

“Flashback: The Sequel”

(Exploring negative memories/experiences)

Purpose: To help students understand how “unwanted” memories/experiences may influence people’s current thoughts & behaviors in non desirable ways which may ultimately lead to their involvement in counseling.

Materials: Computer projector and sound device, one folder, one binder and Flashback: The Sequel video. Use the following link to connect to video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bfvo0btR8Gc&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active

Student Materials: paper/pencil.

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Key Concepts: Memories & Flashbacks, PTSD signs & symptoms, Vulnerability.

Introduce/reintroduce: Self to students. Announce that today’s mental health activity, like all of our classroom activities, are about reasons why a person might go see a counselor someday.

Part 1

Ask: Students to bring out a sheet of paper and write their name on the top and number it 1-5.

Request: Students to think of five good/positive memories they have and to briefly describe those memories on lines 1-5. Also, write down the year or their age at the time the memory was made. For example: 1. Went to Disneyland with my family in summer of 2011, or 2. Went horseback riding with my grandpa when I was 9 years old.

Allow: Students several minutes to complete this request.

Call On: Students to share positive memories.

Emphasize: The role of family, friends or achievement had in their positive memories.

Introduce: The video as a memory book project you’ve been working on.

Announce: “The video will only last two minutes and the only questions you’re going to be asked are what you thought of the video and how you felt while you watched it.”

Play video.

Gather: Student thought & feeling responses to the video.

Part 2

Say: For the next moment I want you to just think (no writing) of up to five memories/experiences you've had that you usually avoid/prefer NOT to think about.

Provide: Encouragement & Reassurance.

Give: Pause for sixty seconds.

Instruct: Students to turn their papers over and number 1-5.

Ask: Students to use their pencils and *pretend* to write down five of their avoided memories/experiences on their paper.

After: A moment or two have students finish whether completed or not.

Ask: "Raise your hand if anything on your imaginary list makes you still feel....

1. Sad?
2. Odd or Unsettled?
3. Anxious or Embarrassed?
4. Vulnerable (in the middle of a battle with no armor or weapons)?
5. Agitated or Angry?

Ask: Raise your hand if you thought this imaginary activity was dumb or stupid?

Explain: That our memories and our experiences largely determine our future choices about things like colleges we go to, courses we take, the jobs we pursue and the choices of friends we make.

Show & Tell: "For example, let's say this big binder (hold up) represents our individual positive experiences that we're willing to think and talk about and this folder (hold up) contains all the pages of experiences and memories we avoid and often refuse to think about or talk about. Both however contribute to our future decisions about things like choosing friends, colleges, life style and relationships.

Ask: Wouldn't it make sense to better understand the content of the folder (hold up) before you make important decisions about your life especially when some of the earlier important decisions you've made about your life haven't worked out so well?

Provide: Personal examples as needed.

Part 3

Watch: Video again and ask students to keep track of the number of images they felt were unsettling.

Gather: Student responses by requesting a show of hands for feeling unsettled by:

- 0 images
- 1-3 images
- 4-6 images
- 7-9 images
- 10 or more images

Remind: Students that everyone has experiences, events & memories they'd prefer to forget, skip over and avoid talking about. Sometimes those memories "pop up" as flashbacks or reminders of things we prefer to not think about, process or deal with. Those "pop ups" especially if they happen pretty often and you think they might be messing with your decision making might be your clues to talk to a counselor.

Tell: Students one of the most difficult things they'll ever have to do in counseling is to think about and talk about the stuff they don't like to. Sort of like being a kid again and having to go on a really scary ride you've already been on but *this time*, you've got someone sitting right next to you to help you through it. For those people who think the imaginary activity we did earlier was a waste of time and who report nothing in the video was unsettling, that's fine too. (They may not be ready to deal with it all just yet either.)

Collect: Student papers and read aloud one positive memory from each paper without divulging the identity of the writer. Be sure to insert some fun things like "Ate my first burrito" or "Had my first kiss" to lighten the mood as the activity comes to a close.

Review: Privately student papers and determine which students may need your support.