

Hidden Heart

The things that we keep hidden inside are our hurts, emotional pain, scars, and anger. Some people work extra hard to hide these feelings and eventually may physically hurt themselves or others if they don't share their feelings with others.

This activity gives people the opportunity to share their pain and the anger they have hidden inside. When people start to deal with these feelings of anger before becoming destructive they can experience happiness in their lives once again.

Objective

For people to recognize and understand that the anger they keep on the inside affects how they live their lives. To help people recognize the good things that they have in their hearts and to encourage them to share this part of themselves with others.

Who

People who are angry about their own lives and who show this anger easily to others. People who are angry on the inside and keep the anger buried deep down which leads them to have many negative feelings towards themselves or towards others.

Group Size

1 or more

Materials

Paper

Pens or pencils

Scissors

Thin pieces of ribbon

One small, and one large balloon for each person (not inflated)

Permanent colored markers

Description

Give each person a small balloon, piece of ribbon, paper, scissors and a pen or pencil. Explain to them that this balloon represents their heart and all of the pain, hurt and anger that can be found inside of it. Instruct them to cut slips of paper that are small enough to fit into the balloon, to write down their hurts and anger on these, and to then put the papers into the balloon and tie the balloon closed with the ribbon (do not blow up the balloon). These papers do not have to be shown to anyone.

Give each person one of the larger balloons and ask each person to put their "heart" (the smaller balloon) into the larger balloon. Instruct each

person to blow up the large balloon and tie it shut. Tell them that they are to write on the outside of the balloon how they present themselves to others on the outside so that nobody can see the things that are hidden on the inside. Some people use humor to hide the pain; others always act confident even though they feel insecure and lonely. These are the types of things people should write on the outside of their balloon.

Once all of the balloons are written on, gather the group together and discuss what is written on the outside of the balloons. Challenge the members of the group to each share at least one thing they have written down on the outside of their balloon. Then ask each person to state if it is a good thing to cover up what is on the inside or if they would like people to know more about what's going on in their life and if so to think of a way that this can happen. After this discussion, allow them to pop their balloons as a symbolic way of getting rid of all the walls and devices that they use to hide their pain.

After the balloons are popped, the hearts with the ribbons tied around them should remain. Challenge each person in the group to find someone in the next week's time whom they trust enough to give their heart to. They should explain to that person what the balloon represents and why they want to give it to them; they should then let that person untie the ribbon to see what is inside. If possible bring the group back together a week later for a follow up group to find out who was able to find someone to give their heart to. Or simply challenge the group to read what they had in their "heart" to the group.

Discussion Prompts

1. How are you affected by the feelings and emotions that you keep inside of you?
2. What things inside of you makes you feel angry?
3. How can your life change if you get rid of the negative things and leave only the positive in your heart?
4. How can you get rid of the negative things in your life?
5. Do you trust anyone with your heart? Why or why not?
6. How can it help you to find someone to trust with your feelings and emotions?

Variation

Simply place a piece of paper with your name on it inside a balloon to represent you as a person and then write down the things that you do to keep people from getting to know the "real" you on the outside and share these with the group.

