

## **Timber!**

(Learning to believe in your self by letting go of fear and self doubt)

**Purpose:** For students to understand that counselors help people learn to believe and trust in themselves by letting go of their self doubt, fears and counterproductive behaviors.

**Materials:** Adequate open classroom area, Folded blanket or Big Dog pillow, Hand Mirror, Masking tape, White board marker and Letting Go card (see attached sample.) Counselor must be able and willing to catch/support a falling backwards student. Recruit the teacher for support as needed.

Student Materials: None required. \*Student must be physically able to participate. If student has no recess or gym restrictions he/she should qualify for participation.

**Time:** 20-25 Minutes.

**Key Words/Concepts:** Free Falling, Letting Go, Issue, Trust, Belief,

**Introduce/reintroduce:** Be sure to tell the kids who you are and that it's both your job and privilege to have the opportunity to come to their classroom and do activities about mental health. Tell the kids that their teachers can text, email or call you anytime they have a 911 personal (non life threatening) emergency with family or friends at school.

### **Part 1:**

Ask: Raise your hand if you believe in these three statements about yourself:

1. I'm worthwhile.
2. I matter.
3. I'm important.

State: For those of you that said "yes" by raising your hand, you'll have the chance to prove it. For those that did not raise your hands, you will have the chance to witness your classmates get tested. You might also realize you actually do believe in yourself just by watching your classmates!

Monologue: Now, in order to really believe in those three statements about yourself, you have to be able to *let go* of their opposites. That is, if you believe you are worthwhile you have to be able to let go of any thoughts or feelings you have of *not being worthwhile*. The same is true for letting go of your thoughts and feelings of *I don't matter* and *I'm not important*.

State: It's not as easy as it sounds because negative thoughts are all some people have to hold on to and letting go of them can be pretty scary. I'll show you.

**Part 2:**

Call: Up between 5-7 \*physically qualified students who had initially raised their hands either by their rows, desks, or tables to form a line. Do not call up everyone at once. It's important that the kids have an audience (witnesses.)

Optional: You may use your tape (masking tape) to mark a line on the floor.

Announce Directions:

The first person in line is going to turn around and face the person behind him/her.

I will then give the first person in line a "let go" card.

The first person in line will then give his/her "let go" card to the person he/she is facing.

After giving ("letting go") their card away, the first person in line will:

- A. Extend arms away from his/her sides so they are level with their shoulders (Demonstrate what you've just said.)
- B. Continue standing stiff and straight with legs together (Demonstrate again) and
- C. On my signal (Ready 1, 2, 3...Timber!) without bending his/her knees should fall straight backwards (Demonstrate without falling completely back and thus prematurely ending the day's activity;)

State: *I'm* not going to catch you. I'm just the *reflection* (hold up mirror) of the confidence and belief you have in yourself of

1. Being Worthwhile,
2. Matter and
3. Being Important

and that is what will catch you if you fall straight back where I, as your reflection will catch you! The mat is here just in case you don't really, fully believe those things about yourself...yet.

Remind: (Show & Tell) Remember, arms positioned firmly straight out away from your body, legs straight & stiff and knees locked straight up and solid. Fall straight back when you get the signal (Ready 1, 2, 3...Timber!) and you'll be just fine=)

Ask: The boys and girls who are sitting down to help call out “Timber” with you after you’ve called out Ready 1, 2, 3. They can also witness how well (based on minimal knee/waste bending) the letting go student did by holding up either their number one (pointer) finger for an “ok” job of letting go or a thumbs up for a “great” job of letting go. (*Monitor the use of both pointer and thumb simultaneously as it may indicate an “L” for loser.*)

State: You will only have one chance at this today and we probably don’t have lots of time for you to get ready once you’re up here. I may ask some students who aren’t quite ready to return to their seats and wait until the next time.

Begin: The process of having students take turns. Proceed with one row or group of students at a time. Appoint a student who either already had their turn or chose not to “let go” to be the student who receives the let go card when the line comes down to the last person. Be mindful of the classroom time you have available. Some boys and girls will get stuck between wanting to fall and being too afraid to fall. Encourage as needed but also be quick to offer that it might be too soon for them to fully believe. (That’s what counseling can help with;) Leave a couple minutes in the activity for the closing (Part 3.)

### **Part 3:**

Ask: Raise your hand if you had some fun today with this activity?

Summarize: That the activity was largely about how counselors help boys and girls learn to let go of negative thoughts and feelings of themselves. Letting go of fear and doubt and trusting in your self is not easy and it’s something many of us have to practice a lot at home, in class, with our dance and music clubs, in sports, at work and with our friends!

Report: Students who feel like they don’t matter, aren’t important and aren’t worthwhile usually don’t do well in school, clubs, sports and friendships and seem to get into more trouble than those who can let go of their self doubt and fear.

State: Letting go of negative self thoughts also means that you let go of (Write on white board) B.A.D. (negative) actions: Behaviors, Attitude, & Decisions.

Give Thanks: And remind students that you are only a phone call, text message or email away from helping them=)



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(of negative thoughts, feelings, behaviors and self doubt)



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