
LESSON 2 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Lesson 2 of *The Erika's Lighthouse Program: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students*.



Today you'll work in small groups and read more about one of the students from the video.



In your small group, take turns reading aloud each part of your student's story. When you're finished reading, discuss the reflection questions and jot down your group's answers in your packet.



Finally, your group will create a mini-poster to share with the full class highlighting something you learned about your student.



When Edgar was a teenager, he moved from Mexico City to the United States. His experience moving and having to leave some of his family behind in Mexico contributed to his depression. His story shows how he came to understand his depression and how family and mentors can play an important role in getting help.

RECOGNIZING DEPRESSION I come from Mexico City [and] a really loving family, a lot of support.

The first interaction with depression I was about 14, 13. I was in Mexico. All of a sudden, I felt something was wrong. I thought it was mostly because of my relationship. I loved this girl with all my heart, but then for one reason or another, things didn't work out, especially with me moving to the United States, I knew that was going to be a tough transition.

Latinos, we know family, community. Leaving that behind, no matter where you go, even if you're leaving for the greatest thing, you're not going to have your family with you. That is the hardest part I think. That support. It's people who know when you're sad, when you're happy, they know everything about you. So not having that support [after you move], it's tough.

IMPACTING DAILY LIFE I knew that my grandma and my mom would have a hard time [with me leaving Mexico] because I'm their only son and their only grandson. So I knew that was going to be tough on them, so I was kind of sad for that reason too. I felt slow, my mind was clogged. My mood wasn't as happy, or as energetic. My thoughts were of guilt, thinking I could have done things different to sustain my relationship [with my girlfriend in Mexico]. I was clumsy in my movements, I did not want to do as many activities.

My mom was a little angry and surprised. She had never seen [me depressed] like that, and she told me about how I was not focused. Coaches told me the same thing, my level of play wasn't as it used to be and they wanted me to perform well. The desire to learn wasn't as strong.



SEEKING HELP AND FINDING SUPPORT The inner struggle was that I was someone who I didn't think would have depression. I am outgoing. But it was happening to me. [For me, getting help was] going to therapy, meeting with my therapist. I miss her, she was a big part of my recovery from that state of mind. I remember the first sessions were just like basic stuff, getting to know me. After a while, that's when I really started opening up about the core of my depression.

EDGAR

I did cry. It got me. It really did. Because we all feel, and my message is, allow yourself to feel. When that happens, when something isn't as good as you want it to, like depression, talk about it, let it go. It's like putting weight away.

COPING SKILLS My goals, my family, the desire to do well for me and those around me [give my life meaning].

What I do to keep balanced is, I like to learn things all the time. I'm a curious person. Learning new things, they keep your mind positively occupied.



Depression will not look to your skin color, to your background, that will not matter to depression. What people misunderstand about depression sometimes is that [they think] if you have depression, you're weak, or something along those lines. Something about being less than the person next to you. That is not true. The point is anyone can have depression, we're all different of course so there are different reasons for what triggers depression.

A lot of people need to hear [about what it's like to be depressed] from someone who looks like them, in my case, in my culture, Latinos. I know what it's like, I know the struggles. I'm trying to get this message to everyone, but especially to my people, the people I know.

LOOKING FORWARD I learned that I'm stronger than I thought I was. Once you overcome depression, you feel like you can do anything. You've been on the low, but now it's time to enjoy when you're on the rise.

Love yourself at all times because you don't want to do anything that harms yourself. Do not hold onto feelings of hate. Take care of your body because it's who you're going to be for the rest of your life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Talk about the following questions in your small group and jot down some answers.

1. What was going on in Edgar's life when he was experiencing depression? Why was it so hard for him to talk about those feelings?
2. What did depression feel like for Edgar or what areas of his life did it affect? How do you think these feelings would have affected his behavior day-to-day?
3. What difficulties did Edgar have when asking for help or trying to get help? What were the barriers to getting help?
4. What people, resources or activities did Edgar find helpful when he was experiencing depression? What other resources could have been available to him?
5. What about Edgar's story most stood out to you? What would you have done as his classmate to help?

STUDENT STORY PRESENTATION

Create a Mini-Poster

Each small group will now create a mini-poster on a sheet of paper to present to the class. **Your mini-poster should highlight one part, theme or message from Edgar's story** that your group thinks is important for the class to know.



The mini-poster can have words, drawings, sentences, quotes or anything important your group wants to share with the class about Edgar.



If you're not sure what to talk about, go back to the reflection questions for ideas.



Each group will present their mini-poster to the class. When your small group presents, tell the class:

1. What did you decide to put on your mini-poster?
2. Why did you feel this was an important part of Edgar's story to share?
3. Overall, what's a positive take away or message you learned from reading about Edgar today?