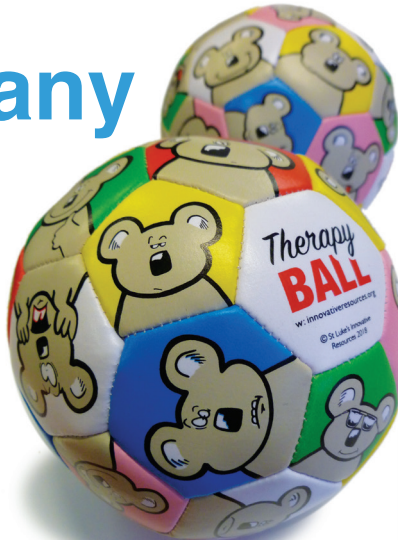


Koala Company

Therapy BALL



Therapy BALL: Koala Company

Soft, squeezable, multi-coloured ball made from PVC synthetic leather, lightly stuffed, 12.5 centimetres in diameter, with hand-stitched, pentagon-shaped patches, featuring 30 expressive koala characters (head and shoulders) depicting a wide range of emotions. Koala Company illustrations by Mat Jones.

Learning to recognise our feelings and communicate them effectively to others are key aspects of building emotional intelligence. So too are noticing and empathising with the feelings of others. Developing skills in managing our feelings as they arise and subside is crucial for building resilience and wellbeing, and is a hallmark of emotional maturity.

But talking about feelings can be tricky. So whether you are a parent, a counsellor, a teacher, a social worker, a mentor, or a coach, it can be very helpful to have a collection of simple, hands-on resources to bring an element of playfulness into these conversations.

The *Therapy Ball* from St Luke's Innovative Resources is designed to help get 'feelings conversations' rolling with kids and adults. Light, soft and easy to catch, the *Therapy Ball* features thirty zany characters from the much-loved *Koala Company* card set. These highly-expressive koalas cover the whole gamut of emotions from calm, contented and cuddly to sad, surprised and scared, all the way through to disgusted, disappointed and down-hearted—and any other emotion a child, young person or adult may be feeling.

- Throw or roll the *Therapy Ball* to someone, or play catch around a circle. Ask the catcher questions like: Which koala is facing you? Which koala is closest to each finger? What are those koalas feeling? Have you ever felt that way?
 - Can you pick a koala to show how you're feeling today? Which one shows how you'd like to be feeling?
 - Can you tell a story using several of the koalas? What names would you give them? What happened in the story?
 - What are the koalas in your story feeling? Have you ever felt that way? What is the best thing another koala could say to you when you are feeling that way?
 - Can you find pairs of koalas that show emotions you feel often, and ones you hardly ever feel?
 - Can you find pairs of koalas that show emotions you think are similar, opposite, easy or difficult?
- Which ones show emotions you would like to manage in a different way?
 - Do you know anyone who handles this emotion in a way you admire?
 - Can you copy something they do and see how it works for you?
 - What would be different in your life if you changed the way you handle this emotion?
 - Pick a koala and find at least three words to describe that feeling. Are there slight differences in meaning in these words?
 - Pick three koalas and describe how your body feels when you are feeling those emotions—your shoulders and your tummy, for example.
 - Is there a koala that shows how you felt often as a child? What was that like? Did others know you felt this way?
 - You can simply leave the *Therapy Ball* on a table for someone to pick up and squeeze in a counselling or mentoring session.
 - The ball can be used as a way of taking turns to speak in a group. Whoever has the ball can speak, and then they toss the ball to the next speaker.
 - Invent your own games and bring play into learning whenever possible. For example, you might lob one or more balls into a hoop or bucket and build conversations about feelings into the game. Perhaps everyone who gets a ball into the bucket is allowed to name a feeling that everyone else then has to demonstrate.
 - Play charades: each person picks a koala and demonstrates the expression to the group, and the rest of the group has to guess which koala it is.



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