to someone, make sure to talk to me or a trusted adult or me in your life. Please feel free to ask questions at any time, but if you want to reach out to me after this lesson, that is fine too."

Icebreaker: Ask everyone to share one good thing about today.

Slide 2: Lesson Objectives:

Facilitator says: "In this lesson, you will:

- Learn about mental health
- Learn ways to keep your mind healthy
- Play Charades
- Play True or False

Slide 3: What is mental health?

Facilitator says: "Mental health is about our feelings, thoughts, and moods and is important for a happy, healthy, productive, and balanced life. Just as we brush our teeth every day to take care of our teeth, we need to make sure our brains get taken care of, too. Just like taking care of our bodies, there are ways for us to take care of our minds, too. Looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health."

Physical health = taking care of body

Slide 4: How do we care for our mental health?

Facilitator says: "There are many ways that we can care for our mental health. We are going to play charades to demonstrate some of these ways. I will ask for volunteers to act out a mentally healthy behavior just using their bodies - no words, sounds, or props. I will show the volunteer the mentally healthy behavior listed on a card without anyone else seeing and then they will act it out. Everyone else will watch and guess."

Facilitator asks for a volunteer and shows one mentally healthy behavior card. Facilitator should be prepared to prompt and provide assistance with each behavior in case the student volunteer gets stuck.

Save the "showing feelings" card for last to flow into the next activity.

Slide 5 - Mental Health and Feelings

Facilitator says: "As we just learned, it's healthy to feel and show the feelings we feel. When you're sad, it's OK to show that you're sad; when you're happy, it's OK to show that; even when you're mad, there are healthy ways to show that you are mad. Feelings can be big or small and everything in between. They can be everyday feelings or overwhelming feelings."

Slides 6-7 Knowledge Check

As the facilitator goes through slides one by one, students can move or point to the True / False sign on opposite sides of the room, indicating their answer to the true/false statement. Teachers can also use a preferred polling tool or thumbs up/down. Encourage students to share their reasons why they answered true or false before revealing the correct answer.

Slide 8: Notice / Wonder Think-Pair-Share

Facilitator says: "Think about the activities and the conversations we've had today. Spend some time independently now thinking about what you notice and what you wonder. Write your ideas down."

Provide ample time for independent thinking, then pair students up to talk about their answers. Again, provide ample time to discuss, then bring students all together and ask for volunteers to share a notice and/or a wonder. This is a great

time to ask students if they have any questions about today's activities or information learned.

Slide 9: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Facilitator says: "Remember, if anything shared today prompted a feeling that you need to talk to someone, make sure to go to a trusted adult. You can also call or text 988 to speak or text with someone at the suicide and Crisis Lifeline if you are ever concerned about yourself or a friend."

Slide 10: Thank you

Facilitator says: "Thank you for your thoughtful participation in this lesson. We hope you enjoyed learning about mental health. Remember, we all have mental health and you are not alone."

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