

The Power of Social Stories

Indrani Basu

Autism Society West Bengal
Kolkata

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People with autism

- Have difficulties understanding social situations; understanding, predicting the 'wh' questions about a social situation: Where, who, what, when, why
- Find it hard to cope with unpredictability and change
- Have difficulties to ask for information/ clarification (may lack of requisite communication skills)
- Have sensory difficulties



Differences in thinking (cognitive) styles

Impact on social understanding



Theory of Mind

Enables us to

- Understand our thoughts, mental states +
- Understand that what others know, think, feel can be different from what goes on in our minds
- **Infer** (Understand) a person's internal mental state based upon the external behavior that they exhibit.
- **Predict** (Guess) future behaviors based upon one's inferences regarding mental state.
- **Modify** (Change) one's own behavior upon the judgments made.



Executive Functions

Executive functioning is the ability of the mind 'To do all it takes' to complete a given task

- Maintaining Attention
- Controlling Impulses
- Tuning out distractions
- Mental planning and organising
- Problem Solving
- Thinking Flexibly
- Self-Monitoring
- Staying Goal Directed
- Shifting attention

Central Coherence/ Global Thinking

- The brain's ability to immediately see invisible relations between details which give an overall meaning to the whole
- We who are neuro typical/ non autistic:
- Look at the big/overall picture FIRST
- Have the natural ability to seek out overall meaning in an array of details
- We seek out meaning first and then detail
- We go from general to specific



To sum up, people with autism

- Understand/ predict the 'wh' questions about a social situation:
Where, who, what, when (what is happening/ going to happen, what will people say or do?)
- May have difficulties with change, with learning from mistakes
- May find it difficult to understand the whole, the context



Social Stories



What is a social story?

- A short story that describes a situation, concept, or skill
- A tool for teaching social skills to people with autism that provides the individual improved understanding of events and expectations that may lead to more effective responses.
- Provides details of what an individual might expect from the situation and what may be expected of him
- Provides information about situations that he/she might find difficult or confusing



What is a social story?

- Uses a format that is meaningful for people with ASD
- Is VISUAL
- A very effective technique to teach appropriate behaviour
- Developed by Carol Gray for persons with autism in 1991



What does a social story do?

- Provides description of a situation
- Suggests how others feel, how one reacts in such a situation, and WHY a behavior is helpful or is not helpful
- The social story is not to admonish the child "you should or should not do"
- Its not about improving behaviour; rather about improving understanding of events and expectations

Purpose of a Social Story

- To provide description of a social situation
 - To provide information about the ‘Wh’ s of the situation
 - To provide information on what others do, feel, think, act in the given situation.
 - To explain the behaviors that are part of any social interaction
 - To explain the reasons for the required behavior
 - To clearly state the expected response in the given situation
-
- The social story is not to admonish/dictate to the individual "you should or should not do"



Goal of a Social Story

- To increase the individual's understanding of,
- make him more comfortable in,
- possibly suggest some appropriate responses

for a social situation



A Social Situation could be any of these

- Travelling with others in a public bus,
- Keeping oneself clean
- Walking on the street
- Talking to strangers
- Waiting
- Eating Out
- Getting a hair cut
- Going to a birthday party
- Writing exams
- Standing in queue to buy a ticket

And so on.....



We use a Social Story to improve understanding so as...

- To overcome a rigidity
- To teach a new routine
- To change an existing routines
- To introduce a change in the environment
- To increase awareness of self
- To help change an inappropriate social behavior
- As a behavioural/ self regulatory strategy
- And many others



Some Examples of Social Stories



Going to the playground

- Sometimes in the evening Mamma and I go to the playground.
- A lot of the children play on the playground equipment.
- It is fun to play on the playground equipment.
- When the alarm rings, it means it is time to go home.
- When the alarm rings I can hold Mamma's hand and go home.



Talking to my friends

- Sometimes I talk to my friends in the class.
- When I stand too closely, it makes my friends feel uncomfortable.
- If I stand too close, my friends sometimes get angry at me.
- I can back up and stand one arm away from my friends when we talk.
- It makes my friends happy when I stand one arm away when we talk.



Social Stories are comprised of certain sentence types

- Descriptive
- Perspective
- Affirmative
- Directive

- *Cooperative*
- *Control*



The sentence types sorted as

- Sentences that DESCRIBE
- Descriptive Sentences
- Perspective Sentences
- Affirmative Sentences
- *Cooperative Sentences*
- Sentences that DIRECT
- Directive Sentences
- *Control Sentences*

Sentence types- Descriptive

- **Descriptive sentences**
- Describe the social setting
- Give accurate information about the setting
- Objectively address the “wh” questions: *where* the situation takes place, *when* the situation takes place, *who* is involved, *what* they are doing, and *why* they may be doing it.
- Truthful, assumption free statements

At snack time we eat our snack in the Green class

We eat the snack out of our own snack box.



Sentence types- Perspective

- **Perspective sentences**
- Describe other people's perspectives
- Give a peek into the minds of others
- They refer to or describe details of the reactions and emotions of others in a given situation like their thoughts, feelings, and/or mood

Most people like it when we eat the snack out of our own snack box



Sentence types- Affirmative

- **Affirmative sentences**
- Describes a commonly shared value or opinion
- Enhances the meaning of the other sentences by expressing a commonly shared value or opinion.
- They frequently follow descriptive, perspective, or directive sentences.
- Contributes to the reassuring quality of the story

Most people like it when we eat the snack out of our own snack box.

Its smart to eat out of our own snack box



Sentence types-Directive

- **Directive sentences**
- Provides information about what the person can do
- Suggests desired responses tailored to the individual.
- Gently directs the behavior of the person with ASD.
- Can act as a 'prompt' in the situation
- Directive sentences often begin with 'I can try to.... ' or 'I will try....'or 'I will work on....' etc.
- *At snack time, I can try to eat the snack out of my own snack box.*

Sentence types- Co operative

- ***Co operative sentences***
- Describes the role of other people
- Talks about what others will do in the situation to help the person be successful
- Helps to remind/ ensure consistent responses by a variety of people.

Raina will help me eat from my own snack box



Sentence types- Control

- ***Control sentences***
- An aid/ reminder for the person
- Identifies personal strategies the individual will use to recall and apply information. They are written by or in consultation with the individual
- Similar to a mnemonic device -- a sentence to help him remember the story or deal with the situation

I get a hug from Preeti when I eat my snack from my own snack box



Snack Time in Green Class

- *At snack time we eat our snack in the Green class*
- *We eat the snack out of our own snack box.*
- *Most people like it when we eat the snack out of our own snack box.*
- *Its smart to eat out of our own snack box*
- *Raina will help me eat from my own snack box*
- *At snack time, I can try to eat the snack out of my own snack box.*
- *I get a hug from Preeti, when I eat my snack from my own snack box*



This is a 'Story'!

- Remember that this is a social STORY
- It is not necessary for the child to be able to read
- It can be read out to the child who cannot read as with any other story



Why are social stories effective?

- Visual
- Provide accurate information.
- Factor in cognitive learning styles
- Identify and highlight relevant social cues
- Only relevant aspects are included, the rest filtered
- Provide information about other people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs
- Describe expected behaviors
- Lack of 'social inference' - No assumptions, no judgements

Steps to implementing a social story

1. Identify the target social situation
2. Gather Information
3. Write the Social Story.
4. Introduce the story.
5. Incorporate the story into the person's 'schedule'.
6. Adjust the content if progress isn't being made.
7. Fade the story when the desired goal is maintained and reintroduce if needed.



1. Identifying the target social situation

- Prioritize
- Based on the person's needs- factor the future
- Consult the 'team'



2. Gather Information

- Gather Information about the situation
- Gather information about the person
- Identify the motivation/ function of the behaviour
- Identify the replacement/ alternative behaviour



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

- Clear and simple language
- Short and simple sentences

- Have a title for the story



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

- Start a story with a descriptive or perspective sentence
- Do not start with a directive *or control*
- Ideal ratio:

Two to five sentences that describe for every one sentence that directs

2-5

:

1

Descriptive/ Perspective

Directive/ Control

Affirmative/ Co operative



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

- Try to use the present tense.
- May be written in the future tense, to describe an upcoming situation
- Try to provide ample information about the situation



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

- Preferably write in the first person
- Use the individual's name to personalize story and help them internalize it quickly
- Use real-life situations that the individual will be in
- Use names of family members, friends, and activities he engages in routinely



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

Presentation Format

- Handwritten
- Typed
- With illustrations/ pictures/ photographs (unless it distracts the individual)
- Power Point



2. Writing the Social Story (Some Guidelines)

- Involve the individual when writing the story



Use a POSITIVE Approach

- State **directive sentences positively**
- State **desired responses instead of ‘problem’ behaviors**
- Use terms like **‘I want to’, ‘I can try to’**.
- Avoid statements that begin with ‘I must....’, ‘I will....’ or ‘I should.....’
- Use terms like **‘usually’ or ‘sometimes’**
- Avoid terms like ‘always’
- Avoid ‘not’, ‘never’



4. Introducing the Social Story

- When introducing a story for the first time, begin with a quiet place with minimal distractions. Maybe bedtime/ 'talk time' with teacher.
- Remember: This is a time for sharing information and not table-top teaching
- Reinforce the message of the text with positive facial expressions and gestures while reading
- The same social story may be used in several environments, depending on the targeted social situation



5. Incorporating the story into the individuals' 'schedule'

- Always read the story in a relaxed setting; in other words, **not** while the event is occurring
- Also, do not use the story as punishment;
- Read the story over many days, more than once is also okay.



5. Incorporating the story into the individual's 'schedule'

- You can incorporate the story into the daily routine prior to the event taking place.



6. Adjusting for progress

- Monitor the effectiveness of the story
- If after two-three weeks of consistently reading a particular story, there is little/no noticeable change, the story should be reworked.



6. Adjusting for progress

- Elements that may be vague or confusing should be removed or rewritten
- The function/motivation behind the behavior may need to be re-evaluated.
- Is the story truly addressing the reasons *why the child may be confused or misreading a situation?*
- Check if the story ‘informs’ or ‘orders’
- It might be necessary to change the presentation of the story. For example -use PowerPoint on the computer instead of a handwritten booklet to present the story



7. Fading the social story

How many social stories at a time

- Ideally ONE
- The next to be introduced once there is a degree of success with the first



7. Fading the social story

- Space out the times between readings, so that instead of reading it daily, read the story only several times a week.
- Reduce or eliminate the directive sentences
- As each story is mastered, it could be kept visible in the individual's environment for review when needed like a 'My story book', a basket, a file folder on a computer, tablet



Remember that a social story is to

- Increase individual's understanding of
- Make him more comfortable in
- Suggest some appropriate, 'doable' responses for

a social situation in question
using positive, non judgmental language



And

- A Social Story is part of a whole
- Like any other strategy it is most effective when used in conjunction with other strategies, instead of in isolation.



My teacher talks to a lot of people

- My teacher talks a lot.
- Sometimes she talks to me.
- She gives me directions and helps me with my work.
- Sometimes she talks to other people.
- She might talk to other children about their work.
- She might talk to another adult.
- It is okay when she talks to other people.
- When my teacher talks to other people I can keep working or playing.
- This will make my teacher happy.
- I will try to keep working or playing when my teacher talks to other people.

Annual Day

- Annual day is on 10 April 2017
- Anup is in two items in the Annual Day.
- Anup is singing 'I have a dream'
- Anup is also the sun in the play.
- Anup needs to wear different clothes for 'I have a dream' and for the sun in the play.



Annual Day-contd

- Anup needs to wear a tshirt, underpant and jeans when he sings 'I have a dream'.



- Anup needs to change his clothes after 'I have a dream is finished'



Annual Day-contd

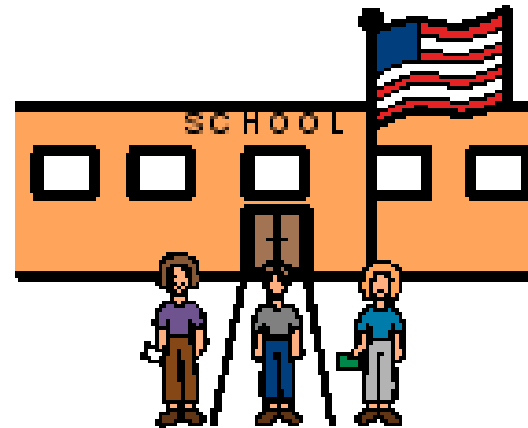
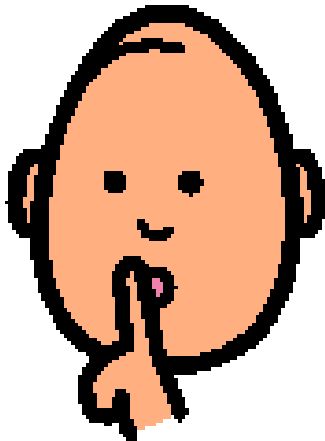
- Anup can change in the boys toilet and wear kurta, underpant and pajama for being the sun.



- Changing clothes for the Annual day is ok.



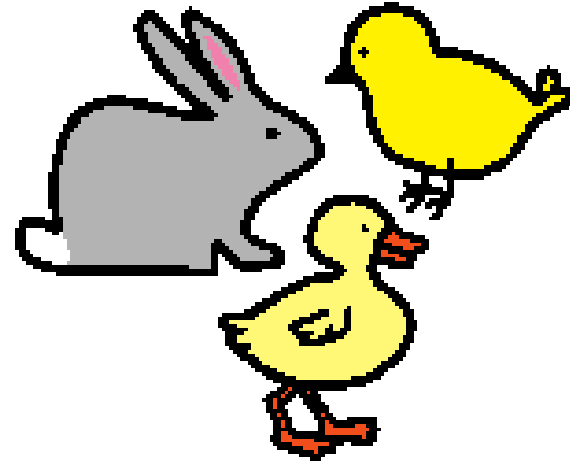
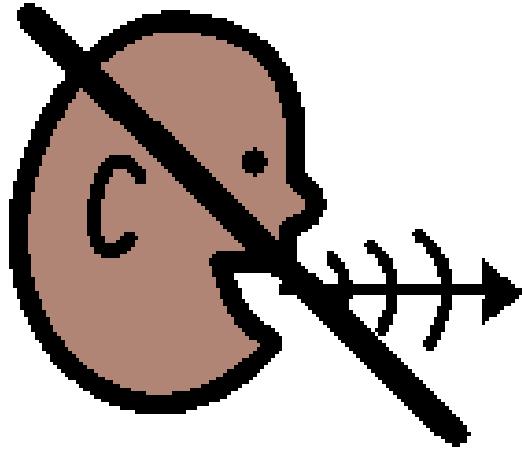
Quiet Mouth



- At school everybody tries to have a quiet mouth

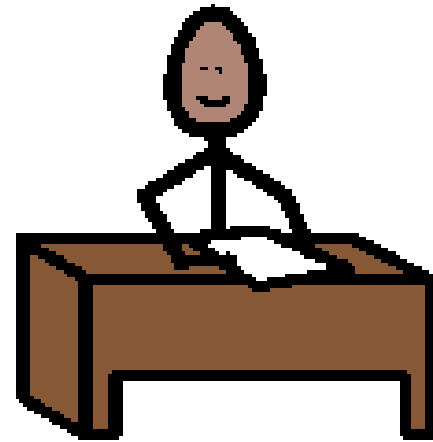
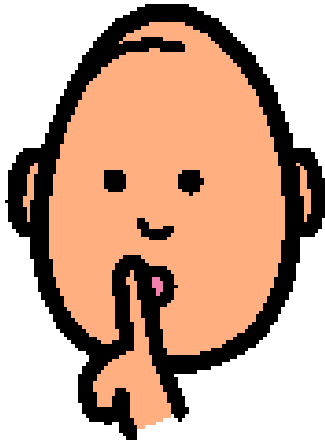


Quiet Mouth- contd



- I have a quiet mouth when I am not talking and making animal noises

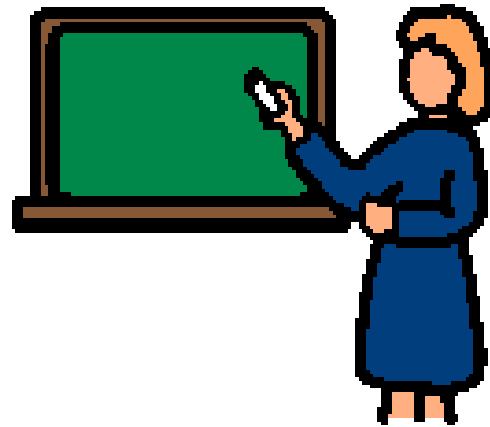
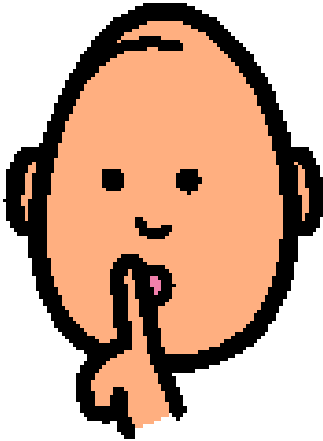
Quiet Mouth- contd



- I am quiet when I do my work



Quiet Mouth- contd



- I am quiet when Veena talks to the class

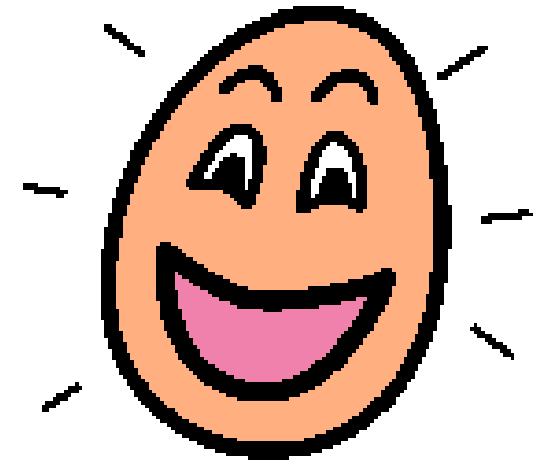
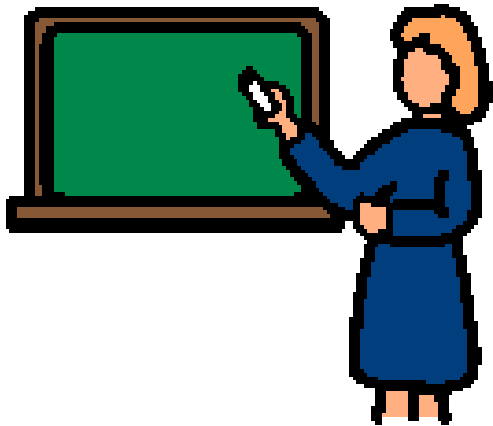


Quiet Mouth- contd



- I can use a loud voice in the playground

Quiet Mouth- contd



- Veena and my friends are happy when I have a quiet mouth.

Thank You