



## Resource Brief

### Erika's Lighthouse

**Website:**

[www.erikaslighthouse.org](http://www.erikaslighthouse.org)

**Grade Level:**

Middle School  
High School

**Time:**

- Three lessons,  
45 minutes each.

**Cost:**

- Free; create account

**Additional supports:**

- Comprehensive lesson plans
- 20-minute video
- Student workbooks
- Stories of teens with lived experiences with depression
- Student self-referral cards
- Teen Depression Toolbox
- Parent Handbook
- National Resources
- Opportunity for Teen Empowerment/Teen Led Awareness Campaigns through development of Teen Clubs
- Remote support
- Adaptable and flexible curriculum

### Summary

Erika's Lighthouse offers comprehensive lessons that educate youth and raise awareness about adolescent depression, encourage good mental health and break down the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. The highly supported lessons incorporate the lived experience of a diverse group of peers with adolescent depression, and allow for flexibility, as well as adaptability in lesson presentation to best fit the needs of the targeted audience. Erika's Lighthouse educational programs include:

- the identification of risk and protective factors for depression.
- the recognition of the signs and symptoms of depression.
- effective approaches for supporting a friend.
- the development of self-help and treatment-seeking behaviors.
- skills to utilize personal and community resources.
- the concept of recovery through authentic lived experiences.
- the development of practices to support mental health.

In addition, Erika's Lighthouse includes a Teen-Led Awareness Campaign and a Teen Club to empower students, to promote in activities that reduce stigma, and to build positive mental health habits in their school community. Opportunities exist to adapt the program from year to year, identify discussion questions that are best suited for each school's unique needs, and to tailor the program for non-traditional school settings.

### Considerations

Erika's Lighthouse curriculum focuses primarily on teen depression, which while common, is not the most common mental health disorder. It is important to educate youth about other mental health challenges, such as anxiety disorders and substance use disorders. While many programs allow for flexibility in presentation format, the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. encourages schools to provide mental health instruction in classes to enable educators to better monitor the responses of students to this sometime sensitive topic.