
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.

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Callie experienced bullying and her parents' divorce also had an impact on her. She also lost a friend to suicide, which was something that contributed to her depression. Callie learned about the self-care strategies that work best for her when she is experiencing depression.



CALLIE 1

CALLIE

RECOGNIZING DEPRESSION My depression comes from a lot of different situations that piled up on top of each other. My parents' divorce was a main factor in my depression. I think a big part of that was I felt like an item, going back and forth between house to house.

I had some bad experiences with peers and people I thought were friends at the time. They were really mean to me and pushed me away and ostracized me. Something that's important to know is that bullying can look like a lot of different things, it's not necessarily what you imagine, like a kid getting picked on in the hallway or books being shoved down. Especially now with technology, a lot of it is behind screens and people just being mean and manipulative.



When I was a freshman in high school, I had a really good friend who was a senior. I really looked up to her. It was Thanksgiving and I was with my family, and I got a call from another friend telling me that my friend had taken her own life. The first thing I experienced with that was just shock.

For a while, I had depression but wasn't familiar with what it was, I didn't really have a name for it. I had some symptoms of depression, but I didn't know what it was or how to classify it.

IMPACTING DAILY LIFE I lost my passion for things I really cared about. [My depression] also definitely impacted school. I felt like I was sitting in class, trying to do a math problem, but I had so much more on my plate and so much more to deal with.

SEEKING HELP The first person I went to was my mom. I said, "Hey, this is what I'm feeling" and she kind of shut me down a little bit. She was a little defensive, she didn't want to believe that I was dealing with depression so she was kind of like "Nope!" I think inside she did really understand it, but she shut it down to me. I was a little discouraged, and was like "Is this not how I'm feeling or am I mislabeling how I'm feeling?"

I finally decided to go talk to someone else and I decided to talk to our school counselor, and she was awesome, so finally I was like, "Good. I can actually use this to get better." I talked to her about everything, and that was an amazing experience to be able to open up and have someone really say, "The way you feel is not your fault, and we're going to help you get better from here." So therapy was definitely really big for me.

CALLIE 2

CALLIE

FINDING SUPPORT School was [also] an incredibly supportive environment. I found love and peace and comfort in my teachers and coaches. I felt that I was in a safe haven within the walls of my high school, and I am incredibly grateful for that. I found support in my friends and I did find support in my family. My mom is definitely supermom. Sometimes this support was confusing and not exactly how it was needed, but I know that everyone around me meant well.

COPING SKILLS I love running. Running just kinds of brings me away from all the struggles that I'm dealing with and lets me get away from it. When I'm running, I'm not thinking about how hard of a day I had, I'm thinking about how great it feels to be out there running. It kind of just lets me connect with myself and turn inward and just exist

[My friend's suicide] kind of taught me that we don't know how much time we have left, so to make the best of the time that we do have. I decided to make sure I took advantage of all the time that I have because she doesn't have any time left, and I can't bring her back, but I can live the best life that I can, to try to take advantage of that time.

[Because of my depression] I definitely learned about myself that I'm a lot stronger than I thought I was. I'm learning that I'm capable of getting through a lot. I think the capability to deal with difficult situations has always been there, I just didn't know it. It's important for us all to know that we are capable of overcoming and that we will overcome.

It can be really scary to open up to someone. Telling someone that you have depression makes it more real, it makes it difficult to say to someone that you are depressed because that makes it a really real thing. **But if you're feeling scared or worried about it, I think it's really important to know that there are so many people around you that care about you, whether it's parents, teachers, a coach, a relative, there are a lot of adults who can help and want to help.** It's all about taking the first step and deciding you are going to get help.

LOOKING FORWARD My depression does not define me. No one's mental health struggles define them. We are all more than our struggles. We all have stories to tell.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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

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



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 Callie's story to share?
3. Overall, what's a positive take away or message you learned from reading about Callie today?