

“Staying Afloat in College”

- *Hand out different size and shaped balloons to each student (this represents the variety of people who go to college and inherent differences between them). Tell them that they are allowed to give a puff of air into the balloon for every “very important” support factor they have, but they must release a bit of air for every “very important” support factor they don’t possess. Notice the balloons end up all different shapes and sizes.*

Support Factors:

- **Effective study skills**
 - **Time management skills**
 - **Writing skills**
 - **Self-discipline**
 - **Academic support**
 - **Motivation**
 - **Positive attitude**
 - **Emotional support**
 - **Health and fitness**
 - **Financial support**
 - **Money management skills**
 - **Close family relationships**
 - **Close friends**
 - **Support through organizations (church, athletic teams, Greek organization, clubs)**
- *After students tie their balloons, have them throw their balloon in the air and try to keep the balloon in the air on their own for one minute. **RULE:** Once the balloon touches the ground, it cannot be picked up again until the next round.*
 - *Now, have another round only this time all students work as a team to try to keep all of balloons afloat.*

Discussion:

This activity is a good way to reflect upon the different resources and skills each of you have to utilize. If you look around, you’ll see that all of your balloons are of different size and shape. The resources that every student brings is different, as well as the time, ability, and willingness to access campus resources. You are all constantly being challenged to fill your balloons up with more air (further your success in college) and keep them from “dropping.” It is important to recognize your strengths and weaknesses so that you can use/compensate for them. One way to increase success is to learn what the campus has to offer and utilize it to the best of your ability.

Note to Facilitators:

In addition, you will be dealing with incoming students who come from all different backgrounds possessing different skills and resources. It is important to recognize that students having balloons of varying size and shape will have different needs and you as the advisor will need to address their concerns accordingly and help them to fill their balloons as much as possible.