

Best Practices for Implementation

Welcome to the Erika's Lighthouse Resource Portal for community-based organizations. The purpose of this guide is twofold: First is to help you understand what resources and materials are available on the portal. The second is to provide recommendations regarding best practices for implementing the materials and resources within your organization. In addition to this guide, there is a 5-minute video available on the portal for you to watch. This video reviews what materials are available for your organization. Additionally, it highlights the important things to think about prior to your staff implementing any of the materials.

The portal offers a variety of resources for your organization to utilize; ranging from staff training, activities to promote good mental health, and daily lessons that can be implemented with the children/youth in your facility. The portal is intended to be used as an a la carte menu of resources and can be tailored to the needs of your organization. However, the best practice is to use all of the materials available to promote an inclusive environment around mental health awareness.

Step 1: Prepare Your Organization

1.1 Things to Consider

Who/What/Where within your organization:

Supervisors and Administrators, it is important to answer these questions prior to moving forward with any of the resources.

1. Which staff member(s) will be implementing these resources/lessons with the students?
2. Where in the building will the resources or lessons take place?
3. Who is the "Pre-Selected Trusted Adult" for your organization?
4. Have all of the staff attended the staff training webinar?
5. Does all of your staff know who the Pre-Selected Trusted Adult is for your organization?
6. Has your organization reviewed and/or created protocols around this topic?
 - a. Do you have a list of referrals?
 - b. What will you do if an emergency arises?

Additional Things to Consider:

Erika's Lighthouse wants facilitators to be successful when implementing the materials and resources on the portal. Here are a few suggestions to ensure success:

1. Staff members should review all of the materials before introducing the materials to the kids: it is suggested that each facilitator reviews all parts of the lesson or activity prior to implementing with the kids.

2. Before implementing the lesson to a group of kids, ensure that the pre-selected trusted adult of the organization will be available if a child(ren) needs to speak with them immediately.
3. Best practice is not to show any of the lessons or materials on a Friday or at the end of the day. You want to ensure that if a child needs to speak with a trusted adult there will be someone in the building and the need is taken seriously.
4. Remind the staff that it is not their responsibility to diagnose or treat a child's mental health. Only a trained mental health professional can do that.

1.2 Complete the Staff Training:

Ensure your organization is prepared to cultivate an inclusive culture around mental health by having all of your staff attend the staff training webinar. This webinar will focus on the signs and symptoms of depression and what it means to be a trusted adult. These are key factors to discuss with your staff and be aware of prior to implementing any of the resources.

Step 2: Create An Inclusive Culture

2.1 Leverage Awareness Into Action Activities:

Awareness into Action Activities are the engines of change within an organization. These easy-to-implement activities help raise awareness, reduce stigma and promote help-seeking. Your organization can choose to use all eight of the Awareness Into Action Activities, just one, or anything in between.

Recommendation: Consider implementing these 2-3 weeks prior to using the lessons below to start a positive dialogue.

2.2 Promote Education & Help-Seeking:

Three complete lessons that introduce mental health by understanding everyday feelings vs. overwhelming feelings. There is a strong focus on help-seeking and the importance of taking care of our mental health. Each lesson includes a slide deck, a scripted facilitator's guide, and any additional handouts that could be paired with the lesson. The additional handouts are supplemental to the lessons and can be used as a way to continue the conversation and/or reinforce the information that was covered.

Lesson 1: We All Have Mental Health

This lesson identifies what is mental health and why it's important to take care of our mental health.

Additional activities: Charade cards, Notice and Wonder Worksheet

Lesson 2: Everyday Feelings vs. Overwhelming Feelings

This lesson utilizes a five-minute, animated video about Sasha and Andre who experience everyday feelings and overwhelming feelings. This lesson also discusses various coping strategies that children can use when they are feeling stressed.

Additional Activities: Coping Diary

Lesson 3: Help-Seeking

This lesson will help children identify who is a trusted adult in their home, school, or community. It will also discuss how asking for help can be difficult but emphasizes that asking for help is a necessary step to take care of your mental health.

Additional Activities: Trusted Adult Worksheet, What Would You Do or Say Worksheet