**Building stress resilience in early adolescents’ lives (BReal)**

**Lesson Plan: Lesson 1 “Born to be brave”**

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| **Lesson**  1 of 3 | | **Key Terms**  Stress, being brave, learning, learn from experience, finding the ‘sweet spot’ |
| **Suitable for**  Year 7-9 | |
| **Title:**  Born to be brave | |
| **Learning objective**  To learn about the stress response and ways of managing stress.  **Learning outcomes**  Students will be able to:   1. Explain how the mind and body respond to stress. 2. Identify how stress affects different people in different ways. 3. Assess healthier ways to respond to stress, including challenging ourselves. | | |
| **Resources:**   * Lesson 1 worksheet for each student (includes Baseline and End Point assessments “Student Questionnaire”, case studies, and personal reflection activity chart) * Lesson 1 BReal animated video (linked in slide deck- needs to be played with sound) * Flipchart paper and pens for six groups * SEND alternative glossary * Lesson 1 Quiz * Parent information sheet | | |
| **Suggested lesson timings** *(compress, lengthen, or subdivide depending on your school’s standard lesson length and the needs of your students; the discussion and activity sections are particularly adaptable depending on your timing needs)* | | |
| 5 min | **Lesson 1 Baseline (slide 2):** “Student Questionnaire” in Lesson 1 worksheet   * As this is a baseline assessment, students should work independently. Do not provide prompts or further explanation at this point. Whilst students complete the task, monitor their responses to establish their current knowledge, ideas and misconceptions and consider how these will be addressed in the lesson, for example by spending additional time on specific activities. Once completed, ask students to add their names and put these to one side, as these will be revisited at the end of the lesson. | |
| 5 min | **Introduce** lesson objective and lesson outcomes, and establish ground rules (slides 3-4)   * Introduce BReal and its purpose: to support students in building a cognitive toolbox to improve resilience to stress | |
| 5 min | **What is stress?** Use slides 5-9 and show Lesson 1 BReal video | |
| 10 min | **Group work (slide 10)**  6 groups with flip chart paper – based on the video, write what they know about:   * what stress is * how minds and bodies can respond to it * different effects it can have   **Feedback** by asking different groups to explain their answers to the questions and refer to subsequent PowerPoint slides (11-15) for each of the following:   * the science of stress * how minds/bodies respond to stress * adolescence * how people can learn to respond to stress | |
| 15 min | **Case studies (slides 16-22)** – one case study per group for students to discuss and record answers to following on flip chart paper:   * What is the character stressed about? * How do they feel? * What is happening in their mind/body? * What strategy/ies are they using? * Are they effective? Explain your answer.     **Feedback** each case study by asking each group to share their ideas, showing each case study on a PowerPoint slide whilst it is discussed. Teacher is to record strategies students have identified (good and bad) on the board.  Notes for case study discussion:  *‘What are the characters stressed about?’*   * What other people think (Amber – but likely to be others too!) * Friendships (Joe) * Getting into trouble (Kai) * (Not) being good enough (Amber/Harry/Tia/Kai) * Emphasise these are all normal and common worries that everyone has but especially during this point in your life   *‘How do they feel?’*   * They may all be feeling a range of different emotions, including anxiety/fear/worry, sad/hopeless, frustrated/angry and other emotions (e.g., guilt, shame, envy, anger). * They may also experience some positive emotions, especially Maryam as she improves on the saxophone (e.g., feeling proud, pleased, excited).   *‘What is happening in their body?’*   * They may have lots of sensations in their body as a result of being stressed, anxious or angry, such as heart beating fast, tight chest, breathless, dizzy/faint, sick, butterflies, stomach aches. Sometimes these sensations can feel scary even though they are harmless. Some of these same sensations are also experienced when feeling excited. * If feeling sad/hopeless, they may be feeling tearful, sluggish, tired, keyed up or slowed down.   *‘What is happening in their mind?’*   * Kai might be having thoughts like ‘I’m stupid’, ‘I’m a loser’, ‘I’m going to get in trouble’. * Maryam might have thoughts such as ‘I’m going to prove you wrong’ or ‘this sounds better than last time’ - but she is likely to also have some negative thoughts like ‘I’m never going to get any better’ or ‘I’m rubbish’. * Joe might have thoughts like ‘she’s going to dump me’, ‘I’m going to have no friends’, ‘I’ll never have any friends’, ‘no-one likes me’. * Amber may think ‘I’ll look weird’, ‘they’ll laugh at me’, ‘they’ll judge me’, ‘they won’t be friends with me anymore’. * Tia might think ‘I’m never going to get picked for the team again’, ‘everyone else is better/stronger than me’. * Harry may think ‘I’m stupid’ or ‘they’ll think I’m stupid’, ‘they’ll judge me’.   *‘What strategies are they using to deal with feeling stressed?’*   * Having a go/persisting even when difficult (Maryam) * Avoidance (Amber/Harry/Tia) * Giving up and not trying (Harry/Tia) – this is a form of avoidance * Trying to get someone to do something that they might not want to do (Joe – trying to spend more time with Maisie) – Joe is trying to get Maisie to reassure him that nothing has changed even though they have (and he is likely to need to adapt to this) * Thinking/planning (Amber – non-uniform clothes) * Worrying or dwelling on it (Kai/Amber) - people might not see worrying as a strategy but going over something in your mind, overly focusing on it and thinking ‘what if X happens’ could be seen as a way of (trying to) manage the stress (although likely to make the problem worse).   *‘Are they effective?’*   * Having a go and persisting isn’t easy but this is likely to be the most effective. However, it’s important that Maryam looks out for what her actions lead to (e.g., improvement in skills) rather than the ‘in the moment’ feelings (e.g., frustration). * All the other strategies (e.g., avoidance, getting reassurance, over-thinking/planning, worrying/dwelling) may feel easier and helpful in the short-term. However, they tend to keep the problem going (or even make it worse over time) as the person doesn’t learn that their worst fear may not come true or that they can cope.   If time, could also ask for ideas about what the other young people could do that might be more helpful, but this will be covered in next 2 sessions, focusing on specific cases.  **SEND alternative for case study discussion:**  For SEND students you may prefer to use fill-in-the-blank answers rather than free-flowing responses. We have provided some suggested fill-in-the-blank responses for you to use or adapt at your discretion:   1. *What are the things that are making the young people in the case studies feel stressed or worried?* Joe worries about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (basketball/friendships/forgetting homework) 2. *What are the strategies they are using to deal with feeling stressed?* Joe is trying to cope by asking Maisie for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (reassurance/money/ideas) 3. *What strategies are likely to work best in the long run?* Joe might feel less upset about Maisie if he makes another \_\_\_\_\_ (enemy/friend/rival)   **Challenge activity:**   1. Write a short story or comic depicting one of the case studies from the lessons, and imagine an ending where the character deals with their stress by using information or practical strategies from the lessons. | |
| 5 min | **Evaluate strategies (slide 23)** – as a class, discuss:    Are there any strategies that might seem to work in the short-term but might not work in the long-term? And: Which strategies are likely to work best in the long run?  *‘Are there any strategies that might seem to work in the short-term but might not work in the long-term?’*   * All the above strategies except having a go and persisting (Maryam) may remove stress in the short-term (especially avoidance) * In the long-term they tend to actually make it worse – e.g., they keep beliefs that the person isn’t good enough or a failure going, as the person doesn’t learn anything new   *‘Which strategies are likely to work best in the long run?’*   * Having a go and persisting (Maryam) * This might be a harder strategy to use * But over the long-term it pays off as she reaches her goals, has a sense of achievement, and is likely to feel more confident to take on new challenges   **SEND alternative for case study discussion:**  For SEND students you may prefer to use fill-in-the-blank answers rather than free-flowing responses. We have provided a suggested fill-in-the-blank response for you to use or adapt at your discretion:   1. *Which strategies are likely to work best in the long run?* Joe might feel less upset about Maisie if he makes another \_\_\_\_\_\_ (enemy/friend/rival) | |
| 5 min | **Personal reflection (slide 24):** Ask students to complete the ‘Practice makes progress’ chart based on their recent experiences – students are not required to share these reflections. Ask students to keep this resource to refer back to in lesson 2. | |
| 10 min | **Endpoint assessment (slides 25-26):** Revisit the questionnaire from the start of the lesson and, using a different colour pen, ask students to re-answer the questions to demonstrate any new knowledge, skills and attitudes they have developed in the lesson.  Optional extension activity: Lesson 1 Quiz  Signpost further support and answer students’ questions (slides 27-29)  A parent information sheet for BReal is available, which you can give to students to share with their parents. | |