



Children, Horses and Adults in PartnerShip (CHAPS)

www.chapswyo.org

info@chapswyo.org

307-673-6161

Emotional Balls

Goal:

Visual representation of juggling emotions and finding ways or resources to assist in managing them

Rationale:

Emotions are real and necessary, but they can be messy and hard to manage. Developing coping & management skills for emotions can help people to keep them from being overwhelming.

Objective:

- To discover how many emotions we can carry at one time
- To develop coping & management skills for healthy living

Materials:

- Balls of all sizes – 48" to tennis balls (need 20+) (we use 27 balls of varying sizes)
- 2-3 Calm, forgiving horses that do not mind the big balls
- Address labels & sharpie

Mission:

- Have all 20+ balls off the ground at one time
 - Rules: Team MUST stay together
 - Pick up all 20+ balls ("emotions") at once for a minimum of 5 seconds
 - May not use bags, buckets, wheelbarrow, or anything not on his/her person
 - May use clothing (hoodie hood, pockets, ball cap, etc.)

Activity:

- Write down any emotion you have experienced in the last 5-7 days on the labels
- Put the labels on the balls
- Toss the balls around the arena (spread them out pretty well)
- Get teams together – 2 veterans and a horse
- Individually, have the veterans touch their horse's neck and think of resources for managing emotions
- Have each team verbalize their resources (must be done after giving it to the horse!) If needed, label the resources and have the horse carry them.
- As a team (2 veterans and horse) move around the arena and pick up/gather the "emotions" - they MUST stay together, do not divide and conquer
- To be successful, all 20+ balls must be off the ground for 5 seconds – all at once
- Many times they will gather the balls to one spot then pick them up, others will try to pick them all up as they go
 - Ideally, they will have the horse carry most of them as the participants have already given the horse their resources.
- If time permits, have each veteran do the activity by him/herself



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Process

- Was this easy or hard? Why?
- Did you notice the “weight” of holding all the emotions at once?
- Did you use your resource(s), why or why not?
- Did you sort your “emotions” or were they all equal? Why or why not?
- What could you have done differently to get a better outcome?