



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERIKA'S LIGHTHOUSE TO DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AT THE 2021 SHAPE AMERICA NATIONAL CONVENTION & EXPO

April 12, 2021 – Winnetka, Ill. – [Erika's Lighthouse](#), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to educating and raising awareness about adolescent depression, encouraging good mental health, and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health issues, announced today that it will be making two presentations on the importance of mental health education in schools at the [SHAPE America National Convention & Expo](#), which will be held virtually between Tuesday, April 13 and Saturday, April 17. Erika's Lighthouse will also be [virtually exhibiting](#) at the event. Throughout the 2020 – 2021 school year, the free depression education programming from Erika's Lighthouse has been made available for remote learning, hybrid environments, and the traditional classroom setting in middle schools and high schools. Since the beginning of the 2020 school year, the depression education program [has been taught](#) in 460 schools in 41 states and has had a positive impact on more than 190,000 students.

“Health and physical education teachers have been a tremendous asset to students around the country as they have helped guide them through a rather difficult year, often making use of our mental health and depression education programs,” said Brandon M. Combs, the executive director of Erika's Lighthouse. “We are looking forward to showcasing how these free resources from Erika's Lighthouse can truly make a difference to educators with turn-key lessons on a challenging topic.”

Brandon Combs will lead a session focused on [“Skills-Based Depression Education as Suicide Prevention”](#) on Thursday, April 15, at 11:30 a.m. Eastern. This session will describe how utilizing the free depression education programs from Erika's Lighthouse can have a positive impact on students and a school's mental health culture. Attendees will learn how to immediately access and implement these free programs.

Erika's Lighthouse will also host and moderate a Lunch and Learn session focusing on [“Addressing the Post-Pandemic Mental Health Crisis in Schools.”](#) It will be held on Thursday, April 15 at 2 p.m. Eastern and will feature an esteemed panel of experts in school mental health and physical education including Peggy Kubert from Erika's Lighthouse; Robert Jamison, from Virginia Beach City Public Schools; Bill Casey, from Neuqua Valley High School; and Rachel Winsten, from Brevard County Public Schools. They will discuss and answer questions about the importance of post-pandemic mental health education in schools and advancing student capacity and resilience. The panel will be moderated by Ilana Sherman, who is the Director of Education at Erika's Lighthouse.

The SHAPE America National Convention & Expo is the leading professional development opportunity for health and physical education professionals — from preK–12 educators who teach our country's youth about the benefits of living a healthy, physically active lifestyle, to university professors who conduct much-needed research and teach our industry's future professionals. More information is available at: <https://convention.shapeamerica.org/>.

Erika's Lighthouse is A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression and develops and provides free teen depression awareness programs and resources to middle school and high school communities across the country. A new website and resource portal provides all of Erika's Lighthouse resources in one place, including more than 90 resources including Awareness into Action Activities.. More information on bringing Erika's Lighthouse programs to middle schools and high schools is available at www.erikaslighthouse.org/contact/.

About Erika's Lighthouse

Erika's Lighthouse: A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression is a non-profit organization committed to raising awareness about teen depression in middle school and high school communities at no cost to schools. Erika's Lighthouse works to eliminate the stigma surrounding depression and empower young people to take ownership of their mental health. Core programs include the video-based, teacher-led depression awareness classroom programs—The Erika's Lighthouse Program: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students and The Erika's Lighthouse Program: Depression Awareness for Middle School Students. Erika's Lighthouse also provides countless other web-based resources. To learn more, visit www.erikaslighthouse.org.

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