

TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

Expanding The World Through Social Development: Your “Wh” Questions Conversational Social Communicators

Presented by:
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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series



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The contents of this power point presentation were developed under a grant from the Nebraska Department of Education, IDEA parts B and C from the U.S. Department of Education. However, this content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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Learner Objectives

1. The participants will determine the needs of their students by utilizing the appropriate social skills assessment tools.
2. The participants will be able to describe strengths and needs of students with conversational social communication challenges.
3. The participants will be able to explain the impact that social skills have on student access to relationships, education, different environments and quality of life.
4. Participants will be able to design individualized social skills instruction across all environments.

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Presentation Summary



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Take Home Message.....

The social skills curriculum should be a critical part of EACH and EVERY day for students with ASD. The curriculum and activities have to be planned and implemented with as much consideration, if not more than math, literacy and every other area.



Why?

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Research says...

- Individuals with “soft skills” such as good social skills, sociability, good work habits, and conscientiousness, as well as those who participate in extra curricular activities are more likely to make more money, be employed, and attain high levels of education than those with good grades and high standardized test scores.

(Lleras, 2008)

Common Social Skills Difficulties

- Marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate **social interaction**.
- Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level.
- A lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people.
- Lack of social and emotional **reciprocity**.

Bellini, S. (2011). Overview of Social Skills Functioning and Programming (Columbus, OH: OCALI). In Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), *Autism Internet Modules*, www.autisminternetmodules.org. Columbus, OH: OCALI.

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Social Characteristics of Students with ASD

Social skill deficits may be separated into four broad categories of social functioning:

- nonverbal communication
- social initiation
- social reciprocity
- social cognition

Bellini, S. (2011). Overview of Social Skills Functioning and Programming (Columbus, OH: OCALI). In Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), *Autism Internet Modules*, www.autisminternetmodules.org. Columbus, OH: OCALI.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- Raise your hand if this sounds like a student with whom you have worked.



- Think about the specific areas of difficulty that the student has had and how that impacts their daily life.

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Who?

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Characteristics: Conversational Social Communicators

CAN EXHIBIT THE FOLLOWING:

- Generally well developed social radar
- Have metacognition
- Understand perspectives
- Lack perception of subtleties
- Less attune to nonverbal
- Pervasive anxiety
- Blenders and faders with anxiety
- Function under the radar, avoid social situations outside home

This information is an adaptation of the 36-page article Social Communication Learning Styles as a Guide to Treatment and Prognosis: The Social Thinking-Social Communication Profile by Michelle Garcia Winner, Pamela Crooke, and Stephanie Madrigal available at <http://www.socialthinking.com/images/stories/ST%20SCP%20Ver%20%206.12.pdf>. It does not contain all the information in nor is it intended to replace the information in the article itself.

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Strengths and Needs: Early Conversational Social Communicators

Strengths:

- Average to above average verbal skills
- Average to above average IQ
- May be very bright in areas of special interest and global knowledge
- Language
- Solid academic skills

Challenges With:

- Executive Functioning
- Spontaneous Interactions (may monopolize or withdraw if not interested)
- Being bullied
- May isolate with books or avoid group work
- Adults may see as charming and struggle to recognize difficulties
- Sensory problems
- May have high risk of OCD, depression, anxiety

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- Which one(s) of the following are characteristics of a student who is at the conversational level of social communication?
 - A. Average to above average IQ
 - B. Sensory problems
 - C. Understands the perspective of others
 - D. Bullied
 - E. All of the above

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What?

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Assessment

- **Underlying Characteristics Checklist: HF** (Aspy, Grossman)
- **TRIAD Social Skills Assessment** (Vanderbilt TRIAD)- **FREE**
- **Parent, Teacher, and Child Interview of Social Functioning** (Bellini, 2006)
- **Autism Social Skills Profile** (Bellini, 2006)- **FREE**
- **Social Skills Observation Forms-** **FREE**
- **Conversation Effectiveness Profile**<http://www.socialpragmatics.com/cep-r.html>

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Communication Considerations

1. Well developed language skills
2. Age appropriate vocabulary
3. May interpret language literally
4. Less attune to nonverbal communication
5. Difficulty with self regulation
6. May not accurately interpret others' expressions

Critical Social Skills for Conversational Social Skills

- Perspective Taking
- Eye Contact
- Reciprocal interactions
- Communicating wants and needs
- Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
- Gestalt Thinking- "Big Picture"
- Ability to think flexibly

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

True or False:

Understanding verbal AND nonverbal communication is a critical social skill that students need to have in their repertoire.

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How?

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Interventions

- Key Components of Interventions
 - Direct Instruction
 - Generalization of Skills
 - Developing Peer Awareness

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Social Skills Instruction

- **There is no one method to teach social skills that works for all students all the time. However, evidence shows that many approaches can be effective...Scott Bellini**
- Individuals with ASD need direct teaching of social skills. There are many curricula and programs available. Some good resources include:
 - Social Skills Instruction (Jed Baker, Scott Bellini)
 - Social Thinking by Michelle Garcia Winner

Interventions

- Regulation Strategies
 - Incredible 5 Point Scale
 - Alert Program
 - Zones of Regulation
- Relationships
 - Superflex™
 - Social Thinking™
- Social Narratives
 - Social Stories
 - Power Cards
 - Social Behavior Mapping
 - Social Autopsies
 - Story Kit (App)
- Social Skills Groups

Regulation Strategies

- Incredible 5 Point Scale
- Alert Program
- Zones of Regulation

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The Incredible 5-Point Scale: An Example from Kari Dunn Buron

| | |
|----------|--|
| 5 | Impossible to handle! Not ready |
| 4 | Really hard for me. I will need lots of help to work on this. |
| 3 | Hard for me. I can try to work on this. |
| 2 | With a plan, I can do this on my own. |
| 1 | No sweat - easy as pie. I can do this totally on my own! |

The Alert Program How Does Your Engine Run?



- **Why the engine analogy?**

The Alert Program uses an engine analogy because many children can relate and learn quickly about self-regulation when talking about their “engine” going into high, low, or just right gears. The engine analogy is just one way, but by no means the only way, to describe how alert one feels. We search for words that have meaning to the child or adult client (obviously we would not talk about engines when working with older students or adult clients). We can use any descriptor that conveys the person’s inner experience of self-regulation such as:

- colors (red for high, yellow for low, green or blue for just right)
- animals (maybe cheetah for high, turtle for low, and bear for just right)
- Winnie the Pooh (Tigger for high, Eeyore for low, and Pooh for just right)
- use the child’s special interest, especially if on the Autism Spectrum. (For example, if the child loves to talk about a certain movie then use characters from that movie.)
- or adults might use the words, “high alert, low alert, and just right for ____ (fill in the blank for any activity)”

ZONES of Regulation

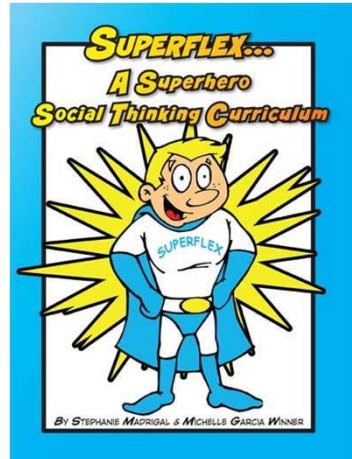
“ZONES is a concept used to help students learn how to self-regulate. The Zones of Regulation creates a system to categorize how the body feel and emotions into four colored zones with which the students can easily identify”

-Leah Kuypers, Zones of Regulation (2011)



Relationships

- Social Thinking®
 - Superflex™



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Social Narratives™

- Social Stories™
- Power Cards©
- Social Behavior Mapping
- Social Autopsies
- Story Kit (App)

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Social Groups

1. Introduction/warm-up
2. Topic focus
3. Modeling
4. Practice
5. Coaching/prompting
6. Feedback/problem solving
7. Free/snack time

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Social Skills Programs are Ineffective Because...

- Insufficient dosage
- Contrived and de-contextualized settings
- Failure to match skill deficit with type of intervention strategy
- Failure to assess social skills prior to intervention
- Use of ambiguous intervention objectives
- Lack of systematic programming
- Poorly implemented interventions

Bellini, Peters, Benner & Hopf (2007); Gresham, Sugai & Horner (2001); Quinn, Kavale, Mathur, Rutherford & Forness (1999)

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

When teaching a social skills group, you should do the following:

- a. Assess student needs.
- b. Create daily lesson plans.
- c. Provide direct instruction.
- d. Allow time for students to practice their newly learned skills.
- e. All of the above

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A large gray rectangle with a green border is centered on the slide. Inside the rectangle, the word "Where?" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

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Generalization

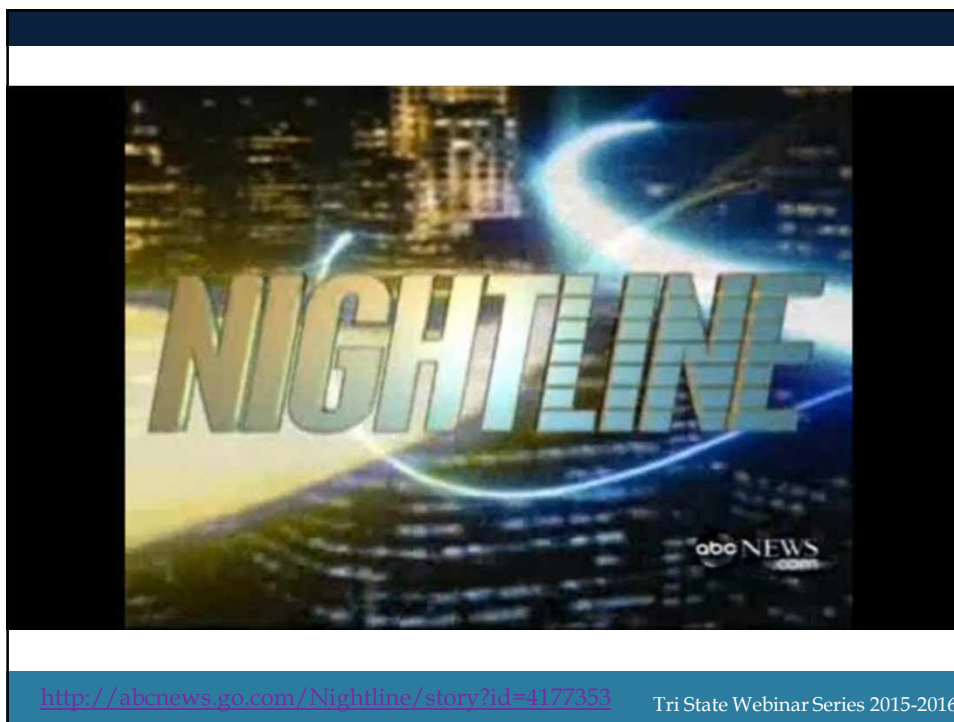
- Regulation Strategies
 - Cue cards
 - Visual supports
- Relationships
 - Training of staff and students
 - Use of same language within different environments
- Social Narratives
 - Priming: Power Cards, Social Stories, Social Behavior Mapping
 - Social Autopsies
 - Story Kit (App)
- Social Skills Groups
 - Lunch Groups
 - Structured/ planned play groups during recess gym class

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Developing Peer Awareness

- Peer Networks
 - Circle of Friends
 - Intricate Mind Videos
- Peer Mediated Interventions
 - Lunch Groups
 - Peer Buddies
 - Structured Recess

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Does the situation in the video clip remind you of a student with whom you have worked?

Raise your hand if you can identify one strategy from this webinar that you might use with Kaede.



THANK YOU!

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Selected References

- *Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome and Social-Communication Problems* by Jed Baker
- *Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome and Social Communication Problems* by Jed Baker
- *Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence Practical Solutions to School Success* by Brenda Smith Myles & Diane Adreon
- *Comic Strip Conversations* by Carol Gray
- *The New Social Stories Book* by Carol Gray
- *'Underdiagnosed' Girls With Autism Struggle to Fit In*
Nightline

Selected References

- *Thinking About You Thinking About Me: Teaching Perspective Taking and Social Thinking to Persons with Social Cognitive Learning Challenges, 2nd Ed.* By Michelle Garcia Winner
- *Think Social! A Social Thinking Curriculum for School-Age Students* By Michelle Garcia Winner
- *Superflex: A superhero Social Thinking Curriculum* By Stephanie Madrigal & Michelle Garcia Winner
- *The Zones of Regulation* By Leah Kuypers, MA Ed. OTR/L
- *"How Does Your Engine Run?" The Alert Program for Self-Regulation* By Mary Sue Williams & Sherry Shellenberger

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5-Point Scale Materials

- *A "5" Could Make Me Lose Control! An activity-based method for evaluating and supporting highly anxious students* by Kari Dunn Buron
- *Power Cards* by Elisa Gagnon
- *A 5 Is Against the Law! Social Boundaries: Straight Up! An honest guide for teens and young adults* by Kari Dunn Buron
- *The Incredible 5-Point-Scale Assisting Students in Understanding Social Interactions & Controlling Their Emotional Responses* by Kari Dunn Buron
- *When My Autism Gets Too Big: A Relaxation Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders* by Kari Dunn Buron

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