

BAM! Student/Teacher Resilience Lessons

Lesson 2: Actions (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 explain two helpful actions they can take to reduce stress.
2. Students will be able to apply deep breathing or muscle relaxation and deep breathing to relax their body when they feel stress.

LESSON MATERIALS

- BAM! Puzzle Worksheet
- Optional: Progressive muscle relaxation video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQVpkZACGCE>
- BAM! Summary and Review of Lesson 2

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Welcome and Recap

- » Welcome everyone back to the session.
- » Remind students about the impact of stress on our body discussed in the previous session (the “B” in BAM).
- » Ask who remembers the Just Breathe exercise.
- » Remind students of the basics and practice with three sets of deep breathing:
 - Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 6 seconds.
- » Use the BAM! Summary and Review of Lesson 1 on a whiteboard or on easel paper to help students remember the previous lesson.
- » Have students label another section of their BAM! Puzzle Worksheet with “Actions” and color that section.

Main Lesson (3-4 minutes)

Actions Activity

- Introduce the Actions part of the BAM! model and consider the ways that the actions we take when stressed can be helpful or unhelpful.
 - » Share that a little bit of stress can help us and motivate us to take action (e.g., study for a quiz), but too much stress can lead to distress. The things we do when we are in distress are called our “coping mechanisms.”
 - » Some of these actions really help us to cope with our stressors, some may sort of help us feel better in the short-term, but they don’t help so much in the long-term, and others can be completely unhelpful.
- Discuss with students the ways we respond to stress and anxiety through our actions.
- Ask students: What are some examples of actions that people take to cope with stress that may not be particularly healthy or helpful?
 - » [Teachers/presenters can use the [attached slides](#) to prompt students to discuss with a partner if they think each action

would be healthy or unhealthy. Students could be asked to discuss each slide with a partner and then as a whole class.]

- » Have students list these on whiteboards or discuss them in groups. Allow students to share unhealthy coping behaviors like withdrawing from friends/activities/schoolwork; avoiding tasks that need to be done; yelling (at siblings, friends, parents); watching too much television or mindlessly scrolling through social media; sleeping to avoid people/feelings/activities; or isolating themselves.
- » Note that some of these actions are very normal, common reactions that most of us have experienced at some point in time when we have been in distress. They may help us feel better for a short time, however, they often don't help us feel better in the long run.
- Next ask students: Now, let's think about some healthy and helpful actions people can take when they are anxious or stressed.
 - » *[Have students list these on whiteboards or discuss them in groups. Allow students to share helpful coping behaviors like spending time with friends; talking to someone they trust; going for walks; exercising; video chatting with family and friends; writing; drawing; finding a new hobby; listening to to/playing music; helping others; asking for help; or brainstorming ways to solve whatever problems are on their mind.]*
- Discuss the impact of our actions when we are stressed and worried. Ask students:
 - » How can being active relieve stress and improve mood?
 - » What is the one thing causing you the most stress today/this week?
 - » What activities are you doing to reduce that stress?
 - » What are some actions you have seen other people do to relieve their stress (helpful or unhelpful)?
 - » What is one action you can take to reduce your stress based on what we have learned today?

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Activity (5 minutes)

- Introduce a progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) technique and have students practice it.
- The key to PMR is noticing what the muscles feel like when they are tense, and slowly relaxing the muscles so that you begin to notice the difference in how they feel when they are relaxed. The more you practice this, the more quickly your body can relax. When muscles are tense, they might even hurt.
- Students can start by clenching their right fist as tight as they can without hurting themselves. They should be instructed to make a fist and hold it for 10 seconds and then slowly relax for 6 seconds, noticing the difference. Next, they can bend their arms at the elbow and tighten without clenching their fist, working through other muscle groups next (i.e., neck, stomach, face, legs, toes).
 - » A step-by-step description on how to do this is provided in the full suggested script. You may also use this video link to a one-minute relaxation practice for additional support: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQVpkZACGCE>

Closing (2 minutes)

Summary

- Remind students how helpful actions can reduce stress.
- Discuss how students can evaluate if their actions were helpful or not. It can often be hard to tell if our actions are helpful or unhelpful in the moment. Something students can ask themselves is, "When I did that, did it help me feel less stressed? Did it help me work through my problems? Did it cause additional problems?" Some unhealthy coping activities may work in the short term but not in the long term. In other words, students should consider if their actions actually helped them work through their stress/solve their problem, or did they do the opposite? Helpful actions can allow us to get through whatever situation we may be facing.

Practice

- Have the class engage in a deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation exercise for a minute or two.
- Encourage students to:
 - » Practice deep breathing and/or progressive muscle relaxation at least once a day.
 - » Thank one person a day for supporting them.

Use the BAM! Summary and Review of Lesson 2 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.