

BAM! Student/Teacher Resilience Lessons

Lesson 1: The Body (10+ minutes)

NOTE: Links to all videos, webpages, worksheets, and other materials mentioned in this lesson can be found at at.apa.org/resilience-bam. A full suggested script is also available online as a guide through the material in this lesson.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to list at least two ways stress manifests in their bodies.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate a deep breathing exercise that can be used to help center their minds and relax their bodies when they feel stress.

LESSON MATERIALS

- BAM! Puzzle Worksheet
- Label the Effects of Stress on the Body Worksheet
- Answer Keys to Activities in Lesson 1
- Just Breathe video: youtu.be/L_qOORFmpRk
- BAM! Summary and Review of Lesson 1

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Main Lesson

- Welcome students and define resilience as the ability to move forward from challenges. Discuss how building resilience helps us cope with big and small difficulties, including the sense of uncertainty associated with change. Acknowledge the ways in which change or challenges impact everyone in similar and different ways (e.g., friendships, social stress, academic pressure, tests, homework, social and family struggles or stress.)
- Ask students to consider what one difficult thing was for them or their friends in the past.
- Introduce students to BAM: Body, Action, and Mind.
 - » The acronym BAM is a helpful way for us to remember that we can develop and use skills that involve our bodies, actions, and minds to build our resilience. Today we are going to focus on a skill that reduces stress in our bodies, the first part of BAM!
- Have students write their name at the top of the BAM! Puzzle Worksheet, label one section of the sheet with "Body," color that section. Let them know they will fill in the other sections in future lessons.

Mind-Body Connection Lesson (4-5 minutes)

- Discuss the mind-body connection and how the mind has the power to improve or worsen our physical functioning, depending on how we use it. *[The presenter can refer to the APA mind/body webpage: <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/body> or <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress>. The PowerPoint [slides](#) can also be used here.]*
- Discuss how uncertainty, losses, and fears create or increase stress and anxiety. For example:
 - » When one's life changes suddenly, especially when it is unexpected, a typical response is an increase in stress and anxiety.
 - » Fear from any source normally creates an increase in stress and anxiety.
 - » Worrying about what might happen (called "what ifs") can increase stress and anxiety.
- Choose one of the following activities:
 - » T-chart of positive reactions to stress (how can stress help you?) and negative reactions to stress (how can stress negatively impact your body and how you feel?) An answer key with suggested responses is provided at the end of the lesson.
 - » Engage students by drawing and labeling impacts of stress on a picture of a body on a board/screen (a small group or individual activity could be to label a picture of a body; see attached handout).
 - » Using large sheets of paper, break class into small groups and have one lie down on the paper and others outline their body (please be sure the student lying down has given permission to have their body outlined and is comfortable having this done). Using this body outline, have each student mark areas where they feel stress in their own bodies. Discuss the various locations. There may be some locations where a lot of students feel stress. And there will be individual differences in where students feel stress. An answer key with suggested responses is provided at the end of the lesson.
- Discussion Questions:
[To be used class-wide or in a small group; following an activity or on their own.]
 - » When you feel nervous or worried, what do you feel in your body?
 - » Where do you feel stress in your body?
 - » How would you know when there is stress in your body?

Exercise (3-4 minutes)

Just Breathe exercise (see **Just Breathe exercise** section in the full suggested script for added details)

- Share how stress puts our bodies "on alert" and how we may hold our breath or breathe fast and shallow breaths without noticing when stressed. When we are facing a threat, our bodies respond in different ways. Some examples might include: *[The presenter may want to display these examples on a whiteboard or on easel paper for students to see.]*
 - » Muscles feeling tight
 - » Faster heartbeat
 - » Faster breathing/holding breath
 - » Sweating
 - » Stomach feeling funny/stomachache
 - » Feeling tired
 - » Higher or lower appetite
- The easiest first step to relax is through a simple exercise of breathing called *Just Breathe*.
 - » Have students breathe in slowly and deeply for a count of four.
 - » Ask students to hold their breath for a count of four.
 - » Then, have students slowly let their breath out for a count of six. Repeat this exercise three times.

- » If at any moment students feel uncomfortable, encourage them to sit quietly rather than feel obligated to participate.
- » A video is available to use to guide students through this exercise at youtu.be/L_qOORFmpRk. You can also access this video at at.apa.org/resilience-bam.
- After doing the exercise, ask students how they feel and share with students how this exercise will let their bodies begin to relax.
- Share that when we pay close attention to our breath, we take our thoughts away from our worries that might be swirling through our minds—even just for a few minutes. Sometimes getting that little bit of space can help prepare us to cope with whatever challenge we might be facing.

Closing (1 minute)

Summary

- Remind students how stress impacts the body and that our minds are connected to our bodies.
- End lesson by encouraging students to practice the deep breathing at least once a day.

Note: Additional extension activities are provided in the full suggested script available online to allow you to expand discussion and engage students further.

Use the BAM! Summary and Review of Lesson 1 to create a visual summary for students on a whiteboard or on easel paper.

See the resource list at the end of this document for students who may need additional help.