

Gizmo's Pawesome Guidance for Read-Alongs

Introduction: Hosting a Read-Along of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© can be a fun way to engage youth and their Trusted Adults in conversations and activities that promote their mental health and wellbeing!

Your Read-Along can be a simple one-time event, or part of a whole month of themed programming. It can be a single virtual event, or be turned into a Take-and-Make program. You can pre-record your Read-Along, or host it live and make it interactive! Read on for various ideas about how you can host a Read-Along that is just right for you and the youth you serve!

Who can host a Read-Along? Anyone working with youth!

- Libraries
- Community centers
- Schools
- Church groups
- Youth Service Organizations
- Scouting groups
- Counseling Offices
- Pediatric Offices
- Youth's Hospitals
- High School or College students under the guidance of an advisor



Purpose: *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:

1. What "mental health" means
2. That mental health is just as important as physical health
3. Daily activities, and coping strategies that youth can use to improve and support their mental health and wellness.
4. How to know when their mental health needs attention
5. How to identify and connect with their Trusted Adults
And
6. Provides resources that youth's Trusted Adults can use when more help is needed.

Steps:

1. Read this Gizmo's Pawesome Guidance for Read-Alongs; then
2. Read the "How To" Checklist to Host Your *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© Read-Along.

GIZMO'S PAWESOME READ-ALONG PROGRAM OPTIONS

- There are three ways to share *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©, and various format options. Read-Alongs may be hosted as in-person events with the presenter reading directly to a live audience of youth and Trusted Adults. Alternatively, Read-

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Alongs may be hosted using a virtual platform with youth and their Trusted Adults joining by electronic device (e.g. computer, tablet, smart phone).

NOTE: The three most important things to do are: 1) read the book; 2) share Gizmo's Pawesome Pledge for Mental Health; and 3) complete the Mental Health Plan.

- 1. Classic, In-Person Read Along Using English or Spanish Hard Copy of Guide:**
Read directly from a hard copy of the book at an in-person program.

In the Classic Read-Along format, a presenter can read directly from an English or Spanish hard copy of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©. This is the most low-tech version of a Read-Along, and is great for an in-person event, but those offering virtual programming will prefer one of the virtual options below. *We do not recommend use of the hard copy Guide for virtual Read Alongs.*

Free hard-copies of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© can be found here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages.

- 2. Virtual Read Along Using English or Spanish PDF of Guide:** Share your screen and use the PDF copy of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©!

Using the English or Spanish PDF version of the book allows the presenter to offer a more visually engaging experience for participants as all of the images are presented clearly and brightly on the screen while the presenter reads the text aloud. You can download a free PDF version of the entire book here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages.

- 3. Virtual Read Along Using the Basic Animated or the Fully Animated English PowerPoint of Guide:** If you are looking for an even more attention-grabbing visual experience, you can use the animated PowerPoint of the book!

The Basic Animated PowerPoint of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© has animated turning pages, while the Fully Animated PowerPoint of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© also includes additional animated features. These formats are easy to download and use, and adds the attention grabbing elements to keep young participants engaged, without distracting from the important messages.

You can download a free copy of the Basic Animated PowerPoint, or request access to the Fully Animated PowerPoint here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages/. Upon request, the Fully Animated PowerPoint will be sent to you via Dropbox or WeTransfer.

- **Take Gizmo's Pawesome Pledge for Mental Health to Take Care of Your Mental Health Every Day!**
 - No matter what kind of Read-Along program you implement, encourage youth and their Trusted Adults to take the Youth Pledge *and* the Trusted Adult Pledge!

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After taking the Pledge, they will each receive a free gift to remind them to use their mental health plans, and talk to their Trusted Adults when they feel sad, mad, or worried! The Pledge and Mental Health Plan are linked in the same document here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/mental-health-pledge .

- They can also order free copies* of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© on this page: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages . *Free copies are limited as noted on the website.
- **Create and Share Your Unique Mental Health Plan!**
 - Encourage youth to create and share their very own Mental Health Plan with the Trusted Adults in their lives, so they can support the use of it (parents, teachers, counselors, doctors, coaches, etc.).
- **Bring Gizmo's Pawesome Mental Health Promotion and Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum to your schools!**
 - If youth and parents want more fun, mental health guidance from Gizmo, you can let them know that there is an elementary curriculum available for their schools! Just visit this link for more information:
www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/curriculum-preview .

BONUS! GIZMO'S PAWESOME READ-ALONG BONUS ACTIVITIES & IDEAS!

Want to make your Read-Along even more Pawesome? There are a number of ways to expand upon the messages in *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©, make your program more interactive, and make the Read-Along fit your program's needs and goals!

Any of the activities below can be added to your Read-Along to make the event even more fun and engaging. Many of the activities can be offered as their own stand-alone activity to create additional programs, or even a whole month of weekly themed programming! You can choose what is right for you.

- **Interact!**

Many virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom, allow you to use interactive surveys or polls during your presentation. You can use these to engage youth with the material, such as asking them to identify some of their favorite healthy activities, or to identify Trusted Adults who they can talk to when they feel sad, mad, or worried.
- **Discuss!**
 - Throughout the Read-Along, you can engage participants in the material by asking for questions related to the book. Ask youth to talk about their favorite healthy activities. Youth also love to talk about who their Trusted Adults are.

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- Tap into the wonderful imagination of youth and ask youth what they think Gizmo might like to do if he is feeling sad, mad, or worried.
- **Create!**

There is no denying that youth love hands-on activities. Engaging youth in a craft or creative activity can be a wonderful addition to the Read-Along, further immersing youth in the messages of mental health and wellness, and making your program all the more memorable!

 - Ask youth to draw or paint a picture of themselves doing one of their favorite healthy activities, and then show and tell the group about it!
 - Ask youth to draw or paint a picture of one of their Trusted Adults and talk about who they are!
 - Color together! While youth color in the picture of Gizmo and his friends talk about how art can help us when we feel sad, mad, or worried. Coloring pages are available in the back of the book, or can be printed here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages.
 - Make a "Hope Box". Have participants decorate a shoebox, or other small box or large envelope with images or words that are meaningful to them. Then, have them place items inside that make them feel hopeful, such as special pictures, trinkets that hold special meaning, quotations that they find inspiring, letters or cards from someone they love, etc. .
- **Practice mindfulness!**

Use Gizmo's Pawesome Activity Page to practice mindfulness skills together. You can find instructions for a mindful breathing activity here: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages.
- **Move!**

Just like Gizmo, we can all practice healthy activities that can make us feel better when we are feeling sad, mad, or worried. Put on some music and have a dance party, or sing a song together!
- **Take-and-Make!**

Take-and-Make crafts have been wildly popular over the past year. You can make Take-and-Make kits for your participants containing all kinds of fun free items and activities located on the All Ages page on the Gizmo website: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages, including, but not limited to:

 - Their very own copy of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*©
 - English and Spanish copies of the Mental Health Plan (the book includes two copies, one as a tear-out!)
 - English and Spanish Gizmo coloring pages (also included inside the book)

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- English Gizmo word-search and dog find games

At cost, you can also provide supplies for healthy activities to do when you feel sad, mad, or worried, such as art supplies, bubbles, playdough, modeling clay, kinetic sand, puppet kits, etc.

NOTE: Once you have reviewed this Guidance, you may continue to Step 2 - the "How To" Checklist to Host Your *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health*© Read-Along found at this link: www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/allages .