

Beach Ball Resiliency

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Toss the ball and, as the participants take turns catching it, they should say one thing they like about themselves. (In very large groups, not everyone will get a turn.) The idea is to encourage people to think about self-esteem.
2. Explain to the group that the beach ball represents resiliency. Talk about what resiliency means. Demonstrate that even when the ball is tossed around or if you push on one side of it, the ball returns to its original shape and holds the air.
3. Then, the facilitator should talk about things that happen in life that can truly damage the way a person feels about him or herself. First talk about all those little things (i.e. someone made a belittling comment to you today).
4. Pass the ball around again and have each participant mention a small hurt that could damage self-esteem and release a little bit of air with each comment. Continue until the ball is halfway deflated, but not completely deflated.
5. Point out to the participants that when you press on the ball now with this level of deflation, it no longer bounces back to its original shape.
6. You can repeat the activity again, but this time talk about trauma. Explain how one big thing can let the air out of anybody's ball entirely.

Group Size: Any

Time Needed: 11 to 20 minutes

Goal: Discuss self-esteem and resiliency

Audience: Couples, Teens, Parents, Children, Singles

Special Considerations: None

Resources Needed:

- ✓ One inflated beach ball (works well with a large ball)

Tips for Discussion and Processing

It is important when doing this exercise to point out that, when we are children, it only takes little things to start to “deflate” us. Emphasize that it is really difficult, but not impossible, to get the ball inflated again once we are adults. You also can discuss that some people make it to adulthood with pretty good self-esteem, but sometimes one big trauma can really affect that. Make sure to talk about ways to build up self-esteem and resiliency too.