

The Bubble 'Manual'

Rokus Loopik / Harry Gras, January 2020



Create Connection

Let the Bubble Coach introduce the speakers. The coach is responsible for safety in this meeting. People share very personal stories and that requires safety and protection. You can never give too much attention on that topic. It is important that the coach has some experience in leading the Bubble and/or Dialogue.

Rules

- * Everything Said during the Bubble, stays with the Bubble. That means that all that is shared during the Bubble, should not be shared with any other people than the people participating in this meeting.
- * If you want to talk about other people, talk about people who are present at the Bubble. Talking about people who are not present can only be practiced in a positive and constructive way.

Rules

- During the Bubble, allow people to be 'alone' with their sadness / disappointment / joy / surprise. Be respectful and offer your services only if people request that. That means it helps if you can sit on your hands actively.
- If people for one reason or another are leaving the Bubble, because they want to be on their own for a moment, don't panic. Most of the time people solve their own problem and they will come back. Even so, it's good to check whether people need support once they come back.

The Circle

- Ask people to convert all available seats in a perfect circle. Usually participants do not make a real circle. Some people 'hide' behind another participant or turn slightly away from the group. If people are unable to make a circle, then support them and give them tips. Tips that make possible that every participant can look the other participants in the eyes. Please offer people the time needed to achieve this. We are in no hurry. Time plays no role in the Bubble. If all that does not work: put participants in a circle and explain people why it is so important that we can see each other in the eye. The chairs. Preferred chairs are chairs in which people do not doze off, but still are comfortable. Also make sure that the chairs are not uncomfortable. You don't want to stand up after two hours with a 'wooden' butt.

Discipline

Do a 'check in'. Ask participants to state in 30 seconds how they are doing.

Ask people to be 100% present. Sometimes people have been through all kinds of experiences before the Bubble started. It's good to know in what emotional state they are in. It is important to pay attention to it before starting the dialogue. Even positive events are important to share: to celebrate successes with each other.

One of the four main rules in a dialogue is 'respect'. Disrespect will be shown in various ways. Looking away, make noise, shuffling, and so on. The storytellers are always sensitive. I've honestly never seen anything like this, because the stories are always impressive, but you never know.

Noise

- Ask people to stack away everything they do not need during the Bubble. Phones, jackets, bags, anything that can distract people. If the circle is formed, position yourself in the middle and give attention to all those things. Things that people can not use during the Bubble that will distract them from listening. The stories are always impressive and exiting. Some people will always look for a way out of the story. They can be overwhelming. That's very human and not a reason to condemn them. Nothing is a reason to condemn people anyway. Everyone has a reason to do what they do. Or say what they say. Explain people that it is important to stay and finish the Bubble together. If people for example have to go to the bathroom, ask them if they can 'hold it' for some time. Their most important life lesson can come by while they are in the bathroom. In between stories, blend in some breaks.

Writing in a journal every day, keeps the doctor away

- Only a 'journal' and a pen are items that people can bring along during the Bubble. All participants were offered a journal at the start of their learning experience. I use a journal every day and everywhere. During the introduction I will talk about the use of a journal and how it can change your life, in all areas. Make sure you always have Journals with you as gifts for the participants.

More rules

- At the beginning state the following rules of the Bubble: 'Wait and Listen', 'Respect', 'Listen' and if you really want and need to say something, do it direct, positive and constructive.

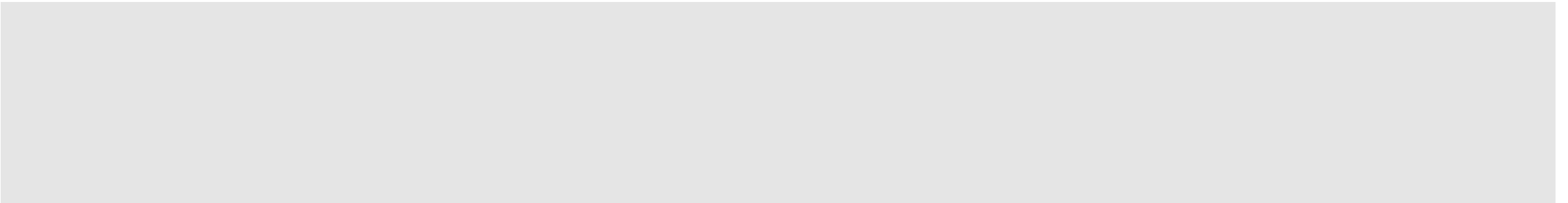
Respecting Emotions

- The Bubble often provokes emotions. It is important that everyone who is part of the Bubble respects these emotions. Do not allow people to practice their uncontrolled desire to help other people or soften / deny / patch / ensure / provide unasked advice or indulge storytellers and participants. If people need support, they can ask for advice. The Bubble Coach has an important and leading role in this. The Bubble is about giving people an opportunity to choose for the path of their personal recovery. That path is different for every individual taking part. It is important that participants "can sit on their hands." Participants are often afraid that by not softening emotions they make things worse for story tellers or participants. The reality is much different. By excepting people as they are and to allow these emotions, to create and an opportunity for self-direction, you help more people.

No questions allowed during the Bubble

- No questions are allowed during the stories of recovery. Be direct and constructive in this. Most questions are about the person who states the question. Most of the time the question has nothing to do with the story they just heard. Explain people why it is so important. Questions are allowed after everyone told his or her story and the Bubble has come to an end. Give people the opportunity to network, exchange stories after every story has been told. Ask people to bring business cards, which helps while networking. Ask people to step out of their comfort zone and ask any question they feel coming up. The receiver decides whether he / she will answer.

Sometimes it helps if you ask people to not talk about the stories they heard until the day after. With this you will ensure that people think about what they have heard, reflect on it within themselves.



Experiment

- Explain participants that it pays to experiment in behavior. If people are used to be submissive, encourage them to get out of that role, to step in and be very active in word and gesture, after the Bubble ends. If people are used to always act and talk, let them practice listening and silence and thus give other people a chance to be more active. The Bubble is an excellent atmosphere to experiment with different behavior. Everything is OK during the Bubble. There is no good or bad.

Managing emotions

- Take care of people who are overwhelmed. It is important that the stories are 'well received' by participants: it contributes to their recovery. The narrators and the coach are their role model, beacon and guide. Stimulate group members to support each other.

Coffee, tea, lemonade

- When starting the Bubble provide in tea / coffee / lemonade / cookies / bagels / donuts, etcetera. Make people feel welcome. Make it a special event. It is proved through research that everything you do in the first 5 minutes of contact, determines the continuation and quality of that contact. The Bubble stands or falls with discipline and focus from the coach and his / her assistants. The better you are 'equipped', the better the result. Also make sure there are refreshments / lemonade when the Bubble has come to an end. Lack of drinks and energy will decrease the ability to concentrate drastically.

Alcohol ruins much more than you want

- Advice people to drink no alcohol prior or after the Bubble.
- Alcohol has a disastrous effect on emotions. It magnifies everything. And puts everything in a different perspective. A perspective that is so often distorted.

Topic

It is important that the coach is informed in good time with the content of the stories that will be told. A good preparation is important. Knowing the content will make it easier for the coach to anticipate on the wellbeing of participants. Together we can solve and achieve everything!

Music

- Nothing more powerful than a song prior and after a story. The story will 'sink in' even more and it gives people time to reflect within themselves about what they just heard or distract them from it if needed. A song often says more than a thousand words.

