



The Anyone Program Help-Seeking Behaviors

Lesson 3

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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

Help-Seeking Behaviors:

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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:

- 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 has 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

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Slide 1: Introduction

Facilitator says: "Today we are going to continue learning about mental health. 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 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."

Slide 2: Lesson Objectives:

Facilitator says: "In this lesson, you will learn:

- What is a trusted adult
- How to ask for help for yourself or a friend

Slide 3: Feeling Thermometer

Invite students to share their current feeling: Thermometer / Mood Meter slide

Slides 4-6: Trusted Adults]

Introduce the idea of a trusted adult by defining the term (an adult who is reliable, dependable, and trustworthy and who can help you) and engage students in identifying potential titles of trusted adults at home, school, and in the community, using the adults from the video as a starting point. *In the video, Sasha and Andre connected with a parent, school administrator, and counselor.* Expected additional responses from students: *parents, teachers, social workers, counselors, religious leaders, coaches, grandparents, aunts/uncles, doctors, mental health professionals, etc.*

Note: It is OK for everyone to have different adults they might turn to. For some students, it may be a teacher in the school, and for other students it may be a coach or friend's parent. Also, while it is good to note that mental health professionals are a good source, these young students wouldn't necessarily have access to those professionals without a parent or guardian first.

Students complete the Trusted Adult worksheet

Facilitator says: "We all have people in our lives who can support us. If you are concerned about your own mental health or a friend's mental health, talk to a Trusted Adult - someone who is reliable, dependable, and trustworthy. How do you know a person is reliable? *They do what they say they'll do; they are available/around when you need them (and when you don't).* How do you know a person is dependable? *You can count on them; they listen to you.* What does trustworthy look like? *You can count on the person; they keep information confidential; they act the same in different situations.*

When you need a trusted adult, you can talk to them in person, call them, or even email/text them (*note: suggest texting/email only if students have access to these forms of communication*) that you're feeling overwhelmed or concerned about something. There are even people whose job it is to help people with their mental health -- these are mental health professionals, like counselors, social workers, psychologists."

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

Slide 7- Asking for help

Facilitator says: "Asking for help can be challenging, but is important in each of these situations.

What are some feelings that you might have when you ask for help?" Expected responses: nervous, scared, excited, powerful, worried

"You might feel nervous because you're not sure how to start the conversation or because you're afraid of what the other person will think of you. Asking for help when you are not feeling well, or a friend isn't feeling well, is the first step to getting better and is a healthy thing to do."

"Think about a time when you were feeling physically sick (i.e., stomach bug, sore throat, fever, ear infection) and had to ask for help. What did you tell your trusted adult? Expected response or prompt for how your body was feeling, what you've already tried to do to feel better, and maybe even what the adult might do to help you feel better. Asking for help when you are having overwhelming feelings is not

any different. Students return to their partnerships to revise their answers on the scenario worksheets based on the direct instruction. Provide ample time to revise and discuss revisions.

Slide 8: 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 9: Thank you

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](#).