

BAM! Student/Teacher Resilience Lessons

Lesson 4: The Mind (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 identify two “self-talk” thinking habits that sometimes worsen their stress and prevent them from taking helpful action.
2. Students will be able to identify how values affect their thoughts.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate a “self-talk” strategy that can be used to challenge unhelpful thoughts, reduce stress, and help them be more effective.

LESSON MATERIALS

- Nine Thinking Habits Worksheet
- Challenge Questions Worksheet

Optional:

- Mind-body connection webpages:
 - » apa.org/topics/stress/body
 - » apa.org/topics/stress

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction (2-4 minutes)

Welcome and Recap

- Welcome everyone back to the lesson.
- Remind students about the connection between personal values and the impact of stress on our bodies and actions. Today’s lesson will focus on the mind.
- Have everyone practice the Just Breathe exercise with one set of deep breathing.
- Introduce how our mind gets stressed and what thoughts or cognitions we come up with when we are nervous, stressed, or anxious.
- An important part of being resilient is something called “self-efficacy.” This means we have the belief that, while we can’t control everything in our lives, there are a lot of situations in which we can take control and make choices that reflect what matters most to us.
- When we get stressed, nervous, irritable, or sad, our minds can come up with thoughts that can make us feel worse. The thoughts we have about ourselves and our situations are called “self-talk.” Self-talk is what we say to ourselves in our minds. It can be positive, neutral, or negative.
 - » A thought is just a thought, which means it’s not always true or realistic.

Worksheet Activity (3-5 minutes)

Nine Thinking Habits and Challenge Questions Worksheets: *These activities focus on self-talk and thinking habits.*

- Using the Nine Thinking Habits Worksheet, have students consider the nine listed thinking habits.
 - » As you go through the habits, ask students to reflect on how frequently they fall into these habits. Ask them to put one checkmark next to the habits they sometimes fall into, two checks if they fall into the habit a moderate amount of time, and three checks if a thinking habit describes how their mind typically works. They should keep their answers to themselves and try to mark them as honestly as possible.
- Next, using the Challenge Questions Worksheet, have students write their responses to the various challenge questions and/or come up with their own challenge questions.
- Lead a discussion on how thoughts are just thoughts (that are not always accurate or reasonable) and ways to challenge thoughts that may not be entirely accurate or helpful. By challenging inaccurate or unhelpful thoughts, we can redirect our minds to think more realistically and helpfully.
- Lead a discussion on how catastrophizing thoughts contribute to stress and ways to challenge these types of thoughts with more realistic thoughts.
 - » Invite students to think about a catastrophic or other hurtful thought habit they have and then to think of one challenge question to counter this thought habit. A quick way to become more realistic is by asking what you would tell a friend who is thinking the same thing.
 - » Students can be invited to share a challenge question with the class.
 - » Note: If students get stuck trying to challenge a particular thought, they can always question whether focusing significant attention on that thought is helping the student with their stress and/or letting them engage in their own valued actions or if it is causing distress and/or holding them back from their own valued actions.
- See the full suggested script for a guide on using these worksheets in class.

Closing (3-5 minutes)

Summary

- Remind students about the three components of BAM! and how this helps them to be more resilient when they practice the activities they've learned in these lessons and think about the discussions they have had.
- Remind students about their "self-efficacy" – their belief in themselves that they can make changes.

Note: Optional activities and discussion questions are provided in the full suggested script to allow you to expand the discussion and engage students further.

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