

# Facilitator's Notes



## OBJECTIVE

**To raise awareness of depression and reduce negative attitudes of depression and its treatment.**

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## | OVERVIEW |

In Lesson 1, students will learn that depression is a common and serious brain disorder and how to recognize the warning signs. Students will also learn about treatment for depression and how to help themselves or a friend who may be struggling. Finally, strategies for good mental health will be discussed.

The core of Lesson 1 is the video and **Discussion Guide**.

The lesson concludes with a **bookmark** handout for each student summarizing the lesson and where to find help. Finally, each student should receive a **self-referral card**, providing an opportunity for students to reach out for help confidentially.

## | PREPARE |

### REVIEW | LESSON 1 CONTENT

Review the Introduction.

Review the Video Summary (*found in the Appendices*) and watch the video on the Program CD or at [erikaslighthouse.org](http://erikaslighthouse.org).

Also, make sure you will have access to a TV and DVD player or computer with projection capabilities and sound. NOTE: If your technology requires a DVD, contact us at [info@erikaslighthouse.org](mailto:info@erikaslighthouse.org) and we will mail you a copy.

Review the Discussion Guide Key.

REPRODUCE | **IF YOU ARE TEACHING ALL THREE LESSONS**, make a copy of the entire Student Workbook for each student.

**IF YOU ARE NOT TEACHING ALL THREE LESSONS**, make a copy of the Student Workbook lessons you will be teaching for each student.

**FILL OUT** local mental health resource information and school mental health resource information on the bookmark template and **MAKE A COPY** for each student.

**MAKE A COPY** of the Self-referral Card for each student and coordinate a process for student referrals with the school mental health staff.

# Facilitator's Notes

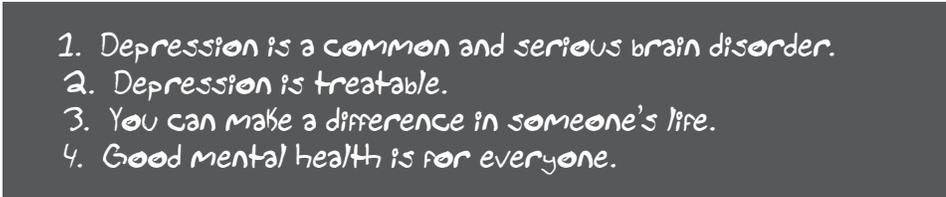
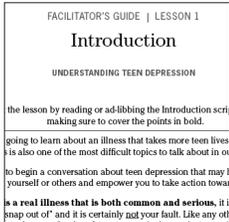


| TEACH |

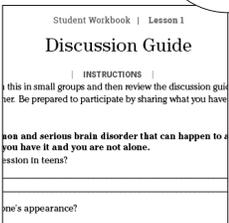
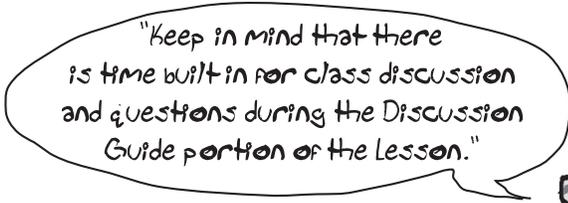
TOTAL INSTRUCTION TIME

2 minutes | 1. **READ THE INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS**

Write the learning goals on the board prior to beginning the program.



18 minutes | 2. **PLAY THE VIDEO:** Found on the Program CD and also at erikasighthouse.org.



20 minutes | 3. **REVIEW THE DISCUSSION GUIDE**

The facilitator will hand out the Student Workbook. In small groups, students will be asked to fill out the Discussion Guide after the video. After 10 minutes, answers should be reviewed by the facilitator using the Discussion Guide Key and shared as a class.

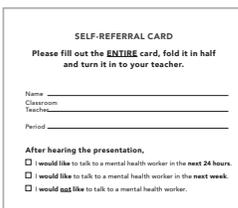
2 minutes | 4. **HAND OUT THE BOOKMARK**

The facilitator will hand out a bookmark to all students, highlighting where to find help, and ask students to fill out the name of a trusted adult.

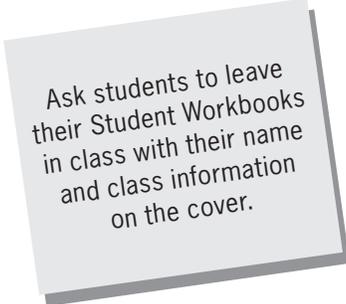


3 minutes | 5. **HAND OUT THE SELF-REFERRAL CARD**

The lesson will conclude with the dissemination of Self-referral Cards, giving students an opportunity to confidentially reach out for help. Read the instructions on the card aloud. Every student should fill one out and turn it into the facilitator at the end of the class.



The facilitator should then notify the student mental health staff of any students in need of support.



# Introduction

## UNDERSTANDING TEEN DEPRESSION

Start the lesson by reading or ad-libbing the Introduction script below, making sure to cover the points in bold.

"Today we are going to learn about an illness that takes more teen lives than any other, yet is also one of the most difficult topics to talk about in our culture.

We are going to begin a conversation about teen depression that may help you identify depression in yourself or others and empower you to take action towards seeking help.

**Depression is a real illness that is both common and serious**, it is not something you can just "snap out of" and it is certainly not your fault. Like any other illness, **depression requires professional treatment**. And, most importantly, you can get better and go on to live a happy, healthy and productive life.

### IN TODAY'S LESSON YOU WILL LEARN ...

- **Depression is a common and serious brain disorder**
- **Depression is treatable**
- **You can make a difference in someone's life and**
- **Good mental health is for everyone.**

### TODAY'S LESSON WILL INVOLVE TWO PARTS ...

1

A **VIDEO** about real teens sharing their stories of depression and hope.

2

The **DISCUSSION GUIDE** found in your **STUDENT WORKBOOK**.

In a moment, I will play the **VIDEO** and we will review the content of the **DISCUSSION GUIDE** in small groups. Please be prepared to participate in the discussion and share what you have learned.

### KEEP IN MIND:

If anything shared today prompts a feeling that you need to talk to someone, make sure to go to a trusted adult or visit the mental health worker's office here at school which is located \_\_\_\_\_.

Please feel free to ask questions at any time."



## Discussion Guide | KEY

If you are moving on to Lesson 2 and 3, less emphasis is needed on questions 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

## | INSTRUCTIONS |

Review this discussion guide in class with your students after they have had 10 minutes total of small group discussion. Tell students to be prepared to participate by sharing what they have learned. Please read the statement in bold aloud before asking each of the questions to the class.

**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. **Q.** *How common is depression in teens?*
  - A. 15 – 20% of young people will experience depression before they reach adulthood. That is about 5 students in a class of 25.

2. **Q.** *Can you tell by someone's appearance?*
  - A. No. You can not tell by someone's appearance if they are depressed because depression occurs on the inside and among all ages, genders, races and cultures.

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

3. **Q.** *Is suicide common?*
  - A. Although depression is common, and is the #1 risk factor for suicide, suicide is rare. However, suicide can happen if someone's depression is intense, not identified or they are not receiving the proper support.

**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 develops depression.**

4. **Q.** *If there is a history of depression in your family, does that mean that you will develop depression?*
  - A. If there is a family predisposition for depression it means that you are at higher risk but it does not mean that you will definitely inherit depression. It is always smart to know your family's mental health history. Don't be afraid to ask.

**Sometimes stress in the environment can trigger depression.**

5. **Q.** *Does this mean that everyone who experiences stress will get depression?*
  - A. No. Not everyone who experiences stress will get depression. Everyone experiences stress differently. Some people can tolerate stress well and others are more sensitive to stressful events. However, continual stress is not good for anyone's mental health. If you are experiencing intense or continual stress, try to do the things that usually help you feel better. If that does not work, tell a trusted adult.

**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. **Q.** *What are the symptoms of depression and give an example of what that would look like in a teen.*
  - A.
    - **Depressed mood, sadness or irritability**  
Feeling down, irritated or angry. Irritability is common in teens with depression. Mood changes may look like excessive crying, shutting down or being combative.
    - **Loss of interest or pleasure in activities**  
Feeling no pleasure in things that used to make you happy. This may look like not returning calls or socializing with friends, skipping school or practice.
    - **Change in weight or appetite**  
Eating too much or too little. Noticeable change in weight, baggy/tight clothes, etc.
    - **Change in sleep**  
Sleeping too much, too little or sleeping at the wrong times. It may look like having trouble staying awake during the day or staying up all night.

# Discussion Guide | KEY

- (cont.)
- **Feeling sped up or slowed down**  
Feeling or looking like you can not sit still or like you're in slow motion.
  - **Fatigue or loss of energy**  
Feeling or looking tired or difficulty engaging in normal activities, like school and sports.
  - **Feelings of worthlessness or guilt**  
Feeling incapable of doing most things or feeling responsible for things that are not your fault. You may hear statements like, "I'm such a loser" or "You don't have to sit by me, I know I'm not fun to be around."
  - **Trouble concentrating or making decisions**  
This may look like daydreaming in class or having difficulty making simple decisions like what to wear to school or what to eat for lunch.
  - **Thoughts of death or acts of self-harm**  
This may look like being interested in death or dark things such as music or writing about death, talking a lot about death, talking about not wanting to be around anymore or engaging in self-harm like cutting or other reckless behavior.

NOTE: It is common to experience some of these symptoms from time to time—it does not mean that you have depression.

Never keep secrets of self-harm or suicide. A person may make a threat in person, in writing, over the phone or Internet. Other signs may include giving their personal belongings away or taking risks like excessive use of drugs or alcohol, reckless driving or cutting.

You must always share this information immediately with an adult. A student might involve their parent or contact the friend's parent or someone at school. A friend may tell you they do not want an adult involved. Tell an adult anyway, he/she may be upset at you for a little while, but that is much better than to have a friend potentially hurt themselves or someone else.

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**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. **Q.** *What are two possible treatment options?*
- A. Talk therapy and medication.
- NOTE: It is normal to need to talk to someone about life stressors. You do not need to have depression to seek talk therapy.
8. **Q.** *Where can you find help in your school or community?*
- A. Most licensed mental health professionals like social workers, psychologists or counselors can be found in school, at a local community mental health center or hospital.

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

9. **Q.** *What are some ways you can support a friend who may be struggling with depression?*
- A. • Treat them normally  
• Check-in with them and listen  
• Invite them to do fun things  
• Support their treatment  
• Help them to make healthy choices

**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 | KEY

(cont.) It is important to remind students that there is a limit to the support a friend can provide. When supporting a friend with depression you can easily become consumed with taking on too much responsibility for their safety and wellbeing. Make sure your friend is getting the help they need from a professional and focus on just being a good friend.

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

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

- A.
- Get plenty of sleep
  - Eat healthy meals
  - Exercise regularly
  - Avoid alcohol and drugs
  - Treat any illness
  - Do things you enjoy
  - Practice relaxation
  - Ask for help

There are negative coping strategies – these include things like excessive use of drugs/alcohol or cutting. Negative coping may feel good in the moment, but are actually quite harmful and a sign someone may be struggling with depression.

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

11. Q. *Why is it important to understand depression?*

- A. Understanding depression helps us to better recognize signs and access help – reducing the risk of more serious symptoms and protecting lives.

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

- A. The teens in the video hope to provide a voice for teens with depression. To break the silence and shame of depression. To let students know that depression is common, serious and can happen to anyone. To express there is help out there and not to be afraid to ask for it. To let teens know that if you struggle with depression, you are not alone and deserve to feel better. And, to share that if you know someone who is struggling with depression, there is a lot you can do to help them to get better.

| HAND OUT THE BOOKMARKS AND SELF-REFERRAL CARDS |

