

Bowl it over

This therapy activity is active, hands-on and uses visual cues. It was developed to assist children to articulate and appreciate situations that they find difficult and also to consider what they can do to help manage these difficulties. This activity can be used either early in therapy to identify current coping strategies or late in therapy when the child is consolidating some of the strategies they have learnt.

MATERIALS

- » You will need a soft ball and something to act as bowling pins to knock down. It is helpful to have pins that you can label so choose something that you can readily put stickers or glue paper onto. A simple way to do this is to use some clear plastic cups that you can slide pieces of cardboard into as the pins, as shown in the *Bowl it over example* picture overleaf. Empty food boxes also work well.

PROCEDURE

Explain to the child that you have been wondering about the things they find hard and thinking about what helps with these. Suggest that you draw or write each of the things that bother the child and stick these each onto a pin.

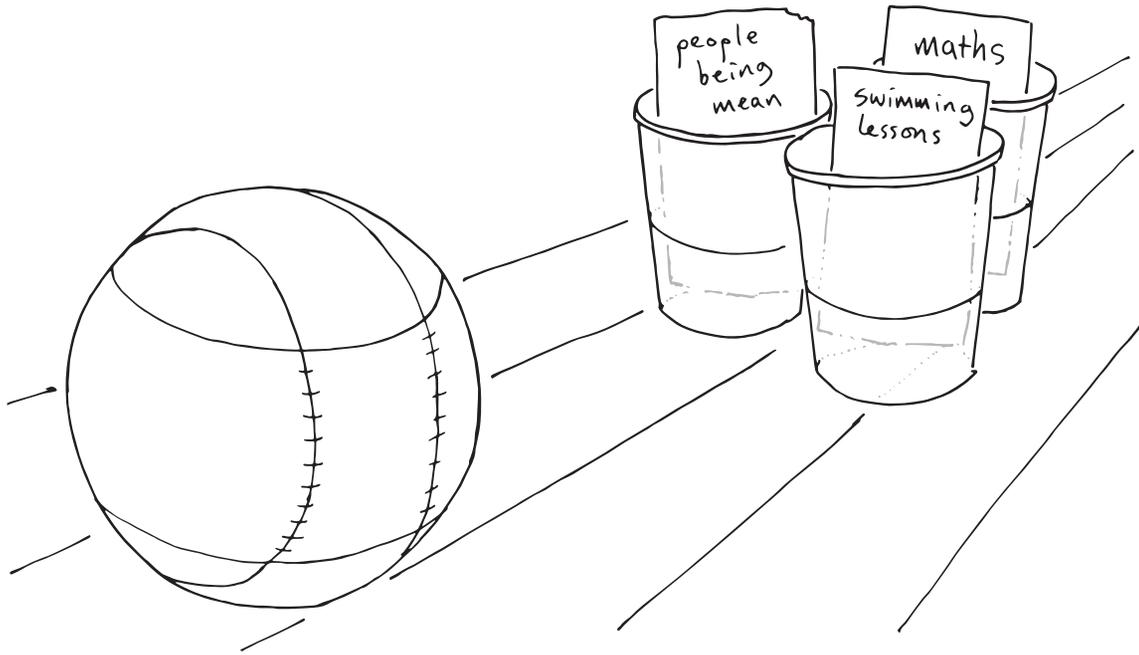
Take your time doing this and then set the pins up so that the child can clearly see them. You may want to reflect on how many or how few there are.

Then suggest that you think together about what would help with those things. Beginning one at a time, ask the child to think of something that helps with one of those difficulties and, when they do, allow them to have a go at knocking it down with the ball. Parents should be included and can ask what they notice helps too.

Continue in this manner until you have knocked all the pins down.

There are lots of opportunities to talk about how one helpful thing can sometimes help with more than one of the difficulties and how sometimes you try a helpful thing and it doesn't quite work, etc.

End the game on a positive with all the pins being knocked down.



Bowl it over example

FOR PARENTS

This game should be played with parents in the room, being actively involved. Parents may also reflect on the helpful things they try and what helps them to knock down the child's difficulties.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Both older and younger children are likely to find this activity helpful. Focusing on behavioral strategies with younger children and including cognitive strategies with older children is a good way of making this activity developmentally appropriate.