Feelings Hot Potato
Source: Caron Harbour Wedeking

Recommended Age Range: Ages 5 and Up

Treatment Modality: Group, Family

Goals
• Verbally express feelings
• Increase awareness of personal feelings

Materials
• Two to four squishy stress balls, (palm size works well)

Advance Preparation
Wash the balls so they become sticky.

Description
Have the group/family sit in a circle on the floor. Explain that the game is played by pressing all the balls together into one bigger ball, then gently tossing the balls from person to person (in a circle or randomly) until one of the balls comes apart from the others. The person holding the balls is then given a feeling (either by the therapist or by the person who last tossed the balls) to talk about.

Discussion
This activity is a fun and non-threatening way for children and families to discuss difficult events that have occurred, and/or process the feelings associated with these events. The activity acts as a catalyst for conversation about topics or events that are otherwise difficult to address. It is easily understood and accomplished, allowing participants to feel competent and relaxed.

The activity can be modified to participants' physical abilities (i.e. sitting in chairs or around a table, sitting in a wheelchair, etc.

About The Author
Caron Harbour Wedeking, LISW is an independently licensed social worker, a member of The National Association of Social Workers, and a member of the Association for Play Therapy. She is currently a clinical therapist working with children ages 0-18 and their families at Orchard Place Child Guidance Center, Iowa's only accredited mental health center for children.

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