



# Erika's Lighthouse®

**Student Workbook:  
Level II Classroom Program - Lesson 1  
Signs & Symptoms of Depression**

## Who is Erika?

This program was inspired by a young person named Erika. Erika was a bright light who, sadly, lost her battle with depression in 2004 at age 14.

Erika's Lighthouse was founded in her honor and is dedicated to helping other young people learn about depression and overcome the stigma surrounding mental health disorders.

### Overall Program Goals

The goal of this program is for you to learn and understand that depression is a common and serious mood disorder and it is treatable.

You can make a difference in not only your own but someone else's life by learning how to get help as well as learning the skills for maintaining good mental health.

### Lesson 1 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, I will be able to:

- Define that depression is a mood disorder
- Describe the signs & symptoms, risk factors and resources for depression
- Access a reliable, trusted adult at school

We'd like to see what you already know. Scan this QR code to take a short pre-test.



<http://elhms.info>

## Discussion Guide

As you watch the video, answer the questions below. Be ready to talk about what you have learned.

**Depression is a common and serious mood 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 experience depression.

**Depression is not like a rash on your skin.**

2. Can you tell someone has depression by looking at them?

- Yes
- No

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

3. If there is a history of depression in your family, does it mean you will develop it?

- Yes
- No

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

4. Does this mean anyone who experiences stress will be diagnosed with depression?

- Yes
- No

**Depression is serious.**

5. Is depression a risk factor for suicide?

- Yes
- No

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



6. What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

- Loss of interest in activities
- Change in sleep
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or acts of self harm
- Trouble concentrating

### Signs & Symptoms Discussion

Below are short bios about each of the students in our videos. Read through them and select two student videos to watch using the links or QR codes. Answer the questions based on what you saw in the videos and be ready to talk about what you have learned.

<p><b>Lindsey</b> is a first-generation student from Illinois whose depression started at six years old. She says her depression felt like “little tornadoes in my head”. Lindsey loves to read, is a dedicated student and is very involved in clubs at school.</p>	<p><b>Henry</b> is from Knoxville, Tennessee. He loves to write, play sports and hang out with his friends. Henry describes feeling anxious, worried often and “never really feeling happy”.</p>
<p><b>Jasmine</b> is an African American student who moved from a small town to a big city. Her move and experiencing community violence contributed to her depression. She is passionate about church and her family.</p>	<p><b>Catharine</b> is from Ohio and is a sports enthusiast; she loves ice skating and tennis. Catharine felt that she needed to be “perfect” at everything: sports, school, friends. She was first diagnosed with anxiety, but then her symptoms of depression began.</p>
<p><b>Alan</b> loves his band and his girlfriend. His depression began during his parents’ divorce. He describes his depression as a “big, sinking feeling” in his chest.</p>	<p><b>Mason</b> is an Asian-American student who experienced anxiety and perfectionism. He loves his family, friends and sports. His dad also experienced depression and is very supportive of Mason.</p>
<p><b>Edgar</b> recently moved from Mexico City to the United States. He left behind his friends and many of his family members. Edgar loves soccer and music.</p>	<p><b>Callie</b> is from Chicago. She loves to run track and hang out with her friends. Struggles with her peers impacted her experience with depression and she felt very isolated during this time.</p>

YouTube	Vimeo
	
<p><a href="#">Student Videos</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Student Videos</a></p>

**Student 1: What signs & symptoms did they experience?**

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**Student 2: What signs & symptoms did they experience?**

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**Did you notice any similarities or differences between the students' experiences? Explain.**

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### Bookmark Activity

When you get your Bookmark, write down the name of a Trusted Adult you can talk to if you are worried about yourself or a friend. Then answer the two questions below.

**Important Terms to Know**

**Trusted Adult:** someone who is reliable, dependable, trustworthy and can help you.  
**Valid:** a source of information that offers correct information and can be trusted.  
**Reliable:** a source of information that can be accessed easily and consistently.

1. Describe how you know that the trusted adult you put on your bookmark is **valid and reliable**.

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2. How can you access or find a trusted adult?

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Remember, if anything shared today prompted a feeling that you need to talk to someone, make sure to go to a trusted adult, talk to your counselor, or visit the social worker's office here at school.

You can also call or text 988 to speak or text with someone at the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline if you are ever concerned about yourself or a friend.