



T.I.P. #55

ACTIVITY: STRESS FOR SUCCESS!

THEORY: This game involves active participation. All you need are stress balls to keep the game going. Whether this be used for a lesson on stress, for teambuilding, or as a group energizer, this is a wonderful hands-on activity that virtually everyone enjoys. This provides a great opportunity to experience how stress can be fun! People also like the chance to get up and move in this activity.

IMPLEMENTATION: Ask participants to stand and form circles of about five to eight people. Give each group one stress ball to begin. Have the first person throw a ball to someone else and remember who they threw it to since they will be asked to remember and continue the same pattern. If there is only one group, you can be part of the group, but if there is more than one, make sure you are not in the mix, since you will need to move around between groups. Each person throws the ball to someone who has not yet had the ball. The last person sends it back to the original person who “keeps the ball rolling” a little faster than next time. (Do not have them throw to the same person twice until all members have gotten it first.) Once they have the pattern down, introduce another ball—then another and then another. Balls drop, roll, etc., but urge them to pick them up and continue. With five or six balls going at a time, it becomes quite a circus with a lot of laughing!

PROCESSING: After about five minutes, have everyone sit down and identify what they can learn from the activity (besides it being hard to keep all the balls in the air!). What did they learn they had to do to be successful? How many thought of what they would eat for dinner, etc.? This is a great lesson on mindfulness, as people are totally in the present, and thus would be an ideal activity for DBT groups when addressing the subject of mindfulness. Point out that life is like the activity—we all juggle many things at one time, and if we are not focused, things get dropped! If we focus too much on the past or present, the stress balls will pound and bombard us if we are not alert. Note: You can order stress balls through many vendors on the internet by putting in the keyword “stress balls.” (They are foam bouncing balls that are soft and will not cause injury.)