

Tripping Up

(What happens when you leave your personal problems lying around)

Purpose: To help improve student understanding of how personal problems can lead to on going issues and unfulfilled goals/dreams if left without a strategy for dealing with them.

Materials: 30+ colored softball size “play land” type balls (ex. 15 yellow & 15 red) or similar colored and number of plastic cups, two black garbage bags, blindfold or oversized knit cap and adequate floor space.

Student Materials: Pencil & paper.

Time: 25 Minutes.

Key Words/Concepts: Problems, Issues, Happy, Independence & Success Strategies.

Introduce/reintroduce: Get a show of hands from the kids who remember you or any of the previous activities you’ve done with them. Ask about earlier activities that involved things like Viking Helmets, Control Box, Ribbons, Hard Hat, & Bling Clock from first grade (Gifts of counseling.) Have kids raise their hands if they remember activities from second grade that may have required them putting their hand in sack/box and feeling what was inside! Perhaps a memory from earlier in the third grade year when the kids participated in the activity with the Hula Hoop (going through,) Jump Rope (getting over) and Coins in the shoes (getting used to change.)

Part 1

Direct: Students to bring out a sheet of paper and pencil.

Have: Students number their papers 1-5 as if preparing to take a spelling test.

Announce: I’ve got five questions for you and your answers are going to be very important.

Ask: (Number 1.) How Happy do you want to be: Not at all, A Little, Some or A Lot?

Ask: (Number 2.) How much do you want to be Managed/Supervised/Bossed: Not at all, A little, Some or A lot?

Ask: (Number 3.) How Successful do you want to be: Not at all, A little, Some or A lot?

Ask: (Number 4.) How good are you at creating strategies for dealing with problems: Not at all, A little, Some or A lot?

Ask: (Number 5.) Choose one the following labels that most describes you:
A) Afraid of Heights. B) Afraid of Spiders. C) Afraid of Snakes D. Afraid of Water.

Repeat: Questions as necessary.

Part 2

Direct: Students to stand when their answer for number 5 is called.

Say: Stand if you're most afraid of Heights. (sit down before going on to next)
Stand if you're most afraid of Spiders. (sit down before going on to next)
Stand if you're most afraid of Snakes. (sit down before going on to next)
Stand if you're most afraid of Water. (sit down before going on to demonstration)

Announce: It's time for a demonstration!

Recruit: A student volunteer to come forward.

Review: Volunteer's first three answers regarding Happiness, Independence and Success.

Review: Volunteer's 4th answer regarding ability to develop problem solving strategies.

Ask: Volunteer "What did you write as being most afraid of Heights, Spiders, Snakes or Water?"

Announce: This is your lucky day (or not)!!!

Show & Tell: Slowly reach in one of the garbage bags & pull out... one ball (or plastic cup) and say "Let's imagine this ball represents a little bit of the problem you're most afraid of....(fill in the blank with student's response. Ex. Spider)

Place: (ex. yellow) Ball on the floor in front of student.

Ask: "How hard would it be for you to get past this ball (without touching it/tripping up on it) to the other side of the room?"

State: "Show me."

Allow: Student to demonstrate. (Student will either "get over it";) or go around it.)

Ask: The student to explain how (the strategy) he/she used in getting past the problem (their fear) without tripping on it.

Present: The student with a greater challenge.

State: Now let's say you're little problem is actually a really big problem...(empty the garbage bag out with the remaining yellow balls/cups in the open area!) Let's also say not only do you have a problem with (Yellow) but you also have a pretty big problem with

(Red) too! (roll out fifteen red balls/cups from the other black trash bag in the same area as yellow balls to represent for example both Snakes & Spiders!)

Challenge: The student to do walk across that area of the room to the other side blindfolded (may use knit hat and pull over eyes)!

Challenge: A few other students one at a time to do the same.

Have: Volunteers help gather the balls/plastic cups back into the garbage bags.

Part 3

Discussion Questions & Topics:

1. How much of a challenge was it for the volunteers to get to the other side of the room without touching or tripping up on the yellow or red balls?
2. What do you think about the idea of having to wear a blindfold or have your eyes covered and have to get across the room to the other side?
3. What if the other side of the room (where you're trying to get to) represents being Happiness, Independence & Success (just like in the questions)?
4. What if the blindfold represents not having a strategy or plan to get across the room?
5. What if the balls/plastic cups represent personal problems like:

~Anger
~Fear
~Hurt
~Doubt

People have other problems like: Addiction, Abandonment, Shyness, Bossiness, and other personal insecurities like how they look and where they come from.

6. Did you know that some people not only have a little anger, fear, hurt & doubt (hold up one ball) but they have A LOT of anger, fear hurt and doubt (hold the entire bag)!

State: Counseling probably can't solve all your problems like the hurt, fear, anger & doubt you might have. However, counseling can help you develop strategies to deal with your problems whatever they may be so you can get to a place in your life (across the room without tripping up on them) where you can be Happy, Independent & Successful.

*Remember, you don't have to solve all your problems you just need to try and keep from tripping up on them!

State & Ask:

Answer the following (example) questions silently to yourself. If your answer is "yes" to any of the questions then think about giving counseling a try.

1. Will your problem/s (whatever they are) keep you from being successful, happy or proud of yourself?
2. Will your problem/s keep you from earning a million dollars? (Getting & Keeping a job)
3. Will your problem/s keep you from making friends or going to dances?
4. Will your problem/s keep you from reaching your goals & dreams?
5. Will your problem/s keep you from going to college?
6. Will your problem/s keep you from playing sports, participating in dance, cheerleading, gymnastics or joining clubs?
7. *Will your problem/s keep you from taking responsibility for your thoughts, words & actions? (Lots of people will blame others (ex. Classmates, Teachers & Bosses) for their own inability to create strategies to be successful even though other kids in class with the same teacher/boss have developed success strategies.)
8. *Will your problem/s keep you from even trying to do any of those things?

Ask: How many of you know someone or can imagine someone you know having a hard time getting past or creating a good strategy for dealing with their problems?

Call: On a few students for their responses (no names please.)

Announce:(In closing): Everybody has problems. Counselors help people to either solve their problems and or learn how to deal with them in ways which allows them to still be happy, independent & successful.