

Stuck Point Help Sheet

What is a stuck point?

Stuck points are thoughts that you have that keep you stuck from recovering.

- These thoughts may not be 100% accurate.
- Stuck points may be:
 - Thoughts about your understanding of why the trauma happened
 - Thoughts about yourself, others, and the world that have changed dramatically as a result of the trauma.
- Stuck points are concise statements (must be longer than one word – “trust” is not a stuck point).
- Stuck points can often be formatted in an “if..., then...” structure. For example, “If I let others get close, then I will get hurt.”
- Stuck points often use extreme language, such as “never”, “always.”

What is NOT a stuck point?

- **Behaviors:**
For example, “I fight with my daughter all the time” is not a stuck point, because it is describing a behavior. Instead consider what thoughts you have when you are fighting with your daughter.
- **Feelings:**
For example, “I am nervous whenever I go on a date” is not a stuck point, because it is describing an emotion. Instead consider what you are telling yourself that is making you feel nervous.
- **Facts:**
For example, “I witnessed people die” is not a stuck point, because this is something that actually happened. Instead consider what thoughts you had as this happened and what you think about it now.
- **Questions:**
For example, “What will happen to me?” is not a stuck point, because it is a question. Instead consider what answer to your question is at the back of your mind, such as “I will not have a future.”
- **Moral statements:**
For example, “The military should take care of soldiers” is not a stuck point, because it reflects an ideal standard of behavior. Instead consider how this statement pertains to you specifically, such as “The military failed me” or “I can’t trust the government.”

Examples of Stuck Points

1. If I had done my job better, then other people would have survived.
2. Other people were killed because I messed up.
3. Because I did not tell anyone, I am to blame for the abuse.
4. Because I did not fight against my attacker, the abuse is my fault.
5. I should have known he would hurt me.
6. It is my fault the accident happened.
7. If I had been paying attention, no one would have died.
8. If I hadn't been drinking, it would not have happened.
9. I don't deserve to live when other people lost their lives.
10. If I let other people get close to me, I'll get hurt again.
11. Expressing any emotion means I will lose control of myself.
12. I must be on guard at all times.
13. I should be able to protect others.
14. I must control everything that happens to me.
15. Mistakes are intolerable and cause serious harm or death.
16. No civilians can understand me.
17. If I let myself think about what has happened, I will never get it out of my mind.
18. I must respond to all threats with force.
19. I can never really be a good, moral person again because of the things that I have done.
20. Other people should not be trusted.
21. Other people should not trust me.
22. If I have a happy life, I will be dishonoring my friends.
23. I have no control over my future.
24. The government cannot be trusted.
25. People in authority always abuse their power.
26. I am damaged forever because of the rape.
27. I am bad because I killed others.
28. I am unlovable because of [the trauma].
29. I am worthless because I couldn't control what happened.
30. I deserve to have bad things happen to me.
31. I am dirty.
32. I deserved to have been abused.
33. Only Veterans can be trusted.