

HANDOUT 6.4

Stuck Point Help Sheet

Date: _____ Client: _____

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 traumatic event happened.
 - Thoughts about yourself, others, and the world that have changed dramatically as a result of the traumatic event.
- Stuck Points are concise statements (but they must be longer than one word—for example, “trust” is not a Stuck Point).
- Stuck Points can often be formatted in an “if–then” structure. Here is an example: “If I let others get close, then I will get hurt.”
- Stuck Points often use extreme language, such as “never,” “always,” or “everyone.”

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 and a fact. 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 criminal justice system should always work” 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 justice system 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. Because I did not tell anyone, I am to blame for the abuse.

(continued)