

## **Stuck**

(Dealing with Desperate Behaviors)

**Purpose:** 1) Help students understand how feelings of being “stuck” can lead to panic and then to desperate behaviors. 2) Improve student awareness of the role that counseling can play in the prevention of becoming stuck, breaking the emotional sequence that leads to panic and to differentiate between desperate and drastic behaviors.

**Materials:** Picture of Stuck/Trapped/Cornered/Can’t Escape and Picture of Panic Button (see attached.) Overhead projector is optional.

*Student Materials:* Sheet of paper and pen/pencil.

**Time:** 20-25 Minutes.

**Key Words/Concepts:** Stuck, Panic, Desperate and Drastic

Introduce: Or reintroduce yourself to the class and any new students.

Review: The Shoe Box activity. Explain the activity was about how sometimes people lose their way in becoming the kind of person he/she always wanted to become and how counseling gets people back on track.

### **Part 1:**

Have: Students take out a sheet of paper and place their name on the top along with the teacher’s name and classroom number.

Ask: Students to number their paper 1 to 3.

Begin: The activity by asking students to come up with a name for the picture you’ll be showing them. Explain that the picture will contain four images that come together to form one picture.

Show: The stuck/trapped/cornered/can’t escape picture using an overhead projector or walk up and down the aisle displaying the picture for everyone to see.

Ask: Students to write down the name they’ve given the picture on line number 1.

Call: On volunteers to share the name they’ve given the picture.

Reinforce: Picture names that support the concept of stuck, trapped, cornered, restricted.

Announce: “I’m going to try to get all of you to stand up by asking the class several Stuck or Trapped questions. Once you’re up, continue standing until my questions are complete. What I mean is that when I ask you a question and if your answer is “yes” you should stand up. Continue standing until I tell everyone to sit down.”

Questions:

1. Stand up if you've ever been stuck in a Tree.
2. Stand up if you've ever had a Ring stuck on your finger.
3. Stand up if you've ever been trapped or stuck in the Snow.
4. Stand up if you ever had a Boot stuck on your foot.
5. Stand up if you've ever been locked in or couldn't get out of a Closet.
6. Stand up if you ever had your head get stuck in a Sweater.
7. Stand up if you ever had your Zipper get stuck.
8. Stand up if you've ever been stuck on a Roof.
9. Stand up if you've ever been stuck in Line.
10. Last chance; stand up if you've ever been stuck in Traffic.

Know: That nearly everyone will be standing, if so acknowledge it's pretty common to get stuck in or on something (stuck experiences/issues.)

Recognize: Not everyone gets stuck. For those that aren't standing, state to the class that not everyone gets stuck or knows what it's like to get stuck but most do.

Have: Students sit down.

Call: On several students to say how he/she felt when he/she were stuck/trapped in any of the previously mentioned 1-10 *things*.

(Ex.: For those of you that were ever stuck in a tree, in traffic or in a line...how did you feel?)

Highlight/emphasize: The feelings of Frustration/Anger, Anxious, Scared, Frightened, etc...

Validate: The following feeling words that often go along with being stuck/trapped/cornered/can't escape:

1. Frustrated/Angry
2. Anxious
3. Scared

## **Part 2**

Challenge: Students to stand again if they have ever felt trapped or stuck in any of the following *situations*:

Questions:

(Stand up if you were ever...)

1. ...Stuck without enough money to buy something.
2. ...Stranded without a ride somewhere.
3. ...Stuck without enough time to finish something (tv show, homework or project.)
4. ...Trapped/Stuck with something you'd ordered at a restaurant.
5. ...Couldn't get out of turning a school project in on time.
6. ...Stuck with a chore (the dishes) or the consequence of something you've done.
7. ...Trapped sitting in the back seat on a long trip!
8. ...Stuck with your first answer about something.
9. ...Trapped in a lie you've told.
10. ...Couldn't get out of a promise you'd made.

Know: Not everyone will be standing but many will be.

Have: Students sit down again.

Call: On several students to say how he/she felt when he/she had been stuck/trapped in any of the previously mentioned 1-10 *situations*.

Introduce & Show: The Panic Button Picture.

Announce: That people who sometimes get stuck may also feel frustrated, anxious, scared, and sometimes will Panic.

Explain: Panic behaviors are actions without much thought.

Say: "Panic behavior usually happen when people who are stuck/trapped and feeling a combination of frustrated, anxious and scared stop thinking and when that happens, they stop managing their emotions.

Ask: Students to write a definition of the word Desperate on line number 2.

Call: On students to read aloud their definitions. Look for and or offer an explanation or definition: Last chance, only thing left to do, last resort, hopeless action, bad, serious, dangerous behaviors and or a complete disregard for consequences.

Offer: Sometimes people who think of themselves as being stuck, trapped and cornered (restricted) also begin to feel frustrated/angry, anxious, scared and after a while they hit the panic button and become desperate.

State: Desperate people do desperate things when they feel stuck, trapped, cornered & restricted. It's almost as if they hit their own personal panic button. Panic Button responses often look like very desperate behaviors!

**Part 3**

Challenge: The students again to stand if they know of any kids or adults that have ever done any of the following **desperate behaviors** (no names or shout-outs please.)

Questions:

(Stand up if you know kids or adults who have ever...)

1. ...Stolen (stuff, electronics, bikes or answers.)
2. ...Broken in (cars, houses, apt. desks etc.)
3. ...Used/Sold/Made Drugs.
4. ...Ran away from home (kids or adults.)
5. ...Done self harm (cutting, hitting fists in walls, overdoing medications)
6. ...Gone to juvenile hall, jail or prison.
7. ...Suddenly left/quit/walked out on their family or job.
8. ...Dropped out of school.
9. ...Used beer/alcohol/drugs to get high or intoxicated.
10. ...Practiced extreme weight loss methods.

Look: To see how many students are standing and make a supportive comment like “Everybody seems to know at least one person who has done something desperate.” Ask all to sit down.

Remind: Students that many people do extreme things/desperate behaviors because they feel Stuck/Trapped/Cornered/Can’t Escape which may lead to frustration/anger, anxiety, fright, and then panic. Panic often leads to desperate behaviors.

Monologue: You may be one of several thousand people who go see a counselor someday because you might feel stuck, trapped, or can’t escape certain...

1. Situations (rumors, backed into a corner, someone calling you out, gossip)
2. Relationships (abuse, have no one else, needing support)
3. Jobs (dead end job/career, no advancement, minimum wage, no job)
4. Debt (owe too much, feeling overwhelmed, no way out)
5. Own body (unhappy with looks, weight, health, etc. )

Remind: Students that counselors’ help people learn how to:

1. Avoid Stuck/Trapped/Cornered/Can’t Escape situations.
2. Learn how to manage frustration, anxiety, fright, and panic.
3. Choose non-desperate behaviors that don’t make things worse...only better.

Ask: Students to write on line 3 about a time you felt like hitting the “Panic Button” or did something desperate because you were feeling stuck, trapped, cornered or couldn’t escape a situation and panicked.

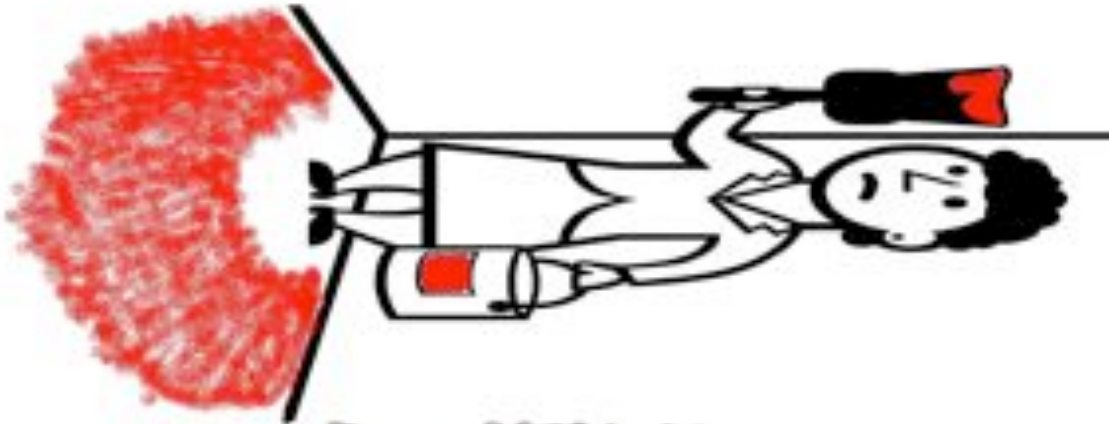
As: Students write, talk out loud how desperate situations do sometimes call for *drastic* behaviors...but not necessarily panic/desperate behaviors.

For example State: “Calling 911 might be considered a *drastic* but necessary behavior when people at home are out of control and hurting each other. Drastic behaviors show that you’ve kept your wits about you when everyone else might be panicking. Running away from home and hitchhiking down the nearest highway would be considered foolish and desperate behavior as a way to deal with that situation.”

Gather: Papers and thank students for participating in the counseling activity.

Privately: Review student responses.

Follow up: With students who have or are currently feeling stuck/trapped in a situation and at risk for doing something desperate.





# Panic Button