If you are viewing this course as a recorded course after the live webinar, you can use the scroll bar at the bottom of the player window to pause and navigate the course.

This handout is for reference only. It may not include content identical to the powerpoint. Any links included in the handout are current at the time of the live webinar, but are subject to change and may not be current at a later date.
Strategies for Teaching Social Skills

Tara Warwick, MS, OTR/L
www.todaysconsultingsolutions.com

Strategies for teaching social skills

• Why are social skills so important?
• Assessing social skills
• Teaching social skills
  – Types of interventions
  – Sample goals
  – Social skills groups
• Case Study
Importance of social skills

• Do you use social skills when:
  – Purchase gas from gas station
  – Eat at a restaurant
  – Go to the bathroom in a public place
  – Read a book
  – Exercise

Emotional Intelligence

• “Measure of an individual’s abilities to recognize and manage their emotions, and the emotions of other people, both individually and in groups”
• Higher EI = easier to form and maintain relationships, better at understanding their own psychologist state and less likely to suffer from depression
• www.skillsyouneed.com
Elements of Emotional Intelligence

- Personal Skills
  - Self-awareness
  - Anger
  - Self-management
- Interpersonal skills
  - Social awareness
  - Rapport building

DSM IV – Social domain

- Four broad categories:
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Social initiation
  - Social reciprocity
  - Social cognition

- www.autisminternetmodules.org
Nonverbal communication

- Majority of communication

- Difficulty understanding and interpreting non-verbal language
  - Gestures, body positioning, facial expression

Social initiation

- Two categories
  - Those who rarely initiate (fear, anxiety)
  - Those who initiate frequently, but inappropriately
Social reciprocity

- Social **reciprocity** refers to the give-and-take of **social interactions**.
- Conversations become monologue versus dialogue
- Conversations often derail back to their special interest
- Might fail to respond to social initiations
  www.autisminternetmodules.org

Social cognition

- Ability to process social information
- Understanding thoughts, intentions, motives, and behaviors of others and ourselves
- Three main processes: knowledge, perspective taking, and self-awareness
Step 1. Assessment

- Checklists
- Observations
  - Naturalistic
  - Structured
Autism Social Skills Profile (Scott Bellini)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>How Often</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invites Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J o i n s  I n  A c t i v i t i e s  W i t h  P e e r s</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T a k e s  T u r n s  D u r i n g  G a m e s  a n d  A c t i v i t i e s</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M a i n t a i n s  P e r s o n a l  H y g i e n e</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I n t e r a c t s  W i t h  P e e r s  D u r i n g  U n s t r u c t u r e d  A c t i v i t i e s</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I n t e r a c t s  W i t h  P e e r s  D u r i n g  S t r u c t u r e d  A c t i v i t i e s</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A s k s  Q u e s t i o n s  t o  R e q u e s t  I n f o r m a t i o n  A b o u t  a  P e r s o n</td>
<td>N S O V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Skills Checklist (Secondary)

RATING SCALE

*Almost always*: the student consistently displays this skill in many settings and with a variety of people

*Often*: the student displays this skill on a few occasions, settings and with a few people

*Sometimes*: the student seldom displays this skill but may demonstrate it on infrequent occasions.

*Almost Never*: the student never or rarely exhibits this skill. It is uncommon to see this in their daily routine.

I. Conversational Skills (Verbal and Non-Verbal)

1. Initiate conversation when it is appropriate to do so
2. Initiates conversation around specific topic
3. Asks “Wh” questions
4. Responds to “Wh” questions
5. Makes a variety of comments, related to the topic
6. Introduces him/herself to someone new
7. Introduces people to each other
8. Ends conversations appropriately
9. Waits to interject in a conversation
10. Maintains appropriate proximity to conversation partner
The Social Navigator

Social Skills Checklist

**SELF-REGULATION SKILLS**

- 1. Doesn’t get too close
- 2. Keeps voice low
- 3. Asks permission (before touching/lying)
- 4. Stays quiet while others talk
- 5. Does not run when upset
- 6. Sits calmly at table
- 7. Listens attentively
- 8. Asks for help
- 9. Accepts “no”
- 10. Doesn’t distract others
- 11. Pays attention to others
- 12. Waits calmly for turn

**LEARNING-READINESS SKILLS**

- 20. Bends down to pick up something
- 21. Stays in seat
- 22. Stays quiet in audience
- 23. Relaxes
- 24. Listens to teacher
- 25. Looks while listening
- 26. Raises hand
- 27. Tries to complete assignment/activity
- 28. Expresses understanding
- 29. Gets started in timely manner
- 30. Asks for help (with work)
- 31. Asks for example

---

**Social Skills Checklist (Project Data)**

**SECTION 1: SOCIAL PLAY AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the Child...</th>
<th>Almost Always Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Beginning Play Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Maintain proximity to peers within 1 foot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Observe peers in play vicinity within 3 feet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Parallel play near peers using the same or similar materials (e.g., building with blocks next to peer who is also playing with blocks).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Imitate peer (physical or verbal).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Take turns during simple games (e.g., rolling ball back and forth).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Skills Checklist
Project DATA
University of Washington

11/1/17
Observation

• Naturalistic
  – Playground
  – Community
  – Other

• Structured
  – Small group (peers)
  – Structured activity

During observation

• How do they initiate an interaction?
• How are they reading cues of another person?
• How is their conversation with others?
• Are they reading non-verbal cues?
• Personal space?
• Are they reading intentions of others?
• How do they repair social mistakes?
• How do they handle rejection/losing?
Step 2. Writing goals

- Be realistic
- Be specific to the deficit and need

Examples:
- When approached by a peer to play, Sally will respond verbally with a minim response rate of 70%.
- Johnny will have a conversation with a peer based on the interest of the peer with at least three back and forth turns.
- During a 15 minute play session, Sara will join in a structured play activity with peers a minimum of two times.

Step 3. Social skills intervention

- Social Stories, Carol Gray
- Social Scripts
- Social Lessons
- Video Modeling
- Emotional regulation
- Motivation
Social Stories™

• “A Social Story™ describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience.”

• www.carolgraysocialstories.com

Tips for practice

• Individuals interested in reading stories

• Write specific to the needs and interests

• Tell them what to do versus focusing on what not to do

• Can be used for many different situations
Social Scripts

- Prompting procedure for teaching students how to respond in various situations
- Use for engaging in play, initiation interactions, maintaining interactions
- Make sure you have a plan for how to fade the prompt
Tips for practice

• Keep it simple

• Teach it ahead of time

• Don’t forget to fade

• What about generalization?

Social Script Example

How To Walk in Line

I look at the person in front of me.

I do not leave a big gap in front of me.

I walk in a straight line. I do NOT WEAVE in the hall.
Social Thinking

• “what we do when we interact with people: we think about them. And how we think about people affects how we behave, which in turn affects how others respond to us, which in turn affects our own emotions.”

• Focuses on teaching
  • How their own social minds work
  • How their behaviors affect the way others perceive and respond to them
  • How this affects their own emotions, responses to and relationship with others across different social contexts.

• www.socialthinking.com

Social Thinking

• Teaches “why” behind social interactions not just a script on how to respond
  • Expected vs unexpected behavior
  • Recognizing that others have different perspectives
  • Understanding how to read cues of other people and change own’s behavior/responses
Video Modeling

• “an intervention technique often used for social skills training which involves participants watching a video of someone modeling a desired behavior and then imitating the behavior of the person in the video.
• Can be video of another person or edited version if themselves without the prompts

• www.modelmekids.com
Tips for practice

• Make sure you video the correct and/or unprompted response
• Individual needs to be able to attend to a video
• Make it available for individuals to watch several times
• Examples: initiating social interactions, engaging in play, performing various self-help skills

Video modeling example

• https://youtu.be/8I4KwA5CbqA
Emotional Regulation

- How does your engine run
  www.alertprogram.com

- 5 point scale
  www.5pointscale.com

How does your engine run?
Motivation

- Is the individual motivated to perform the skill?

- Do we need to target skills with positive reinforcement?
Social Groups

• Most important to match students
  – By age
  – By need
  – By sex?
• Have a plan, with flexibility (do not be afraid to veer off as the group does)
• Perform assessment ahead of time
• Communicate with families and teachers on target skills
• Most important skills to start with: understanding thoughts of others, expected/unexpected behaviors
• Have an end (6-8 week sessions)

Case Study

• Ian is a 6 year old boy with High Functioning Autism who was referred to occupational therapy services to address social skills in the school setting. He was having difficulty with peers on the playground and during free play time. He would often try, fail, and then end up playing on his own. His family had difficulty taking him to birthday parties or to friends home due to the social skills deficits.
The Plan

• Completed Social Skills Profile by Scott Bellini

• Areas he often had difficulty:
  – Joining in activities with peers
  – Interacting with peers during unstructured activities
  – Talking about or acknowledging the interests of others
  – Recognizing the nonverbal cues of others

Case study, cont’d

• Goals:
  – When in an unstructured play situation, Ian will join in to play with peers with no more than two cues from an adult.
  – When approached by a peer, Ian will ask the peer one question along with a follow-up response about the interest of the peer 3 of 5 opportunities.
Case Study, cont’d

• Intervention:
  – Video modeling of joining in on play
  – Social scripts on how to join in to play
  – Social lessons about how to think about another person’s perspectives for conversation skills.

Summary

• Social skills are a part of our every day world.

• Social skills can be taught!
  – Assessment
  – Writing goals
  – Intervention
References

- www.alertprogram.com
- www.autisminternetmodules.org
- www.carolgraysocialstories.com
- www.5pointscale.com
- www.modelmekids.com
- www.skillsyouneed.com