

Name _____

Teacher _____



The **Erika's Lighthouse** Program:

Depression Awareness for Middle School Students

STUDENT WORKBOOK

Teen depression
is a common and serious
brain disorder – but
there is hope and help!



Discussion Guide

Name: _____

| INSTRUCTIONS |

You will work on this in small groups and then review this discussion guide in class with your teacher.
Be prepared to participate by sharing what you have learned.

Depression is a common and serious brain disorder that can happen to anyone. It is not your fault if you have it and you are not alone.

1. How common is depression in teens?

☐ 15-20% of young people will experience depression before they reach adulthood. That is about 5 students in a class of 25.

☐ Teens do not suffer from depression.

2. Can you tell someone is depressed by looking at them?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Depression is serious and is the #1 risk factor to suicide.

3. Is suicide common?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Depression is marked by a chemical imbalance in the brain that impacts moods, thoughts and behaviors. Sometimes genetics can play a role in whether or not someone gets depression.

4. If there is a history of depression in your family, does that mean that you will get depression?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Sometimes stress in the environment can trigger depression.

5. Does this mean that everyone who experiences stress will get depression?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Depression is more than a feeling of sadness. In order to have the diagnosis of depression you need at least five symptoms present most every day for at least two weeks. However, it is possible to have occasional moments of enjoyment with depression.

6. What are some of the symptoms of depression and give an example of what that would look like in a teen?

Many famous people have struggled with depression including: former President Abraham Lincoln, actress/activist Angelina Jolie, comedian/actor Jim Carrey, Princess Diana, author JK Rowling and musicians Pete Wentz and Demi Lovato.

Discussion Guide

Depression is treatable and just like any other medical illness. It requires professional help. The first step is to tell a trusted adult who can help you take action towards treatment.

7. What are two possible treatment options?

8. Where can you find professional help in your school or community?

There are many things you can do to help a friend with depression.

9. What are some ways you can support a friend who may be struggling with depression?

Everyone should know a few ways to get through tough times better.

10. What are some ways to practice good mental health?

☐ Get plenty of Sleep

☐ Ask for help

☐ Eat Healthy Meals

☐ All of the above

All the teens in this video have volunteered to share their true stories and experiences with overcoming depression.

11. Why is it important to understand depression?

☐ To help us recognize signs and symptoms

☐ To help us reduce the risk of more serious symptoms

☐ To help us protect lives

☐ All answers are correct

12. Why do you think these teens would want to make a video like this?



Discussion Guide

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There are two major types of treatment for depression: talk therapy and medication.

1. What happens in talk therapy?

2. Medication is *always* part of your treatment.

☐ True

☐ False

3. What kind of mental health professionals provide talk therapy? What about medication?

4. Mental health professionals can only be found at hospitals.

☐ True

☐ False

5. Why is privacy important in therapy?

Help is available, effective and may take time to see changes.

6. What should someone do if their medication is not working?

☐ Nothing

☐ Tell a parent/guardian and meet with a doctor immediately

7. What should someone do if they are not connecting with their therapist?

There may be barriers to getting help and they can be overcome.

8. Cost of treatment and embarrassment are some of the reasons people do not seek treatment for their depression.

☐ True

☐ False

9. Reduced fees and free services are some options for accessing help/support if money is an issue.

☐ True

☐ False

10. What can someone do if a parent or adult doesn't take their depression seriously?

Asking for help for yourself or a friend can be accomplished in three simple steps.

11. What are the three things to remember to say when asking an adult to help you?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

12. What are the three things to remember to say when helping a friend to access support?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

You can get help for yourself or a friend with depression by saying something to a trusted adult.

Exercise

HELPING YOURSELF OR A FRIEND

| INSTRUCTIONS |

After learning how to help yourself or a friend with depression, partner up with a student in class. Choose, or your teacher will assign you, one of the four scenarios, and with your partner, answer the questions related to your scenario.

Remember when helping yourself:

- State what you **feel**.
- What you have **tried** to do to feel better.
- How they can **help** you take action towards seeing a mental health professional.

Remember when helping a friend:

- State what you **notice** in the friend.
- State that you **care** about them.
- Ask how you can **help** them tell a trusted adult.

Afterward, the class will come together to discuss the exercise. Be prepared to share your scenario and response with the class.

BELOW IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO RESPOND.

Example: MASON | AS YOUR FRIEND



Mason has been feeling down lately. Some other changes include not being able to focus in class, appearing tired and losing weight. Mason's dad has had depression before.

QUESTIONS

- What is the most critical part of Mason's situation?
- If you were Mason's friend, how could you use the language from the lecture to help Mason?

ANSWER

Helping Mason to talk to his dad is the appropriate action.

"Mason, I **notice** you have not been able to focus in class, you seem tired all the time and you have even lost weight. In general, you seem down. This isn't like you. I **care** about you and I want to **help**. I think we should talk to your dad about this."

Example: MASON | AS YOU

QUESTIONS

- What is the most critical part of Mason's situation?
- If you were Mason, how could you use the language from the lecture to ask for help for yourself?

ANSWER

Talking to dad about seeing a therapist is the best choice.

"Dad, I've been **feeling** down lately, I haven't been able to focus in class, I'm tired all the time and I don't have an appetite anymore. I've **tried** doing the things I enjoy and nothing seems to be working. I need **help**. Can you help me find a therapist and set up an appointment?"

Exercise

HELPING YOURSELF OR A FRIEND

Scenario 1: CALLIE



Callie has been very emotional lately. She is tired all the time and isn't even interested in soccer anymore. She has been questioning if people really like her, thinking "if everyone else doesn't like you, why should you like yourself?" Callie has been seeing a therapist, but she doesn't feel like she has a connection with her. Callie is close to her coach, Mr. Clark.

What is the most critical part in Callie's situation?

If you were Callie, how could you use the language from the lecture to help yourself?

Scenario 2: ALAN



Alan has depression and has had suicidal thoughts in the past. He has been seeing a therapist and takes medication, but he doesn't feel like treatment is working. Alan is starting to think, "what is the point" and has expressed that he wants to stop taking his medication and seeing his therapist. Alan is close with his mom.

What is the most critical part in Alan's situation?

If you were Alan's friend, how could you use the language from the lecture to help Alan?

Exercise

HELPING YOURSELF OR A FRIEND

Scenario 3: JASMINE



Jasmine has not been acting like herself lately and feels like she is “drowning” and can’t seem to pull herself out the funk she is in. Her grades have dropped and she has even stopped hanging out with friends. She is afraid if she seeks help, others may make a “mockery” of her. Jasmine is close with her granddad.

What is the most critical part in Jasmine's situation?

If you were Jasmine’s friend, how could you use the language from the lecture to help Jasmine?

Scenario 4: MAC



Mac thinks he is depressed. He has tried to talk about his feelings to a few friends, however, no one seems to know how to handle it or has minimized it as a part of growing up. Mac doesn’t feel comfortable telling his parents, but at this point, he is definitely getting worse. Mac is close with his art teacher, Mr. McGaw.

What is the most critical part in Mac's situation?

If you were Mac, how could you use the language from the lecture to help yourself?

Discussion Guide

Name: _____

| INSTRUCTIONS |

You will work on this in small groups and then review this discussion guide in class with your teacher.
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Everyone deserves good mental health.

1. What are the four major components to achieving good mental health?

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Mental health is balance, the ability to manage stress and achieve one's potential.

2. Is it possible to be free of mental illness, and yet, not mentally healthy? Why or why not?

Stress is normal, but too much stress increases the risk for health problems, like depression.

3. Stress is the body's natural reaction to a situation that is worrisome or threatening and can result in a feeling of being hypervigilant or on edge. What are some things that can cause stress?

4. How do you know you are stressed – how do you experience it in your body?
Why is it important to be aware of your own personal stress indicators?

Small improvements in nutrition, sleep, exercise and coping skills can help us better manage stress and achieve mental health.

5. Whole grains, lean products, fruits, soda, and vegetables are included in a balanced meal?

☐ True

☐ False

6. When you don't eat enough food what is **one** thing that can happen to your body?

- ☐ Your blood sugar drops
☐ You gain a lot of energy

- ☐ You maintain emotional balance
☐ You are able to think clearly and focus

7. How does sleep impact wellness?

Discussion Guide

8. What are some things we can do to improve our sleep?

9. Teens need more sleep than adults because their brain continues to grow until age 25.

☐ True

☐ False

10. Why are electronics bad for sleep?

☐ They are boring

☐ They are devices with back-lit screens that communicate to the brain to be alert and awake

11. Exercise helps to improve our mood because when our heart rate increases we release endorphins that are natural chemicals that make us feel better.

☐ True

☐ False

12. How much exercise should we strive for each week?

☐ 2.5 hours

☐ 10 hours

☐ 15 hours

13. What are coping skills? (mark all that apply)

☐ Doing safe things we enjoy

☐ Spending time with positive people

☐ Using substances/alcohol

☐ Relaxation techniques

14. What are your impressions of the mindfulness exercise? How did you feel before and after?

*Nutrition, sleep, exercise and coping skills
can make a big impact on our ability
to manage stress, prevent depression
and improve mental health.*

Mental Health Questionnaire

| INSTRUCTIONS |

Take a few minutes to answer the questions below.

After, your teacher will share with you the point value and you will add up the total for each category.

IMPORTANT: This is a tool to help you understand the areas of your health that you may want to pay closer attention to.
This is not a tool to diagnose health problems.

Sleep

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. On average, I get 8 hours or more sleep per night. | True | False |
| 2. I have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep more days than not. | True | False |
| 3. Most days, I wake up feeling rested and energized. | True | False |

TOTAL _____

Exercise

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 4. I engage in at least 2½ hours a week of physical activity. | True | False |
| 5. I spend more than two hours a day watching TV, playing video games or browsing the internet. | True | False |
| 6. I walk or ride a bike most places. | True | False |

TOTAL _____

Nutrition

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 7. I eat a fruit or vegetable at nearly every meal. | True | False |
| 8. I eat fried food, fast food or food packed in bags/boxes more days than not. | True | False |
| 9. I eat three meals a day almost every day. | True | False |

TOTAL _____

Coping Skills

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 10. When I'm stressed, I know what I can do to manage it. | True | False |
| 11. When I have a problem, I usually ignore it and hope it goes away. | True | False |
| 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. | True | False |

TOTAL _____

Mental Health Checklist

| INSTRUCTIONS |

Choose an activity from this list that you would be interested in trying out in your daily routine.
Consider choosing an activity from the same category as your highest score from the Mental Health Questionnaire.

Sleep

- ☐ Go to bed to relaxing music (download the app “Calm”).
- ☐ Take a hot bath or shower before bed.
- ☐ Read a relaxing book or magazine before bed instead of watching TV, playing video games or browsing the Internet.
- ☐ Have a cup of caffeine-free herbal tea instead of a sugary drink before bed.
- ☐ Schedule between 8-10 hours of sleep per night (download the app “Sleepbot”).
- ☐ Keep your bed a “sleep only” zone. Complete homework, watch TV, play video games and browse the Internet in other areas of the house.
- ☐ Other:

Exercise

- ☐ Wake up 15 minutes early and engage in a series of stretches or yoga poses (download the app “iYoga+”).
- ☐ If you live close enough, begin walking, jogging or biking to and from school each day (download the app “Map My Run”).
- ☐ During your favorite TV show, do jumping jacks or jump rope during commercial breaks.
- ☐ While waiting for dinner, shoot baskets, kick a soccer ball or play catch with someone.
- ☐ Put on music or a TV music program and dance for 15 minutes.
- ☐ Build in a 5–10 minute break for every hour of homework/study time and do a series of push-ups, crunches or squats.
- ☐ Other:

Coping

- ☐ Write down one thing you are grateful for today.
- ☐ Engage in a mindfulness exercise (download the app “Smiling Mind”).
- ☐ Spend time with a positive and enjoyable person.
- ☐ Start using a day planner (download the app “Evernote”).
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Do something you love to do. Shop, journal, listen to music, go for a jog, read, draw, watch a movie, cook or bake, etc.
- ☐ Other:

Nutrition

- ☐ Drink water instead of sugary drinks (download the app “Waterlogged”).
- ☐ Journal everything you eat in a day (download the app “Fooducate”).
- ☐ Have fresh snacks instead of snacks in bags or boxes.
- ☐ Eat breakfast in the morning.
- ☐ Eat baked foods in place of fried foods.
- ☐ Eat at least one fruit or vegetable at every meal.
- ☐ Other:

Mental Health Journal

| INSTRUCTIONS |

Choose someone in class to be your Mental Health Partner.

Over the next seven days you will incorporate a new activity(s) into your daily routine that may help you reduce stress and improve mental health. You may choose a new activity to try each day or engage in the same activity over a series of days. A helpful tip is to pick an activity in the category of the highest score on the Mental Health Questionnaire.

Each day, engage in the activity of your choice and respond to the questions in your journal.

The next day in class, spend a few minutes with your Mental Health Partner and report on your activity experience and listen to their experience. After, initial each other's journal entry.

DAY 1 – SAMPLE

DAY 1	DATE <u>October 1</u> ACTIVITY <u>Taking a hot bath before bed</u>
MENTAL HEALTH PARTNER INITIAL <u>EL</u>	Why did you choose this activity? <u>I have trouble falling asleep, which makes me want to sleep in</u> <u>in the morning. As a result, I have less time to get ready for school.</u>
	How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine? <u>After all my homework and dinner was complete, I took a bath in</u> <u>the evening before bed.</u>
	How did you feel before and after the activity? <u>Before the bath, I felt wound up from my homework. After taking</u> <u>the bath, I felt relaxed and ready for bed.</u>
	What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful? <u>It was helpful in taking my mind off of school work and put me</u> <u>in a relaxed state before bed. I could then fall asleep easier and</u> <u>had more time in the morning to get ready for school.</u>

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DAY 7 WRAP UP QUESTION – SAMPLE

wrap up QUESTION

What changes did you notice after completing the seven day mental health challenge?

I noticed that with the more sleep I had each night, I felt I
had more energy during the day at school. The energy helped
me to focus in class, take good notes and have an easier time
with my homework that evening. Taking a hot bath not only
helped my sleep, but also improved my energy during the day
and allowed me to be more effective in school.

STUDENT WORKBOOK | MENTAL HEALTH JOURNAL

Name _____ Class Period _____

DAY 1 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

DAY 2 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

DAY 3 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

STUDENT WORKBOOK | MENTAL HEALTH JOURNAL

Name _____ Class Period _____

DAY 4 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

DAY 5 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

DAY 6 **DATE** _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

Name _____ Class Period _____

DAY 7

DATE _____ **ACTIVITY** _____

Why did you choose this activity?

**MENTAL
HEALTH
PARTNER
INITIAL**

How and when did you implement the activity into your daily routine?

How did you feel before and after the activity?

What about this activity was helpful or unhelpful?

DAY 7 WRAP UP QUESTION

wrap up **QUESTION**

What changes did you notice after completing the seven day mental health challenge?

N