



SEL Unit: Resilience,

We Can do Hard Things **Version 2.0**

[Resilience Unit Teacher Guide](#), [Original Lesson](#) (Some content may be different)

Lesson 6, Grades 6-8, Resilience & Breathing to Manage Our Emotions

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to

- connect with their teacher and peers;
- Identify worries or fears they may be having at this time; and
- understand and practice the coping strategy of breathing through worry and fear.

Materials

Release (5:39 minutes)	Slide Deck
Breathing and Finger Tracing (7 minutes)	Feelings Chart or Mood Meter
Family Connect Resource	

Lesson Activities

Welcoming Activity:

- Welcome each student to class with a friendly greeting and using each student's name. When possible, as a class name the students who aren't in class to remember them as community members even in their absence.
- Virtual Learning Confidentiality Review: Please take a moment to review classroom agreements that support the confidentiality of these community meeting times.
- Use the [Grounding Moment Activity/Handout](#). Students write or think responses. OR
- Invite students to share someone who was a "Helper" (supportive adult/friend) to them recently or something they did or saw that made them smile.
- Emotional Check in



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



To request permission for reproducing or sharing please contact abriones@pps.net or jillb@pps.net

- Ask students to draw or share a color that matches their current feeling/s they are having and why.
- OR use the [Feelings Chart](#) or the [Mood Meter](#) to enhance emotional vocabulary and give them language for their feelings.

Engaging Activities:

- Ask students what they can remember about resilience and the tools we have been learning to help us do or get through hard things. We want to remember that things may be difficult right now, but that there are things we can do to help us get through these tough times. Practicing these tools can help us build resilience (bouncing back after challenges). The coping strategies we have been working with are: **courage**, finding our **Helpers** (supporting people or objects), developing our own **Helping Words** (positive self talk), and **focusing on what we can control**.
- Last week we talked about *worry and fear*. We talked about how thinking about the “What ifs” is what can make our worries grow. Worry and anxious thoughts focus on the future and what MIGHT happen--which none of us know what IS actually going to happen. The less we think about what *might* happen, the less our bodies will feel scared. Ask students what they remember from the last lesson about how fear/worry shows up in their bodies, i.e. sick to stomach, headache, sleepy, etc. The more we can learn about how our bodies react to fear/worry, the better we will get at knowing when to use our coping tools to help us feel better.
 - *For educators--it is important to encourage students to practice these tools when they are NOT feeling intense emotions. Let students know that the more we practice these different tools when we are regulated, the better we will know which tools work for us when we are dysregulated. The goal is to encourage students to be able to develop self awareness of (listen to) their bodies because our bodies give us lots of clues about our emotions--sometimes before we even notice we are having them. If we have that self awareness, we can use our tools to help us regulate before our feelings get too intense.*
- Invite students to think about which of the tools feel like the best fit for themselves (courage, Helper, Helper Words/Positive Self Talk, focusing on what we can control). By asking them to think and talk about their coping tools, it brings to their awareness that they do have tools they can draw upon when they are struggling.
- This week, the tool we are focusing on is Breathing.
 - *For educators: you will find numerous strategies for teaching calming breathing techniques. The key is for each of us to find a technique that works for us. Breathing that comes from our bellies can help send messages to our body of calm in contrast to fast breathing from our chest which sends messages to our body of stress and potential danger. (See resources at the end of this document for additional information.)*
- Tell students they are going to watch a short video about how breathing can help us calm our bodies.



- Invite students to watch this video about the benefits of breathing ([Release--5:39 minutes](#))
- Discussion:
 - Ask students if they can relate to any of the comments or people in the video.
 - Ask them if they use breathing strategies in any way to help them move through intense emotions.
 - Ask students how they calm their bodies and emotions.
 - Share with students an example of a time you recently used your breath to calm down when you were having a strong emotion.
 - Share with students why breathing and attention to the breath can actually help the uncomfortable feelings to release.
 - Taking deep breaths allows more carbon dioxide to enter your blood, quieting down the parts of your brain that are activating your anxiety (aka 'fight or flight' response). The breath flows through your bloodstream, calming your heartbeat and making it easier to continue to take deep breaths.
 - Like any new skill, deep breathing can take time and practice to get good at and really see the impact. The more you practice, the more your body will automatically reach for and use this skill when it's needed ([More information on deep breathing here](#))
 - If students have difficulty focusing on their breath (which often is hard for adults too), they can focus on an object in the room, a pet, a picture they like, the different temperature sensations on their body, etc. Drawing our attention to an object, even for short periods of time (a few seconds) can help to interrupt the worry, angry, sad thoughts that are making our bodies react in uncomfortable ways. [Bruce Perry Resource](#) for more information on this concept.
- *Optional Additional Activity:* JusTme, in collaboration with YoMind, has created a [video](#) on Vimeo walking through the activity of finger breathing. The video is about 7 minutes long. He finishes the video with some positive self-talk which is a nice reminder of our previous lessons.
 - Invite students to practice the finger tracing breathing and ask for their reactions.
- *If you have time*, share one or two of the breathing tools listed in the "Extensions" section of the lesson. Practice them as a group. Invite them to share which one they liked the best and why.
- Conclude the lesson by inviting students to share what they learned about how and why to use breathing as a tool for coping with strong and uncomfortable feelings.
- One key point to make is to tell students that we don't use breathing to push our feelings away, but instead, we use breathing to help us to not have our feelings take over. If we try to push away our feelings it can actually make our feelings become more uncomfortable and intense. By learning to breathe through our difficult emotions, we can greet them (just like we learned from the "Guest House" poem by Rumi that we read last



week) with courage by using our breathing to tell our bodies and minds that we are okay and don't have to be afraid of our feelings.

Optimistic Closure:

- Ask students to share one of the following:
 - The next time I have an uncomfortable feeling (or feeling I don't like), "I am going to try _____ breathing tool." OR
 - "One thing that helps me to feel courageous is. . . ."

[Feedback Form](#) Teachers, please take 2 minutes to complete the lesson feedback form AFTER you teach the lesson. This will help the PPS Social Emotional Learning team develop lessons that meet your needs.

Teacher Wellness

The SEL team here in PPS appreciates you and we acknowledge the amazing work you do every day. We believe that we can only support our students when our own wellness is healthy and thriving. We have compiled a list of [Wellness Resources for Educators](#) that you may find helpful. Thank you for all you do for our students. 🧡

Family Resources

Connecting with families is one way to reinforce and extend student learning. The SEL team has developed a [Family Connect Resource](#) (translated in 5 languages), available to teachers to share with families if they feel it will be a valuable resource.

