

The “How-To” Checklist to Host Your Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health© Read-Along

Now that you have reviewed Step 1 - Gizmo’s Pawesome Guidance for Read-Alongs, you are ready for Step 2 - this “How To” Checklist to Host Your *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© Read-Along. This is an instructional checklist for the *Basic Virtual Read-Along*. It ensures that minimum educational standards for meeting the learning objectives will be accomplished.

PREPARING FOR YOUR READ-ALONG

Step 1: *Download the PowerPoint of Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©!

- Go to www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages
- Under the “Host a Read-Along” section, download the Basic Animated PowerPoint, or the version of your choosing, and save it on your computer desktop for easy access. (Note: The Fully Animated PowerPoint is provided upon request)
- It is also helpful to practice opening up the PowerPoint in the virtual meeting platform you plan to use for the Read-Along (e.g. Zoom, GoToMeeting, MS Teams). This will help ensure things go smoothly when it comes time for your Read-Along program.

Step 2: *Familiarize yourself with the Pledge!*

- Go to www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/mental-health-pledge
- On your own, you can take the *Trusted Adult Pledge*, and complete your *Mental Health Plan* so you are familiar with the process. Don’t forget to “print and save” your *Mental Health Plan*, and share it with your own Trusted Adults in your life!

Step 3: *Practice and Preparation!*

- Librarians who host Read-Alongs regularly suggest that in order to make your Read-Along go smoothly, familiarize yourself with *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© and/or PowerPoint of the Guide in advance. Practice reading it out loud, *slowly*, with an animated voice as if you are speaking to a child, because you will be for the Read-Along.
- On text-free picture pages, please share what Gizmo is doing with the participants before proceeding.
- As you read through the *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©, you will come to points in the book that offer opportunities to ask questions of the participants, and on page 12 to turn back to pages 6, 7, and 8 to review. You may use these opportunities to encourage youth participation, and have them share their own thoughts and answers. This can be done by having them share aloud, respond in the Chat, or respond using polls that some platforms offer as mentioned in the Guidance document.
- Should you choose to use polls, you will need to prepare these in advance as directed by the virtual platform you’ve chosen, but the content should align with the Guide. Any page that provides examples and options to the participants can be enhanced using a poll.

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Step 4: *Get the word out!*

- Whether you use email, social media, your website, or flyers to announce your Read-Along, there are a number of Gizmo images and gifs available to you to make your invitations and announcements eye-catching!
- A sample flyer template is available on this webpage: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages . You just need to enter your Read-Along details in the fillable fields, save the flyer in PDF, and then hyperlink your registration link to the flyer. It’s then ready to share.
- Go to www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/gizmo-graphics where you can download animated gifs to send, adorable still images, or even link to a 30 second PSA video! You can also find suggested language for your social media announcements.

TIME TO HOST YOUR READ-ALONG!

Step 1: *Prepare your Read-Along materials!*

- About one hour prior to the Read-Along, open your previously downloaded *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health©*, and be sure it is functioning properly. Early preparation provides you with enough time to address technical issues, contact others for support or back-up, or reschedule as needed.
- Open the Gizmo website to have both the All Ages and Pledge pages open in two different tabs:
 - www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages
 - www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/mental-health-pledge

Step 2: *It’s a GO! Starting your Read-Along – Welcome & Introductions!*

- Welcome your Read-Along Participants! Introduce yourself, and acknowledge the *Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and United Way of Connecticut* as the developers of *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health©*, and thank any key partners responsible for making your Read-Along program possible today.
- Remind your Read-Along participants of the *purpose* of the Guide and the Read-Along program. Tell them *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health©* is more than just a fun book. When the book is combined with completion of the *Mental Health Plan*, it becomes a tool used to teach youth:
 - What “mental health” means
 - That mental health is just as important as physical health
 - Daily activities, and coping strategies that youth can use to improve and support their mental health and wellness.
 - How to know when their mental health needs attention
 - How to identify and connect with their Trusted Adults
 - And
 - Provides resources that youth’s Trusted Adults can use when more help is needed.

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- Inform your Read-Along participants that this will be a fun and interactive program. They will be listening to an engaging story told by Gizmo, and they will have the opportunity to actively participate, ask and answer questions, visit Gizmo’s website, and sign-up for a free gift once they complete their *Pledge* and *Mental Health Plan*.

Step 3: *Guide participants to the website!*

- Type or copy and paste this link, into the Chat: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/mental-health-pledge, and ask participants to open the link to the *Pawesome Pledge for Mental Health*. Tell them you will guide them to this page in a little while during the Read-Along, and that there will be an opportunity to receive a free gift for all who chose to participate.

Step 4: *Time to start reading!*

- Using the animated PowerPoint, read through the *Gizmo’s Pawesome Guide to Mental Health©*, taking time to engage participants as noted above on page 1 in Step 3: *Practice and Preparation!* Remember to take your time and have fun!

Step 5: *Take the Pledge!*

- As you come to the end of Gizmo’s story, ask your participants and their Trusted Adults to go to the *Pledge* webpage you had them open in the beginning. Reshare the link as needed.
- You can share your screen and walk them through the process of selecting either the *Youth or Trusted Adult Pledge*, reading through the *Pledge*, and guiding them to fill out their names at the top of the pages.

Step 6: *Complete the Mental Health Plan just below the Pledge!*

- Direct participants to scroll down from the *Pledge* to the *Mental Health Plan* in the same document. This can be a good opportunity for further engagement and reinforcement by asking youth to share some of the things they plan to include in their plan, such as some of their favorite things to do to take care of their mental health.
- Remind youth to Save and Print their *Mental Health Plan*, so they can use it to take care of their mental health every day, and help them when they feel sad, mad, or worried. Encourage them to share their *Mental Health Plans* with the Trusted Adults in their lives! Copies can be printed or emailed to those they spend the most time with, and who care for them, so they may support the use of the *Mental Health Plan*.

Step 7: *Closing the Read-Along!*

- Once participants have completed their *Mental Health Plans*, they can click on the **green** “Gizmo Thank You Gift” link at the bottom right corner of their *Mental Health Plan*. Here, with the help of their Trusted Adult, they can select their free gift!
- Share All Ages pages for more fun, free activities, and encourage participants to consider hosting a Read-Along elsewhere: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages .

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Step 8: *Don't Forget!*

- We would love to hear from you about how your Read-Along went, and share any additional ideas for Read-Alongs that may help others. Feel free to submit your story and pictures here: <https://www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/contact/>.

