

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Before the meeting: *The topic of mental health awareness is very important and extremely personal. Following school rules, it may be necessary to have parents sign off on the suggested topic and video. As an advisor, you may also want to meet with officers in advance to prepare for the meeting. In that session, the video could be shown so club leaders have time to think about it and help lead the club through the process. Finally, it may be helpful to have a school counselor attend this club meeting as a resource. The video is 20 minutes, which should leave enough time for a good discussion.*

1. Welcome

- a. Introductions.
 - i. Introduce officers.
 - ii. Introduce advisor.
 - iii. Introduce guests.
- b. Icebreakers — [Check out these ideas to kick off the meeting.](#)

2. Old business

- a. Receive reports from members on club projects — What has been accomplished, and what is still to be done?
- b. Were there any projects on the list that were not covered at the last club meeting? What would that timetable be for this part of the year?
- c. Review project assignments and make sure everyone is involved.

3. New business — mental health awareness

- a. A club officer or advisor/counselor should begin the discussion of mental health and explain why mental health is important for all students.
 - i. Current research indicates that between 15-20% of teenagers have some depressive events. See [The World Health Organization's Adolescent Mental Health](#) site for more facts.
 - ii. Key Club can address this issue and work with others in the school to make a difference. Recent stories in your school could also be a good starting point.
- b. Visit Key Club partner [Erika's Lighthouse](#), an organization dedicated to educating and raising awareness about adolescent depression, encouraging good mental health and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Erika's Lighthouse aims to create a community of empathy and education for middle and high school students. Explore the website's excellent resources and videos on this topic of concern for so many students.
 - i. To introduce a discussion on mental health awareness, watch the video [Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students](#). After viewing the video together, discuss it with the club.
- c. Have a brainstorming session as a club. Use these questions and activities to get started:
 - i. What can our Key Club do to make a positive difference for students in our school? Make a list of all ideas — they could be educational or fun, small or large, individual actions or a combined club effort, Key Club alone or in partnership with other school clubs and community resources.

- ii. Once you have your list, refer to the [Awareness into Action Project List](#) from Erika's Lighthouse for other projects. To access this resource and other free resources, create an Erika's Lighthouse account.
- d. Gather all the ideas discussed and determine what the club's focus could be in this area. The club's plan might have several steps, but it is important to get something down as a starting point.

4. Home project

- a. Refer back to open projects from earlier in the meeting — review assignments.
- b. Make assignments for the new project(s) related to mental health awareness.
- c. Allow time for committees to plan meetings.

5. Personal follow-up

- a. Everyone needs to take time for themselves. See tips on how to maintain good mental health and self-care in the article "[Self-care is important for all teens.](#)"
- b. For another conversation on mental health, view [Kiwanis International's Lunch with a Leader](#) featuring a question-and-answer session on mental health from psychiatrist Jessica Chaudhary.
- c. View the Erika's Lighthouse [Teen Toolbox](#) to learn about signs of depression, how to prevent depression, steps to treat depression and improve mental health and how to support those you love who have depression. Check out additional resources for advisors and parents, including:
 - i. [The Parent Handbook on Childhood and Teen Depression.](#)
 - ii. [Remote learning suggestions.](#)
 - iii. [Remote learning intervention considerations.](#)
 - iv. [In-school recommendations.](#)
- d. Visit [National Alliance for Mental Illness](#), [Mental Health America](#) and the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) for more resources and helplines at the local level for students and families.
- e. Kiwanis International offers a [confidential, 24-hour youth protection helpline](#) for all members of our student organizations.

6. Adjournment

- a. Thank everyone for their participation, especially the guests.
- b. Give details about the next meeting.